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NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

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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Portraits from an Antique West

WILBUR S. SHEPPERSON

THE OLD WEST HAS BEEN so thoroughly analyzed, evaluated and studied that further comment may only cloud our appreciation for a well-worn historical tapestry. And yet, the horse thief pictured on the wanted poster, the prostitute with a heart of gold, the shanty saloon selling cheap red eye are simplistic motifs which continue to propel the grand and elusive legend. During the last two decades scholars have attempted to fit the Old West into a manageable and digestible corner of Americana, but thousands of aficionados from around the world have continued to insist on the more romantic and traditional media-nurtured image. Rough-cut cowboys and mustachioed cattle barons, prairie farmers and mining tycoons, scalawags and degenerates still provide a glamor, a drama and a folklore that has generally resisted the academic attempt to synthesize and depersonalize. Unfortunately the Old West has also often resisted being molded into either great literature or great history. It somehow remains a land of anecdotes, tall yarns and grand landscapes. Even occasional literary acclaim for a lyrical rendering of the frontier has not allayed the sentimental demand for the horse operas.

The Bristlecone Series presented by the University of Nevada Press comprises first person narrative accounts gleaned from this brief and engaging era. The four short memoirs* around which this essay is drawn were set in Nevada or the nearby Sierra between the 1860s and the 1920s. Three of the four accounts were written by women. Two of the authors were, or became, knowledgable students of western lore and two gained their education from the raw school of frontier experience. After presenting a sketchy personal background each autobiography focuses on a single poignant era in the author's life. For Martha Gally it was the ten years (1864–1874) of her central Nevada travail.[1] Emmett Arnold emphasized only the four years (1906–1910) in which he lived in Goldfield and other Nevada mining camps.[2] Sarah Olds concentrated on an eighteen year (1908–1926) period to portray life on a dusty homestead in northwestern Nevada.[3] Anita Aldridge

* A fifth Bristlecone volume comprises the reflections of Senator Thomas Fitch as he presented them in a series of articles for a San Francisco newspaper. Since the work differs from the other four in substance and form it is being reviewed separately.

[1] Marvin Lewis, *Martha and the Doctor: A Frontier Family in Central Nevada* (1977).

[2] Emmett L. Arnold, *Gold Camp Drifter, 1906–1910* (1973).

[3] Sarah E. Olds, *Twenty Miles From a Match: Homesteading in Western Nevada* (1978).

Kunkler concluded her personal reflections about life in the California hill country with her marriage at age eighteen in 1925.[4]

The reminiscences do not attempt mystery or suspense, analysis or annotation, popularization or pageant. Rather they recount both amusing and depressing experiences. The works have zest, not because of gunsmoke or Conestogas drawn in a circle but because of personal charm and authenticity. The vocabularies are vivid and quaint because the authors were there; the action is picturesque because it reflects a sense of the vanishing frontier, a bit of the fable that was western America.

Samuel Butler once mused that "God cannot alter the past, but historians can." But in reality the most telling part of any culture is not written down; rather, it is passed down from generation to generation. The legends of America must be acted out; they must become part of our contemporary invention, part of our rather limited frame of reference. Clearly western folk history is not set in the distant past, and yet it seems that centuries of cultural change separate us from its pristine simplicity. The Bristlecone reflections present a frontier in which the wooden shacks and red brick hotels not only were being built, but were already decaying; and the cowhands, wagon trains and shoot-outs were very real but somehow now seem inconclusive. It was a frontier in which settlers did not necessarily melt and blend into the natural surroundings, nor did they slowly and lovingly shape the land into a new tradition, forge a new character, or build a new civilization. Nevertheless, these slim books depict a frame of mind that our generation has been unable to reproduce. They recall an outlook that has disappeared from American life. They project a symbol that helped to shape American thinking for over a century. They tell of an Odyssey, of a visionary epic, of an elementary splendor, a past image which we paint of ourselves.

Certainly the virgin frontier land, which molded the psyche and symbolized the natural beginning of a new life, has within the last few decades become an uncertain reality—both the spirit and the landscape have faded. As we enter an era of nostagic regret when the old rural values seem to crumble, a new breed of pathfinders are appearing who search for a deeper and more serviceable frontier legacy. Our relationship to natural resources and the good earth is again becoming a considered fact of our national existence. Serious attention to the land, to the water and the sky is again a basic necessity for survival. The Bristlecone paperbacks, therefore, provide more than accounts of westering, more than deeds of courage and primitive struggle. We need to see them as more than a sentimental image in the popular memory.

By understanding western life before the sweeping industrialization

[4] Anita Kunkler, *Hardscrabble: A Narrative of the California Hill Country* (1975).

and the all-embracing technology of the twentieth century, our heritage can be made more relevant. The stories provide realism and perhaps help to suggest a simple formula for our physical and social regeneration. They allow us to study an age when the individual could not squarely pit himself against the environment; instead, to exist he was forced to blend into it. All of the accounts tell of continued adjustment, of personal survival, and therefore of human triumph. They show us how candid faith and stubbornness built self-sufficiency. The memoirs reveal a people not given over to the contemplative life. No one suggested the need for a monastery. In an age without heroes perhaps we can be fortified by their heroic, or at least their self-sustaining character.

In 1834 Martha James was born into a moderately wealthy and well-educated middle-class family of Zanesville, Ohio. Her brother became a Boston lawyer and married Lilla Cabot Lodge. Dr. James Gally, a twenty-five year old dentist from Wheeling (now West) Virginia arrived in Zanesville in 1852. Dr. Gally and Martha James were soon married and for some years enjoyed the good life while he performed as a dentist, a newspaper publisher and finally as a real estate promoter. Being anti-Negro and pro-South the Civil War tended to dislodge the Gallys, and with their two children they moved to a small Iowa farm in 1863. Once set adrift from the protective social order of Zanesville the Gallys, by their own admission, became "wandering citizens." They left Iowa for California in April, 1864, with $1,820, fifteen horses, three wagons and two cows. By the time they arrived in Austin, Nevada in October, Martha's confused feelings of fear, doubt and premonition had become disturbingly evident. The family decided to remain in the prosperous mining camp for the winter, but drifted to a nearby homestead in 1865. After less than a year on the ranch they returned to Austin and by December, 1866 were traveling the 110 miles south to the new mining district of Hot Creek. Martha was the first white woman to traverse Monitor Valley and throughout the next eight years was often the only woman to inhabit various isolated mining camps.

In the meantime Dr. Gally had stood unsuccessfully for the State Assembly and the State Senate on the "anti-Sambo" ticket; he had become a southern Democrat before leaving Ohio. As the Gallys moved about central Nevada, Martha found the social life almost intolerable and their financial conditions worsening to the point of near starvation. Although combatting disease, hunger, boredom and the doctor's long absences and incipient alcoholism Martha read Shakespeare, Plutarch, and other leading English and Classical writers, and both she and the doctor composed poems and supplied political columns for half a dozen newspapers as well as for local and family celebrations. In 1874 Gally staked a claim in a new district which he christened Tybo. It proved productive, he quickly sold his interests for $25,000

and the family, after a sojourn of ten years in the Nevada wilderness, moved on to California. Martha died three years later at the age of forty-nine. Martha Gally's *Martha and the Doctor* deals with her observations and evaluations of western life as seen from a Nevada campsite.

Emmett Arnold was born on a cattle ranch near Canon City, Colorado in the early 1890s. One of his childhood fascinations was speculating about the scars and bullet wounds his father had received in youthful clashes on the Missouri-Kansas-Oklahoma "middle border." But despite the contemporary excitement generated by Butch Cassidy, Kid Curry, Tom Horn and other badmen, many of Arnold's relatives were educational and professional leaders. Even his father had read law and provided Emmett with books by Cooper, Swift, Dumas, Kipling and other popular literary writers. At age fourteen Emmett boarded a train, avoided the conductor and embarked upon a brief career as a hobo and a ranch hand. He returned often, however, to visit his parents and it was not until 1906 that he followed an older brother to Goldfield, Nevada and to a new life in a mining boom town.

Being too inexperienced and too small for labor in the mines, young Arnold became the operator of a peanut-and-popcorn machine. Later he opened a messenger service which operated out of a cigar store, then he expanded to become a deliveryman for packages and flowers and finally provided an escort service for attractive prostitutes. As Arnold succeeded financially, he branched into other small business enterprises and soon became involved in prospecting schemes throughout Nevada and eastern California. And yet, simultaneously he joined the radical Western Federation of Miners. After some four years of moving from Pioche to Virginia City, Rhyolite to Ely, and after considerable thought about his future, Arnold decided to become a mining engineer. *Gold Camp Drifter* ends with Arnold leaving Nevada. He went on to earn college degrees in both the arts and in engineering, to study at the Sorbonne and at the National University of Panama, and to become the operator of copra and rubber plantations as well as an owner of banana boats. Sandwiched in between the business undertakings he was a hard-rock miner, oil geologist and intelligence officer in two wars. Arnold finally retired to become a citrus grower in southern Texas, but always gloried in being called by his Nevada nickname, "Dead Shot" and in being viewed as a wanderer and a "congenital rebel."

Sarah Thompson was born on an Iowa farm in 1875. As the youngest daughter in a family of nine, she cared for her parents until their death and in 1897 followed a sister to California. Sarah soon married Albert J. Olds of a well established and distinguished California family. But A.J. was sixteen years Sarah's senior and already ill with silicosis as a result of years in the mines. The family lived in various California, Oregon, Arizona and Nevada mining towns, and in 1905 with three children and no employment they

settled on a small plot of land on the outskirts of Reno. They did odd-jobs for people of the town and operated a small horse-drawn transfer company. After three years and much prodding from Sarah, the Olds family secured a dry and barren homestead thirty-five miles north of the city.

Albert had opposed the homestead idea from the first: "What in Hell could you do out there with a bunch of little kids?" (Olds p. 19). Sarah, however, was delighted by the prospect of again living on a farm. With a strong physique, a dynamic nature and an optimistic personality the ranching experience proved completely rewarding. Even while rearing six children, caring for a chronically ill husband and hunting sage-hens for food, she managed to "skip" across fields, "jump" ditches, "climb" barbed wire fences and at least, in retrospect, glory in the isolation and the basic human pleasures. Even minor details of the original journey to the homestead were recalled years later as though "every step [was] like a mile-post." Over the years Sarah and the children enlarged the rude cabin, planted fruit trees, drilled for water, acquired cows and built a schoolhouse. They thrived on hard work, on the adventure and misadventure of life in a desert waste. In 1926 the Olds family took over the operation of a dude ranch for women seeking divorces and in 1931 they left the Pyramid Lake hotel to retire in Reno. Albert Olds died a few weeks later, but Sarah was to live until 1963. *Twenty Miles From a Match* is a report on the making of a home, the cultivation of the simple virtues and the finding of happiness in a cabin a half-day's ride from the nearest neighbor.

In October, 1907 Sadie Aldridge of Shingletown, California gave birth to a daughter, Anita, her fourth and last child. The Aldridge family lived at Hardscrabble, a small rocky farm on Bear Creek in the mountains of eastern Shasta County. The Aldridges had for generations tested themselves against the harsh forces of nature. They had apparently followed the piedmont south from Maryland to North Carolina in the 1740s. They fought the plantation aristocracy in the Regulator movement of the 1760s and opposed the same patriots in the American Revolution of the 1770s. In the early 1800s they eagerly followed Daniel Boone's Wilderness Road into Kentucky and within another generation had pressed on to Missouri. In 1847 they crossed the prairies and the mountains and by way of the Oregon Trail arrived in the Willamette Valley. By 1862 they were again on the move and eventually settled in a pro-Confederate region of the rugged hill country between Mount Lassen and the Sacramento River.

Anita Aldridge grew up with little formal education or urban sophistication, but she was part of a people who were canny and resourceful, sturdy and self-reliant. They were friendly and hospitable, but rebellious and violently independent. Anita and her elderly father quickly developed a communion of spirit and a deep affection which shaped her early life. She ab-

sorbed his love of the wilderness, his inherent loneliness and his true backwoods hyperbole. *Hardscrabble* is poignant testimony to Anita's first eighteen years in this remote environment. Childhood stories of bullfights and cattle drives, purple shoes and curling irons, bears and snakes, end with the realization that her father was seriously ill and that her mountain wonderland was crumbling. The autobiography was ended with her marriage at age eighteen and with the death of her father a few months later.

Anita and her husband, Lloyd Kunkler, continued the family tradition of wandering as they shifted from community to community for the next forty years. Anita worked as cook, ranch hand, miner, sales person, fruit picker, smuggler of gold, transporter of moonshine, trainer of dogs, horse woman, bar operator, barber, milker of cows, welder in shipyards, and Indian doctor. She was given an award by United States Senator Clair Engle for being the best female operator of a crosscut saw in northern California, and at the time of her death she was writing articles on flying saucers.

History—or more precisely, a search for our past—has become a current trend. In times of uncertainty, stress or shock, we consciously or by instinct seek roots, seek credence, seek a mirror to reassure ourselves. Books which supply this deeply ingrained need of our psyche have in the late seventies become instant best sellers. Whether it is Barbara Tuchman's *A Distant Mirror* which allows us to contrast the calamitous 1300s with our own century, or Theodore White's *In Search of History* which provides us with an autobiographical record of historical events a generation ago, or Arthur Schlesinger's *Robert Kennedy and His Times* which reflects on the historic contributions of a single person, or Herman Wouk's *War and Remembrance* which explains a momentous experience in the lives of many older Americans, there is a fascination for extended vignettes and for the times and the people which we wish to remember. Although modest in focus the four reflections under study help provide us with similar useful glimpses into our past.

The Bristlecone volumes are highly personal, egocentric and genial. The authors note their own childish immaturity, their youthful uncertainty and the women emphasize a kind of feminine reassurance to be found in marriage. The views tend to be sentimental rather than romantic, individual rather than collective; a feeling of willful optimism is commonly projected. The books seem to instinctively reflect Justice Brandeis' sacred right—the right to be let alone. They all suggest strong and independent wills and people who relied little on the beneficient purposes of others.

Each account is replete with tales of difficult trips, worry, of hunger, of cold and finally of arrival at the cabin. The homestead or the mountain shack was generally viewed as "a durn fair place." But uncertainty and waiting

and wondering if and when the man would return was always a heavy feminine burden. Although most rural and frontier people early learned the dimensions of patience, the seeming purposelessness of life and the endless waiting often became a severe depressant. On a December Sunday in 1866, while waiting for her husband to return from a prospecting venture, Martha Gally noted, "We have read, talked and played and yet the day is dull, long and tedious" (Gally p. 89). Becoming more depressed she later declared, "We have passed a dull stupid day" (Gally p. 132). And even after longing for the liberation that summer was to bring she despondently wrote, "I hope we will never spend another Summer so undecided and aimless as this has been" (Gally p. 132). Nevertheless, most accepted the harsh and difficult, and sometimes near hopeless, position in which they found themselves. They prevailed; life seemed to offer no alternative.

The multiple themes most often reappearing in the memoirs deal with location, isolation and transience. In the Old West the landscape ruthlessly dominated physical activities as well as most mental reaction. But while it gained easy sway over the way of life it did not necessarily intimidate or destroy emotional sensitivity. If it sometimes eroded hope, bred anxiety and dulled the feelings, it also kindled the artistic spirit, and exhilarated and spawned a new determination. Despite the rocks, the dust, and the geographic seclusion, the Bristlecone authors repeatedly recall the "enchanting sounds" of the desert and the "bright blue of the sky lighted by the gorgeous hues of the setting sun" (Gally p. 133). In short, all were at times mystified by the "awsome indifference" of nature but all were exalted by its "grand magnificence." A more subtle paradox was the questionable response of man to man. All of the authors were disturbed by the ferocious clashes, the sudden outbursts of violence, the savage ruthlessness, the unbridled license, the "ghoulish man-made calamities." And yet the diarists instinctively gloried in portraying a people "rooted in the sullen rebellion of congenital nonconformity" (Arnold p. 2) who followed "the eternal dream of born boomers" (Arnold p. 88).

Although from different backgrounds, all writers suggest an interest, a respect and a concern for parents and ancestry. Each writer's national origins, early American experiences and migration patterns are used to project an uninterrupted family story. All authors interjected humor; they most often laugh at themselves; they note their own erratic and childish behavior. While all left home at an early age, parents and family made an indelible impression on them. For most, the father or husband-father image was predominant. But it was the mother who insisted on organizing a local school. And both male and female became excited by technological progress such as an improved kerosene lamp, a ride in a Model T Ford, or the building of a railroad.

None of the authors was outwardly religious. None regularly attended Sunday services, nor did they help to establish formal church organizations. Some were pointedly anti-religious; even the power of prayer was sometimes questioned. "Talkin to your grub . . . beggin to some . . . Supreme Being [is] hog wash" (Kunkler xxxv). All seemed to ignore minor infractions of the law. Shooting game out of season, making moonshine, abetting prostitution, betting on horse races, highgrading and smuggling gold were practices readily accepted. However, all stressed "western honesty" which was defined as manly courage, neighborliness, and assisting a friend in distress. All were critical of receiving charity. "I never bummed a meal or panhandled a dime" (Arnold p. 48). And "her children did not fail her by accepting outside help" (Olds p. xii). Nicknames were highly prized. "Dead Shot" Arnold, "Singleline" Gally, "Wild Hog Att" Aldridge and "Scrub" Aldridge Kunkler were proudly recalled in the reflections. All were enchanted by story tellers and spellbinding talkers. All admired the vital, spontaneous and rambunctious. All of the memoirs sometimes verge on fiction and engage in caricature.

The writers observed and sometimes discussed the large number of European and Asiatic immigrants rushing into the West. They dealt with sickness, disease, suicide, the frequency of injury and the high death rate. The drifters, village idiots, and local figures of rumor and mystery were particularly intriguing. Goofy Frank, Old Thad and other solitary, confused, or demented individuals fired the imagination and struck concern in the hearts of most families. Everyone noted Indians, floods, exuberant celebrations and excessive drunkenness. And they viewed an excursion to San Francisco as a never to be forgotten experience; the city was "the anteroom to heaven" (Arnold p. 171) for those of the hinterland.

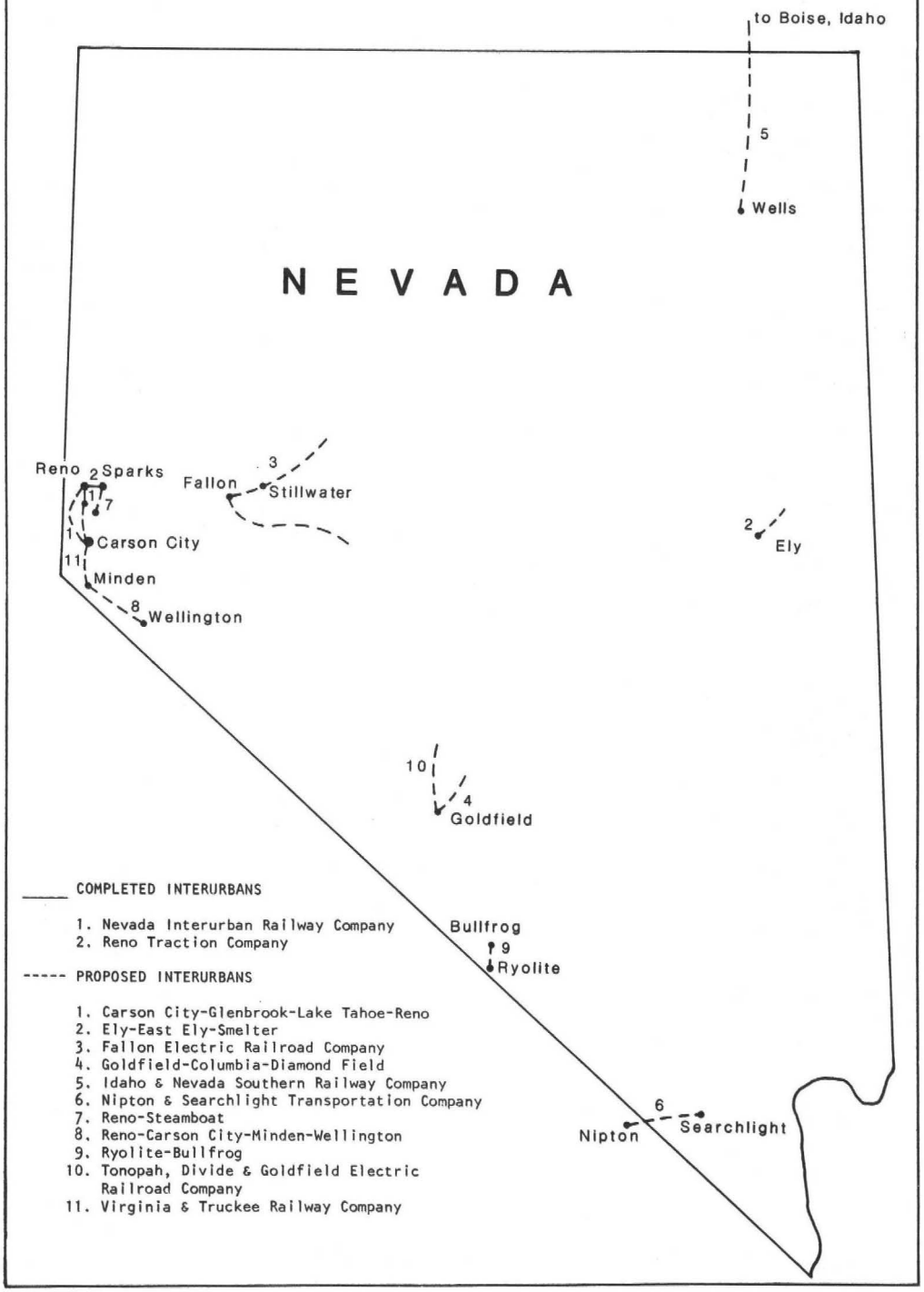
Certain subjects were never alluded to and were apparently beyond the consciousness of the authors. Class bitterness, burdensome taxes, corrupt administration of justice, bureaucratic governments, rural inferiority, and sharp competition attracted almost no attention. In short, the organizational, production and employment problems of craftsmen, tradesmen, laborers and farmers were not considered. No one suggested that they were populists and possessed primitive virtues unadulterated by the venality of the urban world. No group believed that it was a uniquely cohesive force binding the country together. No one saw himself as a peasant, or socialist, or as a spiritual force possessing an unusually pure or particularly patriotic character. None of the authors worried about women's rights, equal opportunity, racial minorities or the mental or physical afflictions of the handicapped. (Such esoteric calamities as overpopulation, pollution, terrorism, energy shortages and urban blight were not yet part of the western lexicon.)

None of the narratives was an investigation of character, none was an

exercise in the use of language, none attempted satire, none sought the truly unique or unprecedented. No one prophesied for future generations; no one presented a new philosophy, envisaged a new freedom, called for a new economic order, or marched to the beat of a new political drum. The authors were not unusually stalwart people who proudly knew and understood their own minds. They were not engaged in defending convictions or traditions. They were reinforced by necessity rather than being galvanized by strong commitment. They were interested in surviving and enduring.

All authors tended to give more to life than they asked from it; all recognized and confronted Western instability; all benignly faced constant uncertainty; all bore the anguish of repeated failure. And perhaps more revealing, all were genial and humane; they did not consider their personal struggle to have heroic dimensions, and they showed no inclination to turn inward and indulge in self-pity.

PRINCIPAL INTERURBAN RAILWAY PROJECTS



The Unbuilt Interurbans of Nevada

H. Roger Grant

Early in the twentieth century "interurban fever" spread rapidly throughout America. This was the era of the newly perfected electric traction railroad. As novelist E. L. Doctorow vividly recounts in his recent best-seller *Ragtime*: "Tracks! Tracks! It seemed to the visionaries of that day that the future lay at the end of parallel rails. There were long-distance interurban railroads, laying their steel stripes on the land, crisscrossing like the texture of an indefatigable civilization."[1]

As the result of improved technology and a healthy national economy, intercity electric mileage exploded after the Spanish-American War. While less than one thousand miles existed in 1897, that total soared a decade later to more than 10,000; the country's interurban network peaked at slightly over 15,000 miles in 1915. Electric lines laced large sections of the nation, especially in New England and the Old Northwest. In fact, Ohio and Indiana became the heartland of "compressed air." With lines radiating out of all the large- and medium-size cities, their respective traction maps resembled plates of wet spaghetti. Yet, electric roads appeared in more remote sections of the country. For example, interurbans connected such isolated communities as Warren and Brisbee, Arizona, and Sheridan and Monarch, Wyoming.[2]

The popularity of electric traction is understandable. If a community or region lacked adequate steam rail service, an interurban could solve the problem. Traction routes would allow farmers, miners, and others convenient access to the socio-economic opportunities offered by urban centers, and these communities could thus profitably tap a larger trading area. When in operation electric lines maintained frequent passenger schedules, often hourly, rather than one or two times a day as did the steam roads. Moreover, interurbans, unlike steamcars, would stop at farmsteads, village crossings, or virtually anywhere. Interurbans were clean. They produced "no cinders, no

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[1] George H. Gibson, "High-Speed Electric Interurban Railways," *Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution* [1903] (Washington, D.C., 1904), p. 311; E. L. Doctorow, *Ragtime* (New York, 1975), p. 80.

[2] George W. Hilton and John F. Due, *The Electric Interurban Railways in America* (Stanford, 1960), pp. 3, 186–87.

The first time "interurban" appeared in a trade publication was 1893 when the *Street Railway Journal* (August 1893) used the word to describe a recently completed six-mile trolley line between the New York state communities of Buffalo and Tonawanda.

dirt, no dust, no smoke." And they were potentially fast. If the roadbed and operating conditions allowed, an electric car could accelerate within seconds to sixty or more miles per hour. Interurban operators, particularly in the Old Northwest and the trans-Mississippi West, regularly entered the trolley-freight business; they provided service to customers who perhaps heretofore lacked a rail link. The traveling and shipping public also liked the usually less expensive rates for passenger, express, and freight traffic. This was especially appreciated after years of widespread discontent with high and arbitrary steam railroad and express company charges. Of course, this new mode of transportation, with all of its advantages, was most popular because the horse-drawn buggy and wagon offered limited range. Even with the coming of the automobile and truck, highway travel remained primitive. It would take years for the good-roads movement to succeed in lifting the nation out of the mud and dust.

Less obvious to most citizens, yet readily apparent to traction promoters, were the ways to profit from the interurban phenomenon. Surely, electric railway stock would advance rapidly in price and presumably pay regular and handsome dividends. There also existed the financial windfalls from the sale of electricity to commercial and residential users along the routes. After all, electric power had to be generated and transmission lines and sub-stations built. Moreover, the opening of a traction road caused land prices to increase, even soar, often to the personal benefit of the backers. The possibilities of easy access to jobs made housing along these arteries desirable.

From an operating point of view, additional profits could be realized. When compared to steam, electric equipment required less expenditures. Traction cars and locomotives contained fewer moving parts than did the "iron horse;" they boasted a much simpler and hence more easily repairable design. Electric rolling stock required neither coal nor water and lacked fires to be banked and ashes to be removed; therefore firemen were not needed. Crew sizes generally were much smaller for interurbans—only a "motorman" and conductor—rather than the four or five employees demanded for a similar steam train.[3]

At first glance Nevada did not seem to offer a conducive environment for electric railways. Its population was only 42,335 in 1900. In fact, Nevada

[3] Hilton and Due, *The Electric Interurban Railways in America*, p. 8; "The Farmer and the Interurban," *Street Railway Journal*, Vol. XXVIII (October 6, 1906), p. 497; Charles B. Clark, "Electric Roads for Rural Districts," *The Breeder's Gazette*, Vol. XXII (August 24, 1892), p. 115; Guy Morrison Walker, *The Why and How of Interurban Railways* (Chicago, 1904), pp. 3–4; H. Roger Grant, "The Excelsior Springs Route: Life and Death of a Missouri Interurban," *Missouri Historical Review*, Vol. XLV (October 1970), p. 40.

was the lone state in the Twelfth Census to suffer a population loss, declining 10.6% from its 1890 total. Moreover, the 1,750 route miles of steam railroad trackage appeared adequate; indeed, Nevada enjoyed the distinction of having more railroad mileage in proportion to population than any other state. Of course, too, the physical terrain posed serious obstacles to the interurban builder. The need to conquer vast deserts and mountains significantly escalated construction and maintenance costs.[4]

Nevertheless, interurban promoters found the Sagebrush state attractive. Their interest can be attributed to more than the widely-held notion that electric railways were the "latest harbingers of a higher state of civilization" and the all-pervasive optimism of the new century. Nevada showed signs of major growth. For one thing, a second great mining boom that started about 1902 helped to rouse the state from more than two decades of economic stagnation. Not only did thousands of gold and silver miners pour into the Tonopah, Goldfield, and Bullfrog districts, but copper became king after 1908 when White Pine County diggings entered full scale production, bolstering population there immensely. Irrigation efforts, too, seemed to portend well for the state. For instance, the nationally famous Truckee-Carson project, begun in 1903, offered the possibility for the agricultural development of huge tracts of heretofore unutilized land; it would theoretically attract tens of thousands of plowmen. By 1911 one Nevada journalist beamed about this agricultural spurt: "Never in the history of Nevada had there been such an influx of colonists and homeseekers as at present. Hardly a week passes but what some of the state papers chronicle the coming of new settlers from various parts of the union to acquire land in Nevada."[5]

Between 1906 and 1919 eager interurban promoters in Nevada sought to tap potential patrons, namely miners and farmers, by proposing to open more than four hundred miles of electric lines in nearly a dozen and a half separate, albeit unrelated projects. The majority were designed to serve communities in the mining counties. In 1906, for example, a South Bullfrog capitalist revealed his plans for a twenty-mile electric road between his home community and the mineral boom town of Ryolite. Even the state's last interurban proposal, the Tonopah, Divide and Goldfield Electric Rail-

[4] *Thirteenth Census of the United States, Vol. III, Population, 1910* (Washington, D.C., 1913), p. 74; *First Annual Report of the Railroad Commission of Nevada* (Reno, 1908), p. 5.

Interest in traction began at an early date in Nevada. The *Street Railway Journal* for September 1892 discussed the incorporation of the Reno Electric Railway & Land Company. Capitalized at $200,000, the firm "will build and operate electric railroads and street railways and purchase land in Nevada and California."

[5] Russell R. Elliott, *History of Nevada* (Lincoln, 1973), pp. 210–15; *Churchill County Eagle* (Fallon, Nevada), April 8, 1911.

road, appeared in the western mining belt. This 1919 project sought to connect the first two settlements of the road's corporate title, a distance of six miles.[6]

Although Nevada traction efforts lagged behind similar ones in the East, their average length was typical of interurban proposals of the day, about thirty miles. The shortest were the two paper roads that actually became reality, the Nevada Interurban Railway and the Reno Traction Company. Best classified as "rural trolleys," the former covered the 3.5 miles between Reno and the Moana Hot Springs while the latter connected Reno with Sparks for a total of 4.5 miles. The longest was the proposal made in 1908 and spearheaded by Boise, Idaho businessmen to link Twin Falls with Wells, Nevada. Their projected 114 mile Idaho & Nevada Southern Railway would traverse about seventy miles of Elko County. Sagebrush State residents also learned of another sizable project the same year: efforts to electrify about forty-five miles of the Virginia & Truckee Railroad. Specifically, this steam carrier considered installing an overhead trolley in Reno and a third rail system on the remainder of its main stem to Carson City. The latter would also be used on the fifteen-mile branch from Carson City to Minden, a line opened in 1906.[7]

A classic illustration of the unbuilt interurban is the saga of the Fallon Electric Railway Company. Organized officially on May 27, 1913, by Churchill County investors, led by physician Dr. C. A. Hascall, the plan proposed to build initially from Fallon "in a general southerly direction to Harrigan, Churchill County, Nevada, also to run from a point at or near the City of Fallon in a general easterly direction to Stillwater, Churchill County, Nevada." Later these traction promoters briefly considered another route that would run from Stillwater northeast for approximately thirty miles into the Dixie Valley, on the east slope of the Stillwater Range. The road's backers, however, entertained more serious thoughts of their line turning east from Harrigan, seven miles south of Fallon, and crossing both the Sand Springs Salt Flat and Sand Springs Mining District, terminating about thirty-eight miles southeast of the Churchill County seat.[8]

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[6] These totals are based on accounts in the *Street Railway Journal* and its successor, *Electric Railway Journal.* Because both trade publications took pride in the completeness of their reporting of all electric traction projects, the listings are highly reliable *Street Railway Journal,* Vol. XXVII (March 3, 1906), p. 38; *Electric Railway Journal,* Vol. LIV (August 30, 1919), p. 461. See also David F. Myrick, *Railroads of Nevada and Eastern California* (Berkeley, 1963), Vol. II, pp. 866–77.

[7] *Fourth Annual Report of the Railroad Commission of Nevada, 1911* (Carson City, 1912), pp. 265–66; *Electric Railway Journal,* Vol. XXXII (June 13, 1908), p. 104; *Street Railway Journal,* Vol. XXXI (March 21, 1908), p. 473.

[8] "Articles of Incorporation of the Fallon Electric Railroad Company," Churchill County Museum, Fallon, Nevada; *Electric Railway Journal,* Vol. XLI (April 19, 1913), p. 745; *Churchill County Eagle,* April 5, 1913; *Churchill County Standard* (Fallon, Nevada), June 11, 1913; June 18, 1913.

Reno Traction Company, Reno, ca. 1915. (H. Roger Grant Collection)

The reasons for proposing the Fallon Electric interurban paralleled those that motivated other traction enthusiasts in Nevada and elsewhere. Residents of the rail-starved areas to the east and southeast of Fallon wanted improved transportation. Only the sixteen-mile Southern Pacific Company branch from Hazen to Fallon served the region; the SP's freight service was at best mediocre and passenger accommodations were no better. Travel over local roadways was even more dreadful, in part because of a shortage of rock and gravel. The county's expanding sugar industry badly needed to improve the movement of beets to processing plants. And some residents hoped that an electric rail artery would spur production of rich deposits of salt and borax as well as other minerals. Naturally, all traffic would be funneled through Fallon. As the *Churchill County Standard* remarked:

A big rich country to the south and southeast of Fallon only awaits the advent of cheaper and more rapid transportation for its development. The camps of Wonder and Fairview and innumerable undeveloped prospects are also handicapped by high freight rates from shipping quantities of ore that cannot be marketed. To these possibilities must be added the immense undeveloped resources of Lone, Lodi and Lower Reese River valleys. These districts are now being served, in part through Austin, but by the completion of the Fallon Electric they will be placed nearer in touch with the outside, both in point of distance and in time by routing their supplies via Fallon.[9]

[9] *Churchill County Eagle*, May 20, 1911; January 6, 1912; June 21, 1913; September 13, 1913; *Churchill County Standard*, September 18, 1912; January 26, 1916.

Determined to shatter the area's chronic isolation and to build Fallon into more than a town of 1,625 residents and, of course, to profit personally, the interurban backers eagerly peddled the company's securities. Although the road issued $500,000 of capital stock (divided into 10,000 shares at a par value of $50 each), the cash amount investors initially paid into its coffers was modest. Only $18,000 was on hand by summer 1913, and Dr. Hascall had contributed most of that. He owned 318 shares, which represented a commitment of $15,900.[10]

The poor showing of security sales is related to several factors. The national fascination with traction schemes had cooled by 1914; the great boom occurred earlier, namely between 1901 and the Panic of 1907. Admittedly, the West experienced a delayed interest in "compressed air" projects, but for outside or "foreign" investors the risks semed higher there, particularly in such a remote place as the high desert country of Nevada. Churchill County's puny population, 2,811 in 1910, greatly limited opportunities for local stock subscriptions. Two additional events seemingly produced a negative impact: the outbreak of the World War in 1914—the conflict badly frightened investors—and the appearance in 1916 of a sizable number of cooperative socialists at the newly formed "Nevada City" colony a few miles east of Fallon. The latter occurrence prompted the *Electric Railway Journal,* the premier trade organ of the interurban industry, to warn: "What sensible investor sinks money into an electric railway project so near a band of socialists? These are people who plan to capture Nevada for the likes of Debs. . . ."[11]

Perhaps because of the paucity of investment funds, the proponents of the Fallon Electric Railway Company formulated an imaginative way to construct their interurban on a "shoestring." The strategy was to spend the money nestegg for the necessary bridge and culvert work. With this accomplished, volunteer labor, largely from "on-line" agriculturalists, would do much of the grading for the roadbed. (These graders would likely receive company stock for their generosity.) The next stage would be for the firm to float bonds based on the physical improvements (bridges, culverts, and roadbed). These funds would be spent to acquire the steel rail, ties, rolling stock, and electric trolley wire. Bond monies, too, would pay for part of the actual assembly of materials. The company, moreover, would continue the philosophy of "self-help." Track and pole gangs would consist of volunteers or those willing to accept a combination of cash and stock for their labors.[12]

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[10] "Articles of Incorporation . . . ," *Churchill County Standard,* June 18, 1913.

[11] Hilton and Due, *The Electric Interurban Railways in America,* pp. 29–37; *Electric Railway Journal,* 1916 Supplement, p. 12.

For the leading account of Nevada City, see Wilbur S. Shepperson, *Retreat to Nevada: A Socialist Colony of World War I* (Reno, 1966).

[12] *Churchill County Eagle,* January 25, 1913; *Churchill County Standard,* July 14, 1915;

While clearly burdened, the builders nevertheless employed their overall strategy with some success. Rather than attempting the Fallon-Stillwater link, work commenced on the Fallon-Harrigan-Sand Springs route. By the winter of 1914–1915 the available funds and donated labor produced seventeen miles of graded roadbed that led from Fallon to "half way across the Eight Mile flat between here and the salt and borax deposits." Reflected one Fallon newspaper on this achievement: "In the face of tremendous difficulties, including a financial handicap, the showing is one that any man or set of men may well feel proud of."[13]

The locally-held expectation that "Fallon will be assured of additional fame as a railway terminal" soon faded, for the project stalled. Dr. Hascall, Churchill County's indefatigable interurban enthusiast, tried to re-energize the scheme when he persuaded R. W. Wiley, an Alaskan mining promoter and Portland, Oregon resident, to visit the Fallon property. Although Wiley "was much pleased with conditions as he found them and strongly impressed with the possibilities of the road," he failed to make a financial commitment.[14]

Churchill County's almost-interurban soon suffered what was probably its fatal blow. In late August 1916, the local press announced that Dr. Hascall, "everybody's friend and Fallon's consistent and persistent booster," had left the community. He moved to Montana to become a drug agent for the federal government.[15]

At least on paper the partially-built Fallon interurban refused to die. The *Electric Railway Journal* early in 1917 reported that "this company, which is building a line from Fallon to Sand Springs, 38 miles, states that during 1917 it expects to build a line from Fallon to Stillwater, 14 miles." And as late as August 1918, the semi-annual *McGraw Electric Railway List* duly noted the Fallon road, along with the state's two functioning electric operations, and stated that the Churchill County firm "expects to place line in operation during 1918."[16]

Although Dr. Hascall returned to Fallon, the roadbed never saw ties and steel. The press, apparently reflecting the local mood, ignored the project after 1917. A community failure was hardly the type of story booster editors wanted their readership to recall. The newspapers focused instead

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Electric Railway Journal, 1916 Supplement, p. 12.

The company apparently considered the use of "Edison Storage Battery Cars" rather than conventional interurban equipment. In this way the cost of an overhead trolley system could be avoided.

[13] *Churchill County Standard*, December 23, 1914.

[14] Ibid.; *Churchill County Eagle*, June 5, 1915; December 18, 1915.

[15] *Churchill County Standard*, August 30, 1916.

[16] *Electric Railway Journal*, Vol. XLIX (January 6, 1917), p. 58; *McGraw Electric Railway List* (New York, 1918), p. 93.

on efforts to build and maintain all-weather roads, especially the Lincoln Highway.

Although the probable impact on Nevada had these "paper" electric roads materialized ("counterfactual modeling") is beyond the pale of this study, the unbuilt interurbans reveal a largely forgotten dimension of the state's transportation history. The merits of the new intercity rail technology did not go unnoticed; Nevadans understandably responded to the interurban craze by not only proposing "hot-air" companies, but actually opening two small lines and constructing the roadbed of another. The interrelated factors of timing and the inability to attract capital largely explain why the state failed to see its electric dreams realized. Nevada schemes generally appeared too late. The twilight period from 1908 to World War I contained relatively few interurban success stories. By this time the wealthiest (usually Eastern) capitalists had often soured on such investments. Local funding proved woefully inadequate.

Undeniably, electric railways would have filled a transportation void in the Sagebrush State. But the likelihood of their being either long-lasting or profitable is doubtful. After the war, the national interurban mileage shrank rapidly when scores of electric carriers went broke. "Interurban fever" had passed forever. Perhaps residents were extremely fortunate that they failed to achieve their interurban plans. For as George W. Hilton and John F. Due, the leading students of the industry, have correctly concluded, "Few industries have arisen so rapidly or declined so quickly, and no important industry of its size had a worse financial record."[17]

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[17] Hilton and Due, *The Electric Interurban Railways in America*, p. 3.

One other interurban-like project experienced some physical development. Promoted in 1906–1907, the backers of the Riverside Railroad Company hoped to tie Reno with a future spa several miles to the west. Some grading occurred and piers for a Truckee River bridge were installed. Shortly before the scheme failed, the firm acquired a small steam transit locomotive rather than traction equipment. See Myrick, *Railroads of Nevada and Eastern California*, Vol. II, pp. 872–73.

The California-Nevada Boundary: The History of a Conflict. Part II

JAMES W. HULSE

V. *The Interests and Actions of Allexey Von Schmidt*

Sixteen days after George Davidson's letter referring to his "rapid field computations" was sent to Massachusetts, Allexey Von Schmidt, a resourceful resident of San Francisco, began the work contemplated by the General Land Office and the Act of Congress approved June 10, 1872, which appropriated $41,250 for a survey to resolve the discrepancies that were believed to exist in the Houghton-Ives line.[67] The background of Von Schmidt and his manner of surveying must be discussed in some detail, since they appear to be relevant to his findings.

Allexey Von Schmidt was a promoter and engineer who shared in the incorporation and development of the San Francisco City Water Works in 1857,[68] and he became a partner in the Lake Tahoe and Nevada Water Works Company in the 1860s. He tried unsuccessfully to persuade Nevadans to grant him a franchise and a monopoly to transport water from Lake Tahoe to the Virginia City region. When this failed, he formed a company called the Lake Tahoe and San Francisco Water Works in 1865 and filed articles of incorporation with the California Secretary of State. One of the purposes of the company was:

> To take the Waters of the said Lake Tahoe at or near its outlet known as the Truckee River and conducting the same through suitable canals, Tunnels, Flumes and Pipes (by the most practical route) to the City of San Francisco . . .[69]

Part I of this study appeared in the Summer, 1980 *Quarterly*, pp. 87–109.

67 U.S. Statutes at Large, XVII, Chapter 415, p. 358.

68 H. H. Bancroft, *Chronicle of the Builders of the Commonwealth* (San Francisco: History Company, 1892) Vol. 3, p. 211.

69 Certificate of Incorporation. Lake Tahoe and San Francisco Water Works. Filed in Office of Secretary of State of California. June 20, 1865. No. 5096. The details of Von Schmidt's plan are summarized in W. Turrentine Jackson and Donald J. Pisani, "Lake Tahoe Water: A Chronicle of Conflict Affecting the Environment–1863–1939," a type-written report reproduced

The plan to convey the water from Lake Tahoe to the Central Valley and ultimately to San Francisco was apparently introduced in the summer of 1865,[70] and the ambitious scheme was to be one of Von Schmidt's favorite projects for more than thirty-five years. He made significant efforts to have the plan approved in 1866, 1870–1872, 1875, 1877, 1879, 1887, 1890, and 1900. From the onset in the middle 1860s, his scheme aroused controversy in California and Nevada. Some Californians objected because of the cost of the project, and Nevada's public officials and newspapers generally criticized the plan on the ground it would divert water being used by Nevada's mills and ranches. In 1866, there was a sharp exchange between Von Schmidt and Nevada's Attorney General (G. A. Nourse) in the pages of the Sacramento *Union* over this dialogue. Von Schmidt asserted that Nevada was entitled to no more than one-third of the lake's water because only that amount of its surface was in that state:

> In reference to the rights of the two States in which Lake Tahoe is situated I think it would be well to consider their respective interests to the water in proportion to the respective portion of the lake in each State. One-third of the lake is east of the line dividing Nevada from California. The other two-thirds are in California as well as its outlet.[71]

In February of 1870, a state senator from San Francisco introduced a bill in the California legislature "to aid in providing a supply of fresh water from Lake Bigler or Tahoe, for the use of the inhabitants of the city and county of San Francisco." It provided that the Lake Tahoe and San Francisco Water Works Company would supply twenty million gallons of Tahoe water to the city daily, and it required a bond election to be held in San Francisco to ascertain whether the people would approve $10,000,000 in bonds for the company for the project.[72] The bill eventually died, but it provoked considerable controversy and commentary in the columns of the Virginia City *Territorial Enterprise,* Truckee *Republican,* Sacramento *Bee,* the San Francisco *Daily Alta Californian,* and other journals.[73] In the meantime, Cornelius Cole, Congressman from California, introduced a bill in the House of Representatives (S 572, 41st Cong. 2d Sess., Feb. 21, 1870) to accomplish the same purpose. This attempt also failed.

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by the Institute of Governmental Affairs, University of California, Davis, California. Environmental Quality Series No. 6. (February, 1972). Von Schmidt's activities are also summarized in a Master's thesis, George Reimer, "Col. A. W. Von Schmidt: His Career as Surveyor and Engineer, 1852–1900." University of California, Master's Thesis (1961).

[70] San Francisco *Call,* as cited in the *Sacramento Daily Union,* July 6, 1865.

[71] The remarks of Nourse are quoted in the *Sacramento Daily Union,* October 9, 1866, 2:2, and those of Von Schmidt in the same newspaper of October 15, 1866, 5:3.

[72] S.B. 346 (Betge), *California Legislature,* 18th Session, introduced February 14, 1870.

[73] Jackson and Pisani, op. cit., pp. 3–4.

Allexey Von Schmidt and his survey party admire the boundary marker at the south shore of Lake Tahoe in 1873. Von Schmidt is second from left with the dog.

Even though Von Schmidt failed in his attempts to get legislative and Congressional support for his plan, he made some progress later in 1870. He acquired title to some land at the outlet of Lake Tahoe and to 500 cubic second feet of water of Truckee River water, and he proceeded to erect the first timber-and-stone fill dam at the point.[74] He also apparently made a trip to Washington where he encouraged the passage of legislation favorable to his plan. Early in 1871, he was trying to sell LT & SF Water Works Company stock in Sacramento and was proceeding with his work at or near the outlet from the lake.[75]

Later that year, only nine months prior to the time when he entered a contract with the U.S. Government to survey the California-Nevada boundary, Von Schmidt published his definitive plan. A report to stockholders

[74] Edward B. Scott, *The Saga of Lake Tahoe*, (Crystal Bay, Nev.: Sierra Tahoe Publishing Co., 1957), Vol. I, p. 27. There are several references to the dam in contemporary newspapers in the early 1870s.

[75] One example of Von Schmidt's effort to sell stock in the "Lake Tahoe and San Francisco Water Works" may be seen in the *Sacramento Daily Union*, February 24, 1871, 2:5.

issued on October 1, 1871, mentioned two dams, one at the outlet of the Lake and another three-quarters of a mile from the outlet on the Truckee River, both of which had already been constructed. The first would raise the level of the lake by as much as six feet to store water for eventual diversion, and the second would divert the flow of the river into a canal for transportation by tunnel to the western slopes of the Sierra and to San Francisco.[76] Von Schmidt claimed title and ownership to the water by virtue of the Incorporation Laws of the State of California and by an Act of Congress passed on July 26, 1866 entitled "An Act granting the right of way to Ditch and Canal Owners, over the Public Lands and for other purposes." While he acknowledged that the right-of-way of his company over lands of the Central Pacific Railroad Company was incomplete because surveying had not been finished, he did not report any problem relative to the title of water. However, it seems evident that title to water outside the State of California could not have been conveyed by a California law, and it is obvious that it was not so conveyed by the federal statute which Von Schmidt cited. That statute, authored by Senator William M. Stewart, was designed primarily to protect the rights of miners already operating under local mining district customs and rules prior to the introduction of federal and state laws. The Section on which Von Schmidt was relying (Section 9, Chapter CCLXII, U.S. Statutes at Large, Vol. XIV, p. 253), was obviously intended to protect the vested rights to water in instances where mining, agricultural, and industrial uses had already occurred.[77] The Statute did not grant to Von Schmidt any right to the water which had been flowing into Nevada, nor did it convey to him any other right without the existence of a system for transporting it. Von Schmidt was clearly aware that the bi-state character of the lake and river system could have an effect on his claim to the water, but he did not mention it in his *Report*.

Von Schmidt promised his directors handsome profits from the water plan. He estimated the cost at more than $10,396,000, but he believed the net income would be more than $1,122,000 annually from the towns, cities, and mining districts that would be served in California. He predicted that the "mining ground" of Northern California, "with all the water that can be brought upon it or made available, cannot be worked out or exhausted in a hundred years."[78] His scheme was one of the most ambitious water projects conceived in the American West in the nineteenth century, and as chief

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[76] A. W. Von Schmidt, *Report to the Lake Tahoe and San Francisco Water Works Company . . .* (San Francisco: Alta California Printing House, 1871), pp. 3–6.

[77] U.S. Statutes at Large, Vol. XIV, Chapter 262, pp. 251–253.

[78] Von Schmidt, *Report to the Lake Tahoe and San Francisco Water Works Company, op. cit.*, p. 10–12.

engineer and primary promoter, he had an opportunity to obtain substantial wealth for himself, if only he could overcome the opposition of his critics on both sides of the Sierra and get control of the water.

There was another effort in the 1872 session of the California legislature to get legislative authorization for the Von Schmidt Tahoe plan. To overcome the opposition of some San Francisco Supervisors, a bill was proposed (Assembly Bill 263) in March to require the Supervisors to sign a contract with the Lake Tahoe and San Francisco Water Company. The bill went through several amendments, passed the Assembly, and eventually died in the Senate.[79]

Von Schmidt had only recently emerged from his 1872 efforts to get support for the Tahoe-to-San Francisco water system when he learned that the U.S. Government was going to let a contract for the survey of the California-Nevada boundary. On June 28, 1872, he applied to Willis Drummond, Commissioner of the General Land Office, for the contract to do the work. He claimed twenty-five years of surveying experience with the U.S. Government and credit for building the San Francisco Water Works, and he offered as references U.S. Senators Cornelius Cole and Eugene Casserley and Congressman A. A. Sargent and S. O. Houghton of California. He asserted that Senator Cole had endorsed his application.[80]

On July 1, 1872, Congressman A. A. Sargent wired Von Schmidt (in care of L. Stanford) with specific advice about how to get the contract:

> Work let by contract telegraph department your bid appropriation forty one thousand bid that if you want job.[81]
>
> A. S. Sargent

Von Schmidt wired a bid in that amount to Drummond on the same day.[82] It will be noticed that Sargent had advised Von Schmidt to bid $250 less than the amount of the appropriation. Eight days later, Sargent wrote a letter to Von Schmidt advising him that his contract would be mailed to him "in a day or two."[83]

see p. 107, part I

When Von Schmidt began to make preparations for his survey, he apparently did not have suitable equipment of his own, and on August 3, 1872

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79 Jackson and Pisani, *op. cit.*, pp. 10–11.

80 A. W. Von Schmidt to Willis Drummond, June 28, 1872, National Archives, RG 49, Div. E, K 5088. Other documents in the same record group show that Cole and Sargent supported the application. This is California Exhibit No. 70.

81 Sargent to Von Schmidt, manuscript Western Union Telegraph, July 1, 1872. California Exhibit No. 66.

82 Von Schmidt to Drummond, manuscript Western Union Telegraph, July 1, 1872. California Exhibit No. 71.

83 Sargent to Von Schmidt, July 9, 1872. California Exhibit No. 67.

he telegraphed Drummond asking him to arrange for the borrowing of an astronomical transit and zenith telescope.[84]

Between August 6, 1872, when Prof. Davidson reported his "rapid field computation" showing his determination of the 120th meridian, and August 10, when a story about Davidson's findings appeared in the *Daily Alta California*, a widely-read San Francisco newspaper, Von Schmidt probably learned of Davidson's work. It was reported in the *Alta California* that Davidson's observations and telegraph time measurements:

> . . . indicate that the boundary line between California and Nevada must be moved to the eastward; and that the determination of the One Hundred and Twentieth Meridian, by late observations is fully two miles in error. . . . This work has no connection with that contracted for by Col. A. W. Von Schmidt and was undertaken at the request of the California State Geologist and the Surveyor of the Fortieth Parallel Survey.[85]

Von Schmidt obviously attached great significance to the findings of Davidson, coming as they did as he was making preparations to set out for the field. Thus he resolved to use Davidson's information as a starting point for his work, although this ran contrary to his instructions from Washington.

The Special Instructions issued by the Commissioner to Von Schmidt, dated July 31, 1872, said:

> You are instructed to proceed to the field and commence operations at the initial point, at the monument already established at the intersection of the one hundred and twentieth meridian west from Greenwich with the Forty second parallel, by Daniel G. Major, Astronomer and Surveyor . . .

And the Special Instructions also contained another requirement, which Von Schmidt took to be contradictory:

> In determining the longitude on the line of the Central Pacific Railroad, you will use the most convenient station on said road, availing yourself to Telegraphic facilities for comparison of local time, with the astronomical station at San Francisco, or Salt Lake City as may be most convenient, these points are considered by the Department as well established in Longitude.[86]

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[84] A. W. Von Schmidt to Willis Drummond, telegraph, August 3, 1872, National Archives, RG 49, Div. E, K 10031. A subsequent letter, dated August 12, 1872, asked to borrow a meridian transit and a zenith telescope from the U.S. Corps of Engineers in San Francisco, "These instruments are the same formerly used by Lt. Ives and are not in use." Von Schmidt to Willis Drummond, August 12, 1872, National Archives, RG 49, Div. E, K. 12432.

[85] *Daily Alta California*, August 10, 1872, 3:2.

[86] A copy of the "Contract, Bond, and Sp'l instructions Gen'l Land Office, July 20 & 31, 1872. Willis Drummond, Commr. Allexey W. Von Schmidt Astronomer & Surveyor." is available from the National Archives, Record Group No. 49, Surveying Division "E". Surveying Contracts and Bonds File. Contracts with Commissioners of General Land Office. (Certified Copy). The contract is dated July 20, and the Special Instructions, containing the language quoted here, is dated July 31. That Von Schmidt received and knew of the Special Instructions is indicated in "Report. A. W. Von Schmidt." February 27, 1873, pp. 1–3.

Although the instructions were explicit about beginning at Major's corner and proceeding south, and determining the longitude on the railroad line for the purpose of information, Von Schmidt chose to ignore them, and to begin at Davidson's point for the intersection of the railroad and the 120th medidian. Obviously he made this decision very early in his work, for he telegraphed Drummond on August 13, 1872, for permission to proceed in this manner.[87] It will be remembered that Davidson had reported his "rapid field computation" only a week earlier, and there is no indication that he had been able to complete or verify it by the time Von Schmidt began his survey.[88] It also appears from a subsequent letter that Von Schmidt began his surveying northward from the railroad with the zenith telescope, but without the "other instrument," which he said he would not need until he reached the "lower part of the line."[89]

Von Schmidt had run his line northward about seventy miles to Smoke Creek on September 12, 1872, when he received a letter sent by Drummond from Washington approximately two weeks earlier with explicit directions to follow the initial instructions. Drummond admonished him not to rely upon Davidson's work but to make his own observations and deductions, so that he would be able to submit an appropriate affidavit of work done. A crucial paragraph in Drummond's letter was subsequently quoted in Von Schmidt's final report:

> There is no objection to your proposition to start from the Rail Road running thence to the intersection of the 120° North Latitude and correcting back but the determination of the starting point on the Rail Road must be from your own observations and deductions. *Major's corner however must be considered as the initial point of your survey, and the line is to be marked with consecutive* numbers of miles therefrom.[90]

Von Schmidt then proceeded quickly from Smoke Creek to Major's corner, discontinuing the running of the flag line. His account of his activities, once he arrived there, raises some puzzling questions:

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[87] A. W. Von Schmidt to Willis Drummond, telegraph, August 13, 1872, National Archives, RG 49, Div. E, K11437.

[88] In December, 1977, the Attorney General of Nevada received from the National Archives and Record Service a copy of the "Personal Equation between G. Davidson and P. R. Throckmorton, Aug. 1872, for application to Difference of Longitude, San Francisco, and Verdi, Nevada." National Archives, RG 23, AX (Astronomical Miscellany) Series File designation 941/1872, GA 1804. It is possible, but not certain, that these are the observations from which Von Schmidt worked. The observations recorded here were recorded on August 15, 16, 20, 21, and 24. This is obviously the "personal equation" which Davidson promised to send in his letter of August 6. It is highly unlikely that these observations can have been verified prior to Von Schmidt's adoption of them. The personal equations apparently were not received in Washington until February 21, 1873.

[89] Von Schmidt to Drummond, Sept. 12, 1872, National Archives, RG 49, Div. E, K 17345.

[90] Willis Drummond to A. W. Von Schmidt, August 29, 1872, from Letters Sent, General Land Office (National Archives), pp. 166–168. This paragraph is quoted in "Report. A. W. Von Schmidt," pp. 3–4. The italics is in the Report.

Arrived at Major's corner I proceeded with great care, and by numerous observations of Polaris to find the line of true meridian, using for that purpose both my Field Transit and the large Meridian Telegraph belonging to the United States Government.

The large Meridian Telescope I placed on the top rock of Major's monument, and after taking my observations, I laid the true meridian to the south by setting a small wooden pin on the ground, on which a flag was held for line, distant 34 chains, 94 links.[91]

In the first paragraph cited above, Von Schmidt appears to have meant "Meridian Telescope" when he said "Meridian Telegraph." Yet it is uncertain where he got this instrument, with which he presumably made his observations for the meridian at Major's corner. His letter of September 12, cited previously, said he had the zenith telescope but not the "other instrument" (i.e. the astronomical transit or the meridian transit) which he had previously requested. It is possible, of course, that the "other instrument" was brought to him in route, but this is not documented. Von Schmidt's report continues:

I did not take any observations for Latitude or Longitude at this point, my chronometer had received some severe shaking in being carried so many miles over a very rough country. I did not consider it reliable, and the fact of my having to recognize Majors corner as the initial point of my survey. I took it for granted he was correct, and that it would be useless for me to observe for either Latitude or Longitude.[92]

According to Von Schmidt's account, he began running his line southward on September 22, locating monuments every mile until he reached a point west of the line which he had previously run northward from Crystal Peak. He ascertained that his new line was three miles, twenty-four chains, fifty-one links west of the first line. Reasoning that his first survey line northward from Crystal Peak was the more accurate and that Congress intended the boundary to be on the 120th meridian, according to his Report, he once again ignored his instructions from the General Land Office, returned to the 42nd parallel, measured the distance eastward from Major's corner three miles, eighteen chains, and forty-three links (which he calculated to be the proper correction in view of the convergence of the meridians) and once again ran a southward meridian line. By doing so, he appears to have ignored the previous survey line established by Kidder and Ives a decade earlier. Von Schmidt reported the accuracy of his survey to have been proven by the fact that upon reaching Crystal Peak from the north, "I found

91 "Report. A. W. Von Schmidt," pp. 4–5.

92 Ibid., p. 5.

that this line ran over the same rail head from which I started the flag line north, demonstrating its correctness beyond doubt."[93]

Von Schmidt then conducted his survey southward from Crystal Peak, recognizing that he had run a line substantially different from that surveyed in 1863:

> At Lake Tahoe the line is 47 chains East of the old line formerly run by the State Authorities of California in 1863, and at Crystal Peak the line is moved 61 chains 15 links east of said old line.
>
> In conclusion I would state that the line, with but very few exceptions, runs over a most miserable and worthless tract of Country, and any change made from the line run in 1863 will make but a very little difference to either the State of California or Nevada so far as Taxable property is concerned.[94]

Von Schmidt mailed his report on the northern survey on February 22, 1873. Not all of the correspondence between Drummond and Von Schmidt which followed is presently available, but it is clear from the portion that has been obtained from the National Archives that Von Schmidt's procedures were the subject of criticism by the General Land Office. Von Schmidt sought payment late in 1872 for the portion of the work he had completed north of Lake Tahoe, and he solicited the assistance of his friend, Congressman Sargent in this matter. Sargent contacted the General Land Office to seek attention for Von Schmidt's request. On December 9, 1872, Drummond advised Von Schmidt that he should submit

> . . . evidences of the work accomplished by you consisting of the field notes of survey and maps, together with astronomical data on your observations and determinations of the 120 degree of West Longitude at Verdi and at the north East corner of the State of California as established by Astronomer Major, whereat you reported to have found the true meridian, and differing from that as determined by said Major.[95]

Another letter from Drummond to Von Schmidt, dated March 22, 1873, shows additional matters about which the General Land Office was uncertain. Von Schmidt's field notes, reports, and maps had been received by this time, but Drummond said he had not received "any data of your observations from which you say you deducted the results" of the Verdi observations.

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93 Ibid., p. 7.

94 Ibid., pp. 13–14. In the 1870 census, the community of Crystal Peak was in Nevada, with its residents listed on the Washoe County rolls. *Ninth Census, 1870.* Photographed in Microfilm Laboratory. Bureau of Census. Census of Nevada, pp. 458–459.

95 Drummond to Von Schmidt, December 9, 1872. General Land Office. Letters Sent. California Exhibit No. 28.

The terms of the contract require the same and they were indispensible—there is no astronomical data of determination except that of the Coast Survey, which you assume as your own but which, in fact, was obtained in June 1872, long before you started for the field. Although not in strict compliance with your contract, this office is willing to admit the Coast survey determination of the 120° Longitude west from Greenwich, West of Verdi, to be correct, but fails to find any evidence in your returns, that you have correctly established the boundary from the 42nd parallel south to the starting point.

There is no record of the time at which observations on the East and West alongations of Polaris have been made for the purpose of keeping yourself on the meridian nor do I find in your field notes any record of triangulation to the flag of Ft. Bidwell. This being a point astronomically established could have served you as a check on your work better than the rock on Mt. Bidwell. In fact a total absence of astronomical observations characterizes your work.

All these failures cannot be compensated, in the opinion of this office, by the assertion of an unprecedented accuracy in your flagging the line 170 miles and striking the same nail head from which you started the first flag line north. Your simple statement that the work is correct is not sufficient to satisfy the Department, it must be corroborated by evidence from which it can deduce the correctness of the line run by you over, as you state, such difficult country.

There are additional paragraphs commenting on the failure of Von Schmidt to report a triangulation connecting his points with Ft. Bidwell and the lack of astronomical data, and then another notable remark:

According to your description, the country over which you flagged the lines both north and south is very broken and in some places could not be chained; consequently, you may have possibly deviated from the meridian in flagging north 70 miles, and running your line south from Mr. Major's corner. In that contingency, your calculations of the difference between the two lines may be either less or more than 3 miles, 25 51/" chains, and if so your own monument on the 42nd parallel may not be in the proper place.[96]

On April 4, 1873, Von Schmidt wrote an eight-page letter to the Commissioner of the General Land Office, explaining his procedure and asking for $9,550 in payment for work done to date. This letter indicates he had doubts about Major's corner before beginning the line.

I took the liberty of adopting the Longitude of Professor Davidson at Verdi, because he had after a series of two months observations conclusively established the position of the 120° of West Longitude, and which fact your Department, I did not think was aware of at the time the contract was drawn.[97]

Although Von Schmidt had acknowledged in his report that he had re-

[96] Willis Drummond to A. W. Von Schmidt, March 22, 1873. General Land Office, Letters Sent, pp. 225–229.

[97] Von Schmidt to Willis Drummond, April 4, 1873, National Archives, RG 49, Div. E, K44615, p. 3.

ceived instructions to determine the meridian on the railroad from his own observations and deductions, he conceded that he had not done so:

> Professor Davidson being the same Astronomer who established the Longitude at San Francisco I presumed that when you became aware of his establishment of the 120° of west Longitude near Verdi, you would approve my adoption of his point, which I am pleased to see you have accepted, when I found he had established that point beyond a doubt. I did not consider it expedient to continue my observations for the same purpose.
>
> In regard to the method of establishing the true meridian at the point established by Dan'l G. Major, and at the point established by myself, as the northeast corner of the state, at the 42nd parallel of north Latitude, and the details of my observations of Polaris on the line run from Major's corner; on the true line run south from my own corner to the connection with my flag line; and from Crystal Peak to Smoky Creek, I have to state that I did not think it was requisite to insert in my field notes anything further than the true variation of the needle, in the same manner as ordinary work which I have heretofore done for your Department during the past 20 years, and I regret that I overlooked that I overlooked (sic) that part of your instructions which called for the minute details.[98]

And in a later part of the letter, he commented:

> In regard to the absence of astronomical work on the line, I found it would not help the line in the least, as I was running a true meridian from a point established by telegraph, and the observations if taken would have to give way to the observations by telegraph from which I was to correct. I cite the instance of San Francisco, which telegraphic communication has proved to be too far west three quarters of a mile, even after twenty years had been occupied in its determination. It could not therefore be expected that I could establish one end, or any portion of the line to astronomical observation and make it agree with Telegraphic observations.[99]

Under the terms of Von Schmidt's contract with the General Land Office, he was required to agree to and post a bond in the amount of $82,400 to assure fulfillment of all aspects of the contract. He therefore ran the risk of losing twice the amount of the original contract if his performance of his duty was found to be inadequate.[100]

A letter that Drummond sent to Von Schmidt in May of 1873, outlining his reservations and the rationale for payment, must be rendered in full:

Washington, D.C. May 1st, 1873
Department of the Interior
General Land Office

98 Ibid., p. 4.
99 Ibid., p. 6.
100 Contract, Bond, and Sp'l Instructions . . . , op. cit.; see footnote 86.

Alexei Von Schmidt Esq
U.S. Astronomer of the Eastern
Boundary of California
San Francisco, California

Sir:

Your letter of the 4th ultimo, transmitting details of observations taken by you of Polaris in running and marking the meridian line between the Lake Tahoe and the 42nd parallel of north latitude has been duly received.

This additional data should have been fortified by observations for correct determination of *time* from which you could have undubitably shown, whether or not, you had adhered to the 120th meridian West from Greenwich as determined not by yourself, as required by the terms of your contract but by Coast survey observations and deductions at a point 170 miles distant from the 42nd parallel of North latitude.

The method you have adopted for keeping yourself on the meridian as evidenced by the details of your observations, whilst it might be satisfactory in running a township and section lines, wherein departure from the true meridian would be limited by their short length, is not entirely adequate for a geodetic line of such distance and importance.

You should have noted and recorded the time at which your observations on the Eastern and Western elongations of Polaris were made, it would have furnished additional elements in testing correctness of the line surveyed and marked by you. As it is, the boundary now established rests on Professor Davidson's conclusive determination at Verdi of the 120th Meridian of West Longitude and your own flag line north therefrom and the true line checked by the observations on Polaris, and the boundary line as established and marked in the field by the joint commissioners of the States of California and Nevada in 1863.

The boundary marked on the face of the earth by joint commission as aforesaid is considered by this office as having been correctly run on a due north line, and although it is proved now not as near the absolute portion of the 120th meridian as the improved instruments and telegraphic faculties enabled Professor Davidson in 1872 to approximate to it, said boundary line furnishes you indirectly with an element to compensate for the paucity of astronomical data in your returns, and enables this office to overcome doubts as to the correctness of your survey.

In view therefore of the circumstances connected with the determination of this part of the Eastern Boundary of California and a thorough examination of your returns of the survey, I have this day approved the work and reported your account of $9,571.87 for 191 miles, 3 chs, & 54 lks to the First Comptroller of the Treasury for his decision thereon.

Respectfully,
Your obd't svt,
Willis Drummond
Commissioner[101]

[101] Drummond to Von Schmidt, General Land Office, Letters Sent, May 1, 1873. California Exhibits No. 29 and 97.

There were some oddities about the manner in which Von Schmidt marked the line. At the north shore of Lake Tahoe, he apparently removed a cut-granite monument that had been established by the Houghton-Ives party, changed the date carved on the monument from "1863" to "1872," and located it on his line. The California Surveyor-General in 1890 ascertained this fact:

> The granite post is the same block of stone which was set by Surveyor-General Houghton in 1863, but it had originally been set at a point about three quarters of a mile further west than that at which it now stands. The original figures 1863 have been changed to 1872.[102]

There is also a report in the *Nevada State Journal* on April 23, 1873 which indicates that during the previous week a 510-pound, eight-foot-high cast iron monument had been unloaded at Truckee, California, for shipment to the northeast corner of California. It reportedly bore the names of California, Oregon, and Nevada, the designation "1872. Longitude 120 degrees west of Greenwich," and the name of Von Schmidt. The monument reportedly was to be taken north by way of Jamison City, in Plumas county.[103] No evidence has yet been found to indicate that it was set in its intended position, and the disposition of it is unknown.

Von Schmidt's procedures were obviously at variance with the instructions he had received, and there were other irregularities and peculiarities in his survey of the oblique boundary. He did not begin this part of the project until early in 1873, and according to his report he placed a cast iron marker near Lake Tahoe on the oblique line; the later U.S.C. & G.S. Report expressed skepticism about this. Upon running the line to the Colorado River he found that the bed of the stream had changed so that the point which Lieutenant Ives had designated as the intersection of the 35th parallel and the river was no longer on the river. His own determination placed the point of the intersection at a distance of one mile, sixty-three chains from Ives' point, and Von Schmidt sought instructions from the General Land Office about which point to use as the southern terminus of the oblique boundary. He was instructed in a letter of October 22, 1873 to rely upon his own determination and survey, as that of Ives had never been returned to or recognized by the Department of the Interior. Since Von Schmidt had surveyed the line toward the original Ives marker and, as he reported, had run the line to within twenty chains, or one-quarter of a mile, of that point, a correct marking of the line would have required him to return along the

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[102] *Report of the Surveyor-General of the State of California, from August 1, 1888, to August 1, 1890.* (Sacramento: State Office, 1890), p. 16.

[103] *Nevada State Journal*, April 23, 1873, 2:2, citing the Truckee *Republican*.

400 miles of the boundary, moving his own markers southwesterly to designate the corrected line. This he failed to do, adjusting his markers only for about 130 miles along the line northwest of the Colorado River. The omission was not discovered until about twenty years later.[104]

It appears from an 1874 letter from Drummond to Senator A. A. Sargent that Von Schmidt himself must have had doubts about his survey of the northern part of the boundary within a year after Von Schmidt had been paid. Von Schmidt had written to Sargent inquiring about a possible resurvey of the California-Oregon line, and he had offered to re-run 100 miles of his survey of the California-Nevada line. Sargent had referred to the letter to Drummond, who wrote:

> 2. As to the matter of re-running of the 100 miles under instructions to Mr. Von Schmidt which he found to be 3 miles and 24 chs too far west, I have to observe that I do not exactly apprehend the meaning of your correspondent; why he should desire to re-run this 100 miles so to make it up on any other work I do not understand; it may be possible that ha (sic) he entertains some doubt as to the correct establishment by him of the monument at the intersection of 42° parallel of north latitude with the 120th meridian west longitude from Greenwich.
>
> The recent returns of the Survey made by Astronomer Major of the Northern boundary of Nevada afford an element of a possible doubt as to the former determination and establishment by Mr. Von Schmidt of the monument 3 miles and 24 chs east of this one which had been erected by Major in his survey of the Northern boundary of California. Should this circumstance have raised the anxiety of Mr. Von Schmidt on this subject and he desires to re-run the said 100 miles in order to satisfy himself that his work is correct, in advising this office of his intent and purpose such opinion will be given him upon the subject as the facts will warrant.
>
> I have endeavored to comprehend Mr. Von Schmidt's intent and meaning but really I am in doubt.
>
> I have the honor to be
> Willis Drummond[105]

No evidence has been found to indicate that Von Schmidt pursued this matter further.

Many years later, Professor Davidson, who was highly respected by the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, wrote his impressions of Von Schmidt and his survey in a letter to the Superintendent of the Coast and Geodetic Survey about two years after this discrepancy was discovered. Davidson

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104 Sinclair, *The Oblique Boundary . . .*, pp. 278–282.

105 Willis Drummond to Senator A. A. Sargent, April 15, 1874, General Land Office Letters Sent, California's Exhibit No. 31. That Drummond still respected the results of Major's survey may be inferred from his approval of a "Map of the Boundary Line between Nevada, Oregon and Idaho surveyed and established under the Authority of the Department of Interior by Daniel G. Major, U.S. Astronomer and Surveyor . . . 1873" from RG 49, Bdy 17, National Archives, Washington, D.C. The map at the scale of one inch to two miles, was certified as a correct representation of the survey on December 9, 1873.

offered his "theory" about how the "erroneous work" had occurred. His letter said in part:

Von Schmidt, by his original contract with the Department, was compelled to establish the 120th meridian. He had neither the means nor qualifications for so doing. I had then recently determined the 120th meridian by work near Verdi.

Von Schmidt wanted me to make observations for him and offered me payment therefore. I declined, and advised him to have the Department accept the Coast Survey determination then not computed. By the active intercession of Senator A. A. Sargent the Department allowed the Coast Survey work to be accepted, and the observations were promptly reduced to meet the exigencies of the case.

Von Schmidt had with him as principal assistant, F. W. Lewis, a competent surveyor and a good computer but given to heavy drinking.

Von Schmidt had the data in the tertiary triangulation which I made to connect Clarence Kings 120th meridian (2 miles in error east) and Colonel Williamson's 120th meridian (¾ mile in error west), and the descriptions of the stations. I had observed for azimuth.

I have never seen Von Schmidt's observations; only his map of the line north and southeast as run by him, nor do I know how he made his connection. *It is in this connection that I think the error* has originated. In the first place he had, to the best of my recollection, only a six inch surveyor's transit, and whether he observed for azimuth or took our azimuth of some line he could make no precise start. He may have connected with one of our azimuths erroneously. I therefore suspect that he started erroneously and *not on the meridian.* His north line strikes 42° latitude three miles from where Majors fixed the northeast corner. That led to some correspondence with the Department; the Secretary at first objecting to so large a change as improbable but finally accepting Von Schmidt's.

After he started south from Verdi he evidently was well off the meridian when he reached the north shore of Lake Tahoe, and thence the error has continued.

He made his emergence from the lake in the method I proposed; and two years ago I learned that he had, at the time of the running of the southeast line, obtained from Assistant Hilgard the azimuth observations. If I knew about it before I had forgotten it.

About four years ago, when the matter was before the California Legislature and when I doubted that an error existed, I wrote to Superintendent Thron what I knew and heard to keep him posted as the matter progressed; and I helped the State survey at the southeast angle at Mojave in having the telegraphic longitude party at the Needles, lay off the meridian &c. After the close of the work of Von Schmidt and to cover possible errors, Senator Sargent had a law passed by Congress deciding that the boundary as marked by Von Schmidt should stand notwithstanding any errors that might exist.

Von Schmidt is still alive; he affects to doubt Grunskey's results. Lewis is dead.

Yours very respectfully,
George Davidson
Assistant U.S.C. & G. Survey.[106]

[106] George Davidson to T. C. Mendenhall, December 14, 1892, National Archives, RG 23, Coast and Geodetic Survey, Series 22—Superintendent's File. Volume 1892 A-D.

The question of whether Von Schmidt had a conflict of interest which affected the integrity of his survey and which was related to some of the decisions he made invites attention. Newspapers reporting Von Schmidt's affairs in 1872 suggested the possibility. The *Truckee Republican* said:

> Von Schmidt has been awarded the contract for running the boundary line between California and Nevada, and from the Oregon line to the Colorado River, and will commence operations next week. He expects to complete the work from the Oregon line to Lake Tahoe this season. The amount to be paid him under the contract is $12,500 in greenbacks. Von Schmidt wants to take the waters of Tahoe to San Francisco, and when he completes the survey we expect the entire lake will be included within the boundaries of California.[107]

In the meantime, some Nevadans were apprehensive about the appointment of Von Schmidt as a surveyor of the state line, in view of his monetary interest in the waters of Lake Tahoe. The *Territorial Enterprise* of October 9, 1872, in a story entitled "Our Western Boundary—A Probable Surveying Fraud," said in part:

> . . . Von Schmidt should never have been selected to make this survey. He is competent enough, but to him especial inducements are presented for acting dishonestly and locating the whole of the Lake in California. He is at the head of a scheme, under a charter granted by the Legislature of California, the purpose of which is to divert the waters of the lake into California for mining, irrigating, and other purposes. . . . To strengthen his claim to the waters of the lake, Von Schmidt, it is not unreasonable to assume, is prepared to vary the true boundary line far enough to throw the whole of that sheet of water into California. This would in no wise affect the right of Nevada to the Waters of the Truckee; but Von Schmidt doubtless thinks differently, and his survey should never be accepted by congress. . . .[108]

Although Von Schmidt was paid for his work after some difficulty, he must have been disappointed with some of the results he had been obliged to report. On November 1, 1873, the *Sacramento Weekly Union* carried the following paragraph in its column entitled "Pacific Coast Items":

> Von Schmidt says that the only obstacle which prevented him from bringing the whole of Lake Tahoe within the jurisdiction of California is the 120th meridian of longitude. If Congress would only amend the longitude and remove it five miles to the eastward it would be easy to bring the whole of the lake within the boundaries of this state.[109]

In the spring of 1874, Von Schmidt sought additional compensation for

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[107] The *Truckee Republican*, August 10, 1872, 3:1.
[108] *Territorial Enterprise*, October 9, 1872, 2:2.
[109] *Sacramento Weekly Union*, November 1, 1873.

having run part of the line between the railroad and the 42nd parallel twice, and once again he sought the intervention of his friend, A. A. Sargent, then in the U.S. Senate, with the General Land Office. In response to an inquiry by Senator Sargent, an Acting Commissioner wrote, in part:

> In reply I have to say that upon a reexamination of Von Schmidt's contract, special instructions, and his return of the survey under consideration, I find that the suggested extra compensation for service in fulfilling his contract, which was of no ordinary amount, has not, in the opinion of this office, any sound basis under the terms of his contract.
>
> There is no evidence found among the returns of Mr. Von Schmidt's survey of the Boundary that he did run due south from the monument already established by Daniel G. Major on true meridian one hundred miles, measuring the distance, taking topography of the country and establishing all the necessary monuments and obliterating the same on finding it to be out of the proper longitude.[110]

VI. *The Resurveys of the Oblique Boundary, 1889–1900*

Approximately fifteen years after Von Schmidt had completed his survey of the oblique line, there were enough ambiguities to cause the California legislature to pass another act authorizing a new survey of that portion of the boundary. In addition, the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey did extensive work in the 1893–1900 period on the same line.

The California statute, approved on February 26, 1889, authorized and directed the state's Surveyor-General to "correct and establish that portion of the eastern boundary line of the State of California, southeastward from Lake Tahoe; that is to say, southeastward from the intersection of the thirty-ninth degree of north latitude with the one hundred and twentieth degree of longitude west of Greenwich. . . ." The Act also provided that once copies of the survey had been made and filed with the Department of Interior and appropriate state offices and after the line had been corrected and marked, it would be regarded as the "legally established eastern boundary line of the State of California, when confirmed by the United States Government, from the points of intersection hereinbefore set forth. . . ."[111]

The Act also required the California Governor to forward a copy of the law to the Governor of Nevada, with a request that a suitable person be appointed from that state to accompany and act in conjunction with the California surveyors. The Act makes no reference to the 1864 California statute which accepted the Houghton-Ives survey of 1863 as the legal boundary. It does have the standard provision providing for the repeal of all

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[110] W. W. Curtis to A. A. Sargent, May 14, 1874. General Land Office. Letters sent. pp. 388–389.

[111] Statutes of California, 28th Session, 1889, as quoted in the Report of the Surveyor General of the State of California . . . 1890 (Sacramento: State Printing Office, 1890), pp. 11–12.

Acts or parts of Acts inconsistent with its own provisions, but there is no reference to the portion of the boundary north of Lake Tahoe.

The Surveyor General of California designated G. E. Grunsky and William Minto, civil engineers, to make the survey. They were instructed to take the latitude and longitude as established by the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey as the basis for their work, using the station at Round Top, a peak about nineteen miles south of the lake, as a reference point. If they found any considerable variation between the correct position of the boundary at Lake Tahoe and that marked by Von Schmidt, they were required to proceed to the Colorado River and to locate there the point at which the boundary intersected it, as a means of calculating the azimuth southeastward from Lake Tahoe.[112]

Grunsky and Minto had no difficulty locating and following Von Schmidt's oblique line from its initial point near the southeastern shore of Lake Tahoe, but they did not feel that the azimuth of the line could be determined accurately from the information provided by the old surveys. Accordingly, Minto proceeded to the Colorado River, and after making the appropriate observations and connections with other reference points, he ascertained that the river channel had changed once again, finding it on the 35th parallel approximately two miles east of its 1873 location as marked by Von Schmidt. The surveyors also ascertained, on evidence from the Surveyor General of Nevada, that the original Von Schmidt monument on the Colorado River was not in its original place.[113] Grunsky-Minto made new observations and calculations with the assistance of the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, and used that information to begin marking a new line southeasterly from Lake Tahoe. Because of the limitations of their appropriation, however, they were able to mark only a few miles of the line.[114] Thus the objectives of the Act were not fulfilled because of the lack of money.

Grunsky and Minto, however, concluded from their observations at the north end of the lake that Von Schmidt's marker there was 1609 feet too far west. They also indicated that they believed Von Schmidt's starting point to have been about a half mile too far south at the southeastern edge of the lake. He was also thought to be in error in his marking of the 35th parallel.[115]

At approximately the same time that the California legislature passed the law authorizing the survey of the oblique boundary, it also adopted a resolution asking the state's Senators and Representatives in Congress to obtain authorization for a remarking of the boundary.[116]

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[112] *Report of the Surveyor General of the State of California . . .* 1890, pp. 12–13.

[113] Ibid., pp. 17, 23.

[114] Ibid., p. 26.

[115] The Grunsky-Minto maps are reproduced in Sinclair, *The Oblique Boundary*, pp. 285–286.

[116] *Statutes of California . . .* 1899, Assembly Joint Resolution No. 10, Adopted February 24, 1899, Chapter XVIII, p. 490.

Approximately three years after the limited work of Grunsky and Minto, another federal survey of the oblique line was funded by Congress. An 1892 appropriation for furnishing points to state surveys included authorization "for surveying and distinctly designating with permanent monuments that portion of the eastern boundary of the State of California commencing at and running southeastward from the intersection of the thirty-ninth degree of north latitude and the one hundred and twentieth degree of longitude. . . ."[117] The responsibility for conducting the survey was assigned to the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey.

T. C. Mendenhall, the Superintendent of the Survey, assigned C. H. Sinclair and W. B. Fairfield to undertake the oblique survey under the direction of Prof. George Davidson in the spring of 1893. It was assumed that an important first step would be the location of the southern end of the oblique line—an assignment rendered difficult by the fact that the Colorado River meandered between banks about two miles apart at the latitude of the 35th parallel. The Superintendent was informed that in about 1860, when Congress initially appropriated money for a survey of the line, the river apparently had run approximately west to east along the 35th parallel for about a mile. The Superintendent therefore instructed Davidson to have his subordinates locate the southeasterly terminus of the oblique line "*midway between the two bluffs between which the Colorado River flows, on the line* of the thirty-fifty degree of north latitude." It is clear that the U.S.G.S. instructions did not contemplate the use of Von Schmidt's marker as definitive for determining the terminus. It could be used, the Superintendent said, as a "first approximation to this point."[118]

The Superintendent also wanted the northwesterly terminus of the line checked by Davidson's men, by means of a telegraph connection with Carson City or some other point where the longitude had been established by the U.S.C. & G.S. The instructions of the Superintendent are quite detailed in places, but it is clear that he did not want to encumber a large amount of money in a redetermination of the entire line. In his penultimate paragraph, Superintendent Mendenhall wrote:

> Finally, these instructions are not to be considered as unalterable, and this is especially so with regard to details, in which you must be largely governed by local conditions. In case you think it necessary to make any considerable departure from the general scheme indicated above, you will as soon thereafter as possible explain such deviation and give your reasons for the same. While it is expected that the work will be of such a character as to assume absolute confidence in the result, it is not thought necessary to maintain in its execution that high standard which is regarded as essential to the success of our primary triangulation. The instrumental equipment need not be so elaborate, nor the observations so

[117] U.S. Statutes at Large, XXVII, p. 357.
[118] Sinclair, *The Oblique Boundary*, p. 288.

often repeated. Much money has already been expended in the location of this line, with unsatisfactory results. It is our ambition, first, to do the work so that it will never need to be done again, and second, to show that with our organization, instrumental equipment, corps of skilled observers and professional esprit, we can execute a piece of work like this at a less cost than any other body of men, especially those temporarily created under the authority of a 'joint commission,' which is itself generally an expensive adjunct, not necessary, and with which we are not burdened.[119]

It required approximately six years and additional appropriations in 1893, 1896, 1897, and 1898 for the U.S.C. & G.S. to complete its work; the initial funding was found to be inadequate. Finally, however, after field work in 1893, 1894, 1895 and 1898–99, Sinclair submitted his report in 1900, with detailed maps and analyses of his own and previous surveys, and a number of excellent photographs. He concluded that:

> By comparison with the Von Schmidt line the state of Nevada gains about 321 square miles; California gains about 65 square miles; making a net gain for Nevada of about 256 square miles.
>
> Owing to the barren character of the country traversed, the change of area does not mean a material gain of taxable wealth to either state in arable land. As to the value of mineral wealth involved, that will depend upon future discoveries; at present there are no indications of important changes.[120]

In the 1898 Congressional Act relating the survey of the oblique boundary, provision was made for surveying and temporarily marking the boundary.[121]

The state legislatures of California and Nevada subsequently enacted similar statutes recognizing the U.S.C. & G.S. survey of the oblique line as the official boundary.[122] These statutes did not, however, make any reference to the California Statute of 1863 and the Nevada statute of 1864 which had approved the Houghton-Ives line, and which had not been repealed.

As late as 1928, the Federal Government had apparently not yet made a definitive determination of the oblique boundary, because the Department of the Interior issued a bulletin indicating that parts of the boundary were not adequately marked.

VII. *The U.S. Supreme Court Case, 1977–1980*

On April 22, 1977, California filed suit in the U.S. Supreme Court seeking to make the Von Schmidt line north of Lake Tahoe official, on the ground that both states had used it for more than a century; it was necessary to

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119 Ibid., p. 290.
120 Ibid., p. 314.
121 U.S. Statutes at Large, XXX, Chapter 546, p. 606.
122 *Statutes of Nevada* . . . 1903, Ch. XV, p. 38.

initiate the suit in the highest court in the land because no other court has original jurisdiction in litigation between two states. The U.S. Supreme Court, upon accepting the case, designated a Senior District Judge, Robert Van Pelt, as Special Master, and he proceeded to take evidence and to recommend a judgment to the Supreme Court.[123]

Judge Van Pelt considered six possible lines for the boundary north of Lake Tahoe and the same number for the boundary southeasterly from the lake. These included not only the Houghton-Ives lines, the Von Schmidt Lines, a line based on the 120th meridian west of Greenwich (which would have transferred some Nevada land to California), a line based on the 43rd meridian west of Washington (which would have transferred some California land to Nevada), and a new survey based upon Major's corner or some new standard set by the court.[124]

On the basic issue of which line should be recognized, the Special Master recommended that the 1872 Von Schmidt line should be used north of the lake, and the U.S.C. & G.S. line of 1893–1899 should be used for the oblique boundary. This endorsed California's request to adopt the Von Schmidt survey, which had never been accepted by the legislature of either state. Judge Van Pelt's finding held that the "doctrine of prescription and acquiescence" was applicable; this doctrine in effect asserted that Nevada had waited too long to press its claim for the land west of the Von Schmidt line, and it took note of the fact that in most matters Nevada had recognized the jurisdiction of California west of that line for decades.

There remained several minor matters to be resolved following the Special Master's Report. The Judge urged the two states to find a procedure which would enable them to agree on the point in Lake Tahoe at which the two lines meet, and if they were unable to do so, he proposed that the Special Master be enabled to re-enter the case, to take evidence, and to propose a ruling. He also recognized that there might be some additional disputes relative to the precise marking of the boundary in certain areas, and some problems might exist over the ownership of parcels of land near the boundary which one or both states might have received in federal land grants and disposed of improperly because of ambiguity over the boundary. He proposed a separate set of hearings on these issues, in which federal interests would be represented, if appropriate.

In a decision rendered on June 10, 1980, the U.S. Supreme Court endorsed the basic findings of the Special Master. Justice William Brennan, delivering the opinion for a unanimous court, found that Judge Van Pelt

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[123] *In the Supreme Court of the United States,* October Term, 1978. No. 73, Original. State of California, Plaintiff vs. State of Nevada, Defendant. Report of Special Master. Robert Van Pelt, Senior U.S. District Judge, Special Master. (Lincoln, Nebraska: Joe Christensen, n.d. 1979.)

[124] Ibid., pp. 15–16.

"was fully justified in invoking the doctrine of acquiescence. . . ." Since the Von Schmidt line has been recognized in practice by the two states for more than a century (in the case of the line north of Lake Tahoe) and for more than four decades (in the case of the oblique line), it now has the force of law, superceding the statutes of the two states. "If Nevada felt that those lines were inaccurate and operated to deprive it of territory lawfully within its jurisdiction the time to object was when the surveys were conducted, not a century later," Justice Brennan wrote.[125]

Thus the question of the California-Nevada boundary appears finally to have been put to rest. The Supreme Court declined to accept one small portion of Judge Van Pelt's recommendation relating to possible future litigation involving the United States, but its findings appeared to close the main question on the legality of the boundary in a definitive manner.

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[125] Slip Opinion, *Supreme Court of the United States*, No. 73, Orig. State of California, Plaintiff, *v.* State of Nevada. On the Report of the Special Master. June 10, 1980. 9 pp.

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

An Illinoian in the Nevada Mines and Mills: The Letters of Robert Wheatley, 1865-66

LARRY D. BALL and MICHAEL J. BRODHEAD

IN 1861 A YOUNG MISSOURIAN, impatient for adventure, was suddenly confronted with the opportunity to travel west—to the Nevada mines, better known as Washoe—and recalled the excitement and anticipation of the trip. "It appeared to me that the heavens and the earth passed away," recalled the traveler many years later. "At the end of an hour or two," he went on, "I was ready for the journey." Of course, this anxious adventurer was Samuel Clemens, later Mark Twain, who looked forward to the leisurely task of private secretary to his older brother, Orion, who, in turn, had been appointed secretary to the newly created Nevada Territory. Other travelers to this remote region were not so fortunate. While Clemens devoted some time to journalism and a budding literary career, with brief asides in prospecting, another visitor, Robert Jackway Wheatley of Illinois, devoted his energy to the laborious job of constructing a stamp mill for eastern capitalists, who were anxious to exploit the ores of Humboldt County, Nevada. While the two men—Clemens and Wheatley—did not meet (the former departed Nevada a few months before the arrival of the latter), Wheatley's perspective upon the frontier of the Sierra Nevada Mountains is an example of a critical mind at work. Wheatley observed the humorous nature of the mining camps (like Clemens), but the Illinoian's roots were much deeper in the soil of the Ohio Valley. He preferred it to the alkaline flats of Nevada.[1]

While Robert Jackway Wheatley distrusted the unsettling conditions of the Far West, he nonetheless was a product of another frontier: the Ohio Valley. The son of a blacksmith, Isaac Wheatley of Wheeling, Virginia (now West Virginia), Robert was born in 1816. After working for his father, the young man engaged in farming and freighted on the Ohio River flatboats. In 1839 he married Deborah J. White and raised four boys and one girl.

[1] Samuel L. Clemens [Mark Twain], *Roughing It*. Intro. by Rodman Paul (1871; New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Rinehart paperback, 1962), p. 4.

Robert demonstrated a strong sense of commitment to ideals as a young man and soon converted to "primitive Christianity," presumably one of the evangelical sects on the frontier. When a hostile mob attempted literally to push their meeting house into the river near Belaire, Ohio, young Robert reportedly defied the crowd singlehandedly. He supported the abolitionists, prohibitionists, and the movement for public education. This independence of mind and self-reliance emerged clearly in the early 1840s, when he lost his estate in a flatboat wreck on the Ohio River. He worked several years to repay his debts and, with only his household belongings, moved to Cairo, Illinois. Misfortune dogged his footsteps, and this property accidentally burned in storage. With only the clothes on his back, Wheatley established a farm near Du Quoin, Perry County, Illinois. He soon opened a blacksmith shop in that community in 1860.[2]

This decision to return to the occupation of his father may have had much to do with Robert J. Wheatley's determination to turn westward in 1865. Two prominent citizens, Alonzo W. Nason, a founder and executive of the Illinois Central Iron and Coal Mining Company in the vicinity of Du Quoin, and Philander K. Roots, son of a well-to-do engineer and educator, evidently contracted to construct a stamp mill in Humboldt County, Nevada. Wheatley's experience in smithing made him a valuable asset to this project. The long and sometimes wearisome journey by way of Panama, to California, and then overland to Nevada afforded this observant man with time to record his experiences in detailed letters to his community newspaper, the *Du Quoin Recorder*. These descriptions from the pen of a man of some perceptivity, but with only a few months of formal schooling, preserve a vivid record of one step in the frontier movement—the eastward advance into the Great Basin.[3]

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[2] The editors are indebted to the following persons for material about the participants in this Nevada venture: Archer Wheatley, former chancery judge, state legislator and attorney of Jonesboro, Arkansas, and grandson of Robert Jackway Wheatley. Judge Wheatley is an alert and gracious gentleman of ninety-three years and can remember the era in which his grandfather flourished in southern Illinois (Interview, 8 February 1979); Genevieve J. Rainey, historian and genealogist, of Du Quoin, Illinois, who generously provided census, newspaper obituaries, and other material from her files. Among these items are an obituary of Robert J. Wheatley (26 April 1816–18 December 1885) from the *Du Quoin Weekly Tribune*, [?]December 1885, and an obituary of his son, Rudolph Archer Wheatley (9 December 1845–2 April 1932), from the *Du Quoin Evening Call*, 4 April 1932. A genealogical chart of the Robert J. Wheatley family is also included.

[3] See letter of Genevieve J. Rainey to Larry D. Ball, 1 May 1979, for facts about Alonzo W. Nason and Philander K. Roots. The Illinois Central Iron and Coal Mining Company was organized 3 March 1857 in the village of St. Johns, about one mile north of Du Quoin. Alonzo W. Nason was secretary-treasurer and Austin S. Tuttle, president. In that same year, Nason participated in the incorporation of St. Johns as a municipality. Among the first trustees were Nason and John Wheatley, possibly a relative of Robert Jackway Wheatley. An Elisha Nason was first police magistrate of St. Johns. Among the first persons to apply for a land patent in Du Quoin precinct was one J. H. Root [Roots ?], who entered his claim on 13 February 1817 (*Combined History of Randolph, Monroe and Perry Counties, Illinois, With Illustrations Descriptive of Their Scenery and Biographical Sketches of Some of Their Prominent Men and*

NO. 1

Steamship
Costa Rica[4]
June 23, 1865
Carribean Sea

Dear *Recorder*:

I am sitting down under rather unfavorable circumstances, to write to you. What with the rolling of the ship as she rocks from side to side under a smart breeze, and the surging of the paddle-wheels as they are forced through the water by a powerful engine—a noisy group of children at play on the awning covered deck, together with the sailors busy with the rigging of the ship, my present locality does not afford the best opportunity to think or write.

As this is designed as the commencement of a series of letters to you, I must begin at the beginning. Leaving St. Johns[5] on Sunday, June 11th, we reached New York on Tuesday evening at 10 o'clock P.M., after a very tiresome ride, with scarcely any stop from the time of starting. We came by the Michigan Central,[6] via Suspension Bridge.[7] Whether this is the most direct

Pioneers [Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: J. L. McDonough, 1883], pp. 433, 437); Philander K. Roots later moved to Little Rock, Arkansas, where a brother, Logan Holt Roots resided. The latter Roots became a distinguished banker and public servant (*In Memoriam; Logan Holt Roots, Born March 26, 1841—Died May 30, 1893* [n. p.: n. d.], pp. 1–9); According to Genevieve Rainey, copies of the *Du Quoin Recorder* have not survived, either in the original or on microfilm. These letters of Robert J.Wheatley have been preserved by the Wheatley family. The letters were cut from the *Recorder* and pasted in a ledger book with other items from that era. The editors are grateful to Judge Archer Wheatley for access to the letters.

[4] An advertisement for the United States Mail Line in the *New York Times*, 14 June 1865, p. 7, col. 3, noted that the *Costa Rica* would sail 16 June. Mail ships were scheduled to leave semi-monthly at noon "from the company's new and commodious pier, No. 43 North River, foot of Canal St." to connect with the *Golden City* at Panama. The standard authority on American steamships of this era, Erik Heyl *Early American Steamers* (Buffalo: n.p., 1953), p. 115, describes a vessel named *Costa Rica*. This vessel, however, was originally operated by the Panama Railroad Company, was not built until 1868, and its usual run was the west coast of Central America.

[5] In Perry County, Illinois, about three miles north of Du Quoin, on the Illinois Central Railroad.

[6] The Michigan Central Railroad extended from Chicago to Detroit, or 284 miles, and required thirteen hours for the trip. "Trains for the east leave the depot of the Illinois Central Railroad, at Chicago about 4 and 6 A.M., and 5:30 and 10 P.M., and arrive at Detroit in time to connect with the trains for Suspension Bridge [a city in New York State]" (Henry M. Flint, *The Railroads of the United States: Their History and Statistics* [Philadelphia: John E. Potter, 1868], p. 168.)

[7] "This bridge crosses the Niagara River at a point two miles below the Falls, and was built in order to carry the New York Central Railroad across the river at this point. It is constructed of iron wires and bound together, and presents an exceedingly light and graceful appearance. It is eight hundred and twenty-one feet long, consists of two main passages, a roadway for horses and carriages, and a track for the railroad, the latter being uppermost. The elevation of the railway track above the water is two hundred and forty-five feet." (Flint, *Railroads of the United States*, p. 167); Wheatley's route took him from Detroit via the Great Western Railroad of Canada to the city of Suspension Bridge near the bridge of the same name; the New York Central to Albany; and the Hudson River Railroad to New York City; see p. 144.

route or not I do not know, but it is at least a very pleasant route of summer travel. Friday, June 15th, was the day set for the sailing of the *Costa Rica* from New York for Aspinwall,[8] at 12 o'clock M[eridies, noon], and finding that they were precise as to time, our party was on board in good season. In two hours we were under way, and by evening all traces of land had faded away in the dim distance, and as we were greeted by a brisk breeze from the southwest, our noble ship began to roll very gracefully over the heaving bosom of old ocean—producing anything but a pleasing sensation in the stomachs of many of the passengers. For they at the invitation of old ocean, commenced heaving up their dinners, and one who had never heard of sea sickness would have naturally supposed that there was a general attack of *cholera morbus*. Among those whose internal equilibrium was not disturbed so as to affect their being at table and doing ample justice to what was set before us, your correspondent, Charley Nettleton[9] and two other of our party were conspicuous, whilst among those of our number who suffered most was Mrs. A. W. N[ason],[10] whose pleasant face and conversation we missed for several days. She is now on deck enjoying the balmy southern breeze, and is feeling pretty well again. Taking it altogether, we are having a very pleasant trip, and the health of all on board is generally very good, thanks to our good Captain Finkapaugh,[11] whose special care for the health of his passengers is observable by all as he is very careful not to provide many of the luxuries common to most tables, so that the appetite is not stunted by good things, but depends on hunger for the necessary sauce.

Incidents on the trip so far have not been very striking. An occasional porpoise turning a summersault, or a school of flying fish, are about all that attracts attention.

On Sunday, at ten o'clock, we had discourse from Rev. Mr. —,[12] of the M[ethodist] E[piscopal] Church—a very pleasant speaker, and a good discourse[r].

On Monday, a small whale made his appearance on our starboard, greeting us with a few of his "blows," and then sank back quietly out of sight. On the same day we passed the Marcquey Island.[13] As there is a one-

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8 Aspinwall (Colón) was the Atlantic terminus for the Panama Railway Company, completed 28 January 1855. The city was named for William H. Aspinwall (1807–1875), a New York merchant and president of the railroad. He resigned in 1856. The Colombians, and later Panamanians, insisted that the community be called Colón, in honor of Cristoforo Colón (Christopher Columbus); see, *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. "William H. Aspinwall."

9 Unidentified.

10 Wife of A. W. Nason, Robert Jackway Wheatley's employer.

11 The *New York Times*, 14 June 1865, p. 7, col. 3, gives his name as Tinkelepaugh.

12 Probably Elder Thomas H. Pearne, whom Wheatley mentions on p. 12; see also, n29.

13 Possibly one of the Marquesas Keys, a small group of islands just west of the Florida Keys, at the entrance to the Gulf of Mexico.

horse rebellion[14] going on there, we were convoyed past St. Domingo by the man-of-war *Rhode Island.*[15]

The last land we have seen or will see until we reach Aspinwall, is Narvasa Island—a barren, rocky-looking place, famous for guano, however.[16] Some vessels were loading there as we passed. This is Uncle Sam's guano patch, and the last of his dominions in the way of land that we shall see until we get to San Francisco.

There is one other matter that cannot fail to attract the attention of those who are not used to long trips on the ocean; that is the familiarity that exists among the passengers. No formal introductions are necessary—but all mix and converse as freely as old acquaintances, whilst the very best feeling exists.

But I will not tax your patience to decipher any more of my hieroglyphics now. To-morrow we expect to cross the Isthmus. The incidents connected with the crossing we will give in our next from San Francisco.

Our post office address in Nevada will be Dunn Glen,[17] Humboldt county, Nevada, where we hope to get an occasional number of the *Recorder,* during our sojourn in the wilds of the Far West.

I close this Saturday morning, June 24th. All well, with our best wishes for you and all of our friends in Du Quoin.

I remain, yours as ever, R. J. Wheatley.

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[14] At the request of Dominican President Pedro Santana, Spain re-annexed Santo Domingo on 18 March 1861. A series of revolts occurred against the reimposition of Spanish rule, and were ruthlessly suppressed (Rodman Seldon, *Quisqueya: A History of the Dominican Republic* [Seattle: University of Washington, 1964], Chap. 6, pp. 71–90).

[15] A steamer of 1517 tons, 7 guns, paddle wheel, purchased 1861–62 (Edward W. Callahan, *List of Officers of the Navy of the United States and of the Marine Corps from 1775 to 1900. . . .* [New York: Haskell House, 1969], p. 746).

[16] An Act of Congress of 18 August 1856 provided that any citizen of the United States might take "peaceable possession" of uninhabited islands that comtained guano (for fertilizer). This law specified that the islands must not be "in the possession or occupation of any other government." (Samuel Flagg Bemis, *The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy,* 10 vols. in 5 [New York: Pageant Books, 1958], 6:387–408; on 1 July 1857, an American ship's captain, Peter Duncan, discovered and took possession of Navassa, thirty miles west of Haiti (Roy F. Nichols, "Navassa: A Forgotten Acquisition," *American Historical Review,* 38 [April, 1933], 505–10).

[17] Founded in 1862, Dunn Glen was named from Angus Dun(n) and became the business center of the Sierra Mining District. A post office was added in 1865. The southern portion of Humboldt County was detached by the Nevada Legislature in 1919 and became Pershing County (Helen S. Carlson, *Nevada Place Names: A Geographical Dictionary* [Reno: University of Nevada, 1974], s.v. "Dunn Glen."); Sierra Mining District was organized in 1863 (Myron Angel, ed., *History of Nevada, With Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Its Prominent Men and Pioneers* [Oakland, California: Thompson & West, 1881], p. 452; Humboldt County was named from the Humboldt River, which flows through the county (Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of Nevada, Colorado, and Wyoming,* 1540–1888 [1890; New York: Arno Press, n. d.], pp. 262–63).

NO. 2

Ocean Steamer *Golden City*[18]
Near the Coast of Tehuantepec,[19]
June 31, 1865

Dear *Recorder*:

My last letter to you was just as we were going into Aspinwall, a short account of which, I trust, will be interesting to your readers. We landed all safe on Sunday morning, June 30th, about six o'clock. Our careful Captain Finklepaugh, thinking perhaps that a breakfast on shore would do us good, hustled us off on the double quick, saving quite an item for the company, and thereby doing a nice thing for the town, which the company owns of course.

To us green ones from lower Egypt,[20] Aspinwall presented a great many curious things. The first object that attracted our attention in the vegetable world was the beautiful cocoanut trees, with its nuts sticking in rich clusters close to the body, just where the long-stemmed leaves put out. No description that I can give can do justice to their beauty. They must be seen to be fully appreciated.

The town itself presents nothing peculiar from other towns built in a frog pond, except the contrast between civilization and semi-barbarism, from the low hut of the native to the beautiful Gothic structure[21] built by the Panama railroad company,[22] at a cost of $60,000, for the accomodation of the Episcopal Church and the American residents. This, with the residences of the officials connected with the railroad and the other necessary buildings belonging to the business houses, forms a pleasing contrast.

As I am somewhat acquainted with a few of your lady readers, you will allow me to inform them that the Aspinwall ladies (or what I took to be the lady aristocracy of the city,) follow some of their fashions very closely. Perhaps a description of one of these ladies and her dress will better enable

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[18] *Golden City* departed Panama, 25 June 1865, at 7:50 P.M., with 236 packages of United States Mail, 4,948 packages of merchandise, and 454 passengers (San Francisco *Daily Alta California,* 10 July 1865, p. 1, col. 5). "The faultless lines of her hull made the *Golden City* the fastest steamer of her time; in her the ultimate development of the stately wooden-side-wheeler is embodied." Launched in June, 1863, the ship was placed on the Pacific Mail Steamship Company's Panama-San Francisco run in December. She struck a sand bar near Cabo San Lazaro in February, 1870, and was destroyed by the pounding of the waves (Heyl, *Early American Steamers,* pp. 185–86).

[19] *i.e.,* in the Gulf of Tehuantepec, off the coast of the city of that name, about 2,000 nautical miles north and west of the City of Panama.

[20] A popular term for southern Illinois (also Little Egypt) in the nineteenth century, referring to the production of cotton similar to the rich yields of the Nile Valley.

[21] Christ Church By-the-Sea, built in 1864 and consecrated in 1865. It survived Colón's fire of 1885 and still stands.

[22] See n8.

them to decide whether I am right in my opinion. This lady was about six feet high, very straight, and what they call a good figure; dark skin—a cross between a Spaniard and an Indian—high cheek bones, and long black hair, just curled enough to make what they call wavy. Her dress was white lawn, with some spots in it, worn without hoops or under dress, so far as I could judge as she walked along the street with about two yards of the dress trailing along behind as beautifully as the tail of a peacock. The waist appeared rather longer than they are worn in Egypt, with a yard or so of extra cloth falling gracefully in front, very much like the pouch of the pelican. Flounces are quite fashionable, most of the dark skinned ladies wearing them. The lower flounce is always long enough to drag well on the ground, forming a very nice contrast to their large black bare feet.

The Spanish language is spoken by all, but the natives understand enough English to tell the price of bananas, mangoes, limes, oranges, etc., which they carry around on their heads. I did not see anybody drunk, yet almost everybody appeared to be selling wine.

The trip across the Isthmus we all enjoyed very much. The road is good and the cars comfortable. The vegetation, being that of the tropics, afforded a feast to our eyes. The stations along the road are tastefully built, with nicely arranged gardens beautifully adorned with flowers. The native villages along the road are of the most primitive order, the houses being constructed of poles driven into the ground and covered and sided with the bamboo. The inhabitants were lounging around, perfectly indifferent almost to the passing of the train itself. Quite a number among the young Grenadians[23] were exhibiting themselves as model artists, or at all events they were stark naked.

At Panama[24] we were crowded and jostled on board a small steamer which took us out about five miles to where the *Golden City* lay at anchor, and we were put on board of this magnificent vessel, the largest and best steamer on the Pacific [Ocean]. She is 3,378 tons burthen, with the most perfect arrangements for the comfort and safety of her passengers.

We have been coasting along near the land most of the time, getting quite a good view of San Salvador and the volcanic mountains of Guatemala. To-day we are running along within a mile or so of the coast of Tehuantepec, and in full view of the cloud capped Sierra Nevada [Sierra Madre] mountains.

So far we have got along well. Although the weather is quite warm occasionally, yet the thermometer has not been so high as it is sometimes in

[23] This term refers to the fact that Panama, a part of Colombia until 1903, was once a part of New Granada. New Granada changed its name to honor Christopher Columbus in 1861.

[24] The Pacific terminus of the Panama Railroad and later the capital of the independent Republic of Panama.

Du Quoin. Our party are in good health, as are all the passengers as far as I know.

I have just returned from a meeting in the dining-saloon, held for the purpose of making arrangements for the celebration of the Fourth [of July], an account of which I will give you in my next, from San Francisco. This I will mail at Acapulco.[25]

Yours as ever, R. J. Wheatley.

NO. 3

Steamer *Golden City*
July 6, 1865

MR. EDITOR:

We entered Acapulco bay, where I sent my last letter to you, about ten o'clock, July 1st. This is a small, beautiful bay, completely surrounded by high hills, with a narrow entrance. The water is deep enough for large ships to lay within a quarter of a mile of the shore. This is the coal depot for the Pacific Steamship company, and in the hand of Yankee enterprise no doubt would be a place of considerable importance. The town on the coast is a small affair, the houses being mostly of the common build of the natives, mere huts. There is a fort commanding the interior of the harbor, but not the entrance. This fort is rather a formidable looking structure as seen from shipboard, and those of our party who went ashore say that it is strongly built. It had been pretty well used up in the bombardment the French[26] gave it some time ago, in their *gander fight*,[27] when they "routed them, and scouted them, and put them all to flight," with about the same results to

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[25] Located in the State of Guerrero on the Pacific coast of Mexico, 190 miles south-southwest of the City of Mexico. The city of Acapulco remained the most important port of the Spanish Empire on the west coast and the terminus for the Manila Galleons in their voyages from the Philippine Islands to Mexico. When this trade was disrupted by the independence of Mexico from Spain in 1821, Acapulco began to languish (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th ed., s.v. "Acapulco").

[26] During Wheatley's visit, Acapulco was one of the few major cities in Mexico controlled by the republican forces of Benito Juarez, leader of a movement against the French army of Emperor Napoleon III. This Napoleon, a nephew of the Great Conquerer, possessed grandiose notions about the recreation of the French Empire in the New World (the British drove the French from North America in 1763) and had attempted to place a member of the Austrian royal family, Maximilian, on the throne of Mexico, in April 1864. Many conservative land owners and pro-clerical elements among the Mexicans supported Maximilian against Juarez, who led the poor peons and other republican elements (Percy Falcke Martin, *Maximilian in Mexico: The Story of the French Intervention* [London: Constable & Company, 1913]).

[27] The expression, "gander fight," was evidently common in Wheatley's day. The writer was comparing the conduct of the French forces to that of the gander which, in a flurry of violent flapping of its wings momentarily disconcerts its enemy and forces it to flee. The victor is deluded, since the enemy assumes a new and even more threatening position. For some intimations of this situation, see, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 12 vols., s. v. "ganderism."

Max[imilian] as the gander fight we read about in the children's school books, for the Mexicans just stepped back into the mountains and cut off supplies so that Max.'s game was not worth the ammunition it cost him to get it.

To your lady readers I will say we had a visit from some of the real genuine aristocracy of Acapulco—five ladies, accompanied by their father and beaux, (as I supposed.) These ladies were very gaudily, if not tastefully dressed. Their complexions were decidedly brunette, with not very red cheeks. To view themselves in one of the large mirrors that hang in the saloon of the ship seemed to afford them the most exquisite pleasure, showing that in some respects at least they are like their sisters in the United States. They were introduced to some of the officers of the ship, which they received very politely.

On Sunday, July 2d, we ran in to Manzanillo[28] to put off some freight and passengers and take on some bullion, considerable quantities of which are shipped from this place. Our mate says he has taken aboard as much as forty tons of silver at a time. It is the outlet for the silver mines in the interior. Several American companies are putting up machinery at those mines, but of course they can't do much so long as Maximillian [sic] has possession of the country, which some passengers who came on board here think will not be long.

Since leaving Manzanillo nothing of importance has transpired except the celebration of the 4th of July, which was done in good style. Not having taken minutes of the programme, I will merely give the outline, which consisted in singing, prayer, reading the declaration of independence, and then a very eloquent address by Elder [Thomas H.] Pearne,[29] of the M. E. Church, from Oregon. The upper deck of our noble ship, which is 384 feet long and 50 feet wide, was covered with awning, thus affording ample accomodation for all who wished to hear or see what was going on. The gentlemanly and patriotic commander of the ship, Captain [W. F.] Lafidge[30] favored us with a salute from two of his guns for every State. After partaking of a good dinner, a party met at the table in the saloon, where a number of toasts were drunk and responded to by those participating, some of which I suppose

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28 Town and port on the Pacific coast of Mexico, in the State of Colima, fifty-two miles by rail west-southwest of the City of Colima (*Encyclopedia Britannica,* 11th ed., s. v. "Manzanillo").

29 The list of passengers of *Golden City* included the "Rev. Thomas H. Pearne and wife" (*Daily Alta California,* 10 July 1865); Thomas H. Pearne occupied an influential position among Methodists in Oregon. In 1852 the Methodist Mission Conference of Salem, Oregon, appointed him a minister to that territory. In September 1862, the Oregon Legislature considered the name of Pearne, among others, for the position of United States Senator. He lost the nomination (Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of Oregon, 1834–1888,* 2 vols. [San Francisco: The History Company, 1888], 2:639, 677).

30 *Daily Alta California,* 10 July 1865, lists his name as W. F. Lapidge (not Lafidge).

were very patriotic, especially those pertaining to the ladies, but as your correspondent is a consistent member of the Good Templars,[31] he did not participate in this part of the celebration, and therefore cannot speak positively as to the character of the toasts offered and responded to.

Mr. [Reuel] Gridley,[32] the Nevada flour man, is on board, with the same sack of flour from which he has realized the handsome sum of two hundred thousand dollars for the benefit of the Sanitary Commission—intending to start from Nevada again to raise a similar amount for schools. He was among the toasted, and make [sic] a speech in reply.

After the toasts were over, all who felt disposed repaired again on deck to witness a dog performance, given by Senor Seglisto,[33] with his wonderfully wise dogs, which was very good indeed, showing that some dogs at least are susceptible of an education. The deck was then cleared and a number of musical instruments produced, which commenced discoursing music and were promptly responded to by the shaking of feet and the fantastic whirl in which many heartily engaged—keeping it up until 12 o'clock at night. Among those that took an active part in the dancing was a party of Mexican ladies and gentlemen, who gave additional interest to the amusement of the evening by dancing a number of Spanish dances and singing Spanish songs. Thus passed the 4th of July, 1865, with us, and it will long be remembered by many—more for the place it passed than what transpired.

One thing that strikes all on board pretty sensibly for the past two days is the change in the weather. Up to that time we were seeking in vain for some cool retreat: but now undershirts and drawers are necessary to our comfort—even our overcoats are not amiss; this, too, in latitude 32. Such is the weather here on the coast of California, and so we will have it until we get into the interior as far as Sacramento. So much for the climate and the coast.

Those unaccustomed to traveling on shipboard can scarcely realize what a world we have in a small space, or rather how much of the world we

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[31] The Good Templars was just one of many temperance societies in the mid-1800s; see, Alice Felt Tyler, *Freedom's Ferment: Phases of American Social History from the Colonial Period to the Outbreak of the Civil War* (1944; New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1962), chap. 13, "The Temperance Crusade," pp. 308–50.

[32] This is a reference to Mark Twain's famous story (*Roughing It*, Rinehart paperback, Chap. 45, pp. 227–33). During the Civil War, Reuel Gridley, whom Twain says was "a former schoolmate of his," ran unsuccessfully for the mayoralty of Austin, Nevada. According to an agreement concluded before the election, the winner was to give the loser a fifty pound sack of flour. Gridley accepted it and someone suggested that he auction off the sack and donate the proceeds to the United States Sanitary Commission, an agency in the East for the benefit of Union military forces. Gridley auctioned the notable bag several times in one day and netted $8,000. In the Comstock, in Carson City, in San Francisco, he repeated this sale. Gridley took the sack to the East, where a final auction was held in St. Louis, Missouri. All told "the Sanitary flour sack" fetched an estimated $150,000.

[33] Unidentified.

can see in a short time, so far at least as its people are concerned. We have almost all the babbling tongues of earth spoken at one and the same time, causing about as much confusion as there was at the tower of Babel, only on a smaller scale. This is especially true among the steerage passengers, where they are quite crowded; in the first and second cabins we have plenty of room and comfortable quarters.

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., July 11th, 1865.—We landed here Sunday, the 9th, about 11 o'clock.[34] We had a beautiful sail into the Golden Gate, upon as beautiful a morning as I ever saw. As soon as we run into the harbor we got clear of the cold winds from which we had suffered a good deal for several days.

San Francisco is quite a city, with a great many really fine buildings. In the way of hotels it is hardly surpassed anywhere. Among the most prominent are the Cosmopolitan and the Occidental. These and others of the same class may do for those who have more means than I have, or men who do not care to make a grand display. The Railroad House,[35] where the most of our party was stopping, is a very comfortable place, kept on the European plan: 50 cents for lodging, and you take your meals at the restaurant—calling for what you want; a good meal costing from 15 to 30 cents. Those coming here will find this house about as good as any in the city of its class.

Business in the city is decidedly flat, as you can tell by walking through it. "To Let" is seen on more houses here than you would see in every town and city in Illinois put together. The nullification act[36] in reference to greenbacks is pinching the would-be-loyal Californians sorely. I don't value very high the patriotism of a people who profess loyalty to our Government and at the same time reject its currency, thereby doing all they can to clog the wheels. The markets are well supplied with everything a man can reasonably desire, whether as cheap as in the States or not, I can't say, as everything is sold by the pound.

I should not like to live in this city unless I could have my eyes covered in some way that would not prevent my seeing, yet keep the sand out. Then

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[34] *Golden City*, a Pacific Mail Company vessel, arrived the morning of 9 July. Among the passengers was R. J. Wheatley (*Daily Alta California*, 10 July 1865, p. 1, col. 5).

[35] The Cosmopolitan Hotel, owned by Tubbs & Patten, was located on the corner of Bush & Sansom streets; the Occidental Hotel, owned by L. Leland & Company, was situated on the corner of Montgomery & Bush streets; and the Railroad House, owned by R. Lansdon, was located at 320 Commercial (Henry J. Langley, comp., *Pacific Coast Business Directory for 1867* . . . [San Francisco: Henry J. Langley, 1867]).

[36] On 3 March 1865, Congress placed a ten percent tax on all state bank notes in an effort to eliminate local currencies that competed with United States greenbacks. This legislation helped to round-out the program of the Republican party and Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase (1861–64) and begun in the National Banking Act of 1863. Treasury Secretary Hugh McCulloch (1865–69) carried out the ten percent bill (James Williard Hurst, *A Legal History of Money in the United States, 1774–1970* [Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1973], pp. 176–81).

it would be necessary to have a small quartz mill added to your internal arrangements to get clear of the sand you are constantly obliged to swallow whenever you go out of doors.

I see by the morning papers that the population of California is on the decrease so far as the whites are concerned, whilst the Chinese[37] element is increasing. The more Chinamen any place has the worse it will be off, for they leave nothing of what they make in the country, but send all back to China—even their dead are sent back whenever it is possible to do so; nor is there any probability of our civilization affecting them for the better.

Among the many fine buildings for religious purposes, the one that will far surpass anything of the kind I have seen here or elsewhere, is a synagogue the Jews[38] are about finishing here.

But I will wear out your patience in making this out and putting it in readable shape, if I make it any longer, so I will stop writing until we get to our journey's end.

All in good health. Yours as ever, R. J. Wheatley.

NO. 4

Chrisopolis Mines,[39]
July 31, 1865

EDITOR RECORDER:

Dear Sir,—My last to you was from San Francisco, which place we left per steamer for Sacramento, July 13, six o'clock, evening. Landed there next morning, where Mr. Nason[40] bought a span of mules and a light wagon, in which we stowed our baggage, and started for this place Saturday, 4 o'clock, evening, landing here yesterday, being two weeks in making the trip, the distance over 400 miles. Sacramento is quite a city, but, like every other place in California, business flat. This place, like Cairo, [Illinois] is subject to inundations and fires, having been drowned out and burnt out several

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[37] Wheatley's sentiments about the Chinese were common in the mining camps. See, Alexander McLeod, *Pigtails and Gold Dust* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton, 1947), esp. Chap. 4, pp. 57–70; and Alexander Plaisted Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California* (Berkeley: University of California, 1971), Chap. 3, pp. 46–66.

[38] Temple Emanu-El was dedicated on Friday, 23 March 1866. Located on Sutter Street between Stockton and Powell streets, this structure was destroyed by the earthquake and fire in 1906. A new synagogue is now located on the northwest corner of Lake Street at Arguello Blvd. (Letter, Libby Fleishmann, Assistant Archivist, Western Jewish History Center, Berkeley, California, to Michael J. Brodhead, 12 February 1979).

[39] "The Chrysopolis [Mine] was about 2 miles north of Dun[n] Glen, and had a vein of white quartz twenty inches wide, charged with black sulphurets of silver, and was estimated to average $100 per ton. The company had 1,800 feet on the vein, which held its width and quality to the depth of eighty feet, the deepest working." (Angel, ed., *History of Nevada,* p. 452).

[40] A. W. Nason and his wife were listed as passengers on the *Golden City* with R. J. Wheatley; see *Daily Alta California,* 10 July 1865, p. 1, col. 5; see also n3.

times. Being the Capitol of the State, where they are building a neat Capitol Building,[41] which, when finished, will be an ornament to the city. Our mode of traveling gave us ample time to take observations of the country, which we will give as they presented themselves to our mind. I do not know how the country from Sacramento to Virginia City will compare with other parts of California; if, however, this part of the country is a fair sample of the State, I was not very favorably impressed with it when compared with the States. We came through in the [dry ?] season, and, of course, the country did not present the best appearance, but even under the most favorable circumstances there are many disadvantages connected with California—for instance, there is a scarcity of timber. The only kind growing until you get to mountains, is a species of live oak, resembling the post oak of Illinois, only much inferior in growth and size. You see no orchards of any kind growing, only in some of the best villages, where they can irrigate. The foot hills of mountains afford good pasturage, however, are all under fence.—There are also some bully fine vineyards[42] coming on in a good many places, which promise very well. Indeed I never saw vines so well filled with grapes, or such fine bunches.—The country is poorly watered, or, at least, the water is not good until you get pretty well among the hills. Even where the wells are sunk to a great depth, the water is quite warm. Just here let me say one word to those who think that California is an Eden, or who may think of leaving good homes in the States for one in California.—In the first place you have no hardwood for general use. Every bit of timber used for wagons or farming tools of any kind that requires that kind of timber, has to come form [sic] the States of Oregon. So you can form some idea what it costs to get such articles new, or get them repaired; and if you don't like to do without rain for a month or six weeks, how would you like to do without rain for six months? I have seen not a 'ranch' as they call the farms here, that I would give any farm about Du Quoin for. The principal crops raised here are wheat, barley and oats.[43] The first named is the finest I ever saw, being white and plump, the straw is bright and clean, and mostly baled and sold in place of

[41] The cornerstone of this building was laid 15 May 1861 and the structure was occupied by the governor on 26 November 1869. The state did not complete the building until the turn of this century. (William L. Willis, *History of Sacramento County, California* . . . [Los Angeles: Historic Record Company, 1913], pp. 362–63).

[42] *The American Annual Cyclopaedia and Register of Important Events of the Year 1865* (New York: D. Appleton, 1871), p. 134, noted a remarkable "increase of vineyards" in California and added that nearly "every European grape [was] being grown in the open air successfully." This commentator continued by saying that "The grape crop never fails here [in California] as it does in Europe . . . and its yield is fully twice that of any other country, while the rich and aromatic character of the soil give to the [California] grape a richer flavor than it attains elsewhere. . . . In 1864 there were 12,592,688 vines growing in California, and nearly four millions more were set in 1865. . . ."

[43] Ibid., p. 134, "The principal farming crops [of California] are wheat, barley, hay, and the root crops. The wheat of California is of excellent quality, containing a larger quantity of gluten than that of any other portion of the globe."

hay, especially the barley straw. I would like to give it as my opinion, and your readers may take it for what it is worth, that no one that has a farm or home in any of the States that I have traveled in, can better themselves by coming to California or Nevada for the purpose of getting a better one. I have asked a great many persons whether they preferred living here or in the States, and nineteen-twentieths have told me that they preferred the States for a pleasant and comfortable living, and most all say they intend to go back again. In point of health there are some localities where folks enjoy better health than in most of the States; but no one need think that they can come to California to get clear of ague. There is plenty of it on most all the streams of any importance, and even when you go a day or so travel into the foot hills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, you find people chilling with the ague. The time is past for people to pick up fortunes out here, unless he has some certain business. Were it not for the mines in Nevada, farming would be a poor business in California. Nor is stock raising much better. There are some men in Illinois that started a good many mules across the plains, thinking they would bring good prices here. Such persons will miss it, as such stock is quite as low here as in the States.

But as I am quite worn out with the jaunt, I will leave off for the present. All of our party that came along with us in the wagon, are in good health. Mr. A. W. W. [Nason ?] will be here some time this week. In my next I will give your readers a sketch of the roads across the mountains, Lake Tahoe, the mines, etc. Until then I remain yours, R. J. Wheatly [sic].

NO. 5

Chrisopolis Mines
Aug. 12th, 1865

MR. EDITOR:

In my last I briefly stated a part of our trip to this place, leaving off at the Sierra Nevada mountains. I had been familiar with the Alleghany mountains, crossing them several times, besides living some ten years at the base of one of the principal western ranges; consequently thought I had some idea of mountains, and mountain scenery; but I must confess that all I had ever seen fell far short of what greeted my eyes whilst crossing the Sierra Nevada.

Their lofty sides, covered with the finest pine timber in the world, or at least as good as any in the country—whether the qualities of the timber is as good in some other place, I do not know; but in size, hight [sic] and variety, I think they are not surpassed. In size you can see many that are

from six to seven feet in diameter, and in hight [sic] many are all of two hundred feet. From their base to near their summits the pines form a dense forest, whilst many of their summits are snow-capped. The snow line being well defined on most all of the summits, yet along the almost perpendicular sides of these mountains winds the roads, with an easy grade considering where they are made—for in many places there is blown out dark colored granite on the sides of the mountains, at elevation of many hundred feet, and in many places so steep are the sides that you drive along as it were the edge of a precipice; were you to go over there would scarcely be a chance of stopping short of the bottom; it is said to be from five hundred to a thousand feet.

This is what is called Ogleby's grade[44] as we come down to the American river; along this grade you get some views of mountain scenery, which is not only grand, but very dangerous—for while you gaze on the clouds which overhang the snow-capped pinaccles [sic], you [c]an look down into an awful gulf below, where the waters of the American river are hurled at the distance of fifty and seventy-five feet to the mile.

On the sides of these mountains there are several roads winding their dubious ways down to the bottom or up to the top of the different ranges. These roads or grades are made and owned by companies, and are consequently toll roads—charging at the enormous rate of 25 cents for a footman, and $2.50 for a two horse wagon; (and these toll houses are tolerable close of each other.)

But the most interesting feature of these mountains, is the most beautiful lake I ever beheld, as it lay nestled in their very bosom—it was formerly called "Big Lake Tahoe." There has been several attempts by men to immortalize their names, by having this lovely queen of all mountain-lakes called after them. Among these were Mr. Brown,[45] Mr. Bigler[46] an ex-Governor of California, who I believe has the lake so named in some geography; but I believe by general consent Tahoe is to be the established name—leaving those that thought their name would for ever be immortalized to gain it some other way.

This lake is some 35 miles long, and from five to ten miles wide, and is

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44 Unidentified.

45 Unidentified.

46 Several Americans attempted to fix their names to the lake, among them John Bigler, governor of California (1852–56); John C. Fremont named the lake, "Bonpland," in 1844; in 1870 the California Legislature designated the lake, Bigler, against the wishes of many citizens of the state, since Bigler had been a Confederate sympathizer during the Civil War. In 1945 the state legislature changed the name to its original designation, Tahoe, a Washoe Indian meaning "big water." Wheatley may be in error when he adds the name, "Brown Lake" (Erwin G. Gudde, *California Place Names: The Origins and Etymology of Current Geographical Names* [Berkeley: University of California, 1969], pp. 328–29).

very deep in some places I am told.[47] The water is as clear as a cristal [sic]; taking it all together the lake and its surroundings form some of the most beautiful scenery the eye of man ever gazed upon. Around the eastern shore is where the road passes the mountains mostly sloping gradually back, and where the numerous springs finds [sic] an outlet into the silvery waters of this loved and cherished queen-lake of the mountains, from which are formed the most beautiful coves. All along this shore you inhale the purest and to me, at least, the most invigorating atmosphere—as balmy as a spring morning; yet not so chilly as one would suppose it would be by looking across at the western side, and see all the mountains skirting the shores, covered with snow. There is already quite a number of good houses along the shore, and are frequented by many who seek retirement or sports. The lake affords plenty of fish, and persons fond of that kind of sport, can pass many happy moments, and even hours on the shores of Lake Tahoe.

And I have no doubt that when the Pacific R. R.[48] is completed, Lake Fahoe [sic] will be visited by thousands of health and pleasure seekers of this and other countries, and if they are seeking a pure and invigorating asmosphere [sic], and a clear deep blue—and in this time of the year a cloudless sky, here they can find it; or if they are fond of being jogged along in a stage coach at full speed on the edges of precipices, or under hanging cliffs hundreds of feet above their heads; I say if they are fond of such excitement as journeying across the mountains and around Lake Tahoe fails to satisfy them, then let them go to the Alps or the Andes. If such persons are not satisfied with grandeur and romance of the journey I have named, they can go to the outlet of this lake and stand upon the brink of a cataract where the waters plunge a thousand feet down into the seemingly bottomless pit.

All these things will lay along the great Pacific Railroad when completed, with many other things to astonish and interest the traveler. Some of which I will attempt to give in my next, in connection with the silver mines of this country. But I don't know whether I shall be home before this letter reaches you or not—especially if it goes by the overland route. We are now over two months from home, and have not received any news since we left Du Quoin. Hoping before long to get sight of the Du Quoin *Recorder* coming by sea or land, I will wait patiently, R. J. Wheatly [sic].

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[47] The length is 21.6 miles; width 10.5 miles; elevation 6,202 feet; and maximum depth is 1645 feet.

[48] Leland Stanford and three associates, dubbed the "Big Four," incorporated the Central Pacific Railroad on 28 June 1861. Theodore Judah became chief engineer for the construction of the road, although Stanford did not begin construction until the United States Congress guaranteed federal aid through the Pacific Railway Act in the following year (Robert E. Riegel, *The Story of the Western Railroads: From 1852 through the Reign of the Giants* [1926; Lincoln: University of Nebraska, n. d.], Chap. 6, pp. 82–94).

The following is an appendix to the letter published in our last week's issue, dated "Chrisopolis Mines, Aug. 12th, 1865:" EDITOR RECORDER: —I should have said something about the towns in California that we passed along the road here. There is one peculiarity about all the towns that I have passed since I landed on the Pacific coast—that is, they appear to be over built, or if you please, they appear to have more houses than people. From San Francisco here, in every town "to let" is seen on a great many doors. It may be accounted for to some extent from the fact that many of the towns along the road are mining towns or were built up when there were good diggings around them, and as soon as the diggings were dug out there was but little use for the town. This is true of Diamond Springs[49] and Mud Springs,[50] both of which have been quite business places, but mostly inhabited by Chinese now, who are to be found at work in all the old gold diggings from on the other side of Clarksville[51] clear on to the American river. They are washing over the dirt and digging up all the places the old miners left; living on less than an American and caring little about dress. What we would consider no pay at all they are satisfied with. And I was told that many of them were sent out by the Manderins [sic], (I think they call the lords in China,) who keep them to work for their board almost, and so long as they make from fifty cents to one dollar per day in the diggings they stick to it. I was told in San Francisco that nearly the whole product of their labor went back to these lords. Nor are they very particular how they make it, as they are considered proverbially dishonest. As for the Chinese women they are the most licentious set of beings that ever disgraced the face of this earth. There was one exception in the towns along the road that I must mention, that was Shingle Springs,[52] a town of some two hundred inhabitants; the whole town having been built, as I was told, by the men there, in about ten days. One house when I was there (on Monday) was occupied as a bakery and restaurant, was commenced on Wednesday and occupied on Friday. This town is the present terminus of the Sacramento and Placerville Railroad,[53] and has a depot nearly finished, some two hundred feet long and

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[49] Diamond Springs, El Dorado County, acquired its name in 1849 when the discovery of quartz crystals led prospectors to mistakenly believe they were diamonds (Gudde, *California Place Names*, p. 90).

[50] Mining activity began in the vicinity of Mud Springs in 1849. Villagers incorporated the town six years later and soon changed the name to El Dorado (Herman Daniel Jerrett, *California's El Dorado: Yesterday and Today* [Sacramento: Press of Jo Anderson, 1915], p. 76).

[51] Clarksville was located six miles east of Folsom, El Dorado County, and is no longer shown on maps (Erwin G. Gudde, *California's Gold Camps* [Berkeley: University of California, 1975], p. 74).

[52] A settlement began at Shingle Springs in 1850, with a post office three years later. The name became Shingle in 1895 and then reverted to Shingle Springs on 13 January 1955 (Gudde, *California Place Names*, p. 307).

[53] Construction on the Placerville and Sacramento Valley Railroad began at Folsom and

about the ordinary width; yet this town is only built for the present use. As soon as the road goes on this town will be abandoned. There is a good deal of freight shipped over the road thus far and then loaded into wagons. Seventy odd wagons were waiting for loads the day we passed through. I [heard ?] many of these towns were built by the mining population, which never stay long in one place, as there is always some better place ahead. From California to Virginia [City], from Virginia [City] to Humboldt, Reese river, [Boise ?], Idaho, Montana, you have towns of several hundred inhabitants.

Leaving California for Nevada and its mines, is the next matter for correspondence.

Carson City,[54] situated in Carson Valley, is the first place where you begin to see stamp mills for crushing silver bearing quartz. Here or near here is situated the celebrated Mexican[55] and Yellow Jacket[56] mills, hauling their quartz some ten miles from Gold Hill.[57] But you do not see the mills until you get to Devil's Gap[58] and near Silver City. Gold Hill and Virginia City, which, however, is a continuous city up a steep hill all the way, with narrow, crooked streets crowded with teams loaded with quartz on all sides. The clatter of stamps as they come down on the quartz, and the machinery for amalgamating, keep up a tremendous noise; yet the business is quite overdone, as there are more mills than quartz to crush. But I shall not attempt to give anything like a description of the mining business now, but at some future time I will give what I think, based upon what I see and learn from others.

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reached Latrobe in 1865. The line eventually reached Shingle Springs. In 1887 work resumed under the name Shingle Springs and Placerville Railroad and track reached Placerville (William L. Willis, *History of Sacramento County, California* . . . [Los Angeles: Historic Record Company, 1913], p. 196).

[54] County seat of Ormsby County and capital of Nevada Territory; Major William M. Ormsby founded Carson City in 1858 in the fertile Eagle Valley. The city was laid out on a rectangular scale with streets of sixty-six and eighty feet in width and a plaza of four acres (J. Wells Kelly, comp., *First Directory of Nevada Territory: Containing the Names of Residents in the Principal Towns* . . . [1862; Los Gatos, California: Talisman Press, 1962], p. 66).

[55] The Mexican Mill was constructed in 1860 on the Comstock Lode, in Virginia City, to serve the mine of the same name. This mill was moved to the east bank of the Carson River in the following year and about one-half mile south of Empire City. The mill soon employed twenty-eight of its forty-four stamps on minerals from the parent mine (Angel, ed., *History of Nevada*, p. 539).

[56] The Yellow Jacket processed the ore of the Comstock Lode, with forty stamps at work at the time of Wheatley's visit (ibid., pp. 541, 615–16).

[57] In January 1859, James Finney and three prospecting friends explored a mound of exposed rock—known locally as Gold Hill, probably out of ridicule—near Virginia City. The contents of a gopher hole contained rich ores. A boom set in. Through mis-management or ill luck, the discoverers failed to obtain permanent claim to their discoveries (Bancroft, *Nevada*, p. 109, n34).

[58] Devil's Gate: "an opening gorge across a reef of siliceous rock, with rocky walls rising perpendicularly on each side, located between Gold Hill and Silver City on the Storey-Lyon county line" (Carlson, *Nevada Place Names*, p. 97).

I had an opportanity [sic] of going thro' the celebrated Gould & Curry mill,[59] which cost about one and a half million dollars; the engines alone costing fifty thousand. There are eighty stamps running, and more being put up. They have forty-four amalgamating pans in operation.

R. J. Wheatly [sic].

NO. 6

Humboldt River,
Sept. 16, 1865

MR. EDITOR:—If I remember right I left off with the mills of Virginia City in my last, of which there are some three hundred in and about the city in running order—so I was told by several persons that were well informed; but that these three hundred mills are all coining money for their respective owners is a question I am unable to answer—only so far as I can get reports or judge from observation; that few of them are comparatively paying a good percentage on the investment—owing in a great measure for want of paying rock or quartz to work.[60] Everything that looked like a ledge was seized upon as such and mills built and set to work, when very soon many ledges gave out or had to be followed at an immense expense down hundreds of feet into the mountains—which expense many of the companies were not prepared to meet; very many having invested all they had have no means left to pay assessments. One man told me a few days ago that he had invested $4000 in one mine there and his last assessment was $1500—paid in gold, though he has not received one cent in return, and may not for years to come, if ever. Thus, there are many who have claims that may some day be valuable, but they cannot possibly hold on to them and pay assessments that will be necessary to make them pay. As an item of expense attending

[59] Officials of the Gould & Curry recorded the mine on 12 May 1859, but incorporation did not occur until the following year (Angel, ed., *History of Nevada,* pp. 58, 613); "The extraordinary mill of the Gould & Curry Company was . . . the most conspicuous monument to inexperience and extravagance ever erected in a mining district. A rocky point two miles east of Virginia City, at the junction of Six and Seven-Mile canyons, was transformed into an artificial plateau, on which was erected a building in the form of the Greek cross, 250 feet long, with arms 75 feet in length and 50 feet in width. . . ." Although $900,000 had been invested in the mill by 1863, the company reduced only 4,812 tons of ore in that period at a cost of about $50 per ton. The mill employed 225 men (Eliot Lord, *Comstock Mining and Miners* [1883; Berkeley: Howell-North, 1959], pp. 124–25); a more immodest commentator, Charles Collins, comp., *Mercantile Guide and Directory for Virginia City* . . . (Virginia [City, Nevada]: n. pub., 1864–65), p. 45, estimated "that this company extract[s] from their ores about a half million [dollars] in bullion monthly" and that it employed 800 men in 1864.

[60] "The early bonanzas—the Ophir, the Gould and Curry, the Savage, the Chollar-Potosi, the Yellow Jacket, and the original Gold Hill mines—which had been opened between 1859 and 1863, seemed to have been depleted by the end of 1864, and the Comstock entered its first depression period" (Russell R. Elliott, *History of Nevada* [Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1973], p. 125).

some of these mills in order to get the quartz to work, a young man told me that he was working at a shaft that the company, who were putting it down, expected to sink it some nine hundred feet, which required fifteen hundred feet of lumber for every five feet they went down—that costing something like one hundred dollars per thousand.

I did not intend to give a history of the mills or mines around or about Virginia City—those that I have given are items that I gathered on the way, and I will leave the rest to persons, who are better posted than I am to give the particulars.

So now I will return to our trip from there to the Crisopolis, which consists of nothing that would interest you or your readers. From Virginia City you strike the mouth of the Canyon—pronounced Kenyon,[61] the Alkalie flats; marked all the way from there until you reach beyond the sink of the Humboldt, with the carcasses of dead oxen, horses and mules, and you will often see from ten to twenty of such at one single glance of the eye; these and sage brush, geese [grease] wood or brush, is all that there is to call the attention of the traveler along the sandy waste that is spread out before you and over which your team must really drag your wagon. On either side of these alkalie flats or valleys, barren mountains so far at least as vegetation is concerned, rear their conical peaks, whilst all around are strewn unmistakeable evidences that those peaks are the extinct work of volcanoes, yet on almost every peak, or on the precipitous sides of nearly all the mountains from Virginia City to far beyond where we are here to day on the Humboldt, lay the untold mineral wealth of Nevada; consisting of all kinds of meneral [sic] in unlimited quantities. The gold and silver ledges are the only ones that attract attention now—whilst copper and lead abound everywhere in vast quantities.[62]

I have not overdrawn the picture if we can believe what those that have partially explored these mountains say about them. I have seen limestone [i. e. brimstone] almost as pure as the limestone of commerce, which compasses nearly a whole mountain in sight of where I am a traveling at present. But I am digressing from my journey and telling what I intended for a future letter, and must now briefly run back on the road; and of all the dreary parts of the country that I have ever seen there is none to compare with this, and I believe that every one that has traveled over this desert will agree with me that it is a perfect scene of desolation. Whilst crossing the desert from Baggtown[63] to the slew of the Humboldt,[64] I could not help but

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61 Wheatley evidently refers to the canyon of the Carson River.

62 Wheatley is exaggerating, although limited amounts of these ores may be found in this region.

63 Ragtown, not Baggtown; the editor of the *Du Quoin Recorder* probably misread the word in Wheatley's letter. Ragtown is located twelve miles northwest of present-day Fallon. In 1854 Asa L. Kenyon established a farm and stop-over point for exhausted immigrants on the

think of what must have been the feelings of many a poor emigrant when on this horrible place, he saw his team lay down and die—compelling him to abandon his wagon, cooking untensils [sic] and indeed everything else; judging from the remains of what I see scattered all along the road. The cause of such destruction of cattle and horses is the prevalence of alkalie in the water, and which abounds in all the streams; unless their [sic] is great care taken it is certain death to cattle and horses. Not only does this alkalie abound in the water, but the surface of the earth is covered over with it like a flake of snow.

In my next I will endeavor to give some account of the mining operations in this part of the country, some of which will be amusing if not interesting.

R. J. Wheatly [sic].

NO. 7

Etna,[65]
Humboldt River,
Sept. 24, 1865

MR. EDITOR:—I promised in my last letter to give you some account of the mines of Nevada—but by your permission I will give a "Frog Story."[66] There is going the rounds in some papers here that there was near the Hot Springs[67] on the Truckee, on the route from Virginia City to Humboldt river,

banks of the Carson River. The community that grew up there was owned entirely by Kenyon and acquired its name either from the ragged clothing cast off by the travelers or the presence of tattered clothing hung out to dry on nearby brush, or from the run-down condition of the waystation (Carlson, *Nevada Place Names,* p. 197).

[64] The "slew" is now called the Humboldt Sink and is situated south of present-day Lovelock, Nevada. Wheatley was traveling in the notorious Forty-Mile Desert.

[65] Etna (Aetnaville) arose in 1865 when a stamp mill began to process the ores of mines in the vicinity. The community was named from the New York company which established a mill there (Etna), a modest structure of fifty-one by fifty-four feet, with walls of rock, and powered by a forty horsepower engine. The neighboring communities of Torrey-town, Oreana, and Etna comprised the Trinity Mining District (David Basso, "The Rise and Fall of Three Nevada Towns," *Nevada Appeal Graphic* [Carson City], 10 September 1967, pp. 4–5). Within a year of its creation, Etna sported two mills, a general store, livery stable, surveyor's office, post office and a ferry service across the Humboldt River. The boom was shortlived, and the mills either moved to nearby Oreana or were dismantled within a few months. Etna remained a ghost town, aside from a brief flurry of activity in 1870–72 (Stanley W. Paher, *Nevada Ghost Towns and Mining Camps* [Berkeley: Howell-North, 1970], p. 126).

[66] Frog stories abounded on the frontier, although the exact origin of the original version is unknown. Henry P. Leland, a writer and journalist, heard one tale while stopping at a steamboat wood camp on the Mississippi River, in Arkansas. He published this frog story in the *Spirit of the Times* (New York), 26 May 1855; Mark Twain heard a similar tale in Angel's Camp, California, told by Ben Coon, an old Illinois River pilot. Bernard DeVoto, *Mark Twain's America* (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin, 1932), pp. 172–76 and Appendix B, surmises that the frog story may have a Negro origin.

[67] Probably Lawton's Hot Springs, five miles west of Reno, in Washoe County (Carlson, *Nevada Place Names,* p. 152).

a monster frog measuring some two feet across the shoulders, and four feet in length—with warts on him as large as one's fist. I do not know whether such a frog is or was in existence or not; if there has ever been such a frog here I would advise them to send the largest frog in the world to the biggest Frenchman in the world, Napoleon,[68] and perhaps that would satisfy his craving apetite [sic] for Mexico. Whether the frog story be true or not, I will give your readers a Bug Story that I will vouch for the truth of. There is a bug here that is quite common in the States as well as here; its habitation here is mostly confined to silver ledges, or where they are said, and in some instances, it has grown to the [e]normous size. There were some men here that got up a wild cat claim of ledges in what they called the Pine nut district,[69] representing said district as abounding in rich ledges of gold and silver bearing quartz—surrounded with mountains densely covered with pine trees, whilst at the foot of the mountains there was fine valleys, through which run beautiful streams of water abounding in trout. There was pictured out on paper a flourishing village, and many other things were taken to New York city, where they soon succeeded in getting a bite at the Bug to the tune of some hundred thousand dollars for the entire district. Three quartz mills were immediately set out to crush the quartz, and a large supply of fishing tackle for catching trout; but to the sad surprise of the company when they got to the district, there was no ledges—no beautiful streams abounding with fish, but on the contrary it was with difficulty they could even get water enough to drink. The machinery is on hand, the fishing tackle is of no use unless they apply it to catching lizards or rab[b]its, as they are the only game there—so much for that Hum-Bug.

Nor is this the only case of that kind I could mention, but I forbear just now. No one not having some knowledge of these matters could have an idea how much of this kind of swindling has been done in the course of the last year; and I would say to eastern capitalist[s] that they had better be sure what they are buying before they go too far. I would further say that although I have no doubt that there is an almost unlimited supply of good mineral bearing quartz ledges—yet there is not in all the Humboldt country a fully developed mine of gold or silver or any other minerals, nor can there be any mines that will pay until they are sunk down to a sufficient depth. Should the ledges prove as good as the croppings seem to indicate, there will be no deficiency—but enough to make silver almost as plenty as in other paying mines as soon as the facilities can be had to work the rock. But to listen to men from here or California, who go to make sales of ledges on their

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[68] A reference to the Emperor Napoleon III of France, who was then engaged in the conquest of Mexico with Maximilian of Austria; see n26.

[69] Probably a reference to the Pine Forest District, organized in the early 1860s in northern Nevada, in Humboldt County (Angel, ed., *History of Nevada*, p. 452).

representations you will get most awfully humbugged—for many sell ledges that they never saw, or never was seen by any person, because there never was a ledge where they represented them to be. I do not know but my writing for the *Recorder* is useless so far as its readers are concerned—as two numbers of the *Recorder* reached here to day directed to Mr. P. K. Roots,[70] and I did see none of my letters in either of them. I thought possibly if my letters had reached you that you thought them of not sufficient merit to give them to your readers. On to day, September 26th, Mr. P. K. Roots received two numbers of the *Recorder* dated September 1st, in which I see you have honored my correspondence—best of all they come ahead of all other news we can get form [sic] the States. We have had no news since we left home that has come through in anything like so short a time as the *Recorder.* No newspaper was ever so gladly received by any set of fellows away from home—I venture to say since the first newspaper was published—"many thanks for them."

As to what we are doing here I will say a word or two. The Chrisopolis ledge that we expected to have went to work on, was not sufficiently opened to justify the putting up of a mill this year. So Mr. Nason selected a place for his mill on the Humboldt river—some 25 miles north of Humboldt Lake, where we are at work putting up a mill. A full account of it I will give in my next.

I will conclude this letter by giving a short account of a Humboldt breeze which blows here not only occasionally, but semi-occasionally. On last Sunday we had one that I will attempt to discribe [sic]: the whole country is a 'sand pile' which has not been thoroughly wet since last winter —not only a sand pile, but an ash heap, for the sand is well mixed with alkalie, and it is as light as wood ashes. Just imagine a heavy gale of wind from the northwest about as hard or perhaps harder than you have it there on the prairie—gathering up the sand and ashes on its onward march with all the force such a wind can have, over a valley unobstructed—no snow storm I ever saw in the States will ever compare with the sand storms penetrating everywhere, into everything, on everything filling the air so thick as to almost obscure the scene. Accompaning [sic] thi[s] storm was an electric current, electrifying the cooking stove and furniture so much so that if you touched the stove or utensile, it gave a severe shock, as Mr. P. K. Root and [I] thoroughly tested. All are well.

R. J. Wheatly [sic].

Letters eight through fifteen will be included in the Winter issue of the Quarterly.

[70] P. K. Roots was elected Humboldt County surveyor on 6 November 1866 and again two years later (Angel, ed., *History of Nevada,* p. 449; see also n3.)

Book Reviews

House of Cards. By Jerome H. Skolnick. (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1978. 382 pp., index. $13.95)

IN LIGHT OF THE CONTINUING casual interest that has long existed among journalists and the general public concerning the operations and activities of the legal casino gambling industry in Nevada, it is surprising how few serious studies have been done on the subject. This book is effectively the first to examine deeply, analytically and critically many of the procedural issues that surround the gaming industry and the political and economic environment in which it exists.

The author, who is a Professor of Law at the University of California, Berkeley, argues that the study of gambling as an activity which has been changing from a criminal status into a legal, though highly regulated setting, provides insights into how well legal controls can operate in general, and how they are affected by economic and political considerations. The gaming industry, especially in the last two decades, has undergone a very rapid evolution in the size and nature of operations and in the complexity of controls. Thus, a study of the industry in transition provides an excellent opportunity to examine society's ability to contain the potentially damaging effects on society associated with a legalized vice, and its ability to cope with the imperatives of economic growth that a highly profitable and expanding industry generates.

The book is a result of a study undertaken from 1974 to 1977 by the author working in cooperation with the Nevada Gaming Control Board, the state's regulatory agency for the gaming industry. Many of the insights in the book are presented in the form of summaries of actual cases and problems that confronted the Control Board and the industry during that period. The close access the author had to the decision making process of the Control Board provides an unusual insider's perspective to the difficulties inherent in fulfilling the regulatory mandates of (1) providing an economic environment for the gaming industry conducive to the continued growth and prosperity of gaming operations and, by implication, the state of Nevada; and (2) exercising sufficient controls over the industry to prevent the occurrence of events, such as infiltration by organized crime, skimming of casino profits, or the cheating of casino customers, that could undermine

the acceptance of casino gambling as a legitimate business activity and the credibility of the state's efforts to regulate the industry without outside (i.e. federal) interference. The basic thesis of the book is summarized by the title, *House of Cards*. "The control of legal gambling is an uncertain, even precarious, enterprise" (p. 12). This is due to the inherent conflicts between the two mandates. "The larger the economic interest of the state in legal casino gambling, the greater the outside pressure to soften the mechanisms of control" (p. 13).

The book is divided into six sections. The first examines some of the fundamental motivations behind gambling as an activity and gambling as a vice. The author presents a cursory and somewhat superficial discussion of compulsive gambling as a social problem; he downplays the significance of the issue in much the same fashion as the gaming industry or the state of Nevada would do. This is probably because, within Nevada, compulsive gambling is an invisible problem as well as a potential threat to the two regulatory mandates. It is invisible because compulsive gamblers who frequent Nevada casinos for the most part reside in other states; thus the financial, legal or marital problems that manifest themselves occur outside of Nevada. Compulsive gambling, if it is potentially widespread in society, threatens the social legitimacy of commercial gambling and consequently its ability to grow. The author is correct on one major point, however: there is very little hard evidence on how prevalent compulsive gambling is, or could be, in the United States.

The second section examines the casino environment, both from the player's point of view and from a casino management perspective. To the player, a casino is not only a place to indulge in gambling; it is also a place in which he or she can enjoy fine cuisine and quality entertainment, indulge in casual, often commercial sex as a voyeur or a participant, and otherwise pursue hedonistic pleasures. To casino management, the casino is a money-producing factory which is highly susceptible to theft and fraud, but one in which management must strike a delicate balance between effective internal controls and preserving the atmosphere consistent with adult play and hedonism. The discussion of credit play and so-called premium customers is particularly interesting; such players, who wager large amounts at games in which the casino has an inherent advantage, are expensive because of the complementary activities they demand from the casino and potentially risky because much of their play is on credit. Thus the casino must exercise shrewd judgment in determining limits both to complementaries and to credit so that the player will generate a positive return to the operation and still want to come back to lose again in the future.

The third section deals with the history of the gaming industry in Nevada. To fully appreciate this book and the difficulties of gaming control,

some fundamental concepts concerning Nevada and the gaming industry must be understood. First, the industry has been, in the author's words, a "pariah" industry. Prior to 1978, Nevada was the only state in the United States which allowed legal casino operations. Furthermore, many of the early casino owners and operators in Nevada were associated with organized crime. Second, the industry, when managed correctly, has been extremely profitable and has been characterized by economies of large scale operations. As a result of these two factors, there has been substantial pressure for the industry to expand to take advantage of the profitability, and to build larger facilities, to take advantage of the benefits of size. However, the industry's negative image, especially within the financial community, prevented the use of conventional financial capital in the industry's expansion well into the 1970s. As a result, the industry relied heavily on less legitimate financial sources for expansion, such as the Teamsters' Central State Pension Fund, especially in the 1960s. Also, it became a clear policy of the state and the industry to improve the image of casino gaming to overcome this constraint. Finally, again because of the pariah image of casino gaming, there has always been a fear in Nevada that the Federal government will decide that Nevada cannot keep organized crime out of gambling operations, and as a consequence would intervene in the regulatory structure or try to shut the industry down. Strengthening the industry's acceptance and legitimacy alleviates that threat.

The next two sections of the book deal with the Gaming Control Board and specific issues that came before the Board during the study period. The key to effective control is the licensing process, the author argues. However, in order to keep individuals who would be "undesirable" licensees out of the industry, the Control Board (and Gaming Commission) need broad discretionary powers in exercising their judgment on applicants. However, under a system of law, license denials without cause could be challenged and possibly overturned. Two cases are discussed in considerable detail that relate to this question. The first involved an individual who had a brilliant reputation as an attorney and businessman, but who had once served as Jimmy Hoffa's attorney and had long been under investigation by Federal authorities. The second involved a professional gambler named Frank "Lefty" Rosenthal, who was initially denied a gambling license by the Control Board and Gaming Commission. He challenged the ruling in court, and in the process the Gaming Control statutes were deemed unconstitutional because they did not specify standards for license denial and because the applicant was denied due process in the licensing procedure. Though this case was eventually overturned by the Nevada Supreme Court, the case pointed out not only the administrative difficulties in establishing criteria for license denial; it also illustrated the potential for corruption of public officials in an industry that has had a long history of contact with "undesirable" individ-

uals. (It should be noted that the term "undesirable" relates mainly to the question of the image of the gaming industry to outsiders and the effect a particular individual would have on that image.)

The final section of the book looks at the regulatory structure of casino gambling in England and compares it to the structure in Nevada. In England, gambling is viewed as a social problem, and casinos are legalized as a control mechanism, to prevent the operation of illegal casinos. The regulatory structure is highly authoritarian, and is used to stifle the imperative for growth that has been so typical in Nevada and now in Atlantic City. British casinos are not allowed to stimulate demand, to grant credit, or to provide other entertainment amenities that are commonplace in Nevada. Furthermore, only members can gamble in English casinos, and a person must apply forty-eight hours in advance for membership; this is done to eliminate "impulse" gambling and to keep the working classes out of the casinos. In effect, the English approach is to keep the gaming industry under control by preventing the establishment of an economic dependence of the state or a community on the continued prosperity of the industry. By contrast, Nevada is effectively a one industry state, and the economic dependence of Nevada on the industry effectively eliminates a broad array of policy alternatives because they would be in conflict with the economic interests of the industry and, by association, the state. This is the basic reason why control of casino gambling is a "house of cards."

This is an intriguing and highly thought-provoking book worthy of consideration by anyone interested in the subject of legalized casino gambling. By legalizing gambling, society creates an opportunity for tremendous profits because of the presence of substantial demand for gambling and related activities. However, because of the difficulties inherent in the control of gambling, the increasing spread of legalized gambling in this country and abroad may bring about greater social costs that the initial proponents anticipated. This book presents an excellent analysis of the kinds of control problems that can and should be anticipated.

William R. Eadington
University of Nevada, Reno

The Story of the Mine, As Illustrated by the Great Comstock Lode of Nevada. By Charles Shinn. (Reno: University of Nevada Press Vintage Nevada Series, 1980; originally published 1896. xv + 277 pp., illustrations, index. $6.50)

The "old west" was still alive in the 1890s when the D. Appleton Company announced the publication of a series of books called "The Story of the West," and the Comstock was still producing in 1896 when Charles

Howard Shinn finished his contribution, *The Story of the Mine: As Illustrated by the Great Comstock Lode of Nevada.* In retrospect, it is curious that Shinn should have gotten the assignment. "The Story of the West" series was inspired in part by Frederick Jackson Turner's famous "frontier thesis" paper at the 1893 convention of the American Historical Association and Shinn, although an old seminar mate of Turner's at John Hopkins, was no disciple. In his *Mining Camps* of 1885, Shinn attributed the institutions of the Sierra gold camps not to adaptation to the frontier but to ancient teutonic "germs" and, indeed, to Tubal Cain himself. It was the *continuity* of miner ways over the centuries, regardless of the nature of the larger culture, that impressed Shinn in *Mining Camps,* not the social, economic, and political consequences of the western environment. Because of the straining necessary to follow such a vein, *Mining Camps,* while not without value, is largely of antiquarian interest today. *The Story of the Mine,* on the contrary, is a classic if not a masterpiece. After eighty-four years the book is still a bonanza of information and insights into the nature of American hard rock mining in the nineteenth century.

Shinn chose to focus on the Comstock for good reasons. The Comstock lasted. California really was a flash in the pan by comparison. But the Comstock endured over long enough a period and through several cycles of bonanza and borrasca so that every aspect of mining technology, finance, and life can be found in its story. Virginia City was the norm to which all other great mining camps were compared for half a century. The technological innovations perfected under Mt. Davidson were borrowed in every other camp.

The Comstock trained the men that worked all of them. The Virginia City and Gold Hill Miner's Unions were the parents of the great labor movement of the mountain west, and only the Western Federation of Miners' Butte Local ever rivalled the Nevadans' degree of job control. In another vein, no other district, not Deadwood nor the Coeur D'Alenes nor Tombstone nor even Cripple Creek, produced a folklore and a literature such as the Comstock did. Small wonder that Shinn could sympathize and call it poetry when, in the 1890s, an old Comstocker surveyed the "wreck, decay, abandonment" and said wishfully to him, "She has another word to say. She is asleep, but not dead."

It is Shinn's appreciation of the glory of the tale that makes *The Story of the Mine* a book for today as well as a popular book of the turn of the century. Many buffs have added anecdotes of heroism, chicanery, and daily life to his story. Many historians have corrected him on one point or another and Eliot Lord's *Comstock Mining and Miners* (which Shinn gracelessly slights: he quotes Lord several times but calls Dan De Quille "the only real

historian of the Comstock") is a far more valuable source for the contemporary student.

But no one, predecessor or successor, has captured so much of the many spirits of Comstock history as Shinn does here. If the teutonism of *Mining Camps* is downplayed in *Story,* Shinn still remained a writer of the old school. His narrative is steeped in classical allusion and metaphor. Far from "dating" the book, they remind us of how much American historical writing, and therefore the quality of our historical sense, has decayed. Shinn's spread-eagle bombast is just right for a saga. His assumption that technological processes and financial manipulations can be explained in attractive, readable prose makes for history far superior to the compilations of tables and graphs and dry-as-silica-dust monographs that "correct" him in many areas.

The Story of the Mine is not the last word on the Comstock. Working mostly from previously-published sources, Shinn repeats errors of perspective and fact. The book is misleading in some particulars simply because of the limitations of the era in which it was written. Thus, Shinn's generation was still unaware of the precise causes of silicosis, "miner's con," and the author attributes the "pulmonary troubles" common to the men "to the sudden change from the tropic lower levels of the mine to the snow-covered, windy ridge of the town in winter."

But if the book is not the last word on the Comstock, it serves as well as any single book as an introduction to the greatest mining adventure in American history. *The Story of the Mine* is the first title in the University of Nevada Press "Vintage Nevada Series." It is a good choice. The editor, Mary Ellen Glass, will do well to come up with others of its caliber.

Joseph R. Conlin
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Western Carpetbagger: The Extraordinary Memoirs of "Senator" Thomas Fitch. Edited and with an introduction by Eric N. Moody. (Reno: The University of Nevada Press, 1978. 286 pp., index, $5.25)

Western Carpetbagger is the fourth volume to appear in the Bristlecone paperback series. The studies comprise first person narrative accounts of life in Nevada and adjacent areas of the West. (For a discussion of the Bristlecone series see the article "Portraits From an Antique West" published in this issue of the *Quarterly.*)

Thomas Fitch (1838–1923) was a politician, lawyer, miner, journalist, lobbyist, speculator, actor, playwright and itinerant spellbinder. Although

dubbed the "Silver Tongued Orator" and once labeled "the most corrupt man that ever followed politics" on the Pacific Coast, he is no longer remembered. Fitch became a one-term Congressman from Nevada, an attorney for Brigham Young, United States Senator-elect had Utah entered the union in 1872 and an associate and advisor to Governor John C. Frémont of Arizona. His observations, therefore, are drawn mainly from political aspects of western American life between the Civil War and the turn of the century.

Someone has said that language is really all that we have in our heads. Children delight in babbling words and adults enjoy written and oral exploration of ideas and commenting upon their past experiences. These extensive newspaper reminiscences by Fitch fall into the latter category. The book is a rearrangement in chronological form of Fitch's reflections as they appeared in the *San Francisco Call* between September 20, 1903 and March 20, 1904. The writer attempted not only to glean colorful highlights from his sixty-five years, but also to retell "popular anecdotes," make "picturesque observations," and provide "ruminations on religion and national greatness."

Fitch's characterizations, episodic approach and literary style are predictable and typical of the era. He seldom uses the newspaper column as a springboard for either novel detail or universal generalization. As a transient politician, he was primarily a salesman who specialized in verbal and written seduction. He does not disclose his personal commitment, his social values, his emotional attachments or his political philosophy. Even his innermost concerns, dislikes and humiliations are not revealed. Rather, he relies on name dropping. The infamous, the famous and the familiar from Mark Twain to Wyatt Earp, from Robert G. Ingersoll to Theodore Roosevelt, from Dan De Quille to Horace Greeley are woven or more often thrust into the author's Gilded Age.

The narrative technique has the obviousness of light journalism. It lacks any coherent point of view and provides gratuitous explanations and wildly exaggerated commentary. Although the articles reflect the author's nomadic instinct they are not romantic; although they strive for dynamic eloquence they become trivial. Fitch's florid panegyric and pretentious flattery seem extreme even for a tasteless age. In noting the settlement of Nevada he wrote:

> Tens of thousands of the brightest, bravest, most generous, enterprising, and energetic men on earth, the Knight Paladins, who challenged the brute forces of nature to combat, the soldiers who, possessed with the *aura sacra fames*, faced the storm and the savage, the desert and disease, swarmed around the base of Mount Davidson and reached out to Aurora, to Reese River, and to the mountains of the Humboldt. (p. 42)

And in commenting on United States Senator William M. Stewart, Fitch ignored any attempt at credibility:

Glorious, incomparable, indomitable, undismayed, tireless "Old Bill," though fortune forsake him, though death snatch from him his nearest, though the favored of Plutus intrigue for his toga, though the wand of age has changed his tawny hair and beard to silver, his steel blue eyes have not lost their glitter, nor his port its erectness, and he springs to the front in the tournament of senatorial debate as vigorous and alert as when he engaged in the contests of the courtroom forty years ago. (p. 43–44)

Despite the prose, in *Carpetbagger* one meets virtually all of the early Nevada literary figures as well as scores of late nineteenth-century western patrons, politicians and tycoons. And despite the dated and tiring dialogue a structure slowly emerges. It becomes sturdy enough to encompass not only the gossip, the anecdotes and the acquaintances but also bits of regional history and contemporary ideas, concepts and fantasies. It is, however, Thomas Fitch rather than Fitch's reminiscences that is worthy of notice. He was a product of his time and of his conditioning; he accepted the West with the bark on; he was less a conservative Republican politician than a flamboyant buncombe artist. And he seems to have maintained a joshing good humor, an urbane open-mindedness, a spirited aggressiveness and a consistent aversion to stability and hard work.

Wilbur S. Shepperson
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Women and Men on the Overland Trail. By John Mack Faragher. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979. xiii + 281 pp., map, tables, appendices, footnotes, selected bibliography, index. $17.50)

The diaries, letters, and recollections of the overland emigrants of the 1840s to the 1860s are hardly unknown material to historians of the American West. These documents have been used to create a large and diverse array of works ranging from the imaginatively conceptual—Bernard DeVoto's *The Year of Decision* (1943)—to the relentlessly comprehensive—John D. Unrue, Jr.'s *The Plains Across* (1979). John Mack Faragher's *Women and Men on the Overland Trail,* while lacking the grandeur of the former and the precision of the latter, is a unique and largely effective interpretation of these most familiar sources. Working from an avowedly feminist perspective, Faragher has analyzed his materials in terms of the dynamics of spousal relationships. He has identified and traced the sexual struggle between wife and husband from their midwestern familial cultural context through their joint stumblings across the plains in that "surrogate society" known as the wagon train. If, along the way, we are never quite allowed to forget the author's feminism we are also unable to doubt his sincerity, his determination to convey the nature, the struggles, the significance of his

feminine subjects. Faragher unabashedly admires them, and with good reason.

The fundamental materials for this study are the nearly 800 extant personal accounts of overland emigrants. Given the focus of the work, Faragher excluded all accounts of men who journeyed in strictly masculine company, leaving only those which observed, directly or tangentially, the experiences of married men and women on the trail. Of these, Faragher studied 169 recollections by family members and 115 by unrelated males who were proximate enough to regard husband-wife behavior. These accounts were then divided into 53 value categories which were, in turn, subjected to a context-analysis designed to yield a systematic profile of behavior, goals, and culture.

Much of the conceptual framework for this study was derived from the field of social psychology. While this approach provides a useful, supplemental means for interpreting the historical evidence, it also enables Faragher to engage in some amateurish behavioral speculation and to draw some very dubious conclusions. The source of this difficulty is the author's occasional presentation of theoretical positions as acknowledged verities. For example, it is Faragher's argument that competitiveness was a predominant trait among the male pioneers, a condition which to him "suggests that men felt insecure and feared their own weaknesses, that male strength was a defensive pose." From this speculation he proceeds to make a statement regarding "weak ego development," and then concludes that "These midwestern men seemed to suffer from underdeveloped capacities to identify with other people, possibly owing to insecurity or uncertainty about their essential selves." Perhaps this sort of thing may be of some interest, but its historical value is certainly suspect.

What emerges from this study is a portrait of a work-oriented culture in which a highly developed sense of masculine superiority fostered a condition of feminine exploitation. Faragher argues that this situation was in part a function of perceptual differences regarding kinds of work. Men, it seems, performed "social labor," work connected, no matter how tenuously, to the larger economic and social world beyond the homestead. Women did work which was, by its very nature, circumscribed by narrow rural domesticity. Males were accorded status for their labors; females achieved none for theirs. But in surveying the standard tasks of each sex, Faragher is clearly more impressed with the demonstrated work capacities of the women than those of the men, and rightfully so. The typical feminine duties, as he describes them, border on the herculean. It may well be that a more critical evaluation of the sources would result in a less monumental although still impressive picture of women's work. As enumerated here, one wonders how anyone organized, much less performed, such a multitude of tasks.

The gender-determined division of labor seems to have been like so much of the midwestern rural culture, easily transferred from the needs of the farm to the dictates of the trail. There, as it had been at home, the stark sexual segregation of unequal distribution of work prevailed: men did men's work almost exclusively, while women did women's, and not infrequently, men's as well. The men were united in a shared culture of competition, aggression, initiative, responsibility, and violence, aptly symbolized by the largely vestigial endeavor of hunting. The women too enjoyed a common culture, cooperatively rather than competitively based, derived from the shared experiences of childbirth and motherhood, of being helpmates and nurses, of simply being women. A fair portion of the men's time was spent in self-indulgence; a fair portion of the women's was spent in self-denial.

Women and Men on the Overland Trail, although intrinsically limited in time, place, and subject, contains many of the familiar, juxtaposed elements associated with the American West as a whole—cooperation and competition, individualism and communalism, excitement and tedium, optimism and despair, the quest for the new and the desire to recreate the old. Unfortunately, the author's focus upon husband-wife relations precluded him from relating much of his discussion to traditional frontier theory. This is especially frustrating because the potential for reinterpretation within this work is substantial. On the other hand, Faragher has restored at least one group of pioneer women to their rightful place in the great American folk movement and that, in itself, is a fine start.

Gary L. Cunningham
University of California, Santa Barbara

The Holdouts. By William Decker. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979. 256 pp., $9.95)

William Decker's second novel,*The Holdouts*, resembles his first, for both could easily be called documentaries rather than works of fiction. While *To Be A Man,* published in 1967, documents the life of a single twentieth-century cowboy, *The Holdouts* offers the reader a whole spectrum of present-day Westerners. Set in northern Arizona, *The Holdouts* details a series of incidents that combine the old West with the new. The key issue is cattle rustling. And the men from the Rocking R ranch attempt to solve their problem in the traditional way, on horseback, with guns. The villain, however, turns out to be the Mafia; the solution turns out to be effected by helicopter; and the reader is left with a conviction that the old and the new have reached at best an uneasy détente.

The book's strength lies in its portrayal of the ranch itself and the characters of the men who run it. *The Holdouts* reminds one, in fact, of Andy Adams' *Log of a Cowboy,* with its detailed vignettes of the dusty reality of cowboying: how to butcher a steer, how to shoe a horse, how to track, how to break, how to brand—the list is endless. And like its classic predecessor, *The Holdouts* mixes stories from the past into its narration of the present, so that the reader encounters such wide-ranging incidents as the hazing of a neophyte ranch hand, the cornering of a recalcitrant bull, the disintegration of a rodeo has-been, even the description of a bloody whore-house brawl. A reviewer of Decker's first novel remarked that portions of it read like transcriptions from a tape recorder, so evocative was it of the past, so life-like in its interpolated stories. The same could be said of *The Holdouts,* for the charm comes from the vignettes, related in tones of nostalgic affection.

Like *To Be A Man,* however, Decker's second novel suffers from awkward transitions and an uneasy style. Too often the author stumbles while moving from past to present, or from incident to explication, or from first to third person point of view. In fact, it is the switching from story to sermon that gets Decker into trouble. Because he chooses to include a philosophy of ranching as well as a picture, he frequently pauses to endorse certain ecologic and economic attitudes. At those times, *The Holdouts* becomes propaganda rather than fiction. With a conceptualization of cattle barons, vast unfenced spreads, rugged individualism, and frontier justice, Decker overlays a nineteenth-century design on a twentieth-century map. That he recognizes his anachronistic result is revealed by his title, by his characters, and even by his cattle—holdouts from the past, every one. It is not the philosophy itself that intrudes, however; it is the way Decker chooses to communicate it, by interruption and lecture, rather than by thematic integration.

Nevertheless, *The Holdouts* is good reading. The action is lively, the characters worth knowing, the anecdotes delightful, the interpolations revealing. And despite occasional feelings of irritation, Western readers will find the examination of modern ranching both intriguing and provocative. Indeed, the book seems especially written for those of us who are holdouts too.

ANN RONALD
University of Nevada, Reno

The Black Towns. By Norman L. Crockett. (Lawrence, Kansas: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1979. xv + 244 pp. $14.00)

HISTORICALLY, BLACK LEADERS in the United States from the Civil War onward have used four basic approaches to solve the dilemma that Afro-

Americans have faced—that is, discrimination and overt suppression (and violence) inflicted upon them by white society. The four approaches are well known: direct political action; economic self-help and uplift as espoused by such leaders as Booker T. Washington; open confrontation as preached by such leaders as W. E. B. Dubois; and mass exodus to Africa, Canada, or some other country. All these approaches have been well highlighted by other authors.

However, there was a fifth approach: self-segregation within the confines of all-black communities. Many Negro leaders hoped that in such towns blacks could escape the prejudice and suppression found in the white world. Leaders and followers thereby hoped they could find personal safety, political freedom, and economic opportunity. Further, blacks in such communities might develop racial solidarity and pride.

Pursuant to the above goals, at least sixty all-black towns were founded between 1865 and 1915. Oklahoma with more than twenty led all other states. Obviously the black town "movement" was a story that needed to be told and analyzed. However, prior to Crockett's present effort, the story remained virtually untold because records concerning many of the towns are often nonexistent.

In this study, Crockett concentrates on the formation, growth, and ultimate failure of five black communities. The author's wide research convinced him that his five "samples" were fairly typical of all such towns. He justifies their selection by virtue of average size, reasons for being founded, and political leanings of residents. As chosen by the author the towns and their dates of initial founding are Nicodemus, Kansas (1879); Mound Bayou, Mississippi (1887); Langston, Oklahoma (1891); Clearview, Oklahoma (1903); and Boley, Oklahoma (1904).

Crockett breaks *Black Towns* into five chapters of virtually equal length. First, he focuses on promoters and settlers; then, he develops a unit on "Image and Ideology." The three following chapters concern "Politics and Discrimination," "Economy and Society," and "Frustration and Failure." The author develops an analysis of promoters such as Isiah Montgomery and Booker T. Washington at Mound Bayou, Edward P. McCabe at Langston, and W. R. Hill, a white promoter, at Nicodemus. All were committed to building personal fortunes out of their endeavors, but they also appeared interested in black advancement. Settlers came by the scores and hundreds. Their motives appear clear—to escape poverty, discrimination, and violence.

In his second and third units Crockett explores the activities of promoters, boosterism, and the world of politics. Almost all methods imaginable were used to attract settlers. Yet there was an internal contradiction in the thinking of promoters and most settlers. Most generally accepted capitalism and the Protestant ethic and were at heart believers in future integration, in the fact that someday blacks would be accepted into the mainstream of

American life. Thus if those assumptions became true, the black towns would fail. In chapter three the author analyzes the politics in the black towns and finds that most men of voting age heartily participated in local affairs. However, at the county and certainly at the state level, blacks were shut out of the political process by whites who continued discriminatory practices. Yet blacks retained control over their local institutions.

In a fourth chapter on economy and society several of the author's major points concern lack of agricultural diversification and the rise of tenancy. Trends of economic decline were set in motion. The final chapter details the collapse of the Negro communities which ultimately buckled under the weight of racism and economic disasters which included lack of ready credit. Perhaps most illustrative of the precarious nature of the economics of the black towns was the disintegration of the Mound Bayou economy in 1914. Here Crockett focuses on the local bank on which farmers depended for loans. But in bad crop years the bank teetered on the brink of disaster. Moreover, one of its founders began promoting the Mound Bayou Oil Mill and Manufacturing Company which was to process by-products of cotton grown by Yazoo Delta farmers. Through the sale of stocks and bank loans, the fate of the bank and the mill became entwined. A problem for one was a problem for both. Pressure on one meant the possible failure of both. Disaster struck in May of 1914 when the bank—over-committed to the mill—needed cash. A white benefactor advanced a $5,000 emergency loan, but just then the bottom dropped out of the cotton market; Mound Bayou farmers were tied to that crop and could not repay loans; the bank was forced to close. The economy of the Mound Bayou blacks was ruined, and the community started to die. In similar fashion the other black towns collapsed. Promoters had made money, but settlers who came to stay sunk into dire poverty. Ultimately, people moved away from the towns seeking better opportunities. The handful that remained suffered as before. Their greatest, perhaps only, benefit was that in their own communities those who stayed—in Boley, for instance—continued to be partially free of a racist white society.

Thus Crockett chronicles the rise and decline of the black towns. Of the basic approaches blacks used to deal with racism, the separatist black-town movement seems the greatest failure.

In conclusion, *Black Towns* is a worthwhile study which fills a void in black, western, and southern history. It is extremely well-written in a straightforward, clear style. The text is buttressed by a thirty-page notes section and an adequate bibliography and index. Professor Crockett is to be commended for this effort.

James M. Smallwood
Oklahoma State University

NHS ACQUISITIONS

Nevada Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs Collection, 1920–1980

The National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs was a postwar project formed in July, 1919, shortly after the close of World War I. It was planned as a war measure in 1918, through the mobilization of a group of women to utilize the untapped reservoir of power represented by the women workers of this country. Although the signing of the armistice negated the motivating urgency, the urge to organize persisted. The project was considered of such import that it was further pursued into the postwar period. The motivating group, the National Business and Professional Women's Committee, divided the country into five districts and put a qualified organizer in each. A publicity representative was sent out through the states to make contacts with both the membership and the public. A tentative draft for a constitution was set up.

In March, 1919, plans were so well in hand that a national convention was held at the Hotel Statler, St. Louis, Missouri, in July, 1919. The intent was to effect a permanent organization of business and professional women. It was to be non-partisan, non-sectarian, and self-governed. It was to be open to all business and professional women irrespective of their occupation or status as worker or executive.

The group adopted the name of National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs and decided to have a publication. It was known as "Independent Woman," later changed to "National Business Woman."

Women of Nevada responded to the national publicity, and early in 1920 they began serious consideration of becoming active and forming a member group. Newspaper reports of April, 1920 indicate that "A business women's group has been meeting every two weeks for the past three months and is strongly in favor of aligning with the national organization." A May 5, 1920 *Reno Evening Gazette* article states "The Business and Professional Women's Club of Reno will be organized and a constitution and bylaws adopted tomorrow." The Reno club received its national charter June 7, 1920.

Thus the Reno chapter became the first Nevada club in the national federation, within months of the latter's organization. It was to be nine years

before other B&PW clubs were organized; Fallon's was chartered May 20, 1929, and Elko's June 6, 1929. These three clubs were the nucleus of the Nevada Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs organized at the first state convention on June 20, 1929.

The Nevada Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs' collection, consisting of several scrapbooks (beginning in 1929) and twenty-seven boxes, record the story of the organization's growth, activities, and impact in civic, state, and national affairs. With the assistance of the newspapers of the 1919–1980 years, a unique opportunity is provided for the researcher to view the full history of both the national and the Nevada organizations.

The collection is arranged to separate the various levels of interest. The national and international magazines are separated from the state's "Nevada Business Woman." In separate boxes are national conventions; state conventions and board meetings; districts; membership lists and financial records; projects of national, state and local club levels; and records of every club organized in Nevada, with information about their chartering and charter members. State presidents have separate files, providing assistance to the researcher needing specific information about such individuals or the years of their top-level activity in the organization.

The National Federation has created a Foundation and what is considered one of the most complete libraries on women in the nation. Scholarships are provided through the Foundation for women needing help in continuing education for higher professional advancement. This Nevada collection is available for all who are researching the progress of the business and professional woman through the years; and it is hoped that the organization of this valuable set of documents and materials will help lead to the completion of scholarly studies on the role of women in the history of Nevada.

MARY M. MURRAY
Archives Chairman, NFBPWC

American Association of University Women Collection

The Nevada Division of AAUW is a member of the largest and oldest national organization for women. It was founded in Boston in 1882 by 65 women college graduates, and now has 190,000 members and 1927 branches located in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam.

A baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited college or university or from a foreign institution recognized by the International Federation of University Women is a woman's key to membership. AAUW mem-

bers are also members of the International Federation of University Women which the Association helped to found in 1919. IFUW links federations and associations in fifty-four lands, uniting women around the world in working toward common goals and international understanding. Its headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland.

The headquarters for AAUW and the AAUW Educational Foundation is a modern, eight-story building in the nation's capital. It houses a comprehensive library and archival collection on women. The AAUW Educational Foundation finances educational and public service programs, and sponsors conferences and publications. AAUW is involved in the advancement of women, education, the community, cultural interests, international relations and legislation. Members and friends contribute to Foundation assets and yearly provide financial support for the Fellowships and Research and Projects programs.

The first branch of AAUW in Nevada was the Reno Branch established in 1917. When it was organized, its main purpose was to put the University of Nevada on the accredited list. This was accomplished about three years after the Reno Branch came into existence. The Nevada State Division of the AAUW was organized at a convention in Tonopah, on October 4, 1941. Five of the seven branches were present: Reno, Southern Nevada, Tonopah, Winnemucca and Fallon. Elko and Carson Valley were absent. The first project of the Division was the observation of National Art Week, November 17–21, 1941. The Nevada Division now has eleven branches around the state: Boulder City, the Capital Branch in Carson City, Elko, Fallon, Hawthorne, Las Vegas, North Lake Tahoe, Reno, Sparks, White Pine, and Yerington. Currently there are 839 members.

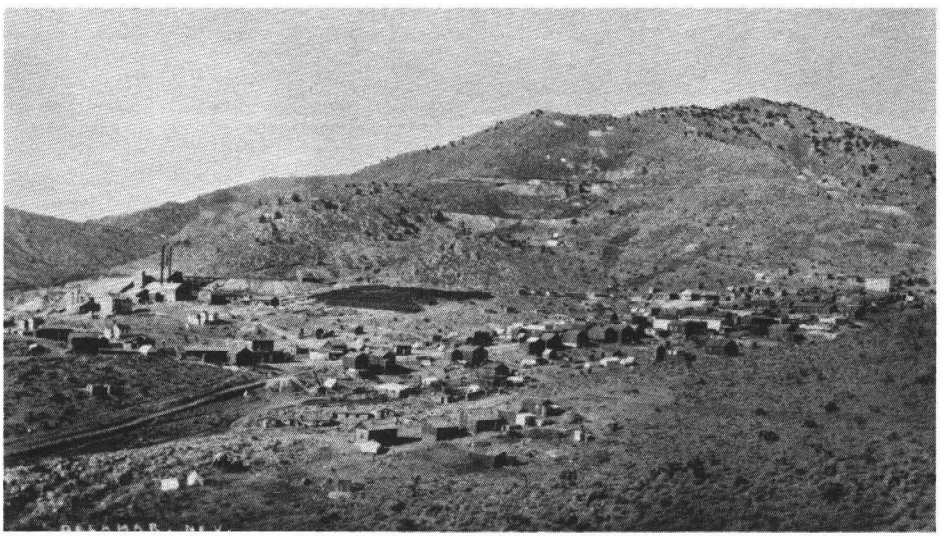
The AAUW Nevada Division and Branches historic collection consists of Division meeting minutes, Branch meeting minutes, scrapbooks, handbooks, chairmen reports, legislative programs, study topic information, magazines, letters, legislative programs, travel program information, and other materials. The organization of the collection has recently been completed, and forms part of the collections of the Society's Reno office. It constitutes a valuable resource for those interested in the history of the women of Nevada and its cultural life.

Mary Busick
Nevada Division Historian, AAUW

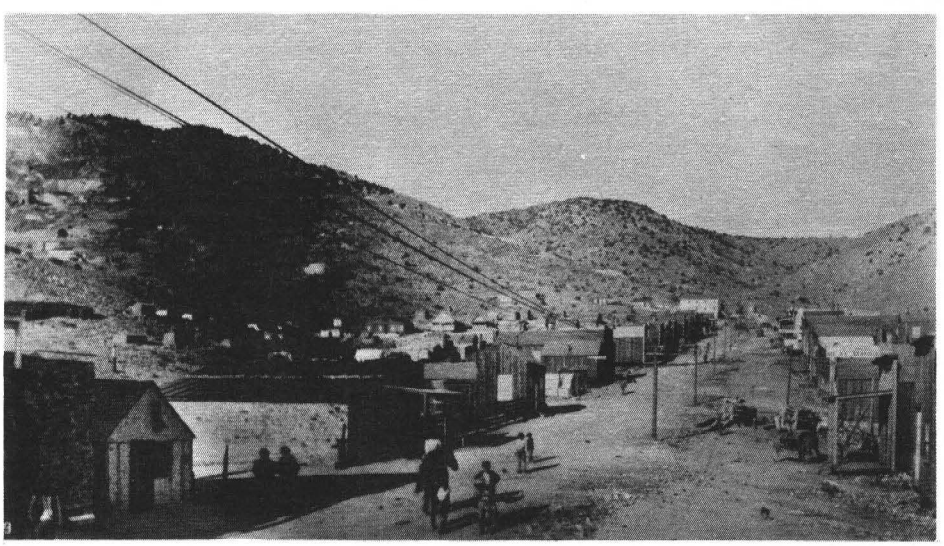
Delamar Photographs

An exchange of photographs with the Arizona Historical Society has brought the NHS ten excellent prints of Delamar. These early prints, produced from

glass plates and taken about 1896, show in vivid detail both the growing community and Captain Joseph R. Delamar's massive cyanide mill. The Society thanks Heather Hatch, AHS Photo Curator, and David Hoober, AHS Curator of Manuscripts.



An early panorama of Delamar showing the town's second mill in the left center of the photo. By January 1896, the Lincoln County town covered the narrow valley below the Delamar and April Fool mines.



Main Street in Delamar was a going concern in 1896. Business boomed, substantial stone structures replaced tents and older frame buildings, and power lines erected down the middle of the street brought electricity to the town. Few people could argue that Delamar was in its heyday.

NHS NEWS AND DEVELOPMENTS

Fleischmann Foundation Grant

The Society in late June received the largest single grant in its seventy-six year history. The Max C. Fleischmann Foundation awarded the Society $150,000 to fund four major projects over a three-year period.

The largest designated sum, $53,231, is for the acquisition of Nevada and Great Basin materials. Since some rare Nevada materials are quite expensive when put on the open market, the Society will now be able to compete with out-of-state institutions for these items. In addition, the Foundation designated $48,815 to arrange, describe, and prepare published registers of the Society's major archival and manuscript collections. A professional manuscripts processor will be hired for a period of two years to complete this project.

The inventorying, relocation, organization, and storage of the Society's three-dimensional collections will be facilitated by the $37,283 designated in the grant for these purposes. Most of these artifacts are now stored in temporary quarters, but will be transferred to the Society's new 10,000 square foot addition when it is completed sometime in the spring of 1981.

The Fleischmann grant alloted $10,670 toward the creation of a new public research facility, complete with carrels, additional reading tables, and equipment. As a result, the research areas should be approximately triple their present size, with more opportunity for private study and research.

Historic Engineering Survey

The NHS has contracted with the Nevada State Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology to survey engineering and industrial sites in Nevada, and to publish the first inventory of these types of sites. The contract is in the amount of $20,000, which will cover all phases of the one-year project. Robert Nylen of Reno has been employed to complete the project, and he will be researching twelve counties, and Carson City, during Phase I. The next phase will focus on Nye, Clark, Lincoln, and Esmeralda counties.

The inventory, which will include appropriate photographs, will be published through the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

The Society requests that persons or organizations interested in assisting Mr. Nylen in his research contact him at the NHS Reno office.

Ulrick/Bay Foundation Grant

The NHS Museum recently received a special grant of $1,500 from the Charles Ulrick and Josephine Bay Foundation of New York. It may be used for any worthwhile museum-related purpose, at the discretion of the Director. This is the second consecutive year the Foundation has awarded a total of $100,000 in grants to museums across the country. The NHS Museum is one of ten selected in the Western region. All museums selected must be accredited by the American Association of Museums. Robert Ashton, the Executive Director of the Ulrick/Bay Foundation, stressed his organization's commitment to regional and local museums.

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.