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The *Quarterly* solicits contributions of scholarly or popular interest dealing with the following subjects: the general (e.g., the political, social, economic, constitutional) or the natural history of Nevada and the Great Basin; the literature, languages, anthropology, and archaeology of these areas; reprints of historic documents (concerning people, flora, fauna, historical or archaeological sites); reviews and essays concerning the historical literature of Nevada, the Great Basin, and the West.

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Mark Twain amd Artemus Ward: A Bittersweet Friendship is Born in Nevada

JOHN J. PULLEN

WHEN ARTEMUS WARD (Charles Farrar Brown) arrived in Virginia City, Nevada, just before Christmas, 1863, he presented a mirror image of future success to Samuel L. Clemens, then an unknown newspaper reporter working in that mining boomtown. To the young Mark Twain, Ward was in many respects a physical demonstration of his own capabilities, all the more striking because of similarities between the two young men which were even more remarkable than Twain may have realized at the time. Both were born into good families, Twain in Missouri, Ward in Maine. The fathers of both died in the same year, 1847, leaving their families in straitened circumstances. Both were put out to work as printer's apprentices, Ward at the age of thirteen, Twain at the age of twelve. Both worked for a time in print shops owned by their elder brothers, but found only brief shelter under these fraternal wings; both brothers failed in their businesses. Turned out into the world again, Twain and Ward worked their way here and there for several years as itinerant printers.

When the youngsters were in their late teens, the courses of their careers diverged. Twain worked on Mississippi River steamboats, served briefly in the Confederate army, and then went West as private secretary to his brother Orion, whom Lincoln had appointed Territorial Secretary for Nevada. But since there was nothing for the Secretary's secretary to do, and no salary, Twain unsuccessfully labored for a while as a miner. Meanwhile he was contributing letters to *The Daily Territorial Enterprise* in Virginia City. Impressed by their quality, Joseph T. Goodman, editor of the *Enterprise,* invited Twain to join the newspaper's staff in the late summer of 1862. To take the job, Twain had to walk more than a hundred miles to Virginia City, since he was just about completely down and out at the time. He came into the *Enterprise* office dusty and dirty, wearing a slouch hat, a blue woolen shirt, pants stuffed into miner's boots, and a heavy set of whiskers.

By the time Artemus Ward arrived in Virginia City more than a year later, Clemens had become a valuable man on the staff. He was already signing his articles "Mark Twain," but his work was still largely unformed,

he had no literary reputation except around Virginia City, and he gave evidence of no great literary ambition. Somewhere under his rough exterior lay one of the greatest writing talents in America, but Mark Twain had not awakened to their possibilities.[1]

For Charles F. Brown the upward path was more direct. At the age of 17, while working in the print shop of *The Carpet-Bag,* a humorous weekly in Boston, he began to contribute sketches to that magazine. His graduation from type case to editorial office continued on various newspapers. In his early twenties he became associate editor of *The Cleveland Daily Plain Dealer.* While writing for the *Plain Dealer* he invented the fictional character Artemus Ward, an old showman who travelled about the country exhibiting waxworks and "wild beests" and sending the *Plain Dealer* eccentrically spelled letters full of a quaint humor that delighted mid-century Americans. It is virtually certain that Mark Twain was familiar with this work, so widespread was its popularity. By the end of 1861 the letters had been in effect syndicated all over the country by a government-subsidized arrangement that allowed publishers to exchange copies of their newspapers free of postage (and incidentally free of any royalties to writers whose material was reprinted). When the letters were published as *Artemus Ward His Book* in the spring of 1862, the book had immediately sold 40,000 copies and its fame had been further enlarged by about the best publicity event one could hope for: President Lincoln read parts of it to his cabinet. (*The New York Herald* said, "The result is that the members are so convulsed with laughter and chuckle themselves into such an extremely good humor that they willingly endorse whatever the President proposes.") The fame of the Old Showman's name had led Brown to adopt it as his own *nom de plume,* and also led him to the editorship of New York's *Vanity Fair,* the nation's leading comic magazine. In late 1861 he had begun to deliver comic lectures which were characterized by ridiculous non-sequiturs ("I met a man in Oregon who hadn't any teeth—not a tooth in his head—yet that man could play on the bass drum better than any man I ever met") and other nonsense delivered with owl-like solemnity and enlivened with odd stage tricks. For example, Ward might begin a lecture by coming out on the stage and saying nothing, only gazing at the audience with a fixed stare while the audience stared back at him intently for several minutes, becoming more and more uncomfortable. Finally, when the agony of suspense gave way to muttering, shifting about, exclamations, stamping and hand clapping, Ward would hold up his hand for silence and say with sad indignation and reproach, "Ladies and

[1] Albert Bigelow Paine (ed.), *Mark Twain's Letters* (New York: two vols., Harper & Brothers, 1917), vol. 1, pp. 1–5 (Paine biographical note). Hereinafter cited as Paine *MT Letters.* Also Mark Twain, *Roughing It,* vols. 7 and 8 of the Author's National Edition. (New York: Harper & Brothers, n.d. [1899–1900]), vol. 8, pp. 17–19. Hereinafter cited as Author's Edition.

gentlemen. When you have finished with this unseemly interruption, I shall be glad to continue." A roar of laughter and probably sighs of relief always followed. Appearing before audiences he had not encountered previously, he used other surprise openers. Typically, he might first appear on the platform to place a glass of water beside the lectern and bustle about with a dusting cloth, leading the audience to mistake him for a janitor. It was also typical of the lectures that the contents never had anything to do with the announced titles.[2]

The enormously successful lectures added to the fame already established by Ward's writings. That he was considered a sure-fire attraction in the West by 1863 is evident from the invitation he received that summer from the theatrical magnate Thomas Maguire to come and lecture in the Maguire-owned Opera Houses in San Francisco and Virginia City. Preceding him to California, Ward's agent E. P. Hingston, lately from England and therefore not wholly familiar with his market, carried with him 100 presentation copies of *Artemus Ward His Book* intended for use in acquainting editors and others with Ward's humor; but he found that Artemus was well known and his works well read on the West Coast. (It is more than likely that several copies of the book reached *The Enterprise* office in Virginia City in this manner.)

Ward's already-existing reputation and popularity in the West was more than borne out by his reception. On his first appearance in San Francisco he took in $1600, and Hingston said later that the night's receipts would have amounted to $3000 had not the crowd, in its rush to get into the lecture hall, overturned the money-taker's stall. After touring the mining region of California, Ward (much to Hingston's dismay) decided to return to the East on the Overland Stage, even though this would take him across vast wilderness areas in the dead of winter and through hostile Indian country.[3]

Imbued with this adventurous spirit, Ward was delighted with what he found when he stopped to lecture in Virginia City. Clinging to the side of Mount Davidson astride the great Comstock Lode, more than 6000 feet above sea level and only a few hundred feet below the gray dome of the

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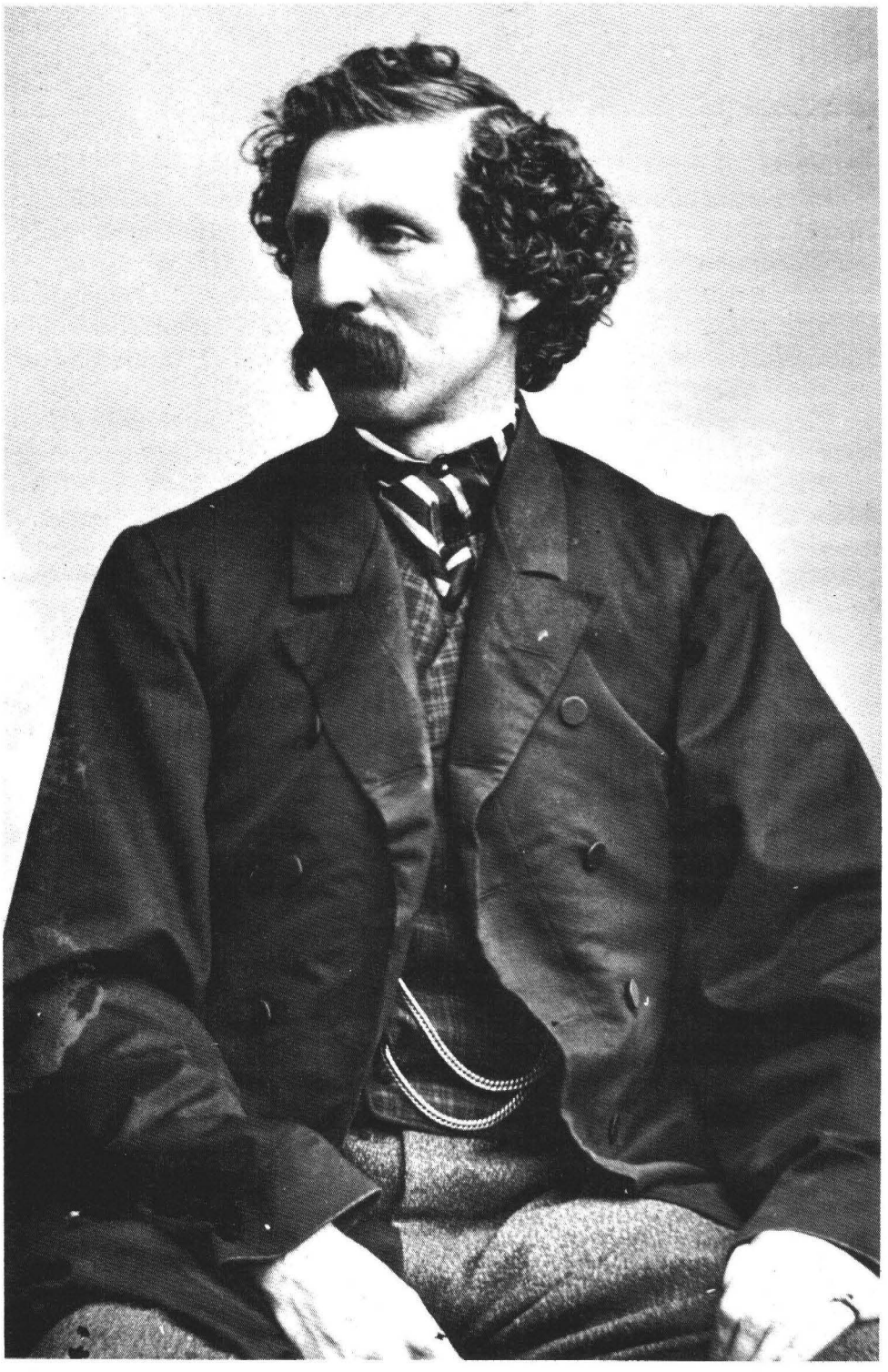
[2] The humor of an Artemus Ward lecture was as much in the manner of delivery as in the substance. Ward was aware of this and discouraged any attempt to reproduce the lecture in print, with the result that contemporary verbatim accounts are rare. Edward P. Hingston (ed.), *Artemus Ward's Lecture,* hereinafter cited as Hingston *AW Lecture,* (New York: G. W. Carleton & Co., 1869), p. 34. The "man in Oregon" bit is from Hingston *AW Lecture* (p. 70), which was not published until after Ward's death. The "silent" opening is described in J. E. Preston Muddock, *Pages From an Adventurous Life* (London: T. Werner Laurie, Clifford's Inn, n.d. [1907]), p. 96. The "dusting" opening, Clifton Johnson (ed.), *Artemus Ward's Best Stories* with an introduction by W. D. Howells, hereinafter cited as Johnson *Best Stories* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1912), pp. 18, 19 (biographical note by Johnson).

[3] Edward P. Hingston, *The Genial Showman: Reminiscences of the Life of Artemus Ward,* Third Edition, hereinafter cited as Hingston, *Genial Showman* (London: Chatto and Windus, n.d. [1870]), p. 299.



Artemus Ward (Library of Congress)

mountain top, Virginia City was in a boom period, boasting banks, hotels, theaters, gambling halls, breweries, jails, restaurants, stores, newspapers, large brick buildings with ornamental iron balconies, and saloons with mahogany bars and oil paintings. Streets were lighted by gas jets on iron poles; the city blazed with illumination at night. Sides of cliffs were painted with spectacular advertisements. Maguire's Opera House on "D" Street had an enormous stage, gas footlights, gilt chairs, velvet railings, boxes brocaded in scarlet, a sparkling crystal chandelier. The roads were jammed with ore wagons, freight teams, buggies, Chinese coolies, Piute Indians, Mexicans, Frenchmen, people from every country on earth: miners in blue jeans, bankers in top hats, gamblers with gaudy vests. The earth shook from the blasting that was going on in the mines deep underground, and from the pounding of the ore crushers. The thunder of hoists, shrieks of steam whistles, curses of teamsters, rumble of wheels and clanging of freighter bells added to a cacaphony that could be heard miles away, far out in the desert. The tinkle of pianos echoed from honky-tonk saloons, and often shots cracked out: inside Maguire's Opera House, on its opening night, two men fired at each other from opposite sides of the house.[4]

A corresponding frenzy seethed in the brains of Virginia City inhabitants. Everyone had a get-rich-quick scheme, and many of the schemes were succeeding. Money was plentiful: the problem was not how to get it, but how to spend it. One man who was there wrote, "Everybody had money to burn, and it might as well have been burned for all the good it did—squandered as fast as made." It was a good town for show business or any business, and Hingston, arriving in advance of Artemus Ward, went on his customary rounds of newspaper offices (there were three in Virginia City) to whip up publicity. At the *Daily Territorial Enterprise*, housed in a fine, new fireproof brick building, he handed editor Joseph T. Goodman a little card which read: "E. P. Hingston. *Ars est celere Artem-us.*" Goodman didn't get it. Hingston had to explain that this was his own version of the old adage "Ars est celare artem" ("True art is to conceal art") changed to mean "True art is to hurry up Artemus," and the editor agreed that the *Enterprise* would do its part in the hurrying.[5]

Joe Goodman's Latin may have been rusty, but he was the king of everything else that had to do with the written and printed word in Virginia City. Handsome, talented, and a daredevil, Goodman had come from San Francisco with one journeyman printer and a borrowed $40 about three

[4] Mark Twain, *op. cit.*, pp. 27–29. George D. Lyman, *The Saga of the Comstock Lode* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), pp. 196, 197, 200, 223, 224, 239, 240.

[5] "Everybody had money to burn": Jared B. Graham, *Handset Reminiscences*, (Salt Lake City: Century Printing Co., 1915), p. 138. "*Ars est celere*": Joseph T. Goodman, "Artemus Ward. His Visit to the Comstock Lode," *San Francisco Chronicle*, Jan. 10, 1892, p. 1.

years previously. Since then he had assembled a staff of reporters, twenty or thirty compositors, a crew of advertising solicitors and a battery of steam-powered presses; now the paper was making big money. Part of the reason for its success was that it dispensed exactly the kind of journalism Virginia City wanted. Along with the news of the shootings, brawls, other commonplace affairs, and the highly technical news of mining that depended on a reporter's knowledge of geology and mineralogy, there were stories that sprang largely from the writers' imaginations—tall tales, burlesques, humor, flights of fancy.[6]

Upon his arrival in Virginia City, Ward went to the *Enterprise* office, got a sheet of 24 x 36 newsprint and with a blue crayon wrote upon it his customary announcement:

ARTEMUS WARD
WILL
SPEAK HIS PIECE
HERE
TONIGHT

He tacked the sheet of newsprint on the door of Maguire's Opera House, and that, with Hingston's publicity work, was all that was necessary to assure a full house. On the *Enterprise*, it had fallen to Mark Twain to write the advance notice of the lecture. He gave evidence of thorough familiarity with Ward's writing by doing the piece in imitation of the Old Showman's eccentric phrasing and spelling, and on the evening of the performance he was in the "printer's pew," a row of seats close to the stage at Maguire's, usually reserved for printers and newspaper reporters.[7]

The lecture was a revelation to Mark Twain. Apparently he absorbed it with two parts of his mind: one part examining and marveling at the technique, the other belatedly enjoying the humor. A printer who happened to be sitting right beside him said that Twain watched with his mouth literally wide open, and that there would sometimes be a general explosion of laughter in the audience following one of Ward's jokes and then, after the uproar had subsided, suddenly a burro-like "Haw, haw haw" from Twain. Once, when one of these delayed "Haw, haws" had interrupted the lecture and attracted all eyes to the "printer's pew," Ward glared in that direction in mock anger and asked, "Has it been watered today?"[8]

[6] Mark Twain, *op. cit.*, pp. 39, 40. Lyman, *op. cit.*, pp. 126–128.
[7] Effie Mona Mack, *Mark Twain in Nevada* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), pp. 289, 290. Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 142.
[8] Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

Ward lectured in Maguire's Opera House in Virginia City on the evening of December 22, 1863. The house couldn't accommodate everyone who wanted to get in, so there was another show on the evening of Christmas Day. In the second lecture he illustrated in a striking way his talent for adapting his lecture to current events. In this case he had to deal with news which was so bad that it might have killed his entire performance. A shock wave of dismay and disappointment had been moving toward Virginia City for many days. It had started on a hill in Sussex, England, at about 10 o'clock on the morning of December 10, when the great prize fighter John C. Heenan, the pride of America and particularly of the western mining regions, beaten almost senseless by Britain's Tom King, had been unable to come out for the 26th round of a much-heralded match.

Two steamships had immediately started for the United States with the grievous intelligence, and the outcome would be unknown there until one of them arrived. In Nevada the news was awaited with anxiety. Many of the miners knew Heenan personally; he had come from Benicia, California, and was popularly known as the Benicia Boy. Heavy bets had been made in Virginia City. The ship *Jura,* after battling the high winds, reached Portland, Maine, early on the morning of December 23, and the sorrowful news was immediately flashed to wherever it would go by the not-always-reliable telegraph system, the speed of which was something less than that of light. The calamitous tidings reached Virginia City just prior to Ward's second performance at Maguire's Opera House.[9]

Privately, Artemus could not have been less interested. In fact, he disliked prize fights. However, on the stage of Maguire's that evening Ward had to forget his own prepossessions and show concern for the mood of the audience. According to Joe Goodman, the gloom which pervaded the Opera House could not have been greater if an army on which the liberty of the country depended had been conclusively defeated. An atmosphere of despondency hung over the audience like a pall.

When the curtain went up Artemus advanced falteringly to the footlights with a handkerchief over his eyes, shaken by paroxysms of grief. In an instant he made everyone's distress seem ridiculous, and Goodman, remembering the lecture nearly thirty years later, described how Artemus followed up on this opener with a reference to the outcome of the fight: "But instantly a bright and hopeful look sprang into Artemus's eyes. He said he was aware it was a low thing to stake so much feeling on a contest of

[9] The author is indebted to Robert D. Armstrong, who as Special Collections Librarian, University of Nevada, in 1968 consulted newspaper files to determine the dates of Artemus Ward's lectures in Virginia City and other dates related to his visit. Details of the King-Heenan fight are from New York newspapers: the *Times, Herald* and *Tribune* of Dec. 24, 1863, also from the *Virginia Evening Bulletin,* Dec. 24, 1863.

this kind; that he knew he ought to be ashamed of himself; but he confessed to the universal weakness of desiring, even in a dog fight, that his dog should win, but, though his dog hadn't won in this case, he did not despair. He believed the nation would survive the defeat, and that there were many happy days in store for us Americans yet."

The ludicrous performance brought enough of his listeners to their senses to inspire laughter and applause. In Goodman's words, he had "neatly relieved an embarrassed situation."[10]

From Virginia City Ward made short side trips to lecture at mining towns in the vicinity: Gold Hill, Silver Hill and Dayton, Nevada, but much of the time was taken up by a binge that was not altogether alcoholic. On Ward Virginia City seemed to have the effect of a strong hallucinogen. The throbbing of the blasting underground, the rarefied air, the oddity of the situation—a mountain-top city from which an endless panorama of hills and desert stretched away sharp and clear in the December sunlight—the noise, the devil-may-care spirit of the place, the throngs of bizarre characters in the street all combined to stir him intensely. In Joe Goodman's words, "He was as if strung on wires, vibrating to every impulse of its tumultous life. Every alarm, every excitement, every killing—and these were things of almost incessant occurrence in Virginia City in those days—shook him with a force at once exhilarating and exhausting."[11]

Ward's unofficial headquarters in Virginia City was the office of the *Enterprise,* to which he had immediately gravitated with his sure instinct for talented and convivial company. From here, guided by Mark Twain and another reporter, Dan de Quille, he ranged all over the town and under it as well; miners laboring hundreds of feet beneath the surface looked up to see him entering the illumination of their lamps; drinkers and gamblers made a place for him at the bars; and he mingled with Indians, Mexicans and Chinese in the street. Now and then he popped into the *Enterprise* office, and if the work was not done at a decent hour of the evening, he took off his coat and wrote an editorial or otherwise helped finish up the chores. Afterwards he and Goodman, De Quille, Twain and others went out to dinners and all-night drinking bouts.[12]

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[10] Goodman, *op. cit.* The performance as described by Goodman was characteristic of Ward, and his account is undoubtedly correct in a general sense. However, writing thirty years after the event, Goodman misremembered a couple of details. In his story he has Heenan fighting Sayers instead of King, and he has Artemus Ward making the first local announcement of the outcome from the stage of Maguire's. If Artemus lectured there on the dates recorded in the *Virginia Evening Bulletin,* Dec. 22 and 25, this would have been impossible; the news had not arrived in America on the 22nd, and on the 25th it had already been known to Virginia City residents since the morning of the 24th. (The *Evening Bulletin* of the 24th printed the results as "taken from the morning paper," evidently the *Enterprise.*

[11] Hingston, *Genial Showman,* p. 418.

[12] Goodman, *op. cit.* Also, William Wright (pseud. Dan de Quille), "Artemus Ward in Nevada," *The Californian Illustrated Magazine, Aug.,* 1893, pp. 403–406.

There is no coherent day-by-day or night-by-night account of this time in Virginia City. And there is no exact agreement among the stories the participants wrote in later years, although all were professional reporters (this undoubtedly indicating the effects of an alcoholic fog as well as the haze that time and failing memories cast over the events). When Mark Twain was an old man dictating his notes for his authorized biography to be written by Albert Bigelow Paine, he not only indicated to Paine that Ward was in Virginia City three weeks, but also that a great deal had happened. But Ward was in Twain's company only one week. He arrived in Virginia City about December 22 and left there on the morning of December 29. From the accounts of his companions, there emerges a rough consensus concerning what happened within that week, but accounts of exactly how and just when it happened would be something else again.[13]

Mark Twain remembered one scene at Barnum's Restaurant at 2:30 A.M. Artemus Ward proposed a standing toast only to discover that no one could stand.[14]

Dan de Quille recalled a dinner at the International Hotel where the group engineered an elaborate prank at Twain's expense. The plot was that after they had had a few drinks Ward, who was an expert at something akin to double-talk, was to say something that sounded highly literary and intellectual but that would actually be senseless, and everyone would pretend to understand it perfectly while, it was hoped, Twain would be baffled. At the proper time Ward, who had seated himself beside Twain, began his rigamarole in a voice that was loud enough to halt the general conversation and cause everyone to listen. De Quille's recorded impression, which of course could not have been entirely accurate, was that Ward said something like, "Ah—speaking of genius, Mr. Clemens, now, genius appears to me to be a sort of luminous quality of the mind, allied to a warm and inflammable constitution, which is inherent in the man, and supersedes in him whatever constitutional tendencies he may possess, to permit himself to be influenced by such things as do not coincide with his preconceived notions and established convictions to the contrary."

All the men around the table nodded in solemn agreement, except Twain. Ward then gravely asked him if the definition was not a good one.

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[13] Paine *MT Letters*, vol. 1, p. 93 (Paine comment) indicates Artemus Ward was in Virginia City three weeks. But he must have arrived on Dec. 22, 1863, because the *Virginia Evening Bulletin* has him lecturing in Carson City (the preceding stop on his itinerary according to Hingston, *Genial Showman*, p. 416) on Dec. 21 and in Virginia City on Dec. 22. And he must have departed on Dec. 29 because Artemus Ward to Mark Twain from Austin, Nevada, Jan. 1, 1864 (Mark Twain Papers, the General Library, University of California, Berkeley) says he arrived in Austin "yesterday a.m. at 2 o'clock," and Hingston, *Genial Showman*, pp. 423–427, indicates that the journey to Austin began on a morning, occupied all the rest of that day plus all the next day and extended into a third day.

[14] Paine, *MT Letters*, vol. 1, p. 183 (Mark Twain to Thomas Bailey Aldrich, Jan. 28, 1871).

"I don't know that I exactly understand you," Mark replied. Ward looked at him with just a slight elevation of the eyebrows, as though politely concealing his surprise and impatience. "Why that is very singular. However, I will try and express myself more clearly." He re-stated his concept a couple of times in increasingly incomprehensible terms, with Twain getting more and more befuddled and the rest of the company faking disgust at his obtuseness, until finally Twain yelled, "For God's sake! If you go at that again, you'll drive me mad." What had been done to him was then revealed, and he was sore for the rest of the evening. The incident later appeared in his collected works as "First Interview with Artemus Ward," but with Twain's own reconstruction of a garbled conversation in an altogether different situation: He and Ward and Hingston were having breakfast in Virginia City, drinking whiskey cocktails; Ward was talking about a silver mine and posing questions Twain couldn't understand; Twain was attributing his growing confusion to the effects of the whiskey cocktails; and finally, when he saw Hingston laughing, he admitted that he had been swindled by "a string of plausibly worded sentences that didn't mean anything under the sun."[15]

On Christmas Eve (according to an account by Joe Goodman), after a lecture in a nearby mining town, Ward appeared in the *Enterprise* office about midnight, helped to put the paper to bed, and then took Twain, de Quille, Hingston, Goodman and Dennis McCarthy to dinner at Virginia City's French restaurant. The drinking and wise-cracking began, and this time, Goodman noticed, Twain was more than holding his own. Held to a draw by Twain, Ward turned to work on Goodman, and Goodman said to let him alone and go on with the mammoth contest of wits; he'd continue with the ordering and have a little joke for them later on. Many courses and wines later, the waiter brought Ward a bill for $237. "That's *my* joke," said Goodman. Ward picked it up saying he was surprised at the moderate amount; he had thought it would be at least twice as much.

Dawn was just breaking when they left the restaurant. "I can't walk on the earth," said Ward. "I feel like walking on the skies." He settled for something in-between, clambering up on a shed and mounting from there to the top of a building. Twain scrambled up after him, and the two went clattering away over the roofs along a row of the closely backed structures, leaping from one rooftop to the next, with their companions running along the street below. Goodman was worried because patrolmen in Virginia City usually shot first and asked questions afterward. Just in time he ran into a policeman who had his revolver cocked and was about to fire at the two figures silhouetted against the lightening sky. When restrained, the officer protested: "Don't you see them burglars up there?" And when told the

[15] Wright, *op. cit.* Mark Twain, "First Interview With Artemus Ward," in *Sketches New and Old* (vol. 19, Author's Edition), p. 364–369.

burglers were Artemus Ward and Mark Twain he responded, "Well I'll be damned." After their night's spree, Twain, Ward and de Quille went to the boarding house where Twain and de Quille lodged, and all piled into one large bed to sleep off their colossal binge just as the sun was rising on Christmas Day, 1863.[16]

Of his Virginia City days Mark Twain would later say, "They were so full to the brim with the wine of life; there have been no others like them."[17] He might also have said that his few days in Virginia City with Artemus Ward added considerable ferment to the development of his own creative career. On this occasion, for the first time, he found himself in close association with a man only a year older than himself, one who was not a product of the academic world, but who had risen out of the print shop and newspaper office to become editor of the sophisticated *Vanity Fair* in New York, publish a best-selling book, consort with literary lights, and lecture to delighted audiences all across the nation. What was particularly impressive about this was that Ward had made his reputation entirely as a humorist. With him, humor was not incidental—it was the whole show, and a highly intellectual show at that. He had raised humor to a new level of respectability that must have been instantly apparent and enormously appealing to Mark Twain.[18] Further, Ward was proving that humor could make money. And what must have been particularly aggravating about this was that Ward was not as good a writer as Twain even then must have known himself to be.

Another dimension of Ward's possible influence upon Twain is hinted at in an appreciation of Ward written by Bret Harte that same December. While in San Francisco earlier in the month, Ward had greatly impressed the literary group clustered around *The Golden Era.* His humor had struck them (as noted by Franklin Walker in his *San Francisco's Literary Frontier*) as "a home-born product that could be turned into an art." Harte wrote a long article, which appeared in the December 27 *Golden Era,* and he observed that Ward's humor deserved:

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16 Goodman, *op. cit.* William Wright, "Salad Days of Mark Twain," *The Examiner,* San Francisco, March 19, 1893.

17 Paine, *MT Letters,* vol. 2, p. 773 (Mark Twain to Robert Fulton, May 24, 1905).

18 Edward P. Hingston, who was Artemus Ward's manager, observed in Hingston *Genial Showman,* pp. 118–120, that a number of American lyceum speakers of that period used jokes to lighten their lectures, and in his preface to Hingston *AW Lecture,* p. 23, he noted that America had produced stage entertainers who by means of facial changes or eccentricities of costume had contrived to amuse their audiences, but that before Artemus Ward there had been no one "who ventured to joke for an hour before a house full of people with no aid from scenery or dress." From this it might be supposed that Ward rates the dubious distinction of having been the first of the stand-up comics. However, his enthusiastic reception by the literary community of London in 1866–67 is evidence that his performance was on a much higher level than that of the modern night club comedian. *Punch,* Dec. 1, 1866, p. 228, made a considerable point of contrasting Ward with the "low comedian of the second rate theater" and others who "minister, unreproved, to coarseness, imbecility and vulgarity."

the credit of combining certain qualities which make him representative of a kind of humor that has more of a national characteristic than the higher and more artistic standard. His strength does not lie simply in grotesque spelling . . . but it is the humor of audacious exaggeration—of perfect lawlessness; a humor that belongs to the country of boundless prairies, limitless rivers and stupendous cataracts. In this respect Mr. Ward is the American Humorist par excellence, and "his book" is the essence of that fun which overlies the surface of our national life, which is met in the stage, rail car, canal and flat boat, which bursts out over camp fires and around barroom stoves—a humor that has more or less local coloring; that takes kindly to, and half elevates slang . . .

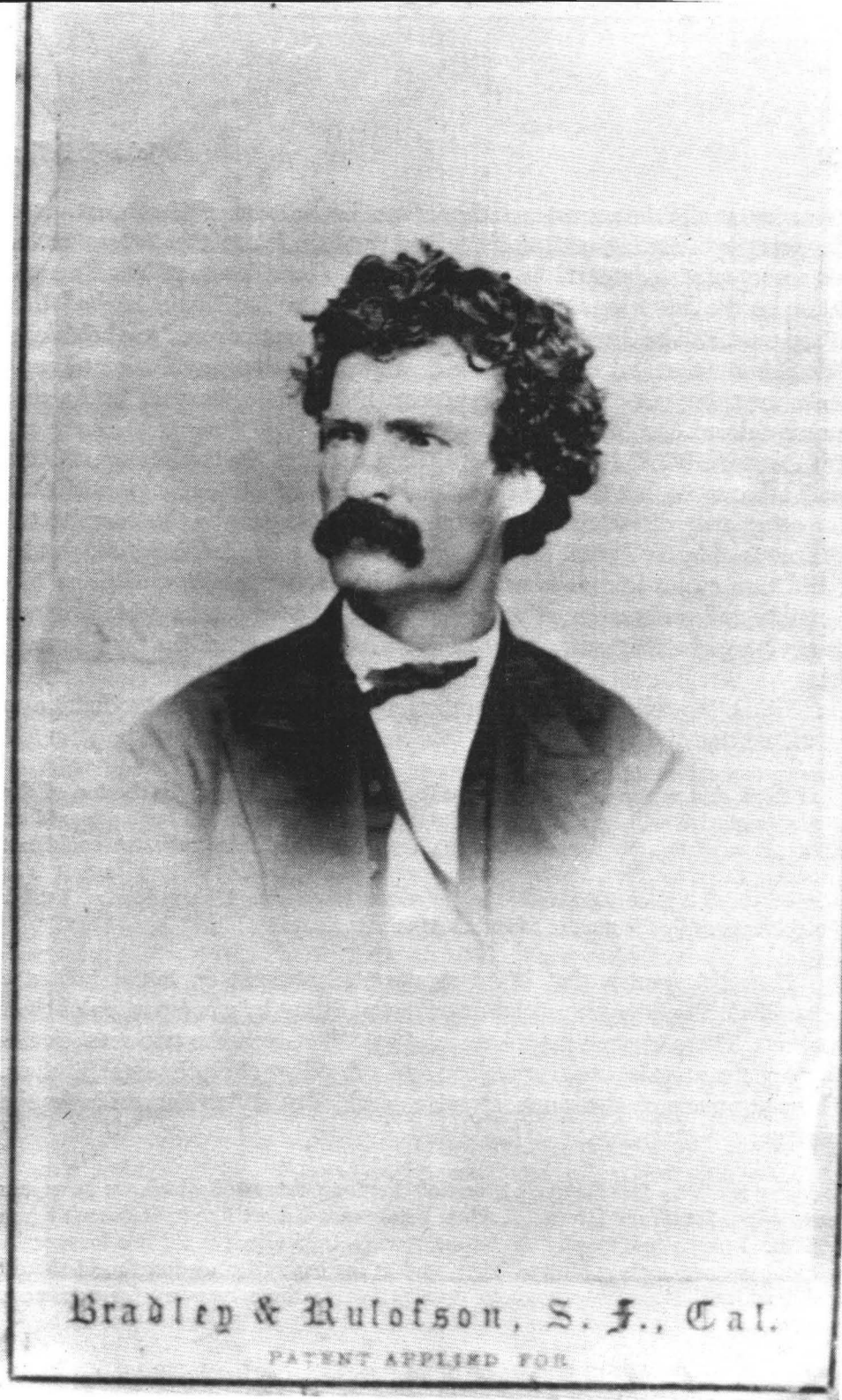
Mr. Walker observed that these words may have signified as much about the young man who wrote them as about Ward, for Harte's own writing, which had hitherto largely reflected the world of books, would a few years later begin to draw from the life he found around him in the rough and vigorous mining camps. The same comment might apply with equal logic to Mark Twain. It may well be that Artemus Ward's example also helped awaken him to the value of the literary raw materials available in the rich mother lode of Western experience and humor.

A more thoroughly documented influence of Ward came from his seeing in this unknown writer a talent that few others had fully appreciated, from his taking a personal interest in Twain and from his urging the young reporter to try to market his literary products on the East Coast. As a result of his own days as editor of *Vanity Fair*, he was well-connected in Manhattan, and he promised Twain that if he would send some articles or stories to New York, he would pave the way by writing to editorial friends on *The New York Mercury*.

Ward left Virginia City with Hingston on the morning of December 29, 1863, to continue their journey eastward by stagecoach, and Twain heard from him in a letter written at Austin, Nevada, on New Year's Day, 1864. The letter assured Twain that Ward would follow through on his promise to intervene for him in New York. "I shall write, soon, a powerfully convincing note to my friends of 'The Mercury' . . . Good-bye, old boy . . . and God Bless you! The matter of which I spoke to you so earnestly shall just as earnestly be attended to."[19]

A demijohn of whiskey which Ward had taken along on the stage may not have been a good idea. Nipping on the whiskey, plus the constant jarring and jouncing of the vehicle, might have placed a strain on his urinary system. Ward said in his New Year's Day letter to Twain that his kidneys were affected, but it was difficult to know whether or not he was serious. At times the letter rambled as though Ward were still nipping. One sentence—among the clearest—said, "I shall always remember Virginia as a bright spot in my

[19] Artemus Ward to Mark Twain, as cited in note 13.



Mark Twain (Bancroft Library)

existence, as all others must or rather cannot be, as it were." Twain extracted the paragraph ending with this line and published it in the *Enterprise*. In his accompanying remarks he was not quite so considerate of Ward's reputation as the latter would be zealous to promote his. Twain implied that Ward must still be drunk: "I am glad that old basket-covered jug holds out. I don't know that it does, but I have an impression that way. At least I can't make anything out of that last sentence. But I wish him well, and a safe journey, drunk or sober."[20]

Artemus Ward died in 1867 at the age of 33, so the two men never saw each other again, but they were destined to have, in spirit, a long association, the complexity of which was determined in large part by the complicated character of Mark Twain. He was capable of warm friendships, and yet he could turn on his friends over imagined slights or misdealings. Within him humility and pride constantly were at war; and it was to be pride as much as anything else that was to affect Twain's attitude toward the dead humorist.

W. D. Howells, who knew both men well, wrote in an introduction to a 1912 edition of Ward's works:

> . . . I think that whoever reviews or makes acquaintance here with the fun of the earlier humorists will be struck with the fact that in some of his beginnings Mark Twain formed himself from, if not on, Artemus Ward. The imitation could not last long; the great master was so immensely the master; but while it lasts it is as undeniable as it is curious, and it by no means impeaches his superiority. I think him incomparably the greater talent, and yet not always.[21]

Howells' opinion that Ward represented at least an initial influence upon Mark Twain's career is borne out to an extent by a comparison of their writings. There is some resemblance of spirit between the two men: something of the same instinct for realism and a deriding of sentimental illusions. There is much of the same sportive, droll, dry style. For example the passage:

> Industry is a very fine thing. It is one of the finest things of which we have any knowledge. Yet do not frown . . . when I state that I don't like it. It doesn't agree with me. I prefer indolence. I am happiest when I am idle. I could live for months without performing any kind of labor, and at the expiration of that time I should feel fresh and vigorous enough to go right on in the same way for numerous months more.

This sounds so much like Twain it is hard to believe that he did not write it.

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[20] Henry N. Smith (ed.), *Mark Twain of the Enterprise* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1957), p. 130.

[21] William Dean Howells in his introduction to Johnson, *Best Stories*, pp. xiv, xv.

The truth is, it was composed by Ward three years before Mark Twain launched his real writing career with the publication of *The Innocents Abroad.*[22]

Since Ward's writing career was over before Twain's began, one might suspect that the latter borrowed certain substantive bits and pieces of humor from the older writer's work, but a warning is in order. Tracing the antecedents of a joke is a tricky business. (According to Twain, even the supposedly unique Jumping Frog story was once attributed, by a professor, to a Greek who had lived 2000 years before Mark heard it.) Perhaps all that can safely be said is that the two often borrowed from the same sources; the same material appealed to them both.

In Ward's work there is the boring minister whom he advised to enlist in the Union medical corps as 160 pounds of morphine and preach while surgical operations were being performed. In Twain's there is the summation of a piece of dull writing as "chloroform in print."[23] In one of Ward's lectures there is a joke about the baggage car man who said of a shipment of limburger cheese (thinking that a deceased lady was inside the large box containing it) "She ain't in no trance!"; in Twain's work there is "The Invalid's Story," a tale about exactly the same situation in a baggage car spun out to 2500 words or more.[24]

What was little more than a passing incident with Ward (as in the case of the double-talk prank in Virginia City which became Twain's "First Interview With Artemus Ward") Twain could elaborate into a whole article. He took one of Ward's two-line jokes, and made it into the climax of a story several pages long. In the summer of 1860, Ward published the following joke: "Waiter: *Please sir, how will you have your steak cooked?* Serious Gentleman: *Well done, good and faithful servant.*" And that was all there was to it. But with Twain, the "Well done, good and faithful servant!" later became the punch line for a long sketch called "Riley—Newspaper Correspondent" in which Riley proposed this as an epitaph for an old Negro woman, long devoted to her mistress, who had met her end by falling asleep over a red-hot stove. (Twain's taste sometimes left something to be desired.)[25]

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[22] Artemus Ward, *Artemus Ward in London* (New York: G. W. Carleton & Co., 1867), pp. 82, 83.

[23] Artemus Ward, *Artemus Ward (His Travels) Among the Mormons* E. P. Hingston (ed.) (London: John Camden Hotten, 1865), p. 102. Mark Twain, *Roughing It* (vol. 7, Author's Edition), p. 132.

[24] James F. Ryder, *Voigtlander and I in Pursuit of Shadow Catching* (Cleveland: The Cleveland Printing and Publishing Co., The Imperial Press), p. 199. Mark Twain, "The Invalid's Story," in *Literary Essays* (vol. 22, Author's Edition), pp. 182–192.

[25] Artemus Ward (ed.), *Campaign Plain Dealer and Popular Sovereignty Advocate,* Cleveland, Oct. 20, 1860. Mark Twain, "Riley, Newspaper Correspondent," in *Sketches New and Old* (vol. 19, Author's Edition), pp. 199–204.

In one of his books Mark Twain used a story that Don C. Seitz, author of *Artemus Ward: A Biography and Bibliography,* attributed to an event involving Ward himself. It seems that one day Artemus was riding on one of the nation's slower trains when he summoned the conductor and, with the passengers as his audience, made a plea for a new safety measure. It was evident from the speed of the train, he pointed out, that it could not possibly catch a cow if one chanced to be travelling on the track in front of it, but there was nothing to prevent a cow from running into them if it happened to be following behind. "I beseech you, therefore," Artemus had cried, "to remove the cow catcher from the locomotive and place it on the rear car and so save us from disaster." Mark Twain used this story, illustrating it with line drawings, in *The Gilded Age.*[26]

On the whole it must be said, however, that as far as it can be discerned, the influence of Ward's writing on Twain's was negligible. The influence of Ward himself may have been something else again. It seems likely that during his meteoric passage through Virginia City, Ward did three important things for Mark Twain. He helped make him more aware of the literary (and commercial) value of humor derived from American frontier life. He presented him with a living example of a success within his own capabilities. And he encouraged him to send some of his writings to New York. With, presumably, Artemus Ward's introductory note running on ahead, Twain followed up on the New York suggestion almost immediately, sending a piece on political affairs in Nevada which was published in *The New York Mercury* on February 7, 1864. On February 21 another Twain contribution entitled "Those Blasted Children" appeared in the *Mercury.* However, these two pieces, excellent as they were, did little to establish Twain's reputation. But then came "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County."

It would be pleasant to relate that the "Frog" leaped to recognition entirely through the interest of Artemus Ward in his friend and protegé, and indeed friendship did play the largest part in his good offices. But so did self-interest, to some degree. When Ward arrived back in the East in the spring of 1864 and started to write *Artemus Ward: His Travels,* a book about his Western trip he had promised his publisher, he found that his notes were inadequate, and he began writing to people he had met on his journey and asking them to send him descriptions of things he had failed to note carefully, or to verify details or make other contributions, for which he

[26] Don C. Seitz, *Artemus Ward, A Biography and Bibliography,* hereinafter cited as Seitz (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1919), pp. 172–173. This story appeared in Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner, *The Gilded Age* (Hartford: The American Publishing Co., 1873), pp. 391, 392, with two illustrations, in a chapter (43) written by Mark Twain, according to Albert Bigelow Paine, *Mark Twain a Biography,* hereinafter cited as Paine *Biography* (New York: 3 vols., Harper & Brothers, 1912), vol. 1, p. 477.

offered payment.[27] He asked Mark Twain to send him something to put in the book, and when Twain got around to it, he sent the story under the title, "Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog." But the manuscript arrived too late, and Ward's publisher, Carleton, very casually gave it to Henry Clapp, editor of the failing *New York Saturday Press,* where it finally appeared in the issue of November 18, 1865. The story made something of a sensation in New York and was reprinted all over the country. The name of Mark Twain became known as the author of the sketch, but he was still four years away from the work that began his lasting literary reputation, and it was, as he complained, only the "Frog" that became famous in 1865, not he.

Concerning the Jumping Frog tale, Twain once wrote, "I used to tell the story in San Francisco, and presently Artemus Ward came along and wanted it to help fill out a little book which he was about to publish so I wrote it out and sent it to his publisher G. W. Carleton; but Carleton thought the book had enough matter in it, so he gave the story to Henry Clapp as a present, and Clapp put it in his *Saturday Press,* and it killed that paper with a suddenness that was beyond praise. At least the paper died with that issue, and none but envious people have ever tried to rob me of the honor and credit of killing it."[28] There is a mix-up of chronology here that may be attributable to loose wording or to a failure of memory. It was not Ward who came along but a letter from him. Twain wrote the Jumping Frog story around the end of January, 1865; he and Ward had met and parted more than a year previously.

Mark Twain's report of the death of the *Saturday Press* was, as he once said of a report of his own demise, greatly exaggerated; this was not the last issue and the paper staggered on for a while afterward. As illustrated by this and other matters, Twain was a master in making often questionable details somehow add up to an unquestionable truth. It was another contradiction of his character that his biographer, Albert Bigelow Paine, remarked upon. In spirit, Paine said, Mark Twain was the very essence of truth, but he often made no real pretense as to accuracy of time, place or circumstance as long as he could tell a good story. "When I was younger," he once said, "I could remember anything, whether it happened or not, but I am getting old, and soon I shall remember only the latter."[29] He was, as was often the case, clowning about one of his human frailities, but he could usually man-

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[27] Artemus Ward wrote a letter of this sort to Nat Stein, an Overland Stage agent he met in Salt Lake City, dated April 28, 1864 (University of Virginia collection). It is reasonable to assume that Ward's request to Mark Twain was conveyed in a similar letter, since he could not have made it personally.

[28] Mark Twain, "Private History of the Jumping Frog Story," in *Literary Essays* (vol. 22, Author's Edition), pp. 120–127. That Mark Twain wrote the story after January, 1865, is indicated in Albert Bigelow Paine (ed.), *Mark Twain's Notebook* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1935), p. 7 (Paine comment). See also Paine *MT Letters,* vol. 1, pp. 6, 7 (Paine note).

[29] Paine, *Biography,* prefatory note vol. 1, no page number.

age what might be called impressionistic veracity, and in this sense Mark Twain was entirely truthful in conveying the idea that the Jumping Frog story involved both an accident and the friendly assistance of Artemus Ward.

In his excellent books *Mark Twain in Virginia City* and *Mark Twain on the Lecture Circuit,* Paul Fatout attributed much of Mark Twain's development as a lecturer to Artemus Ward, pointing out that Twain borrowed not only lecturing techniques but some of Ward's accessory devices. Mark was already known as a fascinating talker when Artemus came to Virginia City, but his status was strictly that of an amateur. Afterwards, he was on his way to becoming a professional. From his front seat in the "printer's pew" at Maguire's Opera House he had watched Ward's performance with a craftsman's intentness, looking for the techniques that lay behind the seeming artlessness—the mock gravity, the look of innocent surprise when the audience laughed, the anti-climaxes, pauses, non-sequiturs, wanderings of thought, and all the other tricks Ward had perfected in many appearances and through long observation of audience reactions. Later on in one of Twain's sketches, "How to Tell a Story," he gave Ward credit as the exemplar of at least one bit of comic art—a delayed-fuse way of putting across the nub of a story not through emphasis by the story-teller but "by dropping it in a carefully casual and indifferent way, with the pretence that he does not know it is a nub."[30]

As time went by Twain would develop and enlarge his own stage personality, but undoubtedly in the beginning he borrowed much from Ward and was often compared with him when he began lecturing on the West Coast in the fall of 1866. Also, apparently, he was still using Ward techniques seven or eight years later, when he was a celebrity. A man who heard Twain lecture in London wrote, "The hall was crowded with fashionable people in evening dress, of whom few if any had ever seen Mark. He came on the platform in full dress with the air of a manager announcing a disappointment and stammered out apologies. 'Mr. Clemens had landed at Liverpool, and had fully hoped to reach London in time, but, etc.' The murmurs were deep and threatened to be loud, when Mark added that he was happy to say that Mark Twain was present and would now give his lecture." This manner of sneaking up on an audience was pure Artemus Ward. So was the relation of Twain's lecture that night to its title, "The Sandwich Islands"; the one had little or nothing to do with the other.[31]

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[30] Paul Fatout, *Mark Twain in Virginia City* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1964), p. 130. Also, Mark Twain, "How to Tell a Story," in *Literary Essays* (vol. 22, Author's Edition), p. 8.

[31] Moncure D. Conway, *Autobiography* (Boston: 2 vols., Houghton Mifflin and Co., 1904), vol. 2, pp. 142, 143.

W. D. Howells summed up Twain's lecturing career by saying, "He was the most consummate public performer I ever saw, and it was an incomparable pleasure to hear him lecture; on the platform he was the great and finished actor which he probably would not have been on the stage."[32] It is undoubtedly correct to believe that Twain eventually far surpassed his mentor on the platform and had little to fear from any comparison with him.

However, for many years, his debt to Ward, both as a literary man and a lecturer, did not rest easily on his shoulders. After their boozy companionship in Virginia City the two men had parted on the best of terms. The letter Ward wrote him from Austin had begun (with Ward's usual airy disregard for conventions) "My Dearest Love," and had ended on an equally affectionate note. And Twain, writing of their brief association years later appeared to remember the genial, kindly Artemus as "one of the best fellows in the world and one of the most companionable."[33]

But the fact remains that Ward haunted him most unpleasantly for at least a couple of decades. He would always be compared with Ward, sometimes unfavorably, and this was galling to a man of Twain's fierce pride. Also, all of his associations with the memory of Ward seemed to rub him the wrong way, and Twain's curious character seemed to turn these into a resentment that had no logical relationship with Ward himself.

To begin with, the linking of his name with "The Jumping Frog" displeased Twain. He asserted that it was a "villainous backwoods sketch" that had stamped him as a rube writer; that he ought to have become known for something better; that he wouldn't have written the sketch in the first place if it hadn't been for Ward; and that he was glad it arrived in New York too late to be included in Ward's book, which was a "wretchedly poor one."[34] The recognition "The Jumping Frog" had brought him failed to make him any money; and when he visited Ward's publisher in February, 1867, with the idea of making it the title-piece of a book of sketches, Carleton turned him down in an interview that left a long exasperated aftermath.

There were two sides to the story. Twain said that Carleton had snootily declined to publish his book on the ridiculous grounds that he had enough books already. Carleton said he turned it down because the author looked like a bum. Nine years afterward Twain wrote that Carleton had insulted him, and "when the day arrives that sees me doing him a civility I shall feel that I am ready for Paradise, since my list of possible and impossible forgivenesses will then be complete." When the book Twain had offered Carleton

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[32] William Dean Howells, *My Mark Twain* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1910), p. 51.

[33] Mark Twain, "First Interview With Artemus Ward," in *Sketches New and Old* (vol. 19, Author's Edition), p. 369.

[34] Paine *MT Letters*, vol. 1, p. 101 (Mark Twain to Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffet, Jan. 20, 1866).

was published in 1867 by C. H. Webb under the title of The *Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County and Other Sketches,* its sales were small and it was full of "damnable errors." Twain must have thought for many years that Ward had done him no favors in bringing this seemingly unfortunate work into the light of day.[35]

On a lecture tour in 1871, when Twain's talk was not going well, he threw out his script and hastily wrote a new one entitled, "Artemus Ward, Humorist." It was partly an account of Ward's life as it might have been delivered by an old friend who by reason of his friendship was entitled to indulge in a certain amount of affectionate and amusing disparagement. Unfortunately, however, his jests came through with a slightly malicious tone, as though he could not help himself. He would begin to say something favorable about Ward: humor was born in him; he took the country by storm; he was a man of good impulses; and so forth. But then there would be a subtle down-grading: Ward had been thrown so suddenly into success that he did not develop into the polished wit he might have become; he did not live in vain, but he was not deep, not great-brained; his humor was not refined, it was not up to that of Holmes, Lowell, Harte or Warner.

Twain also offered descriptions of Ward's personal appearance which were intended to be funny but which were unflattering. And he contributed mightily to an impression that Ward was indolent, saying, for example, that Ward never had any schooling because he was too poor to afford it and too lazy to care for it; that he hated work and even hated to see others work; and that his success was a freak—he had gone to the top of the ladder without touching a single rung.

In the lecture the account of Ward's life served as a framework upon which to mount bits of humor and comic stories—some by Twain but many by Ward, including a joke that was widely known as part of the Wardian legend—his reply to Thomas Maguire when Maguire had wired him all the way across the continent in the summer of 1863, "WHAT WILL YOU TAKE FOR FORTY NIGHTS IN CALIFORNIA?" Ward's return telegram had said "BRANDY AND WATER."

Twain had overlooked the fact that Ward had lectured practically everywhere and this, plus the widespread reprinting of his written sketches, had given his material great circulation. But the borrowing did not escape the notice of the newspapers. One reporter referred to the lecture as "Mark Ward on Artemus Twain," and others severely criticized him for trying to lean on Ward and collecting lecture fees for the latter's old jokes. When he lectured in Ward's home state of Maine, the *Portland Daily Press* chastized

[35] Ibid., pp. 8, 123 (Paine comments); p. 124 (Mark Twain to Bret Harte, May 1, 1867); p. 276 (Paine comment); p. 278 (Mark Twain to W. D. Howells).

him for a number of grave errors in regard to Ward's early history, condemned the lecture generally and suggested that "Mr. Clemens' forte is not the platform. He does better with the pen."[36] The talk was finally discontinued with Twain saying he hated it, and with Ward getting a good deal of the blame; the material Ward had written was no good, he asserted—it was only the part he had written himself that audiences laughed at.[37]

Public comparisons of Ward and himself represented a cross that he had to bear for years, and even his old friend Joe Goodman did not altogether spare him. In an article published in 1892, Goodman observed that people of that day might well be astonished at the reputation Ward had achieved thirty years previously, "but, nevertheless, it was genuine and well deserved. Aside from being a pioneer in his line of literature, there was about him a personal charm that one of his successors need never pretend to."[38]

Also typical of unfavorable comparisons was a review by *The Spectator* in 1873 which concluded that on the whole Twain could not be regarded as "so remarkable and rare a humorist as Artemus Ward." In 1876 the *New Quarterly Magazine* of London made about the same sort of comment: he was a bit too smoothly professional; but the humor of Ward had always seemed completely spontaneous.[39]

When he visited England—having been preceded there by Ward—he had to overcome a strong personal bias on the part of many London newspapermen to whom Ward had already endeared himself, both on and off the stage, only a few years previously. One of the fraternity, after attending a Twain lecture, wrote that "His coming had been heralded by much flourishing of trumpets; but, speaking for myself, I was greatly disappointed. Perhaps it was that I was prejudiced. Anyway, I compared him with Artemus Ward, greatly to the disadvantage of Twain, who seemed to me to copy Ward's methods without success."[40]

Another comment made in the *New Quarterly Magazine* touched more closely the real difference between the two men. Mark Twain, the magazine said, was more diffuse in his composition; he would take a whole page to bring a jest home. Artemus Ward would do it in a line, a phrase or a misspelling of one word. It was soon to be proven that Twain was not just more

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[36] Accounts of Mark Twain's lecture: Seitz, pp. 148–150; Paul Fatout, *Mark Twain on the Lecture Circuit* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1960), pp. 152–159; and Fred W. Lorch, "Mark Twain's 'Artemus Ward' Lecture on the Tour of 1871–1872," in *The New England Quarterly*, XXV, Sept. 1952, pp. 327–344. Also, *The Hartford Daily Times*, Nov. 9, 1871, p. 2, and the *Portland (Maine) Daily Press*, Nov. 17, 1871.

[37] Paine *MT Letters*, vol. 1, p. 193 (Twain to James Redpath, Oct. 28, 1871).

[38] Goodman, *op. cit.*

[39] London: *The Spectator*, Oct. 18, 1873, pp. 1302, 1303; *New Quarterly*, XI, 1876, p. 208.

[40] Muddock, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

diffuse; he was enormously larger. In his performances as an author and a lecturer he would soon surpass the impression left with the Londoners in the early 1870s.

Albert Bigelow Paine relates a significant episode that took place in London at a gathering for Mark Twain in 1872. In 1870 John Camden Hotten brought a pirated edition of *The Innocents Abroad* with an introduction, highly complimentary to Twain, by E. P. Hingston, Ward's former manager. Twain, by now quite famous, was angry with Hingston, but Paine does not indicate why except to say that "Twain's views had changed," a remarkably unclear explanation. Paine does not make it appear that Hingston was blamed for being associated with the piracy, which, in the absence of any Anglo-American copyright agreement, was a common enough practice anyway, and he really does not seem to understand the reasons for Twain's ill will. There is a hint, however, in Hingston's introduction to the book, which concludes:

> I believe that Mark Twain has never visited England. Some time since he wrote to me asking my opinion relative to his giving an entertainment in London. He has appeared in New York and elsewhere as a lecturer, and from his originality would, I have no doubt, be able to repeat his lectures with success here were he to visit this country. But I never met him in the character of a public entertainer, and can only speak from experience of his remarkable talent as a humorous writer, and of his cordial frankness and jovial good-fellowship as a friend and companion.

There is reason to believe that Hingston was being very tactful in this statement—and that concerning the proposed lecturing tour in England, Twain had asked him for something more than his opinion. In *The New York Clipper* of November 17, 1866, there had been an item reporting on Ward's début in England which said "Hingston is engineering for him." In the same issue there was another story about Twain beginning to lecture "in the mountain towns of California." And there is in possession of Hingston's great-grandson in England a letter from Twain to the English manager. In it he says his book is about ready for publication, refers to what appears to have been a previous proposition that Hingston "engineer" for *him* and asks Hingston how he feels about it now. From the circumstances and the use of this word "engineer," an unusual one to employ with respect to theatrical management, it seems very likely that Twain, who arrived in New York from the West Coast in January, 1867, saw the *Clipper* items and began a correspondence with Hingston referring to or enclosing them along with a proposition that Hingston act as his manager, and that since nothing came of it, placed the Englishman on his list of unforgiveables.

At any rate, at the meeting of the two men in London Hingston came toward Twain, his hand outstretched and his face aglow, ready to greet his

old pal from Virginia City. Twain cut him dead, and refused even to look at him. As an example of Twain's occasional behavior, this was not too exceptional; but what *was* remarkable was Paine's observation that "in after-years his conscience hurt him terribly for this. He remembered it only with remorse and shame. Once, in his old age, he spoke of it with deep sorrow."[41] This is rather mysterious. Distress of this sort did not afflict Twain very often. One can only wonder if, in a confused and troubled memory of that evening in London, he did not see stepping forward in an accustomed place beside his old manager someone who had not actually been there, Artemus Ward, the young humorist whom he could think of in his old age as his true friend, but whose incorporeal presence had been at one time his most annoying competitor.

On that same visit to London in 1872 Twain was entertained by the Savage Club, a group that had welcomed Ward, made him a member and became greatly attached to him in 1866. It is quite possible that this was the gathering at which Mark Twain met Hingston. If so, the puzzling aspect of the incident deepens. When Twain arose to speak to the Savages, he knew perfectly well of their emotional involvement with Ward, and if he were going to say anything about Artemus, it would have to be something pleasant. On the other hand, he could have said nothing. What he did express was thanks for the hospitality and help the Club had extended to his "old friend," and he proposed a toast to Artemus Ward.[42]

It is the more fond and friendly attitude expressed in the toast that Mark Twain seems to have developed toward the memory of Artemus Ward, after the remembrance of Ward had faded in the public mind, and once Twain himself had become "the most conspicuous person on the planet."

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[41] Paine MT Biography, vol. 1, pp. 408, 458, 464; E. P. Hingston, preface to Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad* (London: John Camden Hotten, 1870); *The New York Clipper*, Nov. 17, 1866, p. 255; Mark Twain to E. P. Hingston, undated letter in possession of Moran Caplat, M.B.E., Glyndebourne, Sussex, England.

[42] Mark Twain, *Mark Twain's Speeches* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1923), p. 421.

A Case of Mistaken Identity: William M. Stewart and the Rejection of Nevada's First Constitution

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WILLIAM STEWART, claimed his contemporary admirers, "towers among men like the Colossus of Rhodes." To this, his detractors retorted, "and has as much brass in his composition."[1] The exchange contains an essential truth about the man, and about his place in Nevada's early history. Talented, energetic, and equally arrogant and unscrupulous, Stewart dominated as no other man the legal and political affairs of Nevada's territorial period. As counsel for the largest Comstock Lode mining corporations, he played a central role in the "interminable litigation" over conflicting mining claims in the years between 1860 and 1865. Ambitious and well heeled, he left an indelible mark on the turbulent political events that preceded Nevada statehood. Stewart's legal acumen and political audacity have received prominent mention in histories of the territorial period.[2] And yet, historians have misinterpreted for almost a century his role in the events surrounding

[1] Quoted in Grant Smith, *History of the Comstock Lode* (Reno: Bureau of Mines, University of Nevada, 1943), 67.

[2] No definitive study of William Stewart's life yet exists. Stewart's autobiography, *Reminiscences of Senator William M. Stewart of Nevada*, ed. George Rothwell Brown (New York: Neale Publishing Co., 1908), is unreliable, as is the biography by Effie Mona Mack, "Life and Letters of William Morris Stewart, 1827–1909" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1930). However, his career as counsel (and in some instances trustee as well) for the major Comstock mining corporations, including among others the Gould and Curry Ophir, Chollar, Belcher, Yellow Jacket, and Sierra Nevada companies, has been outlined in Eliot Lord, *Comstock Mining and Miners* (1883; Berkeley: Howell-North Books, 1959), 144–164 and *passim*; Grant Smith, *History of the Comstock Lode*, 69; and *Virginia Evening Bulletin*, January 25, 1864. Glimpses of Stewart's early political activities, which were inseparable from his legal concerns, are found in Lord, *Comstock Mining and Miners*, 131–180. Additional information is available in the recently published reports of the Nevada territorial legislature and first constitutional convention. See Andrew Marsh, *Letters From the Nevada Territory, 1861–1862*, ed. William C. Miller, Russell W. MacDonald, and Ann Rollins (Legislative Counsel Bureau, State of Nevada, 1972); and William C. Miller and Eleanor Bushnell, eds., *Reports of the 1863 Constitutional Convention of the Territory of Nevada, as Written for the TERRITORIAL ENTERPRISE by Andrew Marsh and Samuel Clemens, and for the VIRGINIA DAILY UNION by Amos Bowman* (Legislative Counsel Bureau, State of Nevada, 1972).

the rejection of Nevada's first constitution in January, 1864. As a consequence, both Stewart's early career and the divisive political campaigns of 1863 and 1864 remain profoundly misunderstood.

Every published account of the first statehood campaign has identified Stewart as the constitution's most important and effective opponent.[3] The claim is demonstrably false. The available evidence, gleaned from surviving Nevada newspapers and the extensive Nevada correspondence printed in the California press, clearly shows that Stewart was the constitution's "warmest advocate."[4] Indeed, it shows that opposition to statehood was

[3] The following books and articles all place Stewart in the forefront of the campaign against the 1863 constitution: Myron Angel, comp., *Thompson and West's History of Nevada* (1881; Berkeley: Howell-North Books, 1959), 84–85; Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of Nevada, Colorado, and Wyoming* (San Francisco: History Publishing Company, 1890), 178 (regarding the Angel and Bancroft versions, see footnote 5, below); Mack, "Life and Letters of William Morris Stewart," 36–37, 294, 301; idem, "William Morris Stewart, Empire Builder, 1827–1909," American Historical Association, Pacific Coast Branch, *Proceedings* (1930), 188; P. O. Ray, "Stewart, William Morris," *Dictionary of American Biography*, ed. Dumas Malone (New York: Charles Scribners and Sons, 1935), Volume IX, Part 2, p. 14; Effie Mona Mack, *History of Nevada; a history of the State from the earliest times through the Civil War* (Glendale, California: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1936), 250–252; Effie Mona Mack and Byrd Wall Sawyer, *Our State, Nevada* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1940), 87–88; Work Projects Administration, *Nevada: A Guide to the Silver State* (Portland, Oregon: Binfords and Mort, 1940), 44; F. Lauriston Bullard, "Abraham Lincoln and the Statehood of Nevada," American Bar Association *Journal*, XXVI (March and April, 1940), 212; Effie Mona Mack, "Territorial Governor of Nevada," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, IV (July and December, 1961), 38; idem, "Orion Clemens, 1825–1877: A Biography," ibid., 96; idem, "William Morris Stewart, 1827–1909," ibid., VII (1964), 33; Merlin Stonehouse, *John Wesley North and the Reform Frontier* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1965), 157, 164; Gilman Ostrander, *Nevada: The Great Rotten Borough* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1966), 38–40; James Hulse, *The Nevada Adventure: A History* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1969), 103; Lynn Williamson, "The Bullion Tax Controversy," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, XV (Winter 1972), 6; Russell Elliott, *History of Nevada* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1973), 80–83; Secretary of State, Nevada, *Political History of Nevada, 1973* (Carson City, State Printing Office, 1974), 79; James Thomas, "Nevada Territory," *Journal of the West*, XVI (April 1977), 39; Eleanore Bushnell, *The Nevada Constitution: Origin and Growth* (fourth edition, Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1977), 48.

[4] The quotation is from the *Virginia Daily Union*, January 15, 1864. Evidence concerning the constitutional campaign is limited to California and Nevada press reports. The papers of Stewart and other early Nevada politicians consulted by the author at the Bancroft, Huntington, Beinecke, California Historical Society, and Nevada Historical Society libraries contain no relevant information. Likewise, no mention of the campaign is found in the *Reminiscences of Senator William Stewart of Nevada*, or in the subscription biography of Stewart in Oscar Shuck, *Representative and Leading Men of the Pacific* (San Francisco: Bacon and Co., 1870), 635–644. Readers who are aware of additional documentary materials on the first statehood contest are urged to contact the author.

In the contemporary Nevadan and Californian newspapers, there is an abundance of information on the campaign. In these sources, there are neither statements nor intimations suggesting that Stewart opposed the constitution or statehood. On the contrary, there are many references to his continued support. The *Virginia Daily Union*, January 1, 1864, refers to his "great speech in favor of the new Constitution." The *Reese River Reveille*, January 16, 1864, names him as a "leading advocate." Other references to his support are found in the *Virginia Daily Union*, January 6, 8, 9, 10, 13, 17, 19, 21, 1864; the *Gold Hill Evening News*, January 14, 1864; the *Virginia Evening Bulletin*, January 11, 1864; the *San Francisco Evening Bulletin*, January 6, 23, 1864; the *Humboldt Register*, January 16, 1864. Hereafter, I will use the following ab-

based upon a widespread conviction that Stewart intended to control the new state government as a means to further his own interests and those of the mining corporation officials he represented. Contrary to what has become the conventional wisdom, Nevadans rejected statehood because they feared and distrusted William M. Stewart.

It is time to correct the record.

I

The most sustained attempt to place Stewart in the forefront of opposition to the first constitution is found in the writings of Nevada's pioneering historian, Effie Mona Mack.[5] In publications that spanned the years from 1930 to 1964, Dr. Mack repeated a misinterpretation of Stewart's role that other historians have failed to investigate and correct. She argued, in short, that rejection of statehood stemmed from two features in the constitution: a clause providing for the taxation of the territory's mines on the same basis as other property, and a provision that called for the election of state officials concurrently with the vote on the constitution.[6]

Stewart, according to this interpretation, argued in the 1863 constitutional convention for a constitutional provision that would exempt non-

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breviations to refer to the *Virginia Daily Union* (*VDU*), *Sacramento Daily Union* (*SDU*), *San Francisco Evening Bulletin* (*SFEB*), *Gold Hill Evening News* (*GHEN*), *Virginia Evening Bulletin* (*VEB*), and *Humboldt Register* (*HR*).

[5] Dr. Mack's account is found in her writings cited in footnote 3, above. It should be noted that much of the confusion surrounding Stewart's role in this campaign has stemmed from the scattered nature of the sources and an unfortunate tendency among historians to rely upon, as primary rather than secondary sources, the partial and ambiguous accounts of the first constitutional contest found in Angel, *History of Nevada*, and Bancroft, *History of Nevada, Colorado, and Wyoming*. The former is cursory and misleading; the latter is demonstrably false. Angel pointed to the division in the nominating convention as the catalyst that led to the constitution's defeat. There, he explained, a formidable split occurred between the allies of Stewart and those of the Comstock journalist, Tom Fitch. While—correctly—bringing attention to this division, Angel did not state which side went on to oppose the constitution. In an ambiguous passage that has misled historians for almost a century, he remarked that "the Stewart war-cry of injustice, contained in the clause that authorized the taxing of the "poor miner's shafts and drifts and bed rock tunnels," enabled the opposition to carry with it the popular element, that resulted in an overwhelming rejection of that instrument." (Angel, comp., *History of Nevada*, 85.) In this statement, Angel may have meant that Stewart led the opposition to statehood. Or, and closer to the truth, he may have meant that the constitution's opponents adopted the "war-cry of injustice" that Stewart abandoned after the constitutional convention. Those historians who have read this passage in the former light have done so mistakenly.

On the other hand, there is no ambiguity in H. H. Bancroft's explanation. In what is, unfortunately, the weakest and most unreliable volume in Bancroft's history of the West, he boldly (and without evidence) stated that Stewart, aided by Baldwin, "used all his powerful influence to enlist the mining population against the constitution." (Bancroft, *History of Nevada, Colorado, and Wyoming*, 178.) Moreover, Bancroft added an element that subsequent historians have ignored, claiming that Stewart opposed statehood because he was a secessionist and desired to align Nevada with the South. The charge is patently false. Unfortunately, subsequent historians have chosen to ignore this part of Bancroft's account rather than conclude that it calls the entire interpretation into doubt.

[6] The most detailed example is in Mack, *History of Nevada*, 250–252.

productive mining claims from taxation. Against the bulk of opinion within the convention, he pointed out that a tax which treated all mining claims the same, be they rich producing mines or the prospector's speculative venture, would ". . . impose a burden upon the miners which would be heavier than they could bear."[7] Thus, when the convention passed a tax measure he opposed, Stewart became convinced that "it would mean the death of the mining industry," and committed all his energies to defeating the constitution.[8]

After leaving the convention, Dr. Mack continues, Stewart closed his law office and, joined by his partner Alexander Baldwin,

> went out into the important mining communities to talk against the adoption of the constitution. He recognized that the voting power of the territory lay with the miners; it would be to they [sic] to whom he would have to appeal for its defeat. Consequently, he exploited the provision in the constitution which taxed the "poor miner's" shafts, drifts, and bed rock tunnels.[9]

The effects of Stewart's campaign among the miners—a campaign that never occurred, as we shall see—was purportedly decisive. As the state's official political history maintains, ". . . the importance of the mining question and the influence of Stewart were the main reasons why the voters turned down the proposed Constitution by better than a 4 to 1 majority."[10]

Complementing Stewart's campaign, we are told, was a serious split in the territory's Union Party, which led a group of disappointed office seekers to join in the opposition to statehood. Because the constitution provided for the selection of state officials at the same time as the vote on the constitution, and because there were more potential governors, judges, and legislators than posts to be filled, those who failed to gain a coveted nomination allegedly turned their backs upon statehood.[11] It is unclear whether or not Dr. Mack and those who have followed her account of this campaign count Stewart among the disappointed office seekers, for while she claimed that he was the leader of the "dissenting wing of the Union Party," she also held that he had become "violently hostile to the adoption of the newly made constitution" before the Union Party "convention had made its nominations."[12] No historian has attempted to clarify Stewart's role in the nominating convention or to specify the supposed relationship between the opposition stemming

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[7] Ibid., 251. This was, indeed, the case. See Miller and Bushnell, eds., *Reports of the 1863 Constitutional Convention*, 241–252.

[8] Mack, *History of Nevada*, 252.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Secretary of State, Nevada, *Political History of Nevada, 1973*, 79.

[11] Mack, *History of Nevada*, 252.

[12] The statement regarding Stewart's leadership of the party's "dissenting wing" is found in Mack, "Territorial Governor of Nevada," 38; the remark concerning his early hostility to the constitution is in Mack, *History of Nevada*, 252.

from Stewart's attack upon the mining tax clause and the opposition stemming from the disappointment of potential politicians. Rather, historians have been content to interpret the role of disappointed office seekers as complementary to Stewart's personal campaign against the constitution's mining tax clause.[13]

II

As in most historical accounts that subsequent research has shown to be incorrect, the accepted explanation of Nevada's first statehood campaign includes an element of truth that has allowed it to go unchallenged for decades. In the first place, Stewart did for a time oppose the clause that provided for the taxation of the mines on the same basis as other, non-mining property. In the second place, this provision did play a central role in the events that led to the constitution's defeat. In the third place, there was a serious split in the Union Party nominating convention that led to great opposition to statehood. However, the actual substance of these issues, and Stewart's role with regard to them, were quite different from what is supposed to have been the case.

Even before the constitutional convention's close, Stewart had reconciled himself to the tax clause that the convention had passed over his objections. On the day before adjournment, he ". . . stated that he should support the constitution before the people, notwithstanding the taxation of the mines, believing, as he did, that the legislature had the power to decide that a mere hole in the ground was not property."[14] In subsequent speeches, Stewart took a position that was, as a correspondent to the *San Francisco Evening Bulletin* observed, "eminently practical":

> He had been strenuously opposed to the mining tax clause, in all its stages, and in every shape it had assumed, but come to look at it now he was satisfied there was nothing in it; that it rather commended than otherwise the constitution to the support of the "poor miner."[15]

Much to Stewart's chagrin, this new argument pleased no one, and was met with criticism and suspicion from all sides. Recognizing his new tack for what it was—political legerdemain—those who supported taxation of the mines saw in it an attempt to nullify an essential constitutional provision. Those who opposed the clause saw no such legislative prerogatives inherent

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[13] See the Angel, Bancroft, Mack, Stonehouse, Ostrander, Hulse, Elliott, and Bushnell works cited in footnote 1, above, for the variations on this theme.

[14] Miller and Bushnell, eds., *Reports of the 1863 Constitutional Convention*, 394.

[15] *SFEB*, January 23, 1864. Other discussions of Stewart's changing position on the mining tax question are found in the *VDU*, January 6, 9, 15, 1864; and *HR*, January 16, 1864.

in it, and concluded that their erstwhile spokesman was willing to accept the mining tax in exchange for a state government he could control.

Likewise, while it is true that the Union Party nominating convention contributed mightily to the constitution's defeat, it was not simply a case of disappointed office seekers turning themselves against statehood in a fit of pique. Rather, Stewart's success in controlling the meeting and obtaining a slate of candidates Nevadans felt were his "tools," created a groundswell of opposition that quickly spread throughout the territory.[16]

In both the Nevada and California presses, the first contest over Nevadan statehood received extensive coverage.[17] From these sources, only one conclusion can be reached: Nevadans rejected statehood because they believed that William Stewart would capture the state government and use it to serve the purpose of San Francisco financiers in control of Nevada's largest mining corporations. Stewart, as attorney Lloyd Frizell put it, was "connected with certain immense mining monopolies in Storey County, and . . . the people were jealous and were afraid that they would exercise undue influence."[18] In the weeks leading to the vote upon the constitution, Nevadans expressed their fear and jealousy through two issues, both of which were raised by Stewart's support of statehood.

First was his successful packing of the Storey County Union Party convention and, subsequently, the state nominating convention. His aim, as Nevadans came to see it, was to remove the territorial judiciary which had blocked his efforts to extend the mining claims of his San Francisco clients.

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[16] Those candidates for state office most frequently named as Stewart allies were: (1) the candidate for governor, Miles N. Mitchell of Storey County, a member of the California legislature in 1857, the Nevada territorial legislature in 1861 (when he was Speaker of the House) and 1862, and the first constitutional convention. Mitchell listed his occupation as miner. (2) John B. Winters, of Lyon County, the candidate for Congress. Winters served in the territorial legislature in 1862. (3) The three nominees for the state supreme court, Richard S. Mesick of Esmeralda County, M. D. Larrowe of Lander, and J. B. Harmon of Storey County. All were lawyers. Larrowe was District Attorney of Ormsby County from 1861 to 1863, and a member of the first constitutional convention. See the *GHEN*, January 5, 1864; *VEB*, January 4, 8, 12, 16, 1864. For the opposition's view of these men, see the *VDU*, January 3, 6, 9, 1864; *VEB*, January 11, 1864.

[17] Relatively complete runs for the period are available for the *Virginia Daily Union*, the leading opposition paper, and the *Gold Hill Evening News* and *Virginia Evening Bulletin*, both of which supported statehood. Scattered issues of the *Reese River Reveille* and *Humboldt Register*, which opposed the constitution, have also survived. The *Daily Union* was owned by John Church, S. A. Glessner, and J. L. Laird, the *Evening News* by Phillip Lynch and J. H. Mandall, the *Virginia Evening Bulletin* by H. P. Taylor, the *Reese River Reveille* by W. C. Phillips, and the *Humboldt Register* by W. J. Forbes and L. Perkins. In addition, the campaign received coverage in the *Sacramento Daily Union* and *San Francisco Evening Bulletin*, in the form of reprints from the Nevada press as well as direct correspondence.

[18] Frizell made the statement while arguing the Storey County bolters' case before the Union Party nominating convention in Carson City. *VDU*, January 1, 1864. A reprint of the *Territorial Enterprise* report of this meeting is found in the *SDU*, January 15, 1864. Further citations on this point are found in footnotes 29 and 30, below.

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The second was a widespread conviction that Stewart's reinterpretation of the constitution's tax clause was a transparent cover for his baser designs upon the body politic.

III

As the 1863 constitutional convention came to a close, few Nevadans foresaw the divisive campaign that would dominate the territory during the following weeks. The convention ended with what its reporter called an "Era of Good Feelings."[19] Remarked the convention's president, future

[19] Miller and Bushnell, eds., *Reports of the 1863 Constitutional Convention*, 412–413. Stewart clearly left the convention without animosity. On the convention's final day, the report states: "Short speeches on the subject of impending separation, and expressing kindly feelings,

Stewart adversary John North: "I wish to refer once more to the beautiful association we have had, the happy time which we have spent together while performing this task of framing a Constitution for our new state."[20] All the delegates proclaimed their support for the constitution and vowed to work for its ratification. Within three weeks, however, the constitution faced certain defeat. The origins of this remarkable turn of events are to be found in the Storey County Union Party convention that met on December 28, 1863.

There, his opponents charged, Stewart packed the meeting with his supporters, thus placing securely in his pocket the largest bloc of votes that would select the nominees for state office.[21] Over the protest of eight delegates, Stewart pushed through two resolutions that his adversaries found obnoxious. The first called upon the new state's legislature to ". . . leave free from taxation undeveloped mining claims of a mere speculative value."[22] Essentially, this resolution asked the legislature to repudiate the constitution and establish by statute the tax provision that Stewart had unsuccessfully argued for in the constitutional convention.

The second fateful resolution bound Storey County's delegation to the state nominating convention to ". . . oppose by all honorable means the nomination of said J. W. North to office by said Convention."[23] Few Nevadans found anything "honorable" whatsoever in such a resolution. North, a justice of the territorial supreme court, had become a popular figure in Nevada because of his decisions against Stewart's "one ledge" theory of the Comstock Lode. Briefly, Stewart's position held that the Comstock Lode consisted of a continuous ledge of ore that ran the length of Mt. Davidson on a north-south line. Opposed to his interpretation was the "many ledge" theory, which held that the Lode was made up of a series of parallel quartz ledges interrupted by silver-free clay and rock. As Nevadans understood the controversy, judicial sanction for the one ledge theory would only serve the interests of the largest mining companies, which controlled the original mining locations and argued that the parallel mines located to their east and west were trespassing on drifts and spurs of their claims. Their opponents concluded that the largest mining companies, with large funds and teams of lawyers at their command, would use the one ledge theory to consolidate their control over the entire Comstock Lode and thus drive out the small mine owners and prospectors. At stake was the ultimate control of Virginia

were made by Messrs. Brosnan, Johnson, *Stewart*, Sterns, Kennedy, Larrowe, Epler, Mitchell, Haines, Nightingill, Small, Hickock, and Noteware" (emphasis added).

[20] Ibid., 414.

[21] *VDU*, January 1, 6, 1864; *SFEB*, January 9, 1864; *SDU*, December 31, 1863, and January 15, 1864; *VEB*, January 11, 1864.

[22] *SDU*, December 31, 1863.

[23] Ibid.

City's mines, and widespread fear of Stewart's motives convinced all but his clients that the one ledge theory was not only a "detriment to any mining district," but "odious" and an "absurdity."[24] North, whose "unquestionably good straightforward common sense" led him to uphold the many ledge theory against Stewart, became a champion of the people.[25]

The action that most offended Stewart's opponents, however, was the manner in which he ruthlessly controlled the selection of Storey County's delegation to the state nominating convention, as well as the local candidates for assemblymen, state senator, and county and district judge. Stewart had himself appointed chairman of the committee on nominations, and pushed through a rule providing for a bloc vote on the slate reported by his committee. His opponents resisted these strongarm tactics, but when their appeal fell upon deaf ears, they left the meeting, declared the "proceedings to be an outrage upon the people, and advised popular action for an independent ticket."[26] Three days later at Carson City, two contesting sets of Storey County delegates presented themselves to the state nominating convention, the regulars led by Stewart and the independents led by those who had bolted the county convention. When the latter failed to receive the endorsement of this convention, they quickly announced their opposition to statehood.[27]

Those loyal to Stewart and statehood attempted to blunt the bolters' charges, but without success. The *Gold Hill Evening News,* an outspoken supporter of the constitution to the day of its defeat, continuously charged that statehood's opponents were but "sore headed and disappointed office seekers," and that the attacks upon Stewart were a "Bugbear." "Mr. Stewart," the *Evening News* observed at the height of the campaign,

is a fair lawyer, and by following out the now mostly obsolete plan of minding his own business, has accumulated much lucre, and a high position at the bar.

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[24] *SDU,* January 26, 1864; *VDU,* January 19, 1864; *SDU,* December 31, 1863. In addition, see *VDU,* January 10, 1864; *Carson Independent,* January 17, 1864 (reprinted in *VDU,* January 19, 1864); *SDU,* December 31, 1863. A general discussion of the North-Stewart feud over the one ledge theory is found in Stonehouse, *John Wesley North,* 156–177.

[25] *SDU,* December 31, 1863; *VEB,* January 11, 1864.

[26] *SDU,* December 31, 1864. The Storey County delegation to the state nominating convention was composed of William M. Stewart, A. W. Baldwin, F. A. Tritle, John Allman, J. M. Walker, J. W. Wright, E. Cushing, E. L. Buckingham, Robert F. Morrow, D. M. Hanson, Thomas Peasley, Isaac Brokaw, N.A.H. Ball, A. J. Gould, J.H.C. Lee, and W. H. Russell. *GHEN,* December 31, 1863. The Storey County nominees to the state assembly were A. J. Gould, W. H. Dollman, John Nelson, John Leavitt, Jr., S.D.R. Stewart, T. G. Taylor, L. P. Wardle, Lewis Goodwin, Warren Heaton, J.H.C. Lee, Charles Tippett, and D. W. Balch. The nominees to the state senate consisted of A. W. Baldwin, Charles Wilson, Isaac Requa, and H. H. Flagg. The nominees for county and district judges were, respectively, David M. Hanson and H. O. Beatty. *GHEN,* January 4, 1864.

[27] *VDU,* January 3, 1864; *SDU,* January 15, 1864.

Having some pecuniary interest in the conduct of the political affairs of the country, he has had the wisdom to attend somewhat to the defense and protection of those interests. His views of policy have chanced to be at variance with those entertained by certain other parties, and in exercizing his undoubted right of expressing his preference as to who should be his rulers, he seems to have lost sight of the fact that Messrs. Church, Hannah, Fitch, Brosnan & Co. were entitled to all the offices in the State, and that without those gentlemen at the head of affairs there could be no State. Behold, then, Bill Stewart transmogrified into a great ogre, and bugbear to scare small schoolboys and denizens of hay yards withal. The people of this Territory are informed that in their present state of imbecility and ignorance they are incapable of coping with the machinations of this political Moloch.[28]

Despite daily repetition on the pages of the *Evening News,* this view of the situation made little headway against a swelling tide of anti-statehood sentiment. The adversaries of Stewart and the constitution, defining themselves as the territory's "little interests," enunciated a variety of charges that had a telling effect.[29] Central to their attack was the claim that Stewart had controlled the Storey County and State Union Party conventions in order to fill the new state government with political hacks beholden to him and his clients, the finance capitalists of San Francisco who directed the affairs of the major Comstock mines. In announcing its opposition to statehood, the leading opposition paper declared:

The UNION was in favor of a State Government when it supposed that the people would be protected; it opposes a State Government now that it discovers that under a State Government the people would be hopelessly subject to a very mean kind of "one man power." We prefer that the people should elect their own officers rather than that those officers should be appointed at Washington. But as it stands,

[28] *GHEN,* January 11, 14, 1864. In addition, see *Ibid.,* January 4, 7, 13, 15, 22, March 17, 1864; *VEB,* January 4, 9, 12, 1864. "Church, Hannah, Fitch, Brosnan & Co." refers to John Church, Thomas Fitch, and Cornelius Brosnan, all of Virginia City, and Thomas Hannah, of Gold Hill. The four men were leaders of the anti-Stewart forces in the Storey County and state nominating conventions. They were also key opponents of statehood.

[29] *VDU,* January 3, 1864. For another commentary along these lines, see *Ibid.,* January 23, 1864; and *VEB,* January 11, 1864. The *Daily Union*'s opposition to statehood—it composed the opposition's mouthpiece in Storey County—stemmed from three factors. First, the close association between Thomas Fitch and the paper. The *Gold Hill Evening News* claimed that Fitch, a leader of the bolters at Carson City and friend of John North, was the editor of the *Daily Union.* Though both Fitch and the paper's owners denied the allegation, it is clear that Fitch contributed mightily to the paper's campaign against the adopter of the constitution. Second, John Church, one of the paper's owners, had unsuccessfully sought the Union Party nomination for state printer, only to be blocked by Stewart's supporters at both the Storey County and State Union Party conventions. Third, the *Daily Union* consistently aligned itself with the sector of Comstock Lode society it described as the "little interests outside the mines." (*VDU,* January 3, 1864.) As such, in opposing statehood it represented the voice of those merchants, businessmen, professionals, and independent craftsmen who did not equate their interests with those of the dominant mining corporations, or with the Stewart wing of the Union Party.

they are appointed by one man, and as the people have no choice anyhow, we prefer Uncle Abe to Bill Stewart as an appointing power.[30]

Stewart's first priority, his opponents claimed, was to remove North and thus procure a supreme court that would rule in favor of the one ledge theory. Rallying to North's defense, opposition papers throughout the territory charged that "Stewart and Co. want a State Government because they have come to the conclusion that our present Judiciary care more for the people and for justice than they do for the influence of improper combinations."[31] "It is a notorious fact," the *Daily Union* declared,

> that Mr. Stewart had the reputation of dictating the decisions of our District Court, to a very great extent, previous to the time at which Judge John North took his seat. . . . It is said, and we believe with much truth, that Mr. Stewart's only object in working for a State Government is to secure the removal of Judge North from the bench. Why does he want Judge North removed? Because he cannot be used as a tool.[32]

Stewart's actions in the two conventions, his control over the Union Party's nominees, and the conviction that he supported statehood as a means to removing the popular North from the supreme bench, were probably sufficient to defeat the constitution. Opponents of statehood, however, found additional grounds for opposition: Stewart's (and his candidates') dissimulation with regard to the constitution's provision for taxing the mines.

On the one hand, owners of non-mining property throughout the territory believed that Stewart intended to have "his" legislature annul a constitutional provision they considered essential to their interests. Stewart's scheme, charged the *Daily Union*, would ". . . destroy our only means of raising a sufficient revenue," and thereby "ruin the public credit and inflict a ruinous tax on the little interests outside the mines."[33] In rural Washoe, Douglas, and Ormsby Counties, merchants, ranchers, and farmers agreed that Stewart's ambiguous reading of the constitution meant the "surrender [of] ourselves and our rights to the possession of capitalists of San Francisco and to William M. Stewart, who is their agent."[34] The *Carson Independent*

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[30] *VDU*, January 3, 1864. In addition, see ibid., January 1, 9, 17, 1864. In Carson City, rumor had it that Stewart and the Ophir Company had imported thousands of dollars from San Francisco to insure the Constitution's passage. See *VDU*, January 13, 17, 19, 1864; *Carson Independent*, January 17, 1864 (reprinted in *VDU*, January 19, 1864).

[31] *VDU*, January 10, 1864.

[32] *VDU*, January 6, 1864. See, also, ibid., January 15, 17, 19, 1864; *Carson Independent*, January 14, 17, 1864 (reprinted in *VDU*, January 15, 19, 1864); *SDU*, January 6, 1864; *VEB*, January 11, 1864.

[33] *VDU*, January 3, 23, 1864.

[34] *VDU*, January 9, 1864.

charged that the nominee for governor, Stewart minion Miles N. Mitchell, had taken one position on the mining tax in the cow counties and another in the mining region, and declared that ". . . if a clause is to be construed to suit the interests of a certain class, and millions of dollars worth of property are released from taxation, then it [the constitution] is not worth the paper it is written upon."[35]

On the other hand, prospectors, mine speculators, millers, and workers attacked Stewart's tax position from another angle: they opposed taxing the mines and believed that Stewart's argument that the legislature could redefine the constitution's tax provision was but a specious cover for his true intentions—the removal of Judge North. Stewart, they declared, did not really care about the mining tax. He was willing to let it pass if that was the price of obtaining a court that would rule in his favor with regard to the one ledge theory. These smaller mining interests argued that no court could possibly interpret the constitution in Stewart's light, and that the resulting tax would impose an unendurable burden on workingmen and small mine owners.[36]

The attack upon Stewart and statehood filled the opposition papers and the Nevada correspondence in the California press to the day of the election, when statehood was rejected by a four to one margin. In reflecting upon the constitution's overwhelming defeat, a Nevadan from Aurora concluded that "the Constitution would have been adopted had it not been for riding Stewart and his Clique into power."[37] Another, from Washoe City, concurred:

> The land rejoices and the people are glad, for the silver bowl of our prosperity came near being "crushed," but the sovereign arose from their [sic] Rip Van Winkel torpor, and rushed majestically to the polls and pop went the constitutional weasel! Bill Stewart & Co. are busted out and some of the balance of us are busted in. Whoop![38]

Stewart and the "immense mining monopolies of Storey County" had been decisively defeated, or so it appeared in January of 1864.[39]

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[35] *Carson Independent,* January 14, 1864 (reprinted in *VDU,* January 15, 1864). In addition, see *Carson Independent,* January 8, 1864 (reprinted in *VDU,* January 9, 1864); *VDU,* January 13, 1864.

[36] *VDU,* January 9, 19, 1864; *SFEB,* February 4, 9, 1864. In the less developed Humboldt region, opposition to statehood began before the split in the Union Party, and was based almost solely on the mining tax question. Nevertheless, contributors to the columns of the *Humboldt Register* recognized that "with the big mining companies in litigation, . . . the question is, will certain legal questions be sustained, or will they be reversed, by the proposed new judges?" *HR,* January 16, 1864. In addition, see ibid., December 19, 26, 1863, January 2, 9, 16, 1864.

[37] *SDU,* January 26, 1864.

[38] Ibid.

[39] *VDU,* January 1, 1864. In addition, see footnote 18, above.

IV

Nevadans repudiated statehood for reasons quite different from those historians have put forth for almost a century. Far from following William Stewart in a movement to protect the "poor miner" from an onerous tax, or in venting their anger at being passed over in the selection of nominees for high office, Nevadans rose up against what they considered to be a bald attempt on Stewart's part to capture the state government for the mining corporations he represented.

Once this campaign is properly understood, it becomes clear that much of Nevada's early social and political history—and William Stewart's role in that history—needs to be recast. In rejecting statehood in the winter of 1864, Nevadans made Stewart a symbol of a feared future, a future dominated by outside interests and marked by concentrated economic and political power. Yet within nine months, the common cause against these threats evaporated when Nevadans faced another, more immediate and ominous, challenge. The depression that struck the Comstock Lode in the spring of 1864, devastating in its effect upon all ranks of Nevadan society, raised the spectre of social and economic collapse and radically altered the context of political action.[40] In the face of widespread stock failures, bankruptcies, and a collapse in capital investment, concern over economic survival supplanted Nevadans' fear of domination by outside interests. Ironically, the crisis presented William Stewart with a propitious opportunity to resurrect his political fortunes. In September, 1864, statehood again came before the voters. Stewart, along with his former adversaries, bent every energy to convince the electorate that statehood would provide an antidote to economic crisis.[41] And successfully so. The new constitution was endorsed by an overwhelming margin, and three months later the state legislature sent Stewart to Washington D.C. as Nevada's first Senator.[42]

The events of 1864, which saw the territory first reject and then embrace statehood and its "warmest advocate," demand close re-examination. Only then will we correctly comprehend a pivotal period in the career of William Stewart, and in the political and economic development of Nevada.

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[40] The depression is discussed in Lord, *Comstock Mining and Miners*, 181–182; Smith, *History of the Comstock Lode*, 48–49; and Rodman Paul, *Mining Frontiers of the Far West, 1848–1880* (1963; Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974), 74–75. For a contemporary comment, see *SDU*, July 16, 1864.

[41] *SDU*, October 7, 1864; *Territorial Enterprise*, reprinted in *SDU*, August 19, 1864.

[42] *SDU*, December 16, 1864.

A Nineteenth-Century Western Circus: Virginia City, July 4, 1870

SHERMAN L. RICARDS and GEORGE M. BLACKBURN

NO CELEBRATION TODAY can compare with the glorious Fourth of July in nineteenth century America. But as that day approached in 1870 the editor of the Virginia City *Territorial Enterprise* was worried. "If we are to have a Fourth of July celebration this year," he scolded in early June, "it is about time that some kind of preliminary action was being taken."[1]

The editor need not have been so concerned. Less than a week later a "Grand Inauguration Ball" was announced for the Fourth in Gold Hill. One of the "best Bands of Music in the country" had been engaged; tickets would cost $5, a day's labor in the mines. Further, when the glorious day arrived, the city was "dressed in holiday attire through the whole length and breadth." Many visitors had heeded the editor's boast that they would be furnished "with all the amusement they can possibly desire and [that we will] treat them as well (and often) as were G. Washington, Uncle Sam or old F. July himself. Come one, come all, short and tall, great and small!" Virginia City's town fathers organized a parade featuring almost every civic leader and organization. John Piper offered free use of the Opera House for the Fourth. After the parade, the people went to the Opera House where there was poetry reading, an oration, and a reading of the Declaration of Independence. Lawrence Barrett, one of the leading actors of the day, read the noble Declaration so movingly and the audience's applause was "so great that some laughingly said that he was being encored." Of course, there were also fireworks. The editor had promised that the fireworks would be "judiciously as well as artistically displayed" by a pyrotechnist, a certain Mr. Sweetapple, so that they would not "prove a grand promiscuous fizzle or simultaneous blow-up."[2] Finally, perhaps inevitably, there was also a circus at Virginia City on the Fourth of July.

We are pleased to acknowledge the financial assistance of the Research and Creative Endeavor Committee of Central Michigan University. We are grateful to Gladys Hansen of the San Francisco Public Library for data on John Wilson and to Russell Nye for directing our attention to Bouissoc's work in the circus.

1 Virginia City *Territorial Enterprise*, June 7, 1870.

2 Ibid., June 9; July 2, 6, 1870.

For circuses to appear in a particular town two elements were essential: a sizeable population and money. It is no surprise that the swollen population and wealth of Virginia City in 1870 attracted Wilson's Great Overland Circus as part of the celebration for the glorious Fourth.

The organization and acts of the Overland Circus clearly demonstrated that the circus had evolved a great deal since its origin in England, where in the spring of 1768 on an open field Philip Astley performed an equestrian exhibition. When it was learned that a circle some 140 feet in diameter represented the best distance to balance centrifugal and centripetal forces acting on horse and rider riding the circumference of the circle, the circus acquired its most distinctive feature, the ring. In 1782 one of Astley's horsemen gave the exhibition the name "circus" when he founded the Royal Circus in that year.

In 1792 the circus came to America where early performances occurred in an amphitheatre—really a hybrid of the theatre and the riding ring. Other features of the circus soon developed. In the 1820's entrepreneurs introduced the canvas tent; as a result, with the development of transportation facilities, the traveling circus was able to journey to interior towns and villages. The first traveling shows had a few horses and wagons, acrobats, an educated mule, and a one-ring format.

Other features of circuses also became standard. Menageries featured exotic animals in separate traveling shows; they became an integral feature of some circuses in the 1840's. Circuses also developed pantomimes and equestrian dramas. The pivotal fixture in the one-ring show, however, was the clown; in many ways he became the key to success of the circus. Not only was the clown expected to perform acrobatics but he also acted as a standup comic with verbal jokes.[3]

Indeed, in many ways the circus was "a kind of mirror in which the culture is reflected. . . ."[4] With the construction of railroads, many circuses came to travel by rail. Further, American industry in the Civil War era was small, frequently ephemeral, with changing personnel, and subject to frequent reorganization. As will be shown, these were all characteristic of the Great Overland Circus which visited Virginia City in 1870.

The Overland Circus was scarcely the first to perform in the Far West. Indeed, circuses and circus type performances had begun on the West Coast

[3] The literature on circuses is voluminous. Much of the preceding historical sketch is based on John Townsen, *Clowns* (New York, 1978). See also Earl C. May, *The Circus from Rome to Ringling* (New York, 1968), which is based on his own and his father's close relationship with circus people. May even recalled observing Barnum barking his own autobiography outside the main tent. George F. Chindahl, *A History of the Circus of America* (Caldwell, Idaho, 1959), is more an outsider's view, based on the files of the New York *Clipper, The Billboard,* and other entertainment literature.

[4] Paul Bouissac, *Circus and Culture: A Semiotic Approach* (Bloomington and London, 1976), p. 13.

soon after the United States annexed California. The first true circus performance in the West took place in San Francisco in 1849 featuring Rowe's Olympic Circus. Two entrepreneurs, H. C. Lee and John R. Marshall, gave shows on the coast in both theaters and in tents from 1851 to 1856.[5] During the Civil War a number of persons organized circuses on the West Coast, including John Wilson, the leading figure in the Overland Circus, which performed at Virginia City on July 4, 1870.

A well-known West Coast circus proprietor, Wilson was born in Scotland of American parents in 1826. His early circus life is unknown although he was at one time manager of Dan Rice's Circus. Wilson was the first to take a circus across the plains to San Francisco partly by rail, and, for a time he operated an establishment at New Montgomery and Mission Streets. The arrival of Cole's Circus by rail in 1873 foretold the eventual demise of Wilson's career.[6]

The center of the West Coast entertainment industry was San Francisco, and it is not surprising that its circus entrepreneurs, an enterprising group, recognized the entertainment potential of performing at Virginia City, Nevada. Alfred Doten, a local newspaperman and diarist, vividly described that place as a

> big, bustling noisy city—all in process of creation—streets full of wagons, horses, omnibusses, crowd—sidewalk crowded with rushing crowd—500 houses now being built, mostly wooden but many brick and stone. . . . Lots of gambling saloons open to the public—crowded—Monte, faro, chuckerluck, rouge et noir &c—bands of music and orchestra—just like San Francisco in '49—in the saloons also were dancing girls—hurdy gurdys, organs &c in the streets—lots of money flying around in this city & no mistake.[7]

In 1870 Virginia City boasted the Piper Opera House, which presented both traveling celebrities and a resident company. Its prices, 50 cents and $1.00,

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[5] Chindahl, *Circus in America*, pp. 71–72.

[6] Works Progress Administration, *San Francisco Theater Research*, I, First Series (San Francisco, 1938), 109–110. Dan Rice was one of the most famous nineteenth century clowns.

[7] Walter Van Tilburg Clark, ed., *The Journals of Alfred Doten* (3 vols., Reno, 1973), vol. 1, p. 716. Doten was a reporter for the Virginia City *Daily Territorial Enterprise* from 1865 until he became editor of the Gold Hill *Daily News* in 1867; in 1872 he became proprietor as well as editor of the Gold Hill paper. Doten's journals are extensive repositories of information about Virginia City, including much material that never was printed in the newspapers. His journals are particularly rich sources after his arrival in Virginia City in October, 1864.

The senior editor of Doten's diary, Walter Van Tilburg Clark, began the arduous task of working on Doten's seventy-nine manuscript volumes in 1862, a task uncompleted at his own death in 1971. Robert Morse Clark completed his father's work and wrote the introduction to the published three volumes. The senior Clark believed that the diaries "present in graphic and often moving detail the tragic course of a single representative life through the violent transformations enforced by the predatory and essentially amoral life of the California Gold Rush and by the Nevada Silver Rush. I know of no other account of the kind, or fiction either, for that matter, which even begins to do this as fully and memorably as Alf's journals" (vol. 1, xiv).

its orchestra, and the "Whoop-La" and "Walk Around" dances made it popular in the area. For those who wanted a more earthy form of presentation there was the Alhambra, which supplemented its legitimate offerings with some which were closely related to circus acts, such as gymnasts, tight rope walkers, and trapeze artists. Alfred Doten was a regular at Virginia City entertainments; his *Journals* suggest that performers working the city were busy indeed.[8]

Many circuses tapped the rich Virginia City market. Apparently the first was Dr. Bassett's in 1861. The first recorded by Doten was Lee, Winall & Sebastian's Great Circus in 1863. Having been in Virginia City in 1864 with their Great Equescurriculum and Camel Show, Lee and Rylands returned in 1865 and performed to a full house of 600 on May 12; Doten thought it a "very good show."[9] About two months later the Cook, Zoyara and Wilson Circus played Virginia City to a large house: Doten thought it "bully."[10] Indeed according to one report, the Wilson circus outshone " 'anything of its kind yet seen.' " Various acts had been brought from New York and Havana at " 'immense cost, thus enabling the management to produce elegant, sensational, comic and entertaining novelties of the day'," including the Great Ella Zoyara Troupe with " 'a reputation celebrated world wide.' " Patrons enjoyed the big top with its " 'immense chandelier whirling and twinkling like a python in coils of fire' around the pillars that supported the canvas, and enjoyed 'the finest event of its kind that ever visited Washoe or California'."[11]

In 1868 the Blaisdell and Constable Circus, a tent show from California, played Virginia City to a house of 700; Doten rated it "nothing extra."[12] About a month later Stickney's Great Circus gave a performance with George Constable as a clown; Doten considered it a "pretty good circus."[13] Chiarini's Royal Italian Circus, charging $1.50 and $2 to the 600 or 700 purchasers, exhibited in early October. Doten praised it as the "best I have seen . . . this side of the mountain," having "ladies & gents splendidly uniformed, on splendid horses followed [by] the band wagon" and featuring the Mexican clown Torres. After glowing reviews, the circus left for Washoe City.[14]

In 1869 three circuses performed at Virginia City. In June the Champion

[8] See, for example, ibid., vol. 2, p. 1104.

[9] Ibid., vol. 1, p. 716; vol. 2, p. 833; Margaret G. Watson, *Silver Theatre: Amusement on the Mining Frontier in Early Nevada, 1850 to 1864* (Glendale, California, 1964), pp. 66–67.

[10] Doten, *Journal*, vol. 2, p. 844.

[11] Watson, *Silver Theater*, p. 309.

[12] Doten, *Journal*, vol. 2, p. 1006.

[13] Ibid., p. 1012. Robert Stickney performed in a four horse act. George Constable was a clown in the Wilson Overland Circus when it opened in San Francisco in April, 1870; New York *Clipper*, April 16, 1870.

[14] Doten, *Journal*, vol. 2, p. 1024.

Circus played the city with a "good sized tent" and though "a rather inferior circus, stale & but little that was new," drew an audience "crowded as long as a soul could get in." The show featured Cooke, the well-known clown, and stayed in Virginia City two days.[15] Late in the same month Wilson returned with his Great World Circus and played to a "big house" of "1,000 persons at least" with a den of four African lions and a minstrel show featuring Dick Sands. Despite heavy thunder and lightning and a runaway pony which "jumped the ring & plunged into the audience," the circus maintained the tradition that "the show must go on." The final Wilson performance featured a benefit for Harry Jackson, the clown, and Doten recorded a "full house as usual."[16] On July 13 Dan Costello's Circus and Menagerie, probably the first railroad show to perform in either the West or in Virginia City, came to town. Its tent, Doten reported, was the "biggest tent full I ever saw"; fully, 2,500 [were] present and lots couldn't get in." While the circus had an elephant, lions, tigers, leopards, zebra and monkeys, Doten was "disappointed in the performance," thought the "circus part poor" with "not a single new feature," and in reality was "a dam big bilk for $1.50."[17]

The 1870 circus year in Virginia City proved to be equally active. The season began with the arrival of the Oriental Circus on May 28. Doten spoke of it making a "grand entry and big display" on C Street at 10 A.M., featuring a "band wagon, ladies, and knights in armor on horseback." Though winds blew down the tent in the forenoon, the evening performance was crowded; Doten judged it a "good circus."[18] The Alhambra on June 11 brought on the Oriental Circus Troupe featuring the wonderful horse "White Pine." A local newspaper praised the performance and anticipated "a still better one . . . tonight."[19]

The peak of the 1870 circus season, however, was expected for the glorious Fourth of July. For that festive occasion the Overland Circus arrived from Washoe City. Doten noted that the Overland was "Principally Wilson's old Circus with a lot of Arab tumblers added, and Jule Kent as clown."[20] It should be recalled that two "Wilson" circuses under varying names had previously appeared in Virginia City. By no means were Wilson's activities unusual: typically circuses during the era underwent frequent reorganizations and changes of name and personnel.

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[15] Ibid., vol. 2, p. 1048.

[16] Ibid., p. 1051. Richard Sands, a well-known performer, had owned his own circus and enjoyed a fine reputation.

[17] Ibid., p. 1054.

[18] Ibid., p. 1094. According to the *Clipper*, this group finished its season successfully in San Francisco.

[19] Gold Hill *News*, June 11, 1870. Available records do not disclose the relationship, if any, between the "Oriental Circus" and the "Oriental Circus troupe."

[20] Doten, *Journal*, vol. 2, p. 1097.

In the winter of 1869–1870 John Wilson's Great World Circus had been reorganized with ambitious plans. Quartered in San Francisco in an old circus pavilion at the corner of Post and Stockton, the organization gave "regular circus performances," and afforded the "ring stock daily practice." During the winter Wilson apparently brought in Leihy, Lake, and Baker with new capital, and together they organized the Great Overland Circus and Menagerie, "one of the largest and most complete organizations on the road this summer." Leihy became the circus treasurer, with Wilson its active manager. Other administrative personnel included E. D. Boone, boss canvas man; B. B. Acker, boss ostler; Abe Ogden, paste brigade; and Omar Kingsley, equestrian manager. Kingsley, a male, had also performed as a female equestrienne under the name of Ella Zoyara and had been affiliated with Wilson in 1865. Though some of the administrative personnel are unknown, nevertheless their presence shows Wilson had organized a large traveling circus. The presence of a boss ostler, a manager of work horses, is evidence that Wilson planned to play mountain towns.

The performers are better known and included Jule Kent, clown; the Rizarelli Brothers, trapeze and gymnastic artists; J. Williams, hurdle and "Ride for Life" rider; Master John Cook, infant Momus; and the Mohammed Troupe of Bedouin Arabs. After a big street parade, the Great Overland Circus opened its season in San Francisco on April 6 in a tent with a 120 foot round top and a 48 foot center piece, the "highest canvas seen in this country." Around the first of May the circus left San Francisco for the mining camps and eventually the East Coast.[21]

Two pieces of evidence link the Overland Circus which performed at Virginia City on July 4, 1870 with the Wilson circus which was organized at San Francisco in the winter of 1869–1870. Doten's description of the Overland as principally Wilson's old circus has already been noted. In addition, the manuscript census of 1870 for Storey County, Nevada, lists twenty-two "circus performers" as residents at Gold Hill on June 15, 1870. Nine of the twenty-two enumerated in the census were also listed by the New York *Clipper* as members of the Overland Circus at San Francisco: Omar Kingsley, J. Williams, John Cooke, Jule Kent, Mohammed, and the group of Moroccan teen-age males.

It is clear, however, that the Great Overland Circus was much smaller in Virginia City than it had been in San Francisco. The Rizarelli Brothers,

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[21] The material on the winter reorganization is derived from the New York *Clipper*, April 16 and May 7, 1870. The *Clipper* reported that the circus had 100 ring and baggage horses, 12 ponies, a camel, a lama, and a den of large performing lions. Omar Kingsley, the Great Zoyara, had had a long and distinguished career masquerading as a female equestrienne; Albert R. Bowen, *Theatrical Entertainments in Rural Missouri Before the Civil War* (Columbia, Missouri, 1959), p. 26.

for example, had left the circus; one of them performed at Piper's Opera House some weeks before July 4.[22] Further, some of the Overland personnel joined another circus, the Nelson show, when the Overland left San Francisco around the first of May.[23] In addition, Add Weaver, a thirty-five-year old minstrel and Johnny Campbell, a twenty-one-year old New Brunswick minstrel were enumerated in the federal census in Virginia City on July 7; both had performed at the Alhambra. Weaver left the city by Wells Fargo and Co. stage on the twenty-fifth of the month.[24] Clearly both Weaver and Campbell had left the Wilson organization. The loss of Weaver must have been particularly serious, because he had been the concert party manager. The loss of so many performers meant that Wilson was creating a new circus while on tour. Bouissac emphasizes that a circus is an organic whole and the loss of an act means that the program would have to be entirely restructured. Not surprisingly, the *Clipper* carried a report that in June the Overland Circus was "doing a poor business."[25]

Nevertheless, the Wilson circus was a hit in Virginia City. The local paper enthusiastically reviewed a performance:

> The huge canvass [*sic*] of the Overland Circus was crowded last night, on the occasion of the first performance of the company in this city. Owing to the difficulty experienced in finding a vacant lot sufficiently large and level for the tent, it is pitched a little farther from the centre of the city than could have been desired, yet after all it is but a short distance from the smooth sidewalks of C Street. An excellent entertainment was given last evening so far as we witnessed it. The tumbling and posturing of the Arabs, and their feats of strength were truly wonderful and elicited frequent and hearty applause. Mohammed is a giant in size and strength, being able to support the weight of the whole Arab crew when they had built themselves upon his broad shoulders. Their tumbling is of a style different from that usually seen in a circus where there are only European performers. The trick horse, Oro Fino, is a very fine and well trained animal and enjoys the fun quite as much as the audience. He was trained by Mr. Bartholomew. He is a great favorite with the youngsters. Crocker's den of lions comprises some ugly looking monsters, but he is a second Daniel and they don't care a —— dash for Daniel, and he don't care another —— for the lions. The clown is never at a loss for material from which to manufacture jokes, and manages to keep every one in a good humor. There is plenty of riding and the usual feats upon the trapeze, etc, but of all this we have not space to speak. A performance will be

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[22] On June 21 the *Territorial Enterprise* reported that Domingo Rizarelli, while performing at Piper's Opera House, had contracted erysipelas from an ignored scratch by a wire. He had been suffering at Virginia City "for some weeks past" but was "in a fair way to recovery." Despite the fears that his leg might have to be amputated, the paper stated that he was "able to stand on his feet once more."

[23] New York *Clipper*, May 7, 1870.

[24] Ibid., July 25, 1870. Age and occupation data are from the census manuscripts.

[25] Bouissac, *Circus and Culture*, p. 13; New York *Clipper*, June 11, 1870.

given to-night, a matinee to-morrow afternoon and another performance to-morrow night.[26]

Certain of the rather cryptic references in the newspaper account can be explained. Mr. Bartholomew, who trained the trick horse, for example, was a well known West Coast showman and had performed in Virginia City. No one by the name of Crocker was enumerated at Gold Hill; Crocker may have been a circus name or his act may have been brought in to augment the Gold Hill group. The pony "January," which appeared with Kent must have been a new animal, since the *Clipper* on April 30 carried an article reporting that Kent had hit his animal and killed it. An arrest was sought by the SPCA, but charges were dropped upon the claim that the death was accidental. According to the newspaper account, the clown Jule Kent must have followed the Dan Rice tradition of joking with his audience in contrast to the silent tradition of typical modern day clowns.

From the census enumeration it is possible to describe certain demographic characteristics of the circus performers. With the exception of Fannie and Frank Kent, respectively twenty-seven and twenty-three years old, both listed as female, all the troupe were males. The scarcity of females seems surprising because nineteenth century circuses usually featured female performers. The males were young, none over forty-four (median age = 24.17). Eight were under twenty years of age; in fact, five were either fifteen years of age or younger. This suggests that some nineteenth century boys actually did run away to join the circus. Further, the group was predominantly foreign-born, since only five had been born in the United States —one in Ohio and the rest from the northeastern states. Six of the foreign-born were Moroccan, one from England, seven from Australia, and three from Canada.[27] The lack of females and the youthful age of the performers suggests that the troupe was organized primarily to tour mining camps. If the twenty-two performers were in the hands of an older, experienced circus manager, we were unable to distinguish such a person. It is possible that these performers were housed in tents since we could find no persons with them who were either hotel managers or rooming house owners. Though it may have been characteristic of the circus to eat together, no cooks were enumerated with them. That they lived together may well suggest that they

[26] *Territorial Enterprise*, July 3, 1870. By no means was the circus the only entertainment available in Virginia City during the holiday. The circus competed against the two theaters, "the exhibition of the Turk's Head, the Irish Dwarf, learned pig and all other shows [which] were crowded during the evening to say nothing of the saloons, restaurants, billiard rooms, and rooms in which were to be found popular games of chance"; ibid., July 6, 1870.

[27] Nevada residents would scarcely have been disturbed at viewing foreign-born performers; almost half the state's residents were foreign-born. For that topic, see Wilbur Shepperson, *Restless Strangers: Nevada's Immigrants and Their Interpreters* (Reno, 1970), p. 13.

saw themselves as different and quite possibly, as did many nineteenth century circus performers, potential victims of "townies."

Two other matters should be mentioned. None of the performers claimed any property. Further, those who owned the circus were not enumerated at Gold Hill. Where the owners were located is difficult to determine, since an examination of census manuscripts for the entire state of Nevada in 1870 failed to disclose any other persons who listed their occupations as being related to a circus.

We suspect that little or no grifting, swindling or cheating by performers was associated with the Overland Circus, because neither the *Territorial Enterprise* nor Doten made any reference to it. Of course, it is possible that the amount of grifting which a circus could do in three days in a Western community such as Virginia City would be small. What is more, with games of chance endemic to the town, some grifting by circus personnel might have been unnoticed.[28]

It is unfortunate that the performers had little property, because the early difficulties of the Overland Circus persisted. From the lack of newspaper reports it is clear that the performers enumerated at Gold Hill did not give a show in that city or in Virginia City during the month of June. They performed in late June in Washoe City, made the trip to Virginia City, set up and played that place on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th of July, and were scheduled to play Silver City on the 7th of July.[29] How long the Overland Circus continued on its 1870 tour or how far east it was able to go is a mystery. A careful examination of the files of the *Clipper* into the month of September failed to disclose any mention of the Wilson organization. Probably the circus never got over the mountains. On February 11, 1871, the *Clipper* gave a Cincinnati address for Jule Kent. On May 27, 1871, the *Clipper* reported that Omar Kingsley and Thompson had organized a circus in Portland, Oregon, and had begun their season in May. In short, the Overland Circus probably broke up soon after playing Virginia City, and the performers scattered, with many securing jobs in other circuses. No doubt the experience of the Wilson Circus was typical. In 1869, for example, only six of twenty-eight "wagon shows survived a tenting season initiated by thirty days of continuous wet weather."[30]

From this study certain conclusions can be drawn. It is possible to reconstruct the history of a circus, an ephemeral institution, through census

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[28] James A. Inciardi and David M. Petersen, "Gaff Joints and Shell Games: A Century of Circus Grift," *Journal of Popular Culture* VI (winter, 1972), 593–94.

[29] *Territorial Enterprise*, July 7, 1870.

[30] May, *The Circus from Rome to Ringling*, p. 296. There are apparently no published accounts of the Wilson Circus; Robert L. Parkinson, Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wisconsin, to Ricards, December 21, 1976, and Greg Parkinson to Ricards, October 18, 1978.

manuscripts, files of a local newspaper, the journal of a local newspaperman, and trade publications. These sources show that the Wilson Circus management was male and the circus performers were typically young, male, and foreign-born. The features of the circus were characteristic of the time: a ring, a canvas tent, riding acts, tumbling, a talking clown, a menagerie, and a trick horse. Finally, according to May, circuses in the early part of the nineteenth century were small and constantly in trouble. They changed names frequently and were reorganized virtually every year. By the later part of the nineteenth century, some circuses had evolved, as had other economic institutions, into large, well organized organizations which persisted for years. The Overland Circus, which played Virginia City on the 4th of July in 1870, is representative of the genre in the early nineteenth century.

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

The Black Experience in Southern Nevada
Part II

ELIZABETH NELSON PATRICK

THE INTERVIEW WHICH FOLLOWS is part of a collection of transcripts of oral history interviews of Black people in the Donated Tapes Collections in the Special Collections Department, James R. Dickinson Library, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Written permission must be obtained from Special Collections to photocopy, cite, or quote from the transcribed interviews.

William H. (Bob) Bailey has been in the entertainment field in Las Vegas in clubs, radio, and television. Active in the NAACP and chairman of the State Equal Rights Commission, he did much to help desegregate Las Vegas hotels and casinos and to secure open housing. His interview is a rich source for Black "firsts" in entertainment in Las Vegas.

INTERVIEW OF WILLIAM F. (BOB) BAILEY

Collector: I don't know when you first came to Las Vegas.

Bailey: I came to Las Vegas in 1955. I came out to open the Moulin Rouge Hotel.[1] I was master of ceremonies and the assistant producer. My wife was in the show; she was a dancer.[2] We came to Las Vegas to kind of enjoy ourselves, and it was a challenge because it was the first interracial hotel in Las Vegas, which is very significant. It was put on the border line on Bonanza[3]

[1] The Moulin Rouge Hotel is located at 900 West Bonanza Road, Las Vegas. It operated briefly in 1955 as an interracial hotel-casino, but after that it ran into economic difficulties. Rooms at the hotel subsequently became small shops and businesses, and finally space was used by various social agencies. The area became industrialized. Recently the property has been acquired by new owners, and it is being completely renovated to serve once again as a hotel-casino.

[2] Bailey's wife, Ann Bailey . She was the first female Black dancer on the Strip.

[3] Bonanza Road was the southernmost street in the McWilliams' townsite, an area across the tracks from the Clark townsite where Las Vegas began. Bonanza Road is considered the southern boundary of the Black ghetto.

which was not in the White area and not in the Black area, just kind of a border line at the time. It was probably the most exciting hotel that will ever be. The times and the customs and conditions here had a lot to do with creating a condition that could never occur again unless there were the same outside pressures.

At that time you couldn't go on Fremont Street;[4] the patrons couldn't walk Fremont Street, Black, that is, on the Strip or Downtown.[5] Nor were the Black entertainers allowed to mingle with the guests. You could not mingle with the guests at this time in '55.

Collector: We've been told that the only exception to that was the Kit Carson Club where Jack Denison was the maitre'd and that he did welcome the Treniers[6] and let them make themselves at home there. Had you ever heard anything about that?

Bailey: The Kit Carson Club was a little before I got here. It does not strike me as being incorrect, however. The Treniers have always been a very liked group and this was probably a small club with nothing but entertainers probably going there. Then the Treniers are not really what you call a test case either. They look very Spanish, being lighter complected. That's quite possible that this happened in that one place because Jack Denison owned it, but it was an exception to the rule, rather than the rule.

Collector: They had plenty of trouble every place else.

Bailey: Well, it was no place that the entertainers could go. Nat King Cole, I guess in '56, '57 maybe, that he came down to the lounge. You're talking about people like Lena Horne . . .

Collector: Where did Nat King Cole play?

Bailey: The Sands.[7]

Collector: And I believe Sammy Davis, Jr. says that they let him stay in the hotel as the first Black entertainer. Is that correct, to your knowledge?

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[4] From the teens into the 1930s, Fremont Street led to the Union Pacific Depot, and some of the finest homes in the city were located there. All of the fine old homes and the great trees that lined the street are gone, and the portion of the street near the railroad is the center of the Downtown gaming district (Casino Center, sometimes referred to as "Glitter Gulch"). See Stanley W. Paher, *Las Vegas, As It Began—As It Grew* (Las Vegas: Nevada Publications, 1971), pp. 134–135 for a picture of Fremont Street in its heyday as a residential area.

[5] There are two main gaming centers in Las Vegas, the Downtown district radiating outward from Fremont Street and Casino Boulevard, and the extensive hotel-casino development along Las Vegas Boulevard (Fifth Street) called the "Strip."

[6] The Treniers are a Black singing group; they still appear in Las Vegas showrooms.

[7] The Sands is a large hotel-casino on the Strip; its showrooms featured many prestigious "big-name" entertainers during the period being discussed.

Bailey: Well...

Collector: Did Nat King Cole?

Bailey: I remember when he went over from the El Rancho Vegas[8] to the Sands. Sammy—the Will Mastin Trio[9] then.

Collector: Right.

Bailey: Yes, quite possible that's true. Sammy may have stayed before Nat and most of the stars used to stay at a lady by the name of Harris's house.[10]

Collector: Ma Harrison.

Bailey: Yes, over on the Westside,[11] and also Shaw's. Shaw had a motel there . . . on Van Buren and F [Streets]. No, Van Buren and G, I think it was. Anyway, Sammy had some fantastic experiences. At any rate, no one could stay; it was very few until about '57. And this became a thing where the people were demanding that if they couldn't live at the hotel, they didn't want to play there. Now let me go back again though. Josephine Baker is the first one that really broke it down—the first showroom on the whole Strip—I mean, really broke it down. She played the El Rancho Vegas in '56, was it? Latter part of '55? Must have been latter part of '55. Anyway, she...

Collector: What hotel did she play?

Bailey: El Rancho Vegas. She refused to go on for her second show unless they had some Blacks in the audience. She found out why. She says, "There's no Blacks in the audience. What is this? What's happening?" She had no idea what was happening. She stayed at the El Rancho Vegas, in fact, she had the only suite....

Collector: Did you know Miss Baker?

Bailey: Oh, yes, I had met her once in New York. She had come to New York from Paris where she was living and I was with Count Basie then; they were very great friends so I met her there.

She made them give her two tables down front. Incidentally, what they did to get her to go on for the second show, they picked up some maids and porters that were working in the hotel and told them to hurry up and go home and change clothes and come back. Otherwise, there wouldn't have been a second show. Can you believe that?

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[8] El Rancho Vegas occupied the corner of Las Vegas Boulevard and Sahara Avenue. It burned June 17, 1960 and was not rebuilt. See the *Las Vegas Sun*, April 1, 1979, pp. 6–10.

[9] Sammy Davis, Jr., sang with the trio before beginning his solo act.

[10] "Ma" Harrison ran a boarding house where Black entertainers stayed because they were not allowed to lodge at the hotels where they performed. Many private homes were opened to Black performers so that they would have places to stay while working in Las Vegas.

[11] The Westside is the predominately Black section of Las Vegas. It is the area of McWilliams' townsite. See note 3.

Yes, and every night thereafter she had two tables and she insisted that there be Blacks at those tables. And she picked up the check. It was fantastic.

Collector: She must have been a beautiful person. I would have loved to have met her.

Bailey: Yes, fantastic. Just fantastic. She really was the first one that shook things up. Of course, she never played Vegas since then. She said she didn't need it.

Collector: She doesn't.

Bailey: No. She wanted to honor her contract, but under those conditions. . . . Anyway, I guess things started really kind of changing, but there was incidents over at the Desert Inn[12] when Billy Daniels and Billy Eckstein two different times got into fights. Billy Daniels didn't have as great a problem because of his light complexion. Of course, Billy Daniels is a Black man.

Collector: Very light.

Bailey: Yes, for all intents and purposes, Billy is White. But he still was Black.

Collector: He got in fights with customers?

Bailey: Oh, he got in fights with one of the bosses or customers, I don't know. Billy Eckstein got in a fight with a customer and it was fantastic. Anyway, I'm trying to give you a picture of why the Moulin Rouge was so significant. There have always been big stars out here; even the lounges had big stars themselves. People would gather back in New York or in Los Angeles, Black and White stars, and have fun together and do shows together and things, but when they came to Las Vegas they couldn't hang out in the hotels together. So here comes the Moulin Rouge Hotel, OK? It's the first interracial hotel in the state. Now this became the meeting place for all the Black and White entertainers. You'd go in the place and see all the big names in the town almost. Everybody started coming to the Moulin Rouge.

Collector: It became the big "in" thing.

Bailey: It was the "in" thing, yes. We started the first third show in this town; they had never had a third show in this town. So the third show was put on to bring all of the entertainers over because they only did two shows.

Collector: Right.

Bailey: And that third show! You'd walk out and you'd see so many stars every night. I never knew who I would see when I would

[12] The Desert Inn is a large Strip hotel-casino.

walk out. It was fantastic. Movie stars. During that period of time, Las Vegas was a haven for the movie stars. All the movie stars came down from Los Angeles. During the week they would be shooting up in Kanab, Utah, and they would come down here and spend the week[end]. It was a . . .

Collector: When did it open, the Moulin?

Bailey: 1955, May '55.

Collector: May '55, and how long did it stay open?

Bailey: It closed in November of '55.

Collector: Oh, no!

Bailey: Yes, it was open about five to six months. Yes, yes, five or six months.

Collector: What happened?

Bailey: Well, I think that there was just bad management and there was too much leakage in the operation. Just fantastic leakage. The night we closed the doors there was standing room only for the Les Brown show. Standing room only. The pits were making money, but the place started getting a lot of pressure from the other hotels because we were taking customers—as the entertainers go, so go the girls, so go the high rollers.[13]

Collector: Right.

Bailey: The casinos were beginning to be empty and there were only three or four hotels here then, you must remember, on the Strip.

Collector: Five months. That's right.

Bailey: They had a lot of short term notes and I'm given to understand that they put pressure on the purveyors[14] to call some of those short term notes and . . .

Collector: You mean the big hotel owners out on the Strip put pressure on the bankers?

Bailey: On the purveyors. This is the story, I don't know if it's true or not, but this is one of the more fashionable stories that goes around about it.

Collector: Who owned the Moulin Rouge? Whose place was it?

Bailey: It was a guy by the name of Reuben out of New York and. . . .

Collector: Reuben? Is that a Jewish name or was he a Black man?

Bailey: No, Reuben was a Jewish man. The only Black ownership in the hotel was—they gave Joe Lewis an option for some points to be the host, but there was no Black money in the operation

[13] High rollers are those who have the reputation of being heavy gamblers. Often they are guests of the hotels. Certain of the entertainers who play Las Vegas have the reputation of attracting big spenders.

[14] The purveyors are the suppliers of the hotel-casinos.

to my knowledge. All the wheels were all White. And there was two guys from—I can never think of their name. Like a Russian name or something like, I can't remember. Reuben I remember because I remember his restaurants in New York.

Collector: Oh, Reuben's!

Bailey: Yes.

Collector: *The* Reuben sandwich. That Reuben.

Bailey: I don't know, but I guess so. I don't know, but he had a big restaurant, Reuben's, in New York.

Collector: So they were out-of-state White men that owned the place?

Bailey: Yes. And a lot of little investors, which is what hurt. They came down the last few days before we closed and they were sitting around waiting and wondering what had happened to their money. One of the owners went to jail because he watered the stock down. The Securities [and] Exchange Commission sent him to jail. There was a lot of little people, little Whites, that put $10,000 in from all different parts of the country. And old people invested their money and their life savings. They figured they would retire here and that would be their income. And $10,000 was a lot of money during '55.

Collector: Enormous.

Bailey: It's a lot of money so. . . .

Collector: And I suppose since it was an integrated hotel that people expected that the great Black acts would play there and therefore it was bound to be a success. Is that how the thinking went?

Bailey: Well, yes. That [it] had to be a winner along with the fact that there was a very large dollar in the Black consumer market down in Los Angeles and there was only about 250 rooms at maximum. It was just the management. The money went out of it. It wasn't financed properly and the money went out the back door. I believe, I firmly believe that the cash flow was sufficient to have kept the hotel open.

Collector: Must have been from what you say.

Bailey: Oh, yes. At night, honey, it was good. The first two shows were always good, too, but that third show! And the casino action from about—lets see, I think we hit at 2:00 [A.M.] and we were over at 3:00 or 3:30—from that time until 8:00 or 9:00 you couldn't move. You couldn't move. And Harry Belafonte might be on the stage singing . . .

Collector: Oh, they all got up and entertained?

Bailey: Oh, yeah!! Louie Armstrong used to come in and blow all the

time. It was the only hotel the musicians could get together and jam.

Collector: That's right, and there were so few musicians, I guess.

Bailey: Oh, there was a lot of musicians, and that was the thing! There was no place that they could jam on the Strip where the Black musicians could sit in!

Collector: I see.

Bailey: Now the Black musicians would come in town with the Black stars playing behind them. They would bring the key musicians.

Collector: The key men.

Bailey: Yeah, the key men. They would hang out on the Westside, of course, but there was no place where they could jam with their White friends.

Collector: And all the White musicians were dying to come out and jam.

Bailey: Yeah. There was a little place called the Elks on Jackson Avenue,[15] even before the Moulin Rouge, where they used to jam a little bit. But it wasn't quite the same as the Moulin Rouge, it was a....

Collector: Well, it was an elegant hotel. It was a first class operation.

Bailey: It was a first class hotel. It was as fine as any hotel on the Strip. It was just a fine hotel. That's really the whole story of the Moulin Rouge: it was just a fantastic place. There was never one fight. Never one incident. Not one Black and White incident in the whole time it was open. They threw one guy out—and he was a White guy—that fell into the pool opening night and then got out and was mad at everybody. He's the only guy that I ever know that they ever had to put out. It was a fantastic place.

Collector: The Treniers told me there was an enormous atmosphere of love.

Bailey: That would be a very good way to deal with it, very good way to deal with it. It was a thing where people knew the rest of the town was so wrong and everything at the Moulin Rouge was so right.

Collector: Uh-huh.

Bailey: You know, it was just—it was a....

Collector: A happy thing.

Bailey: A citadel, yes. And the stars couldn't wait until after they got off work to get over to the Moulin Rouge to hang out.

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[15] Jackson Street was the business center of the Westside.

Collector: Tell me who was here then. Harry Belafonte, of course.

Bailey: Belafonte.

Collector: Sammy was playing here with the Will Mastin Trio. How about the Mills Brothers?

Bailey: The Mills Brothers were playing here during that period of time. Everybody who was big played here. Lena Horne. All the big stars. And then some of the White stars that came over. Frank [Sinatra] used to come over; Dean Martin used to come over. And what's the name? She says daw-ling.

Collector: Zsa Zsa Gabor?

Bailey: No, not Zsa Zsa.

Collector: Tallulah?

Bailey: Tallulah Bankhead. Tallulah, whenever she was in town, she just was always there. Let's see.

Collector: Years ago there was Donald O'Connor, Ray Bolger.

Bailey: Donald O'Connor used to come over. I don't remember Ray Bolger.

Collector: I'm trying to think who played the town then.

Bailey: Well, Donald O'Connor used to come over and . . .

Collector: Vaughn Monroe.

Bailey: And Joe E. Lewis. Joe E. Lewis used to come over and hang. Oh, Joe loved to hang. And he'd especially hang with Pops. Him and Pops.

Collector: Who's Pops?

Bailey: Louie Armstrong.

Collector: Oh, Pops?

Bailey: Yes, yes. Oh, God, I can't even begin to think of all the movie stars that used to come in and out of there. Gregory Peck. You just name them. Just go down the list. Dorothy Lamour. Bob Hope used to come in, too. Yes, because he loved Hamp.[16] In fact, when Hamp was there, he was in and out of there every other night. Milton Berle. It was just unbelievable.

Collector: Did they stay in the hotel very often?

Bailey: No, didn't stay in the hotel too often, but they came over and hung out. There were a number of nights that they ended up staying.

Collector: I would imagine.

Bailey: Yes, there were a number of nights that they ended up staying. When Sammy would come in, they would have a suite over at the Moulin Rouge and a suite where they were at the Sands.

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[16] Lionel Hampton.

Collector: And go back and forth?

Bailey: Yes, a lot of times they'd stay over at the Moulin Rouge. If they felt like hiding away, they'd stay over in the hotel. It was a fantastic place and it set a new pace. It brought a lot of life to the Black area on Jackson Avenue which is really the commercial area at that time.

Collector: Yes.

Bailey: With all the restaurants, and night clubs, and liquor stores, and everything. A very fun street. No pavements. All dirt roads and everything.

Collector: Yes, in '55, that would be before those streets were paved as I recall. It was pretty much a slum district.

Bailey: Those streets that were paved over there were the streets in the subdivisions at Berkeley Square and Cadillac Arms.[17] Those were the subdivisions that the City codes demanded had to be paved, but that was it. And it was only two or three telephones over there, only two or three telephones. There was one at Bruner's Liquor Store.[18] I think Dr. [Charles] West had one; and one other person.

Collector: Well, by '60, I guess Dr. [James] MacMillan, who was secretary then of the NAACP, had led that protest march and they desegregated the Strip, officially.[19]

Bailey: No, that wasn't really officially desegregated until '65, '64. In '61, we brought a mandate to the town that either they opened up or we were going to march—it was just that simple—up and down the Strip. The Governor came back to town. They had a meeting and what we did opened up about, I guess, eighty per cent of the Strip and Downtown. About eighty per cent of it. There were some that we had to fight with the Equal Rights Commission. I was chairman of that. We had to fight. Well, it's history. We had to fight the Golden Gate[20] tooth and nail.

Collector: That's downtown?

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17 These were the first subdivisions on the Westside.

18 Perhaps a pay phone, since Bruner's is not listed in the 1955 telephone directory.

19 Dr. James MacMillan and the NAACP threatened to demonstrate on March 26, 1960. That morning Mayor Oran Gragson, Governor Grant Sawyer, and other public officials met at the Moulin Rouge and the march was averted by an agreement to desegregate the Strip. Changes did not occur immediately, however, and the Equal Rights Commission, of which Bailey was chairman, held investigatory hearings concerning public accomodations throughout Nevada. See the interview of Woodrow Wilson in this collection; as the first Black in the Nevada Legislature, Wilson authored and led the fight for an open housing statute.

20 A Downtown hotel-casino that has variously operated as the Las Vegas Club, Sal Sagev, and the Golden Gate. See Mobility Studies, Bill Murphy, Special Collections, Dickinson Library, UNLV.

Bailey: Yes. And we had to fight a couple of the small places. Then one or two of the hotels on the Strip still wanted to put you in the back and over in the corner and all this kind of stuff. But entertainers started—well, I'll tell you some funny stories. The hotels, they were working in broke down I'd say about '57, '58 at the latest. Though they broke down to the entertainers and gave them free mobility in the hotel they were working, other hotels was still reluctant to let you in. Nat King Cole, myself, and Al Friedman, who was the publicist at the Sands Hotel, went to the Tropicana one night and they turned us around at the door and would not allow us in. Al got in a fight with the security guard. [laughter]

Collector: Was it a security guard that came over and said, "I'm sorry?"

Bailey: We walked through the door and they turned us right back around.

Collector: The security guard did it?

Bailey: Yes, yes.

Collector: Evidently he had been told it was hotel policy and he didn't care who it was.

Bailey: Yes, that's exactly right. When Al said, "That's Nat King Cole,' he went back and said something to somebody. The person came back over and said, "I don't care if it is Jesus. He's Black and he has to get out of here. Both of them." I was on television at the time, too, so it was part of my next show. Then Nat and I went down to the Sahara one night and they turned us out of there, too.

Collector: A security guard?

Bailey: Yes.

Collector: Well, it must have taken a lot of courage for you to go, but I guess you felt you had to try.

Bailey: Well, well, Nat felt this. He says, "Well, I'm going to keep going until the doors open and I walk in by myself." He says, "I go anywhere in the world I want to go."

Oh, yes, yes, and they didn't encourage any of the Blacks that were working at the hotels, maids or porters or anything like that, to come. Even when the doors were open, they didn't encourage you to come to the hotel where you worked. So, it was just a number of things. A lot of the entertainers wouldn't come out here because of the discriminatory practices. Only when they opened, they started coming out. Dinah Washington played here twice and she said she'd never play again. Never

play again. And there were a number of other entertainers that just wouldn't come. Sidney Poitier—well, Sidney actually was acting more than anything.

Collector: Yes.

Bailey: Just wouldn't come. Just wouldn't come up and be embarrassed. It was just that way.

The truth is it has consistently been the law that has brought about desegregation.

Nat really did some things and I've got to say this, Sammy [Davis, Jr.] did more for a given period of time. Did I tell you the story about Sammy diving into the pool at the Sands?

Collector: No.

Bailey: And, honey, they emptied the whole pool!

Collector: Oh, no.

Bailey: [Laughter] They emptied the w-h-o-l-e pool. [laughter]

Collector: This was when he was first playing at the Sands?

Bailey: At the Sands, yes. [Laughter] Can you imagine that? Yes, that's the way it was.

Collector: Well, I'm glad those days are over.

Bailey: Yes.

Collector: Do you think they are? Do they make Black people welcome around the swimming pools at the hotels now?

Bailey: Oh, yes. No problem there at all. Not as far as I'm concerned. It's strictly a situation now where if you have the economics to support your habits, you know. . . .

Collector: If you can afford it, it's all right.

Bailey: That's all it is. You have no problem now.

Collector: The Treniers were telling me that it was kind of a subtle discrimination. For instance, Claude was saying that—you know how they come through the slot machine area and offer you a free drink—they'll offer the White players a free drink and then walk right by the Black player and just casually not offer them the free drink.

Bailey: Yes. You see, in most cases that's not the hotel. That's the individual.

Collector: Oh, really?

Bailey: Yes.

Collector: You don't think that would reflect a general policy?

Bailey: No. I really don't. I honestly don't. Nobody has hollered and screamed at the hotel industry more than I have, but I honestly don't think so. I think the only discriminatory things happening

in the hotels are the hiring policies; they are still discriminatory. There's no doubt about that. The basic tenor of our town is still one of discrimination.

Collector: The Mississippi of the West it has been called.

Bailey: Yes, I put that title together.

Collector: Did you?

Bailey: Yes, it's my title.

Book Reviews

The Urban West at the End of the Frontier. By Lawrence H. Larsen. (Lawrence: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1978. xiii + 173 pp., footnotes, tables, biblio., index, $12.50)

FOR MANY YEARS CITIES east of the Mississippi drew the interest of most urban historians. But in the last two decades, a growing number of scholars have turned their sights westward to Omaha, Denver, San Francisco and elsewhere. Such writers as Howard Chudacoff, Lyle Dorsett, Roger Lotchin, Gunther Barth and a host of others have shed new light on urban growth in this area. Most of this work, however, has consisted of monographs focusing on individual towns. Up to now, there has been no real attempt to synthesize findings, generalize about the region or make comparisons with the east. Lawrence Larsen's book partially fills this need. He has examined the demography, society, economics, public services and technology of the twenty-four western communities which, in 1880, claimed at least 8,000 citizens. Larsen's main source is the Census of 1880, the first to provide detailed statistics on metropolitan life. Supplementing this is George Waring's invaluable *Report on the Social Statistics of Cities,* plus a vast array of "mug books," directories and monographs.

Despite its promise, the book suffers from several basic weaknesses. The chief problem lies in Larsen's approach, dictated largely by his heavy reliance upon the Census. By limiting his study to 1880, the author, in effect, presents a "freeze-framed" picture of the west which conceals the evolutionary development of events and institutions. Except for a few paragraphs on the 1890's, all sense of change over time is absent. Moreover, Larsen has taken too much upon himself, for no one can adequately provide a "cross section of . . . life in twenty-four cities" in just 121 pages. The end result can only be a rushed narrative, superficial coverage and facts compressed beyond meaning. Indeed, no subject is treated in depth—time won't allow it. Whether the topic be sewers, crime or fire, the author seems compelled to devote a few lines to each of the twenty-four towns before moving on to the next theme where the hectic scenario begins anew. Most frustrating is Chapter 1 where the origins and development of all twenty-four cities are described in just thirteen pages!

The work is also impaired by Larsen's persistent attempts to disprove the Turner Thesis. For some reason, he repeatedly mixes Turner's frontier

determinism with William Gilpin's incredible theory which attributed western success to the region's location within the "isothermal zodiac." Larsen's need to refute Gilpin seems unnecessary, while much of his argument against Turner is directed at a strawman. In fairness to the latter, his focus was more the rural farms and hamlets of the west. Had Turner been more conscious of metropolitan growth, he surely would have exempted big cities like Denver and Omaha from much of his Thesis. Besides, Richard Wade really settled the issue of the "urban frontier" twenty years ago. Hence Larsen would have done better to concentrate on his own themes and ignore the "issues" of climatic and geographical determinism.

Aside from Turner, the book's other main finding is obvious if not surprising: in both public services and physical layout western municipalities merely imitated their eastern predecessors. Most curious, however, is Larsen's disappointment at frontier leaders for not pioneering original solutions to urban problems. He seems amazed, for instance, that none of these twenty-four towns innovated new methods of sewage disposal and street paving. But this view underestimates the complex engineering required to build an urban infrastructure. Lacking experience, money and expertise, Omaha, Denver and San Francisco eagerly copied the work of New York, Philadelphia and Chicago. Eastern giants like New York led the way because they faced traffic, sanitary and health emergencies much sooner than places beyond the Mississippi. Moreover, the key advances in applied physics and chemistry occurred in the research centers of the east coast and Europe. For these reasons, therefore, experiments and solutions concentrated first in those beleaguered metropolises where the need was greater.

At various times, Larsen seems to misunderstand the logic behind the city-building process. In a key section he bemoans the failure of western towns to improve upon eastern models. He complains, for example, that frontier municipalities refused to develop an alternative to the street grid plan, and worse, they reserved too little space for parks. Here, the author is plagued by his devotion to present-day values. First, the grid system was universally popular because in the nineteenth century, western cities like their eastern counterparts were products of a *laissez-faire,* capitalist society. Rectangular blocks and lots—even on the hills of San Francisco—facilitated urban growth by simplifying the computation of front and square footage so crucial to the quick resale of land. Similar pragmatism kept parkland to a minimum. Authorities provided little room for recreational areas, because, like early Cincinnati, Pittsburgh and Louisville, the nascent communities of Omaha, Denver and Houston were too financially insecure to retard business growth by tieing up valuable tracts along the waterfront and downtown for parks and plazas. One must realize that, at first, these towns were primarily economic centers engaged in a desperate fight with surrounding rivals for

commercial control of the hinterland. Until victory or at least survival could be secured, there was little time for parks, architecture and other aesthetic considerations.

At times, the text is also marred by contradictions. On page 37, for instance, Larsen writes that "every western town claimed vast factories," but thirteen lines later we read that "still, by 1880, ten of the twenty-four communities had considerable manufacturing." Then, on page 88, he begins a paragraph on crime by arguing that "recorded [arrest] statistics suggest that western cities . . . were no more violent than those in the east," but concludes the same paragraph: "overall, southern and western cities had generally higher [arrest] rates than cities in the Midwest and Northeast."

Then too, Larsen restricts himself to only quantifiable evidence. As a result, the cold figures often conceal the warm, human dimensions of his story. In Chapter 2, for example, he presents a maze of statistics to demonstrate the well-known fact that western towns had sizable foreign-born populations. Then, having made the point, he proceeds hastily to the next subject, leaving the original theme undeveloped. No use is made of newspapers, journals or other accounts to describe the colorful, cosmopolitan nature of these polyglot communities.

On the positive side, however, Larsen's work is the first significant attempt to synthesize past findings about western cities. In this respect, his footnotes and bibliography are especially rewarding. Moreover, he raises questions about demographics, policies and municipal services which can only inspire further research. And his bold effort to broaden our perspective by comparing frontier towns with their eastern counterparts also merits praise. Larsen, therefore, has pointed the way to a new direction. Thanks to him, we can now expect more regional studies of street paving, gas lighting, fire protection and other topics of historical value. And perhaps someday, Larsen himself will contribute a longer book, spanning three or four decades, and allowing more room for thematic development.

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Steamboats on the Colorado River, 1852–1916. By Richard E. Lingenfelter. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1978. 195 pp., appendix, illustrations, maps, index, $17.50)

A CAREFUL EXAMINATION of a general map of the American West showing the major topographical features extending from the Continental divide westerly to the limits of the Pacific shore clearly illustrates the geographic

dominance of the Colorado River in this vast arid region. Rising in the high country of Central Colorado and pursuing a course southwesterly toward an ultimate union with the sea in the upper Gulf of California, the Colorado River was destined to play a major role in the settlement of significant portions of the American West.

After many years of study and investigation, Richard E. Lingenfelter, a professor of geophysics, space physics and astronomy at UCLA and a historian by avocation, has authored the most comprehensive history to date of steam navigation on the Colorado River. His volume is really two books in one. The first examines the Colorado as a transportation corridor from its mouth northerly to the impassible barrier of the Grand Canyon. The second deals with the segment above the canyon and includes the major tributary, the Green River of Wyoming and Utah. Of particular value to persons interested in the history of Nevada are the portions relating to the river ports at Eldorado Canyon, Callville, Rioville and the salt deposits on the Virgin River north of its junction with the Colorado.

While Lingenfelter repeats much that has been previously published in the reports of early explorers such as Lt. George H. Derby (1852), and Lt. Joseph C. Ives (1861), as well as such contemporary interpretations as those of Hazel Emery Mills (1941), Francis Hale Levitt (1943), and Jerry McMullen (1944), he adds important new material. The inclusion of chapters on the Upper Colorado and the Green make his book truly a total historical survey.

An additional contribution is provided by those portions of the book which examine and record the nature of river traffic following the arrival of the western railroads—the Southern Pacific at Yuma in 1877 and the Atlantic and Pacific (Santa Fe) at Needles in 1883. The development of smaller gasoline-powered river craft after the turn of the century in an attempt to continue profitable commerce is another aspect of river history which has not been adequately recorded and interpreted until now.

Adding greatly to the value of the volume are over ninety photographs, from a variety of sources, and eight maps. Twenty-five pages of appendixes are also of major interest and assistance to students of the river. Included in this section are alphabetical listings of steamboats and other river craft, a chronological roster of steamboat companies and the boats they operated, and a table of distances in miles by river channel of the principal landings and ports on the lower Colorado. All contribute to Lingenfelter's principal achievement: placing in full historical perspective the function of the Colorado River in the exploration and settlement of the West.

This wild desert stream did indeed play a major role in Western history. From the initial discovery by the Spanish in the mid-1500's until the Reclamation Act of 1902 and the harnessing of the river beginning in 1909, the

Colorado was of first importance in the settlement of portions of Nevada, Utah, Arizona and eastern California. Even today the river retains crucial importance to Arizona as a source of water through the implementation of the Central Arizona Project.

Anyone possessing the imagination and historical curiosity to be excited by the long-gone sound of the steamboat's whistle or by the churning of paddlewheels in the silt-laden waters of the Colorado River of the West will find this book a pleasant, informative and highly graphic review of the years when this troublesome desert stream was truly a lifeline to the evolving Western territories. Sensitively designed and attractively produced, it is an achievement in bookmaking as well as a landmark in Western scholarship.

DONALD H. BUFKIN
Arizona Historical Society

The Richest Place on Earth: The Story of Virginia City, Nevada and the Heyday of the Comstock Lode. By Warren Hinckle and Frederic Hobbs. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1978. 173 pp., illustrations, $14.95)

THE STORY OF THE COMSTOCK is still alive and well. Although it has long been in borrasca, the glowing embers of Comstock history never cease to fascinate journalists turned historians. The first journalist to put his pen to a history of the Comstock was William Wright (Dan De Quille) in his *History of the Big Bonanza* which appeared in 1876 as the lode and its dependent towns of Virginia City and Gold Hill went into decline. For many years an editor of the famed *Territorial Enterprise,* De Quille produced the *Big Bonanza* as a money making venture. In the same enterprising spirit, Warren Hinckle, former editor of the muckraking *Ramparts Magazine,* offers this latest history and interpretation of *The Richest Place on Earth.* The result is a nicely packaged coffee-table book with a rather serious air about it. The somber impression no doubt is created by the lack of slick and colorful photographs, which usually dominate such efforts. Instead co-author and artist Fredric Hobbs illustrates the lusty years of the Comstock boom in surrealistic black and white line drawings.

The first, a donkey strumming a banjo, sets the mood of the text and the crazy events that unfolded after the "Rush to Washoe" in 1859. Hinckle's reflective introductory essay makes a valiant attempt to sort out the disheveled themes of Comstock history. These themes, he believes, constitute a key to understanding the course of the state's later character and development as one of the most bizarre of western societies. The eternal bleakness

of its land coupled with the dazzle of a mining society in bonanza form the background to the modern state's amorality and "recreation unlimited" mentality.

In the life of Lucius Beebe, who sought refuge in the ruins of the Comstock at mid-twentieth century, the eccentricities and outrageousness of the Comstock are reenacted. Beebe, the darling of cafe society in both New York and San Francisco, surprised his urbane associates when in 1950 he left New York to live out a nineteenth-century drama in the remains of Virginia City. There the distinction between fantasy and reality could be so blurred that Beebe assumed nineteenth-century manners, amorality, alcoholism, and personal journalism as he tried to revive the old *Territorial Enterprise*. Twentieth-century Nevada life could permit all of this without blinking an eye. The Beebe episode concludes the introduction, but before the reader is permitted to move ahead into this latest saga of the Comstock lode the author delivers a parting shot: "Virginia City has always brought out the worst in people that made it their best." Such surprising writing with a twist of irony continues in the text.

The tall stories, the heroes and the villains, the obsessive efforts to dig wealth quickly from the richest place on earth emerge, but all in the veil of an unfolding drama that the author and the artist hope will be a symphonic portrait of the dynamism and energy packed into the Comstock years. The mysterious activities of the Grosch brothers and their hidden discoveries, the rise and fall of Ellie Orrum Bowers, the shrewdness of lawyer William Stewart, and the calculating William Sharon of the Bank of California crowd and many others form the gallery of Comstock portraits who make epic but brief appearances. The book is an artistic success, but it adds nothing new to the annals of Comstock history. Even the geography of the area takes on a lyrical quality when the Washoe range, site of dingy mining camps where the Comstock was discovered, is described "As a prelude to the Great Sierra, the lowly Washoes were a Bach fugue before a Beethoven symphony."

Obviously the book hopes to give the reader an artistic and esthetic experience about the stirring life of the Virginia City mining community. Still, some very large substantive questions are raised that go beyond the artistic medium. Artist Fredric Hobbs raises one of these large questions in his concluding essay "Nights in Virginia City." This involves his own personal journey into the heart of the mountain to behold the Big Magnet—the place that once drew men from all over the world and made some of them crazy for its riches. "The miners," he writes, "had braved holocaust to be near it and the bonanza titans had fought each other to the death for its riches." But for him, ". . . the Big Magnet was a confrontation with the reality of death, the motivation behind the pyramids, the force that always builds great monuments to the mortality of man."

These are large and metaphysical questions to raise from the experi-

ences of a small, rollicking mining community which enjoyed a brief heyday. Perhaps it is high time that such questions are addressed because they certainly do not appear in the host of technical and popular histories of the Comstock. The glitter of the Comstock years has obscured more meaningful probes such as the role of western mining communities in industrial modernization and the response of local society to that phenomenon. The present effort, however, ranks more in the category of the curious, and even the quaint in its attempt to assess the meaning of the Comstock.

Others have also tried. Various technical and business histories of the Comstock such as Eliot Lord's *Comstock Mining and Miners* (1883) and Charles H. Shinn, *The Story of the Mine* (1896) form foundations for later and more popularized works such as George D. Lyman, *Saga of the Comstock Lode* (1934) and Carl B. Glasscock, *The Big Bonanza* (1931). The source most favored by authors Hinckle and Hobbs is the early work by Dan De Quille, to whom they dedicate the book.

Another secondary source that the authors find fascinating is Gilman Ostrander's book *Nevada: The Great Rotten Borough,* published in 1966. Its emphases upon the fly-by-night character of Nevada's mining population and the domination of the state's politics by the Comstock Barons suggest that Nevada is a different kind of place where extremes are more extreme and where corruptness is more thorough and complete than anywhere else. Nevada is different and it is different because of its Comstock heritage. From it, if we are to accept this interpretation, come the values of an untamed mining society, the propensities for risk taking, the flexibility or nonapplication of justice, the greed of the insolent corporations, and finally the crude purchase of political office by those who could well afford it whether they resided in Nevada or in the comfortable mansions of San Francisco. All of these, if we are to accept this latest view of Nevada from San Francisco, are the disturbing burdens of Nevada and Comstock history.

W. D. Rowley
University of Nevada, Reno

The Dominguez-Escalante Journal: Their Expedition through Colorado, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico in 1776. Translated by Fray Angelico Chavez. Edited by Ted J. Warner. (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1976. xix + 203 pp. Illustrations, maps, glossary, bibliography. $12.95)

When the Franciscan Fathers Dominguez and Velez de Escalante set out from Santa Fe on July 29, 1776, hoping to find a way to California, the founding of San Francisco and the Declaration of Independence had al-

ready transpired in that memorable year. Since they were unsuccessful in reaching their goal and their expedition inspired no further efforts at missionary work or colonization, their difficult pioneering journey did not supplant in importance the earlier events mentioned. Although they kept a precise and informational journal, it was negative in its effect, serving only to set a limit to Spanish penetration of the Great Basin, a result which was, nevertheless, of historical significance.

Although the fate of the original journal is unknown, nine copies are extant and three previous translations have been made. The present translation has been made from the earliest copy, owned by the Newberry Library, and is superior to any previous translation in both accuracy and literary qualities. The translator stresses that the journal was the work of both Dominguez and Escalante, not of the latter alone.

The Editor, in a brief introduction, expresses the hope that future historians will refer to Escalante as Velez de Escalante but the usage is so long established that it may be doubted whether this correct but more cumbersome designation will be adopted. He points out that the field work was done by seven separate parties, ranging in size from one to four members, comprising a total of seventeen historians. They were at pains to correct the Bolton edition at various specific points along the route. Since the text is reprinted in modern Spanish as well as in English, those with sufficient knowledge and interest may do their own field work on portions of local interest.

The compass readings appear to be the same as those used by Bolton but it has become a matter of controversy whether or not these are correct. This is a matter which may long be in dispute and which may result in the eventual conclusion that the route can only be approximated. Certainly it is a matter which is beyond the competence of this reviewer to decide.

The work has been accomplished with the aid of Bicentennial funds. The publishers are to be congratulated upon the paper, typography, and binding employed. There are nine excellent photographs. The expedition had the services of a good geographer in Father Miera, whose map of the area of the Great Salt Lake is reproduced. There is also a modern relief map showing the route, which graphically illustrates the enormous difficulty of the terrain over which both the original expedition and the modern scholars traveled. The reading of the journal, with its accounts of the natives encountered, the flora and fauna of the country traversed, and the incidents among members of the expedition is a very pleasant experience, however, despite all the hazards and difficulties along the way.

HARVEY L. CARTER
Emeritus, Colorado College

Colonial Russian America: Kyrill T. Khlebnikov's Reports, 1817–1832. Translated with introduction and notes by Basil Dmytryshyn and E.A.P. Crownhart-Vaughan. (Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1976. 134 pp., introduction, notes, appendices, bibliography, index, illustrations, $8.95)

THIS IS THE SECOND VOLUME in a series begun by the Oregon Historical Society in 1972, entitled *North Pacific Studies.* The purpose of the series "is to make available in English little known or hitherto unpublished works on the early history of the North Pacific Ocean and littorals" (p. i). The fact that the series' first two volumes are by Russians indicates the major role played by this Slavic people in the exploration and subsequent early development of the region. It should also serve to remind us that our westward continental expansion had an earlier counterpart in Russia's eastward expansion and that sparsely settled frontiers were a central feature in the historical development of both of today's super powers.

Khlebnikov's career was spent in the service of the Russian-American Company, first in Irkutsk in eastern Siberia, later in Kamchatka, then briefly in Irkutsk again and St. Petersburg, and finally in Alaska itself for the fifteen years indicated in the title of this work. His position at the Company's headquarters in New Arkhangel (now Sitka) was Administrator, second in command to a series of Chief Managers who succeeded Baranov, chief American agent for the Company for nearly thirty years. Khlebnikov functioned in Alaska as an accountant and business manager. His first task was to audit Baranov's books, about which there was some suspicion. This served to familiarize him with the detailed workings of the American operation and brought him into close contact with Baranov, whose reminiscences provide the basis for Khlebnikov's treatment of the early history of the Company in America. Not only did Khlebnikov find the books to be in order, but he also developed such respect for Baranov that he later became his biographer.

Khlebnikov's "reports" were intended as an official investigation to be sent to the Directors of the Russian-American Company. While there is an occasional investigatory tone to the reports, it is Khlebnikov the accountant who predominates. Nearly seventy of the one hundred forty-five pages (including eight appendices added by the translators) contain lists and numbers of everything from the population of the fort at New Arkhangel to a detailed breakdown of livestock at the Company's Fort Ross location.

While statistical information abounds, causing Khlebnikov to be mistaken for a modern social scientist, there is interesting non-quantitative material. For instance, Khlebnikov provides an ethnographic sketch of the native Kolosh (Tlingit Indians). His observations on social mores and social problems in the colony are intriguing. Citing the frequent use of hard liquor

by creoles (persons of mixed Russian and native blood) as an example of imitating Russian vices rather than abiding by Russian rules for good behavior, Khlebnikov avoids condemnation of drink in a footnote: "One must agree that in a wet and unsalubrious climate the moderate use of liquor is one of the best means of staying in good health" (p. 49). If the supply of liquor is inadequate or its use moderate, one can always turn to the sea urchin for its "healing properties. It can cure stones, also tuberculosis in its early stages. In fact, it is a universal medicine for all illnesses" (p. 37). Khlebnikov's practical bent is evident in his discussion of the spread of social disease resulting from the Russians hiring Kolosh slaves and girls: "This is also an evil, but a necessary one if we are to avoid the sinful unnatural acts which have been remarked, and which would otherwise result from the shortage of women" (p. 71). Khlebnikov felt that eventually the tie between Russian men and Kolosh women could undermine the Kolosh desire for vengeance: "The generation resulting from this liaison may serve as a foundation for union" (p. 101).

When it came to trade relations with the Kolosh, the Russians were unable to compete with the Americans. Khlebnikov readily admitted the superiority of American-built ships to anything the Russians could produce in their colony. "The extraordinary activity of the Americans is quite phenomenal," he said (p. 100). And yet, he predicted a decline in American trade and its virtual disappearance within ten years, because of its high operating costs.

Khlebnikov's remarks on American trade revealed a dilemma never resolved during the history of Colonial Russian America—how to acquire the goods and foodstuffs necessary to the colony's survival, without becoming dependent on foreigners who were making huge profits at Russian expense. Khlebnikov's answer was to develop agriculture at Russia's California foothold, Fort Ross. He postulated that such development could supply grain to all of Russia's American holdings, as well as to Kamchatka and Okhotsk, at half the cost. The last Chief Manager whom Khlebnikov served, Baron Wrangell, disagreed. After an 1833 visit to Ross, he reported farming was a complete failure; the settlement could barely feed itself.

The current volume, translated from an 1861 publication, contains numerous reproductions of nineteenth century illustrations, a selected bibliography, and a useful glossary. A second volume, in preparation, will present the never published balance of Khlebnikov's manuscript on Russia's American colonies.

PAUL E. BURNS
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

When Farmers Voted Red: The Gospel of Socialism in the Oklahoma Countryside, 1910–1924. By Garin Burbank. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976. Pp. xvi, 224. Maps, bibliography, index, appendix)

IT IS GARIN BURBANK'S MISFORTUNE to have published his book, *When Farmers Voted Red: The Gospel of Socialism in the Oklahoma Countryside, 1910–1924,* more or less simultaneously with two other, and greatly superior, books on similar topics: *Democratic Promise: The Populist Moment in America* by Lawrence Goodwyn and *Grass-Roots Socialism: Radical Movements in the Southwest, 1895–1943* by James R. Green. This is not to suggest that Burbank's effort has no merit; three of the chapters have been previously published as journal articles, one in the *Journal of American History.* But it is impossible to avoid making invidious comparisons with two books that do so much more to examine the sources of Southwestern insurgency.

The first problem is the disjointed structure Burbank employs. In his effort to avoid being merely narrative, he tells the reader too little about the nitty-gritty history of Oklahoma Socialism. He mentions key figures and episodes in passing, but unless one is already very familiar with the topic, one is left to wonder about their importance. For example, on page 135 there is this sentence: "It was after the defeat of the Socialist Party in 1914, when so many hopes had been raised by Fred Holt's proletarian campaign, that signs of frustration became more visible in the country neighborhoods." Who was Fred Holt and what was the proletarian campaign? The reader never learns.

In the second place it takes more than a ritual invoking of the name of E. P. Thompson in one's introduction to be able to write the kind of history in which culture is seen as a resource, to use Herbert Gutman's phrase. In *The Making of the English Working Class* Thompson wrote one of the most influential books to be published in the mid-twentieth century. It was his peculiar contribution to see class as a process rather than a structure, with cultural as well as economic components. On this side of the Atlantic Herbert Gutman has pioneered a Thompsonesque approach to both black history and labor history, in which he looks at the cultural resources of groups that have traditionally been regarded as society's victims.

Both Goodwyn and Green bring this perspective to their histories of Southwestern insurgency. Depicting Texas as the seedbed of Populism, Goodwyn explores with loving attention the movement culture that lay at the base of Populist politics. He describes, for example, the fashion in which the Farmers' Alliance became a way of life for hard-pressed Texas farmers and created a context for militancy. Similarly, Green describes Socialist en-

campments in Oklahoma that were part social event and part stirring political occasion. People like Eugene Debs, Mother Jones, and Kate Richards O'Hare could always draw a crowd in the Sooner state.

Burbank says nothing about this kind of ferment. When he discusses the culture of Oklahoma's rural poor, it is primarily to document its inadequacies. Now one can certainly admit that there was racism in the state, even among the Socialists. It is also true that fundamentalist Christianity and Marxism may be an uneasy mix. Nonetheless, the strength of Socialism in Oklahoma was remarkable—nowhere was there a bigger per capita membership in the Socialist Party—and one needs to explain that phenomenon *before* dealing with the Party's eventual collapse. However antithetical the gospel and socialism may be in any ultimate sense, they co-existed remarkably well for a time. Why? Only when one has analyzed the local culture for the sources of insurgent spirit can one logically proceed to deal with the culture's inadequacies.

Yet another problem with the book is Burbank's failure to discuss the connection between Populism and Socialism. Because he begins only in 1910, he avoids the necessity of confronting this issue squarely. This is a serious omission. One wants to know the extent to which Oklahoma Socialism had indigenous roots. If it can be demonstrated that Socialism was the direct offspring of disaffected former Populists, this would be an important piece of evidence. (Green contends that former radical Populists were important in building Socialism in the Oklahoma Territory but not quite so important as the traditional accounts suggest. Green, page 29).

Nonetheless, Burbank's work confirms the importance of local, state and regional history. We now realize that there are many questions about the nature of social change that cannot be adequately addressed if the unit of analysis is as large and heterogeneous as the entire United States. Rather than taking an antiquarian approach, Burbank asks some of those questions and in so doing advances the state of Oklahoma historiography, which all too often has been parochial in the extreme.

GLENNA MATTHEWS
Oklahoma State University

NHS ARCHIVAL ACQUISITIONS

"Sierra House" Photos

To make way for another Reno high-rise, the "Sierra House," an ageing downtown rooming house located at 421 Sierra Street, is scheduled to be moved from its current location to an undetermined site. A call went out for information and photographs which would shed some light on the history of the impressive two and one half story structure. In response, Joann A. Trosi of Reno donated ten fine exterior photographs of the Mt. Rose Hospital, as the structure was known between 1914 and 1922.

Operated by Sarah A. Hegarty, a former nurse at St. Mary's Hospital, the building at the time of the hospital opening was only seven years old. From all indications, Jack E. Davis, proprietor of the Mecca Saloon, a gambling establishment on Virginia Street, had the residence constructed in 1907 next to other houses he owned on Granite (now Sierra) Street. By early 1914 the property and building had changed hands, probably as a result of Davis' declining fortunes following the outlawing of gambling in Nevada in October, 1910.

Miss Hegarty (after 1920 Mrs. George Trosi) maintained the operation classified "as a strictly surgical hospital" for nine years. An additional wing on the north side of the building was added to house the many patients utilizing the facility. According to Joann Trosi, Sarah died in the mid-1920s leaving her husband the property and structure which, despite numerous changes of ownership, has ever since served as an apartment dwelling.

Virgin Papers

Agnes Train Janssen of Salem, Oregon has significantly enhanced the Society's manuscript and imprint collections with her recent donation. Included in the gift are papers of Daniel Webster Virgin, Douglas County attorney and former District Judge, as well as some correspondence to his son, William T. Virgin, regarding matters in the Silver-Democrat Party. A rare imprint entitled "Report Relating To Finances of Douglas County From Its Organization to January 7, 1867," is in the D. W. Virgin materials. Agnes Janssen, the former wife of Nevada botanist Percy Train and author of *Nevada Through Rose-Colored Glasses,* discovered many of the items donated to the Society in Genoa's famous "Pink House," where she and her husband lived some forty years ago. Virgin lived in the house from 1884 until his death in 1926. Our thanks to Mrs. Janssen.

The "Sierra House"

Emory Willard Smith Photo Negatives

Over the last two years, the Society's Tonopah photograph collection has grown by over three hundred photos. Now the NHS has acquired twenty-eight of professional photographer E. W. Smith's original glass and film negatives from James King of Albuquerque, New Mexico. Mr. King, Director of Weapons Electrical Subsystems for the Sandia Corporation, and an avid amateur photographer, purchased the negatives from an antique dealer while in Tonopah in 1970. Since that time, Mr. King has made a number of fine photographic prints from the negatives, and recently paid tribute to E. W. Smith with a photo exhibit at the Sandia Laboratories in Albuquerque.

Born October 1, 1850 at South Deerfield, Massachusetts, Emory Willard Smith spent his youth in the vicinity of his New England birthplace. Choosing photography as a profession early in life, young Emory attended a trade school which specialized in the rapidly expanding craft. One of his classmates (and a close friend, according to Smith's obituary) was George Eastman—referred to as E. K. Eastman in the death notice—who later became famous as the founder of the Eastman Kodak Company. Smith told his friends, wrote the *Tonopah Daily Times-Bonanza,* that "he chose to follow the 'wet' process while Eastman chose the 'dry'." The young photographer's decision was apparently a fateful one. While Eastman went on to amass an immense fortune as a leading innovator in the photographic field, Smith,

after some sixty years in the profession, would die in virtual obscurity and practically penniless.

Nonetheless, Smith upon graduating from the photo trade school thoroughly believed the "wet" process was the technical direction to follow. After experimenting with the process for a number of years in the East, he decided to go West and test his luck. Following the fast-moving mining frontier for many years, and practicing his profession with only limited financial success at best, Smith joined the Klondike gold rush in 1898. For three years he remained in the northern territory. The now-famous Dawson City photographer, E. A. Hegg, and Smith worked together to produce some of the finest photographs of the Klondike rush.

Shortly after the turn of the century, Nevada's deserts held out the allure of instant wealth, and E. W. Smith heeded the call to the West's newest mining frontier. Early 1902 found the itinerant photographer opening a studio on the main street of the booming Nye County town. Now fifty-one years old, the "wet" process photographer would spend his final years photographing the country's last great mining rush.

Prior to his death on September 19, 1941, Smith had produced literally thousands of photographs depicting Tonopah, Goldfield, and their environs. His most active years appear to have been between 1902, when he first arrived in the fledgling silver camp, and the early 1920s, when Tonopah as a result of the Pittman Silver Act and the Divide boom showed signs of regaining its former glory. The subjects and scenes in his photos include almost every facet of community life. Miners and mining engineers, gamblers and mining entrepreneurs, prostitutes and ladies, all found themselves the objects of Smith's roving camera. No event of any consequence in the area escaped the eye of Tonopah's leading photographer.

Unfortunately, E. W. Smith's photo collection did not remain intact. He gave many of the prints away prior to his death, and the negatives which remained in his residence on Bryan Avenue disappeared over the years. The Society has made a concerted effort to reconstruct the collection, and thanks to generous people such as Mrs. Hugh Brown and Jim King our task has met with a considerable measure of success.

NHS NEWS AND DEVELOPMENTS

The Society and the Legislature, 1979

Despite an economy-minded Governor and Legislature, the programs recommended by the staff and trustees were largely approved. Improvements to staff salary levels were authorized, and brought average pay scales more in line with similar institutions. Funds for operating the various programs of the Society were kept quite limited, particularly travel authorized for staff to provide service and assistance throughout the state. Both these areas will become critical by the 1981 session. However, the badly-needed environmentally controlled storage facility for archival and relic items was approved. A fund of $577,000 was granted for the construction of a 10,000 square foot structure to be located immediately north of the existing museum in Reno. This will provide the finest repository for the storage of artifact materials in the state. The Society contributed $50,000 toward construction costs from its endowment. Also approved by the Legislature was the program to protect older and deteriorating photographs. These will be isolated and removed from public use; copies and negatives will replace the originals. A secondary microfiche system for scanning the photo collections is being discussed and evaluated.

Eslie Cann Retires

Mrs. Cann, who is probably the best-known member of the NHS staff because of her services to patrons and researchers, will be retiring sometime during the summer. For the past thirteen years, she has assisted researchers in the location of elusive bits of information necessary for their projects. Often her intuition and expertise have saved months of individual digging among the sources, particularly in the photo collections, which she organized and knew with uncanny recall. Both the staff and patrons will miss her cheerful and knowledgeable help in satisfying their inquiries.

Department of Museums and History

The recent legislative session saw the creation of a new department of state government which will include both the NHS and the State Museum. A department administrator and assistant are authorized as the initial staff. Developments regarding the department will be passed on to the membership when they are available.

The Las Vegas Office

A Southern Nevada museum costing $2,700,000 has been authorized for the Las Vegas area by the 1979 legislature. The probable location is Lorenzi Park. It will be administered by the State Museum, and plans call for 1981 as a completion date. There is provision for approximately 2,500 square feet of administrative and storage space in the structure for the NHS Las Vegas-based staff. Completion of the structure will ease the present space crunch of the Southern Office, and provide adequate room for the education, publications, and other programs conducted from Southern Nevada.

Newspaper Indexes and Historic Sites Inventories

By October first, the following projects should have reached these limits:

Las Vegas Age: indexed 1905 to 1939.
Territorial Enterprise: indexed 1859 to 1868.
Pioche Weekly Record: indexed 1872 to 1905.
Nevada State Journal: indexed 1863 to 1875, and 1880 to 1883.
Clark County Historic Sites Inventory, complete.
Washoe County Historic Sites Inventory, 60% complete.

NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FOUNDED IN 1904, the Nevada Historical Society seeks to advance the study of the heritage of Nevada. The Society publishes scholarly studies, indexes, guidebooks, bibliographies, and the *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*; it collects manuscripts, rare books, artifacts, and historical photographs and maps, and makes its collections available for research; it maintains a museum at its Reno facility; and it is engaged in the development and publication of educational materials for use in the public schools.