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Contents

John Reid's Redheaded "Giants" of Central Nevada: Fact or Fiction?	<i>Sheilagh Brooks, Carolyn Stark, and Richard Brooks</i>	243
Walter Van Tilburg Clark: Memories of the Writer	<i>Roger Smith</i>	253
Italian Images in Northern Nevada Writing	<i>Albin J. Cofone</i>	260
NOTES AND DOCUMENTS		
The End of the Line? The Railroad Cottages of Las Vegas, Then and Now	<i>Verona Pasquale and Cheryl Rose Crockett</i>	269
BOOK REVIEWS		278
NEW RESOURCE MATERIALS		298
NEWS AND DEVELOPMENTS		302
CONTRIBUTORS		304

John Reid's Redheaded "Giants" of Central Nevada: Fact or Fiction?

SHEILAGH BROOKS, CAROLYN STARK AND RICHARD H. BROOKS

IN 1948, the Nevada Historical Society acquired the John T. Reid Collection, which was the fruit of a lifetime of research and inquiry by a Lovelock mining engineer who was also an avid amateur anthropologist. Reid's interest in the archaeology of Nevada and his examination of Northern Paiute culture and lore occupied him for decades, and his collected materials included numerous artifacts recovered from sites in northern and central Nevada. Among the most interesting are fourteen skulls and the skeleton of an individual reputed to be a member of a race of Indian "giants." As a biography of Reid noted (edited by J.G. Scrugham in 1935):

One of his great finds was a skeleton, found about twenty miles southerly of Lovelock, Nevada, showing that the body of which it was a framework, was exactly seven feet, seven inches tall. It is one of the "giant men" of an ancient race of which skeletons were unearthed in Central Nevada. (1935:228-229)

Northern Paiute Indian stories of their massacre of an ancient race of Redheaded Giants in the area of Lovelock Cave were accepted by many inhabitants of the northern Nevada area. Dansie (1975) suggests that Reid became intrigued by these stories, and he started collecting human skeletal remains from archaeological sites in the Humboldt Sink and Pyramid Lake areas beginning about 1920 and continuing until his death in 1948.

Prior to historic contact, few of the Great Basin Indian groups buried their dead in a specific locale, or cemetery, and scattered prehistoric or early historic burials of Native American Great Basin peoples are not uncommon in the areas where Reid was looking for the giants. Reid had recovered a number of burials prior to his death, presumably some from Lovelock Cave, and several which have no provenience other than Pelican Island, Pyramid Lake, Humboldt Sink, or Churchill County. He assumed that these burials were the remains of the Redheaded Giants. When these skeletons and the Reid manuscripts were purchased in 1948 by the Nevada Historical Society, the Reid Skeletal Collection (as it was called) was considered to contain evidence substantiating the Indian stories of Redheaded Giants living in the

region of Churchill County, Nevada. Over the years the skeletal portion of the Reid Collection was apparently misplaced, but his manuscripts were preserved and those relevant to his belief that he had found evidence of the Redheaded Giants are discussed in the *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* (Dansie, 1975).

During a complete change of exhibits and exhibit cases in the Nevada Historical Society main gallery in 1977, a number of boxes were uncovered containing the skeletal remains from the Reid Collection. These were sent to the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), Physical Anthropology Laboratory for analysis. None of these remains has any indication of depth within an archaeological site, nor artifactual associations or context, although according to Reid's notes and manuscripts, some of the burials originally may have had artifactual materials associated with them (Dansie 1975). The results of the laboratory analysis were presented at the Great Basin Anthropological Conference held in Salt Lake City, in 1980.

Tales of the Redheaded Giants

Stories about the Redheaded Giants have many variations, and they are found among several Great Basin peoples, such as the Northern Paiute and the Shoshone. Those which Reid may have heard involved a race of extremely tall redhaired people, referred to as Tule Eaters, who lived in the Humboldt Sink area. These people frequently were described as cruel, wicked, and possibly cannibalistic. Supposedly the Northern Paiutes feared and hated them. According to one version of the story, fighting broke out between the Giants and the Northern Paiutes. The Northern Paiutes chased the Giants into Lovelock Cave and covered the entrance with brush, which they fired to suffocate the Giants. Those Giants who tried to get out of the cave were shot by the Northern Paiutes' best marksmen. Some of the Giants did escape, and the fighting continued into the Humboldt Sink and around Pyramid Lake. All of the male Giants were killed, but a few of the females survived and later mated with Northern Paiute men. In some versions a few escaped and were chased to the northwest of Lovelock Cave; in other versions, they ended up as far away as Tule Lake, California.

Archaeological Evidence

There are many versions of the story, but they all agree the Giants were redheaded and tall, and the setting is often Lovelock Cave. This cave is located in a limestone outcropping forming part of the Humboldt mountain range; it overlooks a dried lake bed that was part of Pleistocene Lake Lahonton. In the late 1800s and early 1900s bat guano was mined from the cave for

fertilizer. Mining ostensibly was abandoned when Indian artifacts became so numerous that it was unprofitable to mine the guano.

L.L. Loud began an archaeological excavation of Lovelock Cave in 1912, under the auspices of the University of California, Berkeley, and during this excavation he identified remains of thirty-two individuals (Loud and Harrington 1929). "Not only is there uncertainty as to the number [of bodies] which the guano crew found but there is also some doubt as to the number of individuals which the writer himself [Loud] uncovered. The bodies were buried in close proximity to each other in straw, tule and similar material which later caught fire and perhaps smouldered for some days" (Loud and Harrington 1929:31). This evidence of a fire in Lovelock Cave may have been added to the stories of the Redheaded Giants being smothered through a firing of brush outside the cave.

Later Harrington joined Loud, and they recovered twelve more burials and some scattered remains. One child burial "was wrapped in a great quantity of fish net. Enclosed in the netting was an unusually excellent rattle" (Loud and Harrington 1929:32). They estimated that as many as forty-five burials were in Lovelock Cave, but they state many of these were disturbed or had been removed by miners or other interested persons. It is not known if John Reid acquired any of these and incorporated them into his collections.

Some of the skulls removed by Loud and Harrington were measured by E.W. Gifford (1926). In 1959, K.A.R. Kennedy (1959) analyzed all the Lovelock burials housed in the Museum of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley, as part of his doctoral dissertation. Neither Gifford's nor Kennedy's researches on the Lovelock Cave burials, nor the recent analysis of the Reid Collection, demonstrate measurable differences from burials recovered elsewhere in Churchill County or near Pyramid Lake (Gallagher 1978, Stark 1983).

Analyses of the Reid Collection Skeletons

Reid conducted the first analysis of the skeletal materials he had recovered by measuring the thigh bones or femora. The results of his measurements ranged from 14 1/2" to 18 1/2". By estimating this length in relation to the presumed length of his own thigh bone, he calculated from his height that these individuals during their life had been 7'7" (for the 16 1/2" femur) and even 9'6" (for the 18 1/2" femur). Hair is preserved on some of the skulls, which still have soft tissues adhering. The hair is a brownish red in color, confirming the description in the Redheaded Giant stories of these people being red haired. Because of his size estimates and the hair color, Reid was certain that he had found and identified the Redheaded Giants described in the Northern Paiute stories he had heard in his youth.

Thirty-one burials were included in the Reid Collection rediscovered by

the Nevada Historical Society and sent to UNLV. Few of these are full skeletons; some are represented only by fragmented skulls, or by as little as three vertebrae. There is no information on provenience with the bones or any other information, except that some skulls have written descriptions on them, as "south end of Pelican Island" or "Winnemucca Lake tufa dome." It is assumed Reid must have collected these specimens from the Pyramid Lake area and in the Humboldt Sink. The time period to which these remains date is undetermined, as there were no directly associated artifacts or archaeological context. Consequently the skeletal material from the Reid Collection was grouped together and treated during this analysis as if all the individuals were from one time period.

Age and sex were estimated for each burial, if possible. Measurements were taken of all complete adult bones and skeletal indices were derived from these (Stark 1983). Dental wear patterns were recorded as well as various traits of the bones and teeth related to shape or morphology. Some of these morphological traits, considered discrete or discontinuous (recorded as present or absent) may be under genetic control and are utilized in comparisons of skeletal populations to determine possible inherited similarities or differences. Any pathologies observed were recorded for interpretation of disease, illness, or trauma (Stark 1983). These data from the Reid collection were then compiled and compared to the Pyramid Lake and Humboldt Sink skeletal collections and to those relevant Great Basin materials analyzed previously (Kennedy 1959, Galliher 1978, and Stark 1983).

Out of the thirty-one burials in the Reid Collection, age and sex determinations could be derived for twenty-five of them. Six of these were identified as females with an age range from approximately 25 to 40 years at age of death with a mean of 31.3 years. Fourteen burials were identified as males with age estimates ranging from approximately 25 to 40 years at age of death with a mean of 32.6 years. Age could not be estimated for five individuals because of fragmentary condition, although these five were classified as males. Six burials contained only portions of a few bones so that no age or sex could be determined for them.

Only six of the male skeletons, but none of the female, had complete long bones (the major bones of the arms and legs) from which length measurements were obtained. The long bones from which stature estimates can be derived are the right and left femora (thigh bones), tibiae (shin bones) and humeri (upper arm bones). The fibulae (the lateral bone of the lower leg), radii and ulnae (forearm bones) can be used as well, but the derived statures are not believed to give reliable results (Bass 1971). The formulae, designed by Trotter and Gleser (Bass 1971), for determining stature from length measurements of these bones were based on data obtained from analyses of the Korean War dead, with documented stature taken during life. The results have been further confirmed through use of the formulae in identification of

skeletal material from forensic (recent medico-legal) cases. There is a standard deviation for these results of ± 2 inches, and usually the stature determinations have been accurate within this range for skeletons with documented living stature measurements.

Table 1 (modified from Stark 1983) lists the range of measurements of each of the long bones in centimeters, the number of individual bones measured, and the resultant estimated statures in centimeters and feet and inches. The derived statures for the ulnae and radii are about two inches taller than those for the other long bones. This is not unusual as these two forearm bones are not directly related to actual stature in the living and are considered unreliable (Bass 1971). In cases where no other long bones are sufficiently preserved for measuring, these bones will at least give a general idea of the approximate stature range during life.

Excluding the results of the radii and ulnae, the range of statures derived from long bone measurements for the right side of the Reed Collection is from 165.7 cm. to 177.5 cm. These estimates in centimeters give a range for the right side of 5'5" to 5'10" with a standard deviation of ± 2 ". The estimated statures for the left side range from 166.0 cm. to 178.7 cm. or 5'5" to 5'11" ± 2 ". A comparison of these results with equivalent measurements and derived statures obtained from the Pyramid Lake males and the Humboldt Sink males (Stark 1983) demonstrates a great similarity in these three groups with regard to stature estimations, as noted in Table 2. The total number of adult male individuals in these two groups is larger than in the Reed Collection. Despite this, the ranges vary only slightly; there is no more than an inch or two differentiation between the Pyramid Lake and Humboldt Sink series and the Reed Collection males (Table 2).

TABLE 1
Measurements of Long Bones and Estimated Statures
For the Reid Collection

Bone	Rt. or L.	Number	Measure- ment	Estimated stature (cm.)	Feet & Inches
Femur	right	3	456 - 469	171.3 - 174.3	5'8" - 5'9" ± 2 "
	left	2	465 - 471	173.4 - 174.8	5'8" - 5'9" ± 2 "
Tibia	right	3	361 - 395	169.3 - 177.5	5'7" - 5'10" ± 2 "
	left	3	360 - 400	169.1 - 178.7	5'7" - 5'11" ± 2 "
Fibula	right	2	347 - 385	165.7 - 175.6	5'5" - 5'9" ± 2 "
	left	3	352 - 385	167.0 - 175.6	5'6" - 5'9" ± 2 "
Humerus	right	3	313 - 337	168.6 - 175.5	5'6" - 5'9" ± 2 "
	left	3	304 - 335	166.0 - 174.9	5'5" - 5'9" ± 2 "
Radius	right	4	255 - 272	176.1 - 182.5	5'9" - 6'0" ± 2 "
	left	2	255 - 275	176.1 - 183.7	5'9" - 6'0" ± 2 "
Ulna	right	1	290	184.6	6'1" ± 2 "
	left	3	278 - 298	180.1 - 187.6	5'11" - 6'2" ± 2 "

TABLE 2
Comparison With Statures From Pyramid Lake and Humboldt Sink
Male Long Bones

Collection	Right Side Statures		Left Side Statures	
	Cm.	Feet and Inches	Cm.	Feet and Inches
Reid	165.7 - 177.5	5'5" - 5'10"±2"	166.0 - 178.7	5'5" - 5'11"±2"
Pyramid Lake	162.0 - 179.9	5'4" - 5'11"±2"	160.1 - 174.5	5'3" - 5'9"±2"
Humboldt Sink	161.6 - 177.5	5'4" - 5'10"±2"	164.6 - 172.8	5'5" - 5'8"±2"

Although both the Pyramid Lake and Humboldt Sink collections contain adult female post-cranial (skeleton from beneath the skull on to the toes) materials, these could not be utilized for comparison because the Reid Collection does not contain any female post-cranial material. No juvenile long bones can be used in these stature estimations since they have not reached their fully matured skeletal potential.

The measurements taken on the skulls and faces of the Reid Collection, as well as the skeletal indices, were compared with those from Pyramid Lake and Humboldt Sink. An index is a derived value obtained from measurements, and it expresses the relationship between two or more measurements. The various absolute measurements and indices from these three skeletal series are similar, and the Reid Collection ranges fall within those for the other two groups (Stark 1983). For the females in the Reid Collection, this applies to the skulls and faces only; for the males, for the entire skeleton when present. The correspondence of the cranial and post-cranial results indicate that all three skeletal series from these geographical locales in western central Nevada are closely related.

The discrete morphological traits recorded for the Reid Collection were compared with those for the Pyramid Lake and Humboldt Sink series. Both in frequency of occurrence of these traits, and the presence or absence of them, the three series are similar. Since there is a potential for genetic control of these types of traits, this is further confirmation of the possible relationship between the three skeletal series.

In general, the measurements, indices, discrete morphological traits, and dental patterning for the Reid Collection "Redheaded Giants" were the same as for the Pyramid Lake and Humboldt Sink peoples. Even the types of pathologies are almost identical, with high frequencies of gum disease, tooth wear, cavities, abscesses, and evidence of extra bony growth at joints and on the vertebrae. This latter is interpreted as the result of arthritic changes during life. Since Reid recovered many of his "Giants" around Pyramid Lake and in the Humboldt Sink, these concordances and conclusions are not surprising.

Why Giants and Redheaded?

In both Tables 1 and 2 the evidence of derived statures based on long bone measurements (even with the taller statures obtained from the radii and ulnae included) in no way confirms Reid's assumption that these were giants. That some of the individual males were relatively tall, $5'11" \pm 2"$, in no way qualifies those persons as giants. Also, others were short for males, $5'5" \pm 2"$. These statures of the Reid Collection adult males, as Table 2 demonstrates, are almost identical in their ranges to those of the Pyramid Lake and Humboldt Sink skeletal series. They are also similar to estimated statures obtained from skeletal series recovered from other areas of the Great Basin in Nevada (Galliher 1978, Stark 1983).

In her discussion of the Reid manuscripts, Dansie (1975) noted that Reid measured the lengths of the femora in inches and derived the "Giant" estimated statures by comparing these femora to the length of his thigh. Reid is not alone in making an error through estimating stature from skeletalized long bones, particularly the femur, by comparing them with the living thigh length. People commonly estimate their thigh lengths from the region of the crotch to the knee. As can be seen in Figure 1, the head of the thigh bone or femur inserts in the appropriate pelvic socket some four to six inches above the crotch. If the femoral head is placed at the crotch, the end of the bone will extend some four to six inches or more below the knee, and the assumption will then be that this was an extraordinarily tall individual, possibly a giant.

The redheadedness has two possible explanations, both of which would affect the hair color either together or separately. In the Reid Collection there are semi-mummified skeletons, and also in the burials recovered from Lovelock Cave by Loud and Harrington (1929). These are natural mummies, preserved by the arid climate. The hair of the mummies in the Reid Collection, when preserved, is a reddish-brown color. From archaeological research, and from ethno-historical accounts, data have been accumulated demonstrating that many of the Great Basin Native American Indian groups painted themselves while alive, and also painted their dead, with red ochre. Red ochre is a mineral paint which colors anything a reddish-brown or orangish-brown shade. The significance of red ochre is that as a mineral it will not disintegrate, if placed on a body prior to burial, when the soft tissues deteriorate. If the body becomes fully skeletalized, the red ochre will then stain the bones after the soft tissues have gone. Red ochre also will color hair, changing black hair into a reddish or rusty-brown shade.

Also after burial, either during the drying out of the soft tissues of the body, or during their disintegration, these tissues release various fluids, which will dye or stain hair if it is preserved. One component of these fluids is ammonia, which dyes black hair a reddish or orangish shade. Either one or both of these methods of staining preserved hair could have affected the mummies in the

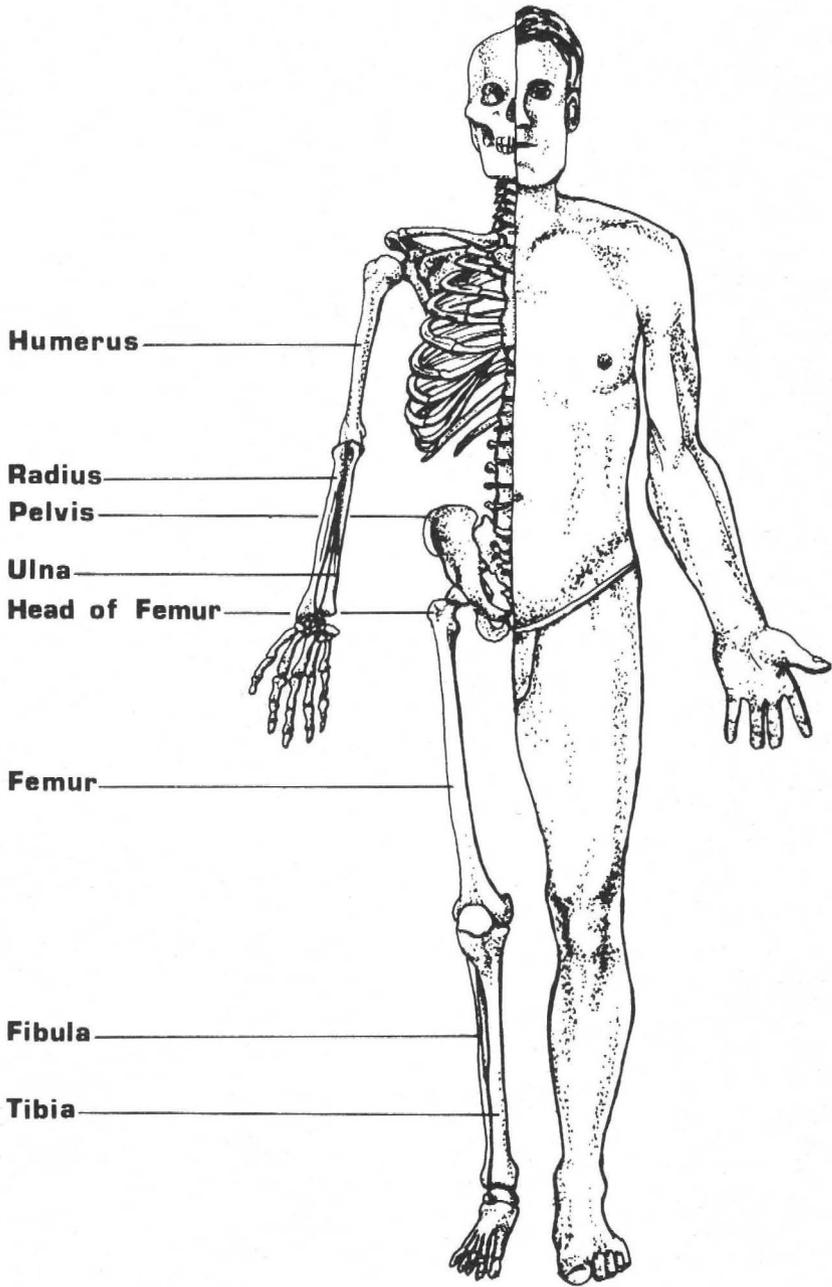


Figure 1

Reid Collection, and also those collected by Loud and Harrington (1929) from Lovelock Cave. This reddish or rusty-brown coloring for the hair of mummies is not unusual in regions where the natural aridity of the climate has preserved the bodies and the hair as natural mummies.

Summary

The Nevada Historical Society, after the rediscovery of the missing Reid Collection, assumed to contain the bones of the "Redheaded Giants," sent the material to UNLV for analysis. There were thirty-one burials, most of which were incomplete. Of these six male adults had complete long bones which were measured and stature derived through use of the Trotter Gleser formulae (Bass 1971). The resultant stature estimates ranged from 5'5" to 5'11" \pm 2", not including the forearm bones which are considered unreliable for stature determinations. Comparing these data with skeletal series from Pyramid Lake and Humboldt Sink resulted in overlapping ranges and great similarities. A further comparison was made between skull and facial measurements, indices, discrete morphological traits, and dental patterning of these three skeletal series. The Reid Collection consistently fell within the ranges of the Pyramid Lake and Humboldt Sink series. Even the Reid Collection skeletal pathologies are similar to those of the two series, and also to other skeletal series from differing parts of the Nevada Great Basin.

The lack of awareness of the length of the femur relative to the position of its head in a socket in the pelvis is not unusual. This apparently was why John Reid assumed that he had found the skeletal material confirming the tales of Giants he had heard in his boyhood. Furthermore, the use of red ochre, a mineral paint, in preparation of the dead by many of the Great Basin Indians, could have caused the reddish-brown appearance of the hair color. Hair coloration could also result from staining through the disintegration of the body tissues and the fluids emitted during that process. These will also stain black hair a shade of reddish or rusty-brown. Either method or both in combination will change the hair color and cause the burial to appear redheaded.

Despite his misinterpretation of the burials he collected—his emphasis that the remains were Redheaded Giants—had Reid not preserved the skeletons these data would probably not exist today. Reid should be acknowledged for his sense of historicity and a feeling for the past; he realized it was necessary not to lose all of the remnants of the Northern Paiute culture as he had known it in his youth (Dansie 1975).

In conclusion, neither this analysis and comparison of the Reid Collection skeletal series, nor the earlier research which included some of the Lovelock Cave skeletal series of Loud and Harrington (Kennedy 1959) have supported the assumption that these skeletal remains are those of the Redheaded

Giants. The archaeological materials associated with the burials removed by Loud and Harrington are of types expected to occur in that area of the Great Basin at that prehistoric time period. There is no substantiation that a group of people with a differing culture pattern, who might fit the description in the stories of Redheaded Giants, lived in Lovelock Cave, Pyramid Lake, or Humboldt Sink during the prehistoric period. Nor is there any evidence of death by violence observed on the skeletons of the Reid Collection, and the description of the burials found by Loud and Harrington indicates that they originally had been carefully prepared for burial. Bones were scattered through mining and other activities, but enough undisturbed burials remained to validate an interpretation of non-violent deaths. Although the belief in Redheaded Giants will no doubt continue, the John T. Reid Collection does not provide physical evidence to support this tale, nor do the burials recovered from Lovelock Cave.

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Walter Van Tilburg Clark: *Memories of the Writer*

ROGER SMITH

Walter Van Tilburg Clark: Critiques. Edited by Charlton Laird. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1983. xiii + 296 pp., notes, photographs, index, \$16).

WALTER VAN TILBURG CLARK died in 1971 and left behind some excellent novels and short stories, a large circle of admiring friends, and a big mystery: why did he stop publishing fiction after 1950? These three legacies merged when Charlton Laird organized a lecture series to honor Clark, his officemate of the University of Nevada, Reno.* Most of the nineteen essays in *Walter Van Tilburg Clark: Critiques*, edited by Laird, come directly from the lecture series or belong to it in spirit. The essays appear in four categories: "Walter Clark as Others Knew Him," "Studies of Major Published Works," "Walter Clark as Literary Artist," and "Two Biographical Accounts of Walter Clark." The first category contains overt eulogies, and the spirit throughout is one of veneration, both of Clark and for his contributions to the literature of the American West. I share that spirit; still, I wonder what readers will think of *Critiques* who do not come to it with the same sort of veneration—who have not lived in the northern Nevada-California areas where Clark's best tales take place, or did not meet him or are not fans already. Newcomers to Clark's work may wonder what *Critiques* is really about. With one clear exception the contributors make apologies for Clark's life as much as evaluate his writing.

The one clear exception is Clark himself, and it is proper here to start with what he had to say about his own writing. Laird has included five statements, drawn from Clark's unpublished letters and lecture notes, that show how deeply he thought about human problems and how much he wanted to portray them honestly, with faith in a remedy for them: "The effort, in short, to *prove* the truth, not *preach* it, by compelling the reader to experience it himself," Clark writes in "Credo." His emphasis upon the experience of literature is ethical—personal in his appeal to his audience as individuals, but

* Charlton Laird, a distinguished professor of English at the University of Nevada, Reno for many years, and a widely-published author, died in 1984.



Walter Van Tilburg Clark. (*Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno Library*)

communal in his exposition of themes. When literature seeks to engage a reader as himself or herself (not as a member of a group) in a story, what the reader remembers becomes part of personal experience and potentially influences behavior toward others. Fiction nourishes the individual point of view. "Nobody likes to be a specimen," Clark says in "Autobiographical Information." "The thing is to be really a part of whatever is going on. . . . The memory will keep what matters." A philosophical man, Clark explored the deep conflicts possible in such western values as justice and self-reliance by setting them in the exaggerated situations that frontier life can produce. One of Clark's finest talents was to make these "situations" not simply believable but familiar through a particularly adept handling of point of view. How he achieved the effect deserves more study, but the point is that as readers we become confidential witnesses, almost insiders to the story.

What do we witness and why? A book of critiques, it seems to me, ought to evaluate the what and why of Clark's fiction, and to an extent this volume does. But because the lecture series and book were meant as a memorial, many essays dwell disproportionately on interesting side issues about Clark's life, especially on his method of revising and his silence after 1950. In this essay I want to call attention to the disservices that such *ad hominem* excursuses can cause Clark's readers.

Clark revised by starting over. According to Laird, Clark often wrote hundreds of pages of a draft and then when he became dissatisfied simply threw it all away and began afresh, less often touching up and reshaping a manuscript as most writers would. He preferred to reconceive a story rather than to refine it, another sign of his interest in the *experience* of writing. Clark's laborious methods, Laird believes, curtailed his production, and Laird is undoubtedly right. The point really only needs to be made once and is more of biographical than literary interest. But Laird brings it up in each of his three essays.

So also do three other contributors attend to some aspect of revision: William D. Bains in "Walter Clark's 'The Pretender': Two Versions," Robert M. Gorrell in "Problems in *The Watchful Gods* and Clark's Revisions," and Susan Baker in "The Poetry of Walter Clark." As Baker points out, "In reading Clark's poetry one is less interested in looking backward to influences upon it than in looking ahead to its role in his development as a writer of fiction." The same can be said of early drafts of novels and short stories. The later published fiction is what matters. Clark more or less gave up poetry in the early 1940s because he found it too confining "to develop subtlety of description or fully to embody abstractions in concrete particularity" (Baker). Presumably he started over on various prose drafts because he found them incommodious, too. Comparisons of drafts or of poetic and prose versions of a story do tell us something about Clark's interests and abilities, things worth knowing. But how much should we worry about false starts? Shouldn't we

concentrate on the final expression? Clark did. *Critiques* may give the impression that Clark is more admirable for how well he revised than for what he wrote.

The mystery of Clark's silence is similarly diverting. Although he continued to write and revise tirelessly, he did not publish any major fiction after *The Watchful Gods and Other Stories* (1950). Contributors propose eight reasons: teaching, which Clark took very seriously, consumed his time, as did his editing of the Alf Doten diaries (1962-1971); his method of revising slowed him to a standstill; workshops, seminars, changes of jobs, and lectures kept him off balance; he had written himself out on the Old West themes that interested him most, and he was out of touch with the modern West (a very interesting view developed by James W. Hulse in "Walter Clark and Nevada"); a growing perfectionism made him too self-critical. All these factors probably distracted Clark to varying degrees, but Wallace Stegner's view in "Walter Clark's Frontier" is the most appealing:

. . . without a more developed and cohesive society than the West, in its short life and against all the handicaps of revolutionary change and dispersion, has been able to grow—and without a *native* audience for its native arts—there may come a time in a writer's career when the clutch of the imagination will no longer take hold on the materials that are most one's own.

The possibility of lapsing into nostalgia and sentimentality, always a danger for fiction writers who treat local history, may have made Clark mistrust himself increasingly as the West became ever more apiece with Eastern culture in the 1950s and 1960s. The older "Nevada was his artistic milieu and, perhaps, as it vanished, it became his prison," Hulse writes. And so Clark left unfinished his projected trilogy of novels that would have portrayed the development of the West.

The limitations of regional subject matter on an author is a topic worth considering carefully. But aside from Stegner and Hulse, contributors prefer to talk about Clark's silence simply as an idiosyncrasy, and so Clark's silence is belabored—an unfortunate irony. True, it is a shame that he didn't write more, and the sad frustration one feels in reading about his later years makes him a more complex, compelling figure, but we should not let our affection for the man wholly embrace our appreciation of his writing. Only six essays in *Critiques* discuss Clark's fiction for its own sake, and even they hint of biographical apology. "When the *Ox-Bow* reached print, he was thirty-one years old," Robert B. Heilman writes in "Clark's Western Incident." "We wonder that a youth of so few years could know so much about humanity and could find so successful an artistic form for what he knew. In that knowing and that forming we see something of genius." Just praise, in my view, but the implication looms large by this point (halfway through the volume) that Clark only partly fulfilled his potential. One gets tired of hearing about Clark's silence.

The literary critiques vary in their approaches, but not widely, and are mostly free of the sort of faddish theory that requires a reader to know its special doctrines and methods. Heilman concludes that *The Ox-Bow Incident*, Clark's first novel, converts the stereotype horse opera into "an exemplary shaping of reality whose presence we can see elsewhere in life and in art." Clark's novel depicts the essence of two conflicting "communities" as characters argue whether or not to hunt down and lynch rustlers. We develop a sense of profound dread, Heilman says, while we witness the more cultured community in the story give way to the more violent community and permit an unjust hanging. *The Ox-Bow Incident* arouses our innermost fears of the chaos that can result when lust for vengeance masters respect for reason and equity.

Max Westbrook argues in "To Escape the Tiger" that Clark's short stories "are centrally concerned with the incapacity of words to capture the primal and religious immensities assigned to them, and with variations on civilized rationalizations of our confronting and failing to confront the primal 'powers' that 'control' us." Granted that words fail all too often to render precisely what we feel and think, Clark's stories nevertheless to me succeed admirably in bringing readers to a specific emotional or intellectual view of the subject. Laird's approach in "The Gospel According to the Trembling Leaves" emphasizes the symphonic accumulation of impressions that the reader experiences during Timothy Hazard's maturation in the *City of Trembling Leaves*, Clark's second novel. According to Laird, it is not precise solutions or definitions that attract us so much as the unsolved puzzle of Tim's life. In "The Shape of Feeling," Arthur Boardman believes it is more useful to examine how Clark rhetorically manipulates negative and positive "feeling" so that the reader perceives an integration of values and merges "with the spirit of the artist, Walter Clark."

It is that spirit that Robert Clark, the novelist's son, considers in "On the 'Voice' of Walter Clark." The voice we so clearly hear speaking in all Clark's fiction really has been the fundamental issue all along in *Critiques*, an issue that it seems to me other essayists largely avoid treating by equating that voice with the author's personality (as they knew it), or by listening over-closely to only one of the voice's many themes. Robert Clark's essay comes last in the book's criticism and summarizes previous arguments with a view toward a synthesis of them. Clark also surveys his father's fiction in order to define "voice," or, as he calls it, "a recurring mood." Here a newcomer learns something about Walter Clark's writing, about its basic quality, that may be usefully held in mind while reading or teaching:

The voice seems often to be evoking sympathy for something good that is irrevocably gone, or glimpsed but not quite graspable. Often the good is some kind of innocence and youthful strength, which enjoyed a corresponding freedom. . . . The end result,

especially in the serious or lyrical pieces, may be melancholy, but often, I suspect, the pieces were fueled by anger. . . . Dad's fiction often seems a means of relieving the anger, which is transformed by the mechanics and the duration of the story to anger spent, muted to melancholy by the distance—the silence . . . that calms the frenzied human activity.

It is as much of Walter Van Tilburg Clark as most of us will ever know, however much we may wish to know him better.

But in knowing Clark's literary voice we know a lot. We know a good deal about how the western landscape can affect settlers, about isolation and nostalgia for boom days, about the optimism inherent in the idea of the frontier, and about yet more common concerns like justice, coming of age, and love. To my mind *Critiques* performs three disservices to that voice and what it can help each reader discover for himself. First, the frequent explanations of Clark's lack of production divert attention from what he did produce, and, second, nearly make it appear that his work needs excuses. Third, by implication *Critiques* encourages readers to equate Walter Van Tilburg Clark, man and writer, with the voice we hear while reading. I do not mean that such equating amounts to the intentional fallacy of the New Critics or that a writer's life has no relation to his writing—not that at all. I mean that the elegaic tone of *Critiques* suggests that knowing Clark himself is necessary to or somehow better than reading his fiction. Such an attitude only adds unnecessary complexities to the literary voice, making it harder to trust, and so weakens a reader's experience of Clark's stories.

Critiques also has much to recommend it, if only because the quality of the writing is consistently high and the essays are a pleasure to read, especially those by Laird, Stegner, and Robert Clark. It identifies significant themes in most of Clark's best fiction. It publishes for the first time a great deal of information useful to a biographer, although surprisingly there is no complete bibliography of Clark's works or of secondary criticism. And its tone will please Clark's admirers, for *Critiques* really belongs to them. I doubt it will benefit anyone else quite as much. The mixture of literary criticism, biography, and reminiscence gives a somewhat confusing impression of Clark's achievements, and readers unfamiliar with Clark will find before them an urbane eulogy, not a balanced introduction to his writing.

It is nonsense of course to fault a book more for what it does not do than for what it tries to do, and a reviewer should not set himself up as a backseat editor. Still, *Critiques* seems to me to be a lost opportunity. I was hoping the contributors would tell me if a writer from the West is a western writer, a distinct breed, and except for Stegner's mostly personal remarks they do not tell me. Well, why should they? Eastern and western writers in the United States are essentially the same, most critics say. Except, they add, that westerners like to sentimentalize Indians, landscapes, animals, and violence, an urge inherited from nineteenth-century Romantics. Maybe. Or can it be

that writers in the West still have a chance to know something that sophisticated easterners have forgotten? Was there a distinctive quality to the unparcelled landscape, mixture of races, brittle government, and opportunism of the frontier that has given western writers greater contrasts with which to dramatize chauvinism, order, and individualism? If anyone had the skill and heart to show us an answer to such questions, it was Walter Van Tilburg Clark. Maybe he has been trying to show us all along.

Italian Images in Northern Nevada Writing

ALBIN J. COFONE

THE ITALIAN HERITAGE in Nevada is a strong one, and dates to the earliest period of the state's history. Italians arrived in the 1860s and 1870s, often to work in the mines or in mining-related enterprises; many stayed, and invested in agriculture, business, and real estate. By 1900, for example, they owned extensive land parcels in the Truckee Meadows areas surrounding Reno, and had begun purchasing properties in the city.¹ In 1927, Frederick Balzar, the son of Italian immigrants who had come to Virginia City in the 1880s, was elected governor. Italians in the present century have engaged in a wide variety of economic pursuits, and presently are located in all major urban centers. Italian names dot the Nevada landscape.

Reflecting the importance Italians have had in the history and the culture of the state is the fact that in fictional treatments of life in Nevada, Italians often play an integral role. To a number of writers, Italians have been an obvious aspect of the state's demographic terrain, and as a result the treatment of aspects of their lifestyles is important in many of the novels and stories that feature Nevada as a setting. The purpose of the present essay is an examination of Italian images in those writings dealing with life in northern Nevada. An examination of popular stereotypes of Italians is badly needed, but this is not a major purpose of this study. To the present author, it is obvious, however, that there has been a more realistic perception of Italian life in the state in many fictional treatments than is present in the stereotypes perpetuated that focus attention on Italians simply as members of the Cosa Nostra or Mafia, who supposedly have dominated the state's gambling and casino operations.²

The author wishes to acknowledge the support of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the assistance of Professor Leonard Dinnerstein of the University of Arizona, in the preparation of the research for this article.

¹ For some background on the Italian cultural presence see Albin J. Cofone, "Reno's Little Italy: Italian Culture and Entrepreneurship in Northern Nevada," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* XXVI (Summer 1983), pp. 97-110. Wilbur S. Shepperson in *Restless Strangers: Nevada's Immigrants and Their Interpretations* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1970) devotes considerable attention to immigrant themes in literature dealing with Nevada, and he offers many insightful remarks on Italian life and culture, and the treatment of Italians in fictional accounts.

² This discussion is intended as an introductory one, and is not designed to be comprehensive. I have limited its scope and have focused attention on some of the novels that deal with Italians in northern and

The Italian as a Workingman

It is common in writings with northern Nevada as a backdrop for the Italian to be viewed as an ordinary working man, often a miner. He is usually described as hard-working and loyal, and as a person who shares the same hopes and fears as other workers and immigrants. In *Grubstake*, Mark L. Requa writes of a Fourth of July drilling contest in which teams representing Cornwall, Ireland, and Italy compete.³ The Italian team is made up of Joseph Spongoli, George Ambrazzo, and Pete Mombelli; the competition is fierce, and the Italians, representing the Nevade Belle Mine, win the \$500 prize. Little is said about them; they are quiet working people, who are a natural part of the Nevada scene. Just as they are casually introduced to the reader, they are also quickly removed from the story.

Miners of all ethnic backgrounds are frequently portrayed as a superstitious lot due to the danger of their work. In *Nine Miles from Dead Horse Wells*, Charles O. Ryan provides a semi-fictionalized account of his days in a Nevada mining camp.⁴ As with Requa's handling of Italian miners, Ryan's writing is matter-of-fact, with the exception of some fully-developed characterization. His Italian character is a mine boss named Ralph Lucorno, and Ryan himself is respectful of Lucorno's knowledge. He observes that "An Italian, Ralph Lucorno, from the last days of Virginia City, helped me considerably by teaching me the ways of the miner and the proper methods of framing timber."⁵ He explains the Italian's superstitions, but is careful to emphasize they are the result of his occupation, and not his ethnicity. Lucorno, for example, is horrified by the thought of a woman entering the mine. The mine suffers a cave-in after her visit, and this re-affirms his belief. Ryan provides an ethnic dimension, but it is descriptive rather than judgmental:

The one drawback to Ralph's help was the combination odor of his carbide lamp, Italian cigar and garlic. Ralph explained the garlic by saying that in seventy-one years he had never been sick a day because he ate one or two cloves of garlic every

central Nevada settings. An all-embracing study of fictional treatments of Italians and other cultural groups in all Nevada settings is needed. With respect to Italians, it would be valuable to have a comparison of the treatment they are accorded in southern Nevada, particularly Las Vegas, settings, with those elsewhere in the state. Another question is whether or not more recent fictional accounts in other areas of Nevada vary in their approach when compared to the novels herein examined, which were for the most part published from the early 1930s to the late 1950s. Two examples of books dealing with southern Nevada are *The Godfather*, by Mario Puzo, and *Big Red*, by John Hasse. In the former, the Mafia eventually makes its move into Las Vegas; one of Don Vito Corleone's sons takes over a desired casino property. In the latter, which is a fictionalized version of the construction of Hoover Dam, there is a violent and promiscuous Italian mobster, Tony Galliano, who arrives in southern Nevada in the early 1930s to make sure the mob gets its share of the money being spent in Las Vegas by construction workers. These types of themes and plots are quite in contrast to the novels considered in the present essay.

³ Mark L. Requa, *Grubstake* (New York: Scribners, 1933), p. 46.

⁴ Charles O. Ryan, *Nine Miles from Dead Horse Wells* (New York: Exposition Press, 1959).

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

morning. The cigars were the crooked cheroot variety that would send most people running after a couple of puffs.⁶

Probably the most widely-known single event concerning Italians in Nevada is the so-called "Italian War," or Charcoal-Burners War of 1879. While the causes of the disturbance have sometimes been ascribed to anti-Italian sentiments, in retrospect it might be better described as having economic origins. The charcoal burners of Eureka, who were almost exclusively Italian, provided the charcoal necessary for the operation of mine smelters. They went on strike against the mine operators; and the owners, who saw their operations and profits threatened, called out the sheriff and his deputies. Five Italian charcoal burners were killed. The results might not have been any different had the burners been Cornish or Irish, for whoever controlled the charcoal controlled the owner's earnings, and the latter's actions did not depend on whether the burners were Italian or not. Ethnic prejudices probably were not decisive in the conflict, although they may have been present.⁷

Against a thinly-disguised setting of this "war," Anne Burns wrote a play entitled *The Wampus Cat*.⁸ There is a Welsh folk belief that whenever a "wampus cat," a creature with a snake-like tail and moldy claws, is found in a mine, a disaster will follow. In Burns' play, a cat is sighted in one of the shafts, and the miners, who are predominately Italian, go out on strike, demanding better wages and a union. Burns handles the striking Italians sympathetically; they are treated as decent working men striking for what is rightfully theirs. Only two characters, a maid and a reporter, are derisive and critical of the strikers, and each is treated as being shallow and ignorant. Pat Burk is the mine owner, and his maid, "Chatty," refers to the Italians as "them Dago strikers." Burk's niece, Lydia, promptly rebukes her.⁹ The reporter is a yellow journalist with little concern for the facts, and he states in a dispatch that "Three or four burly charcoal burners, backed up by a few hundred mill hands, are threatening to tear down the jail unless the sheriff releases three young dagos."¹⁰ On the whole, the play is sympathetic toward the miners. Burns, Requa, and Ryan, although writing vastly different types of accounts, all attempt to show realistically that Italians were trying to earn their livelihoods and adjust to life in frontier Nevada. They were not alien and distinctive, but rather were ordinary and hard-working.

In some of the literature, the Italian characters play only minor roles. Jean

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁷ For a detailed account of this conflict, see Phillip I. Earl, "Nevada's Italian War," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* XII (Summer 1969), pp. 45-87.

⁸ Anne Burns, *The Wampus Cat* (Boston: Meador Press, 1951).

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

McElrath's short story "The Cock Crowed in Basque" is a good example.¹¹ The station master at the Southern Pacific station at Luning is an Italian. Two Basques have missed their train, and cannot afford the twenty dollars it will cost to take a horse-drawn stage to their destination. The station master is helpful and points out the right direction for their walk; he calls out "Vaya con Dios"—"Go with God." It is only a brief incident, but it is a warm example of a man helping two lost travelers, and it shows the Italian at work, assimilated into the ordinary life of the Nevada countryside around the turn of the century.

James M. Cain's *Past All Dishonor* provides another picture of the working Italian, this time as a gambling hall proprietor.¹² His story, which is set in the Virginia City of the 1860s, introduces a character named Rocco, owner of "The Esperanza," one of the largest clubs in town. Rocco is the son of an Italian charcoal burner, and his rise to the ownership of a prestigious establishment is the source of great pride. Little, however, is made of his Italian background, probably because this was not unusual in ethnically-diverse Virginia City. What is perhaps even more important is that Cain does not risk the credibility of his story by featuring a successful Italian businessman.

Of all the works that offer views of the Italian, none is as probing as Robert Laxalt's *A Man in the Wheatfield*.¹³ Laxalt describes an exclusively Italian town surrounded by the immensity of the desert. While adapted for fiction, Laxalt's town is modeled after Dayton, a community that by the end of the nineteenth century was almost completely Italian. Situated along the Carson River ten miles east of Carson City, by 1900 only one of Dayton's farms was owned by a non-Italian. Laxalt captures the subtle aspects of the community's norms, and brings forth some of the typical dimensions of Italian behavior. Laxalt was in fact well equipped to write the book; from childhood he had helped his father tend sheep in the Dayton area, and he was well-acquainted with a number of the community's Italian residents.

Consistent with the Nevada setting, Laxalt's people are hard-working and willing to take risks. Although the totally Italian population breeds an ethnic insularity more extreme than in other Nevada towns, it is nonetheless a perceptive showing of the mistrust of outsiders so common among provincial Italian villagers. When in the case of Laxalt's town an "American," that is, non-Italian, moves in, it is the priest, Father Savio Lazzaroni, who leads the community against him.¹⁴ This characterization parallels the secular power of the clergy often found in rural Italian settings; in many Italian villages, the priest is not so much respected for his piety as he is feared for his ability to

¹¹ Jean McElrath, *Aged in the Sage* (Reno: Recorder, 1964).

¹² James M. Cain, *Past All Dishonor* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946).

¹³ Robert Laxalt, *A Man in the Wheatfield* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964).

¹⁴ In Italian, "lazzaroni" (lazzarone) refers to a beggar, loafer, or vagabond.

wield economic clout. When Edward Banfield studied a small village in Lucania during the 1950s, he reported that although village-priest relations had improved during the past century, many residents still regarded the clergy as "money grubbers, hypocrites, and worse."¹⁵

In more typical Italian settlements in Nevada, it is likely that a Father Lazzaroni would not have had the clout of a typical Italian village priest. The strong traditions of anti-clericalism that had been suppressed in the claustrophobic mountain villages of Italy had a chance to be expressed in Nevada. For many Italians, coming to Nevada meant not only a release from the poverty and lack of opportunity at home, but also freedom from the all-pervasive control of the clergy. Unlike Italian urban groupings in the East, the low population density of Nevada and widely-scattered settlements did not encourage densely-packed, large Italian populations. The migration of Italian priests lagged.¹⁶ Once free of the clergy, many Italians tended to drift from the church and to enter the main stream of local society. A Father Lazzaroni type would have been familiar to many Nevada Italians as a remainder of their homeland, but the actual chance of one of these types of priests obtaining such power over an errant Nevada flock would have been much slimmer in Nevada than in Italy.

Whereas Laxalt provides an image of a total Italian community, Walter Van Tilburg Clark in *The City of Trembling Leaves* offers a glimpse of an isolated Italian couple managing a bar in the remoteness of Tonopah in the 1930s.¹⁷ Clark's personalities are Luigi and Maria, managers of a local saloon. Although Luigi is called a "wop bastard" by a drunk, Clark's clear emphasis is that the drunk is disreputable, and that her slur is caused by resentment of Luigi's respectability.¹⁸

Luigi and Maria are beacons of light in a decaying town. Maria is no provincial Italian mother, shy and suspicious of outsiders, but rather is

... the madonna of the middle years, who regards all lonely people as her children, and deeply shares their losses and sorrows without saying a thing about them. Maria is no longer pretty, but so beautiful with understanding that her guests are more surely restored by watching her face than they would be by joy.¹⁹

Luigi, however, is terribly concerned about surviving in the ever-deteriorating town of Tonopah, and in addition he displays some of the personal feelings of marginality that a number of Italians experienced concerning their American identity during the years of Mussolini's personal rule in Italy. To

¹⁵ Edward Banfield, *The Moral Basis of a Backwards Society* (New York: Free Press, 1958), p. 20.

¹⁶ Giovanni Schiavo, *Italian American History: The Italian Contribution to the Catholic Church in America* (New York: Arno Press), pp. 399-401.

¹⁷ Walter Van Tilburg Clark, *The City of Trembling Leaves* (New York: Random House, 1945).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 648.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 646.

emphasize his loyalty, Luigi points to a banner above the bar reading "God Bless America," and exclaims "When they talk good about this Mussolini, I always tell them, 'If you want to talk about this Mussolini, you go somewhere else. What do I care about this Mussolini?'"²⁰

Whether nearly alone in a dying town, or together in a booming mining camp, Italians in northern and central Nevada are consistently identified as recognizable and acceptable members of the state's labor force. The view is usually not a romantic one, but rather it involves a set of literary references that document the considerable presence of Italians in the mining and agricultural sectors of the Nevada economy. Italians are part of the landscape of Nevada, which is replete with hardworking farmers and miners.

The "Cosmopolitan" Italian

The association of Italian culture with sophisticated and worldly living is also a recurring theme in Nevada literature. When Swift Paine wrote *Eilley Orrum, Queen of the Comstock*, a fictionalized account of the life of Eilley Orrum and the colorful goings-on at her mansion in the Washoe Valley, he described her visit to Italy as the highlight of her continental tour.²¹ Although Orrum's Protestant upbringing made her feel uncomfortable in the same country as the Pope, she comforted herself with the thought that Italian culture and Roman Catholicism were two different things. For Orrum, if her home were to be supreme on the Washoe Valley social circuit, she would have to feature Italian art. Paintings were commissioned by a "famous" Italian artist, and Italian cypress trees were obtained to grace her Nevada surroundings.

In some Reno-oriented novels, Italian characters are portrayed as cosmopolitan, international types. This at times is related to the emergence of Reno as a divorce center in the first decades of the twentieth century. Reno residents were exposed to wealthy, out-of-state visitors, and although it did not become a cosmopolitan urban center, still it reflected the influences of the Americans and foreigners who came to reside there, even for limited periods of time. Because of its notoriety, Reno attracted wide attention, even though in most respects it remained a small western city in the 1920s and the 1930s.

In *Keeper of the Keys*, Earl Derr Biggers brings Charlie Chan to Reno and Lake Tahoe.²² The story revolves around the get-together of the four ex-husbands of an opera star, and the murder of one of the former spouses. One of the former husbands arriving on the scene is Luis Romano; a rather

²⁰ Ibid., p. 647.

²¹ Swift Paine, *Eilley Orrum, Queen of the Comstock* (New York: A. L. Burt Publishers, 1929); see pp. 131-133.

²² Earl Derr Biggers, *Keeper of the Keys* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1932).

bombastic character, Romano relates to Chan that he is a famous musical conductor from Milan. He is broke and a braggart, but he attempts to impress others in the Reno milieu by playing on his exotic Italian credentials.

Second only to Robert Laxalt's work in the total number of Italian characters in a book with a Nevada setting is Greer Gay's *The Case of the Well-Dressed Corpse*.²³ Gay's Italians are not especially well-developed, but their entrances and exits in this mystery set in postwar Reno provide interesting insights into life in the affluent residential neighborhood of Newlands Heights. A fondness for Italy is evident from the start, when Lake Tahoe is described as the region's "Lake Como." The plot concerns the murder of a member of Reno society; Julie Barclay, the heroine, seeks to clear herself as a suspect in the case. Julie, who lives in a mansion on a bluff above the Truckee River, has an Italian neighbor, Count Sessini. Sessini is an Italian expatriate who has chosen to live quietly in Reno. Another link with Italy is a close friend, Sybil de la Cianetti, the daughter of an Italian-born count and a French Canadian mother. Sybil was born in Rome, and educated in Cairo and on the French Riviera. Still another count is introduced when a local divorcee mentions that her antique jewels are courtesy of a divorce settlement from her "Italian count." In Gay's assessment of Reno life, the cosmopolitan Italian was not merely a transient figure, but rather a staple of upper-class society and an important link to international, cosmopolitan influences.

Criminals and "Outsiders"

In the period under consideration, organized crime is not a major theme in the Italian images presented in writings dealing with northern Nevada. While occasionally a gangster does appear, he is usually a fairly minor character, and is seldom clearly drawn or treated in depth. Evidently putting aside for a moment her fondness for counts, Greer Gay included an Italian criminal in *The Case of the Well-Dressed Corpse*. Dominic Barani is the owner of a roadhouse, the Casa Encanto on the highway to Verdi. A gruff person with a questionable background, Barani is rumored to have been a bootlegger during Prohibition. Had Barani been real and living in Reno or Sparks during the 1920s, he of course would have had plenty of company; although illegal during Prohibition, the production of wine in Nevada's Italian communities involved many individuals. This was especially so in heavily-Italian Sparks, where the winemaker could be a respected member of the community.

In *The Galton Case*, however, mystery writer Ross McDonald provides the reader with a straightforward Italian hood, one without any romantic or nostalgic complications.²⁴ Detective Lew Archer finds himself in Reno on a

²³ Greer Gay, *The Case of the Well-Dressed Corpse* (New York: Viking Press, 1953).

²⁴ Ross McDonald, *The Galton Case* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1959).

case, and he must confront a used-car dealer named "Generous Joe Culotti." Culotti is characterized as being vulgar and uncouth, and Archer notes that he has a "trace of a Mediterranean accent that added feminine endings to his words."

On the other hand, Arthur Miller's screenplay for the film *The Misfits* utilizes an Italian character as a classic maverick type of the modern West.²⁵ One of the "misfits" is Guido Racanelli, one of the last of the rugged individualists, an individual trying to survive in the changing and modernizing world of northern Nevada (indeed, of all the West). Racanelli and the others refuse to hold regular jobs; they earn a stake where and how they can, even if it means catching wild horses and selling them to be killed for dog food. But this allows Racanelli to drive his truck, fly a plane, be with his friends, and hope to continue his "independence."

This survey of some of the fiction dealing in major and minor ways with Nevada's Italians reveals some strikingly varied images, from that of the hardworking Italian miner, to the sophisticated representative of a foreign culture. There is even an occasional rogue. On the whole, the fiction examined which was produced from the early 1930s to the late 1950s does not focus on the Italian as a gangster or on the shadowy and brutal operations of Mafia chieftains. Instead, this fiction often presents Italians in realistic everyday roles in a Nevada setting. Italians struggle to survive amid the sometimes harsh realities of life in the West. They try to integrate their lives and to deal with other cultural groups in a new environment. Sometimes this means they reject outside influences, but often they must accept the new and yet hold on to their heritage. The Italian culture is also viewed as something unique and special: it represents certain artistic accomplishments, and its members are sometimes seen as urbane and distinct, even though they are part of the Nevada scene. In conclusion, then, the fiction having northern and central Nevada as backdrops features portrayals of Italians far removed from those to be found in *The Godfather* and *Big Red*.²⁶

²⁵ Arthur Miller, *The Misfits* (New York: Viking Press, 1957).

²⁶ See note 2, above, for brief comments on *The Godfather* and *Big Red*. Undoubtedly the gangster image of the Italian in Nevada will continue to be a common and a potent one. As has been discussed, however, much of the literature focuses upon the pioneer Italian heritage. The popular view which focuses upon the interconnection of Nevada, Italians, vice, corruption, and violence will be a lasting one in many other accounts. Barry Farrell summarized this well in his article on the suspected criminal activities of Joseph Conforte, owner of the Mustang Ranch Brothel in Storey County: "At 11, little Giuseppi arrives in New York from his native Sicily, not speaking a word of English. At 15, he runs away from home. At 16, he has his own fruit market in West Hollywood. At 29, he discovers the state of Nevada—the fulcrum event of his life." ("The Killing at the Million-Dollar Brothel," *New West*, August 2, 1976, pp. 32-43).



Early Las Vegas street scene. (Courtesy Ferron Collection, University of Nevada, Las Vegas Library)



(Courtesy San Pedro, Los Angeles & Salt Lake R.R. Collection, University of Nevada, Las Vegas Library)

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

The End of the Line? The Railroad Cottages of Las Vegas, Then and Now

VERONA PASQUALE AND CHERYL ROSE CROCKETT

LAS VEGAS IN 1910 was a town of 945 people, and its bars and saloons (a total of eleven) outnumbered the miles of graded and curbed streets (ten). The community had been founded in 1905 as a division point on the San Pedro, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake Railroad, and by 1909 it was the county seat of newly-formed Clark County.¹

Glowing copy in an April, 1910 edition of the *Las Vegas Age* promoted the town as the "City of Destiny": it had a bank, two churches, five general stores, a steam laundry, and one moving picture theater.² What the copy did not mention was that Las Vegas also faced a residential housing shortage.

This shortage developed because of the railroad's decision in 1909 to locate its repair shops in Las Vegas.³ The *Age* warned that once the shops were completed, "Las Vegas will have to take upon herself the task of providing homes for a small army of skilled workers with their families."⁴ The article went on to propose that:

Good substantial 4, 5 and 6 room cottages must be prepared for the use of the new population. . . . To be in accord with the character of the city these cottages must be neat and attractive in design. . . . To insure against fire they should be of cement blocks and should be distributed through the residence district and not bunched together like a tenement row.⁵

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¹ *Las Vegas Age*, April 30, 1910, 5:1.

² *Ibid.*

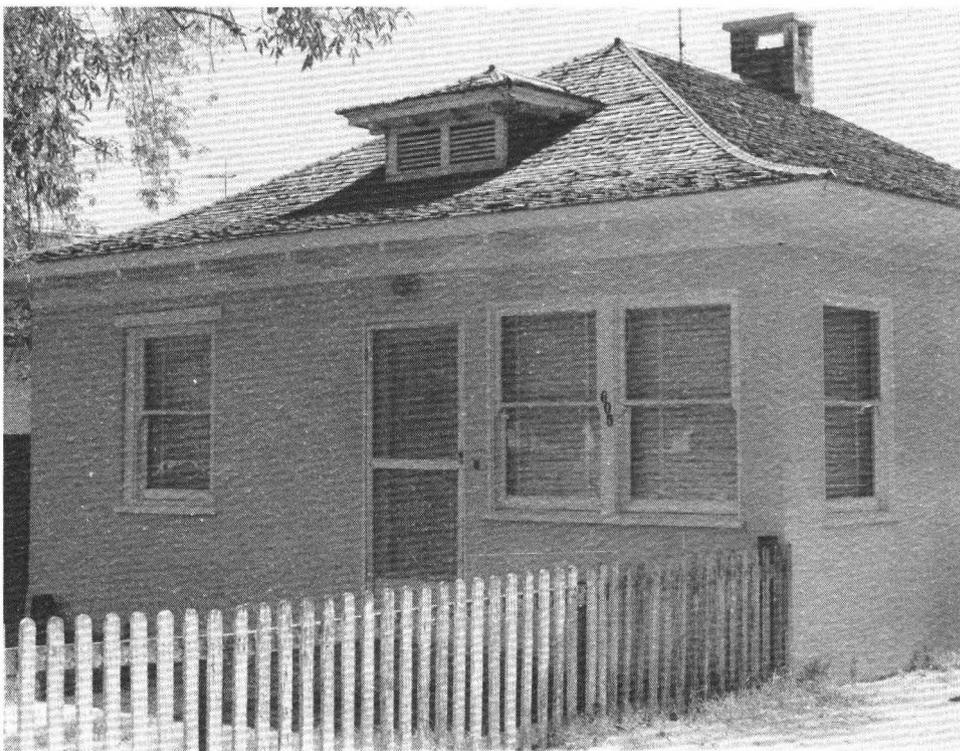
³ *Ibid.*, Oct. 5, 1912, 2:1.

⁴ *Ibid.*, April 24, 1909, 4:2.

⁵ *Ibid.*



Looking east from Main Street, railroad cottages in background. (Courtesy Ferron Collection, University of Nevada, Las Vegas Library)



A railroad cottage with enclosed porch. (Verona Pasquale, 1984)

To a large extent, the description prophesied the type of cottages that were built by the Las Vegas Land and Water Company just one year later for employees of the railroad.⁶

The first 40 cottages, which were completed in 1910, were built of concrete block; as a newspaper article noted, they were "neat as new pins outside and in."⁷ But the small four and five room structures were neither "distributed through the residence district" as suggested by the earlier article, nor were they "bunched together like a tenement row."⁸ They were laid out side by side on double lots 50 feet wide and 140 feet deep.⁹ The cottages were in fact Las Vegas's first tract housing.

Twenty-four of the cottages were located on Third and Fourth Streets between Clark and Bonneville, and the remaining cottages were on Second Street (now Casino Center) between Clark and Garces Avenues. The four room cottages measured 24 by 32 feet, and the larger five room cottages were 24 by 36.¹⁰

The design of the cottages contained elements borrowed from the California Bungalow movement. The use of concrete block in construction was a rather new and innovative technique at that time, and it would prove to have many advantages in the desert. Concrete blocks were made of easily-obtained local materials and were relatively inexpensive to produce. The block construction also provided insulation against the desert heat, and cooling further was aided by good attic ventilation and by broad eaves and porches which helped shade the houses. The cottages were nearly identical in all respects except for minor variations in the design of the roofs.¹¹

The Las Vegas Land and Water Company charged railroad employees \$20.00 per month for the four room cottages, and \$22.50 for those with five rooms, in both cases exclusive of charges for water.¹²

Shortly after the first dwellings were built, Las Vegas suffered through a

⁶ The Las Vegas Land and Water Company was a wholly-owned subsidiary of the San Pedro, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake Railroad. See Florence Lee Jones and John F. Cahlan, *Water: A History of Las Vegas*, Vol. I (Las Vegas: Las Vegas Valley Water District, 1975), p. 15.

⁷ *Las Vegas Age*, April 30, 1910, 4:2.

⁸ *Ibid.*, April 24, 1909, 4:2.

⁹ A single lot was 25 feet wide by 140 feet deep. See Jones and Cahlan, *Water: A History of Las Vegas*, I, p. 28.

¹⁰ The San Pedro, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake Railroad Collection, Box 1, University of Nevada, Las Vegas Library, Special Collections Department. See the descriptions and other data on the cottages in Kim Geary and Jane Kowalewski, *Historic Resources of Central Las Vegas*, three volumes (Las Vegas: Nevada State Museum and Historical Society, 1984), a nomination prepared for the National Register of Historic Places, funded through the Nevada Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology.

¹¹ Geary and Kowalewski, *Historic Resources of Central Las Vegas*; A. D. Hopkins, "Las Vegas' First Housing Tract," *The Nevadan* section of the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, May 28, 1978, pp. 26j-27j.

¹² The San Pedro, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake Railroad Collection, Box 1, letter from J. P. Nicholson to W. R. Bracken, Nov. 6, 1912. In January, 1911, rents were lowered to \$18.00 and \$20.00 for the four and five room cottages respectively, and this rate included a monthly water charge of \$1.50 per house.



A block of railroad cottages shortly after construction. (Courtesy of University of Nevada, Las Vegas Library)



Looking northwest from Garces and 4th Streets; five cottages remain where sixteen once stood. (Verona Pasquale, 1984)

short-lived recession.¹³ Then in September, 1910, the railroad announced it soon would transfer 400 men from Los Angeles to Las Vegas to staff the newly-completed repair shops.¹⁴ Once again there was a pressing need for residential housing, and in November the Water Company announced it would build an additional forty cottages.¹⁵ Next January a newspaper headline read, "First 24 cottages to be rushed with all possible speed."¹⁶

The new cottages were ready by the summer of 1911; built adjacent to the ones completed a year earlier, they were identical in style.¹⁷ The *Las Vegas Age* described the development:

Every house is as neat and attractive as possible, handsome electric light fixtures, plenty of kitchen cupboards and nooks to delight the housewife, cement porches and walks, and are enclosed by good fences. When the lawns and trees which officials have promised are in evidence the place will be very attractive.¹⁸

The number of cottages built by the Las Vegas Land and Water Company totaled 64 by June, 1911. The original intention had been to construct 120.¹⁹ Less than two years after the last of the 64 had been completed, the company decided to sell the existing cottages to its employees and to loan money to other railroad workers who wanted to build their own houses.²⁰ A possible clue to the reasoning behind the railroad's decision to sell the cottages is contained in a note at the bottom of a 1912 Las Vegas Land and Water Company ledger detailing the income from the cottages over a two-year period. The note gloomily states, "This looks as though the thing is not losing money or making [it] either."²¹

In 1912, the Water Company estimated the total cost of the cottages at \$109,781.62, exclusive of the lots. The 32 four-room cottages averaged \$1,632.14 each, and the 32 five-room dwellings averaged \$1,798.53. The total value of the 128 lots on which the cottages were located was appraised at \$13,600.²²

¹³ See Jones and Cahlan, *Water: A History of Las Vegas*, I, p. 42. In early 1910, the resulting floods of a spring storm destroyed much of the San Pedro, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake Railroad's track in the Meadow Valley Wash area. The devastation was of such magnitude that the railroad was forced to lay off almost all of its Las Vegas-based employees.

¹⁴ *Las Vegas Age*, Sept. 3, 1910, 1:1.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Nov. 26, 1910, 1:3-4.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Jan. 7, 1911, 1:1.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* Twenty-four cottages were located on the west side of Third Street in Block 24, on the east side of Third Street in Block 25, and on the west side of Fourth Street in Block 25, all in Clark's Las Vegas Townsite.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, June 10, 1911, 5:4. A 1912 Water Company ledger shows the firm put in the lawns in July and August at a cost of \$562.50; SP, LA, and SL RR Collection.

¹⁹ SP, LA, and SL RR Collection, Railroad Correspondence.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, 1912 ledger.

²² *Ibid.*, "Memorandum." There were 16 corner lots priced at \$150 each, and 112 inside lots at \$100 each.



Railroad Cottage which has been condemned. (*Verona Pasquale, 1984*)



Cottage being demolished. (*Dorothy Wright, 1979*)

Despite euphoric newspaper descriptions of the housing, problems did arise. Until the spring of 1913, for example, the cottages were not connected to a sewer system and had to rely on cesspools. The cesspools were covered with wooden planks and dirt, and by 1912 the planks were decaying rapidly.²³ In a November 6 letter to Walter Bracken, the railroad agent and head of the Water Company, a cottage renter complained:

Dear Sir:

Permit me to call your attention to the scess[sic] pool in the yard of house 621 4th St where I am living. The covering of this pool has rotted away and caved in leaving it open there by [sic] making it dangerous for children and also very unhealthy. . . .²⁴

Problems with the cesspools continued until the cottages were connected to the city sewer line in the spring of 1913. As each house was connected, its cesspool was filled in.²⁵

Despite occasional problems, the cottages were considered desirable residences. They were, however, quite small and many owners chose to enlarge them. The most common way of increasing the size involved the enclosure of the front porch. Block or frame additions were constructed on the sides and backs of many, and a number of owners built garages, apartments, and even barns on the property behind their homes. Often in later years stucco was applied to cover the exterior block walls of many of the dwellings, probably in an attempt to update their appearance.²⁶

The area where the cottages were located remained a middle class neighborhood for many years. Eventually the little community was threatened by commercial development, which had been creeping steadily southward from Fremont Street since the 1940s.²⁷

Eventually the city government decided to acknowledge and encourage commercial development in the area. On December 16, 1964, the Las Vegas City Commission (now known as the City Council) played an important role in determining the future of most, if not all, of the railroad cottages. On that day, Mayor Oran Gragson and the City Commission passed a "Resolution of Intent to Rezone the Property to C-2,"²⁸ which affected not only the land on which the cottages were situated but also the land adjacent to it bordered by Bonanza, Charleston, Las Vegas Boulevard, and Main Street. The resolution provided cottage owners with the option of changing their residential prop-

²³ Ibid., Railroad Correspondence.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Geary and Kowalewski, *Historical Resources of Central Las Vegas*, III.

²⁷ Jones and Cahlan, *Water: A History of Las Vegas*, I, p. 28.

²⁸ This resolution was embodied in part of Chapter 19.44 of the Las Vegas Municipal Code. The C-2 classification provided for property to be used for a general commercial purpose. See also, File #Z-100-64 of the Las Vegas Planning Commission.

erty classification to a commercial one, subject to the Planning Commission's approval of each request.²⁹ The rationale behind the Commission's action was that by allowing owners to develop their land for commercial purposes, the city would be promoting a better, more sensible plan for the future of downtown Las Vegas.

By the early 1960s, the downtown area was no longer attractive to families seeking housing. Elementary schools in the immediate locale had been closed, and amenities such as grocery stores and parks were almost non-existent. More importantly, suburban areas adjacent to the original Clark's Townsite offered better housing and living conditions.

As Las Vegas has grown, government facilities, law offices and courts, and a variety of businesses have all come to require more space in the downtown area. A logical vicinity for such future commercial development is land on which the remaining cottages are located. At present, forty to fifty percent of the cottage property already has been converted from residential to commercial use.

In 1978, forty-one of the original sixty-four cottages were still standing.³⁰ As of this writing, only thirty-one remain. It seems likely that this trend toward extinction will continue; many remaining cottage owners show little, if any, interest in rehabilitating these historic structures. This disinterest is sometimes reflected in the general appearance of some cottages. Many exteriors are deteriorating and are in need of repainting and other major repairs. Some of the lawns are unkempt and serve as convenient parking places for tenants.

For all practical purposes, the cottages are too small to be converted for most commercial uses. It is likely that owners will hold on to their property until it becomes profitable for them to sell to developers, or until they obtain financing to develop the land themselves.

During the late 1970s, preservationists³¹ desperately worked to halt the demise of the remaining houses by attempting to have the cottages, as well as other historic railroad-related sites, nominated for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. These efforts failed when officials of the Review Board of the Nevada Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology took no action in either rejecting the nomination or in forwarding it to officials on the national level.³² The Review Board ultimately based its decision on the fact that respective property owners refused to support the preservation plan.

²⁹ Las Vegas Municipal Code, Chapter 19.44.

³⁰ A. D. Hopkins, "Las Vegas' First Housing Tract," p. 26j.

³¹ Specifically, the Preservation Association of Clark County.

³² Correspondence, March 19, 1979 from Mimi Rodden, Administrator (State Historic Preservation Officer) of the Nevada Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology to Dorothy Ritenour, in the possession of Ms. Ritenour.

As a result of the Board's decision, all organized efforts to preserve the cottages appear to be doomed.

Since almost one-half of the neighborhood consists of fairly new office buildings, and considering the continuing southerly expansion of downtown commercial properties, there seems to be little hope that any of the cottages (at least in their original form³³) will survive. In a sense, it is at least a minor miracle that such an historic neighborhood, one directly related to the origins of Las Vegas as a railroad town, still survives in any kind of identifiable form. It is now still possible to drive to Casino Center and Third and Fourth streets, between Garces and Clark, and view the remnants of the oldest surviving residences of Las Vegas. That opportunity may soon be lost.

³³ An example of an extensively modified cottage is the law office located at 530 Third Street.

Book Reviews

Sarah Winnemucca of the Northern Paiutes. By Gae Whitney Canfield.
(Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983. 261 pp., notes, index,
illustrations, maps. \$19.95)

RECENTLY, INTEREST in the ethnography and history of women has increased vastly, resulting in the reworking and publishing of materials which have lain ignored in archives and fieldnotes, considered unworthy of serious investigation. Despite the pioneering works of Landes (1938), Underhill (1936), Lowie (1920, chap. 8), and a few others, for a long time the most common image of Native American women has been of Pocahontas and Sacajawea, perceived only in their ability and willingness to give help to Anglo males. This is no longer true. The literature concerning the precontact and historical behavior of Native American women has expanded dramatically, and is finally beginning to give inklings of the rich and varied roles that women played in these societies (e.g., Green 1983; Albers and Medicine 1983). Gae Whitney Canfield has contributed to the effort to reach beyond ethnocentrism and male bias in scholarship, to see Native women as actors in their own right, with distinct goals, constraints, and historical imperatives.

Sarah Winnemucca is a worthy subject for such an investigation. As a Northern Paiute, she was raised in the egalitarian tradition common to most hunters and gatherers. Women were active in food getting, political decision-making, and marital arrangements. They were expected to and did take active roles in all aspects of native community life. Sarah's experience was made doubly interesting because she came from a large family which early declared its intention to live peacefully with the immigrant Anglos. She was sent to school in California and lived with the important Ormsby family of Genoa for a time. Later in life she chose to utilize the novel opportunities made available by the interethnic amalgam of frontier life. She served as a scout and interpreter for the army, and as a translator and teacher's aid on reservations. She lectured on the East and West coasts, advocated abolition of the reservation system, started a school for Indian children independent of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and wrote an autobiography. Her life is amply documented as a result of that book, her public record on Indian affairs, and the activities of her many kinsmen. Because of the time period in which she lived, her biography also reflects the fascinating changes which occurred as mining and cattle raising transformed Nevada from a land of native subsistence pursuits to one of Anglo commercial enterprise.

Within this dynamic milieu, Sarah Winnemucca moved as a controversial and complex personality. As Canfield documents, she was sometimes praised by the military while she was reviled by Indian agents and the public press, supported by Eastern liberals while she was ignored by the bureaucratic establishment and exploited by politicians. Canfield has extracted from this multi-faceted and often contradictory life an image of a fighter dominated by "concern for the Paiutes, which all her life had overshadowed her destiny" (p. 65). In her autobiography, Sarah wrote, "I have worked for freedom, I have laboured to give my race a voice in the affairs of the nation," (quoted in Canfield 1983: 231). To this Canfield has agreed, declaring that Sarah was a "messenger and guardian of her people" (p. 216). The author says that by writing this book she hopes that "Sarah Winnemucca's leadership for brotherhood and human rights and her tremendous efforts for peace between races will be recognized and celebrated" (p. 261).

Canfield has done a solid piece of research. She has refrained from the readily-available and often weak secondary sources; instead she has gone directly to primary ones. She has explored the anticipated documents—military and government correspondence for Sarah's early life, and newspaper articles for later dates—as well as unanticipated repositories, such as the holdings of the Canyon City (Oregon) Historical Society, private parties in West Yellowstone, Montana, and the archives of the Archdiocese of San Francisco and of the College of Notre Dame (California).

From these diverse materials, Canfield has assembled a particularly vivid account of Sarah Winnemucca's relationship with Indian agents and the military, and of the bureaucratic persecution she suffered as a result of her opposition to reservation policy. The author has given a good description of off-reservation Indians, who throughout history have comprised the majority of the Nevada native population but who remain virtually unknown to scholars. She has also, perhaps unconsciously, documented the extraordinary mobility of Northern Paiutes during the historic period, as Old Winnemucca's band is traced from Harney Lake to Steens Mountain to the Yakima Reservation, and Sarah's brother Natchez is mentioned meeting her in San Francisco, travelling with her to Washington, and establishing a farm in Lovelock. In a broader context, Sarah's relationship with the New England transcendentalists through Elizabeth Peabody and her sister Mary Mann is documented, and some of the flavor of that unusual circle of intellectuals is portrayed. Canfield successfully avoids many of the pitfalls which often afflict non-anthropologists and non-historians who try to write Indian history; for example she does not believe the false assertions that there were "chiefs" for Great Basin "tribes" (p. 17). At least brief mention must also be made concerning the delightful and well-chosen collection of period photographs which illustrate the volume, carefully placed where they are most relevant to the text.

As a biography should, Canfield's book attempts to portray the historical period through the events of a single life and to see the world through the eyes of a single individual. In so doing, she has a tendency to see a personality as the cause of historical events, rather than the result of on-going social movements: thus, Old Winnemucca is described as being cautious in his approach to Anglos, but Truckee, "*because of his expansive nature and great curiosity . . . continued his efforts to be friendly even when rebuffed by early explorers*" (p. xi—emphasis added). In efforts to personalize the history and add color to the prose, Canfield is led into unprovable assertions of the emotional response and mental state of her subjects. For instance, she says that, while Sarah was meeting with General Schofield in San Francisco, "*she remembered* how [Senator] Jones had turned her and Natchez away with a twenty-dollar bill for their trouble several years earlier" (p. 87—emphasis added). Again, in describing Sarah's approval of one agent's policy to inform Paiutes about decisions he was making, Canfield asserts that "[s]uch a course *never entered Rinehart's [the previous agent's] head*" (p. 122—emphasis added). She can have no proof that the man never thought about such a policy, only that he apparently never acted on it. While such stretching of the data may seem harmless, it can become an insidious source of ethnocentric bias when emotional responses, particularly of non-Anglo persons, are presumed based on the author's understanding of how a twentieth-century Anglo would respond to such a situation.

Also related to the biographical nature of this work is Canfield's staunch faith in Sarah Winnemucca's writings as a source, and her perhaps understandable tendency to accept Sarah's emphatic interpretations as fact. This leads her to underestimate the extremely controversial nature of Sarah's position. While acknowledging factionalism and dispute among Northern Paiutes (e.g., pp. 58, 153), Canfield minimizes the extent to which the Winnemucca family alienated other Paiutes by advocating the military administration of Indian affairs, by presenting Old Winnemucca as head chief of all Paiutes, and by acting in an untraditionally aggressive and authoritarian manner (e.g., pp. 164, 220, 227-228). She quotes Sarah addressing a gathering of Paiutes: "You can say what you like about me. You have a right to say I have sold you. It looks so. I have told you many things which are not my own words, but the words of the agents and the soldiers. I know I have told you more lies than I have hair on my head" (p. 181). Nevertheless, Canfield makes the unqualified claim that "her people begged her to go east and talk for them" (p. 158), without any supporting analysis which would make this request understandable. By relying so heavily on the documents left by the Winnemuccas themselves and by the press, and by mentioning only in passing those few documents left by factions hostile to that family's policy

(e.g., Scott 1966), Canfield has simplified Sarah's remarkable personality as well as the complexity of her role in those changing times.

Similarly, Canfield presents Peabody's interest in Sarah as wholly benevolent, and even her introduction to Senator Dawes as selfless. These were people highly connected in powerful political circles. Dawes was at that time attempting to get a bill through Congress which subsequently resulted in the loss of over 75% of the land then remaining under Indian control (Officer 1971:41); Sarah was persuaded to testify in favor of that bill. Surely there was more to their interest in this Paiute woman than Canfield declares.

In short, I believe Canfield to be too uncritical of her sources. While she has done well in presenting the multi-racial local scene, she lacks sufficient historical scope to give a completely satisfactory interpretation of the subtleties of this woman's complex life. She is left with Sarah Winnemucca as "savior of her people," a noble, attractive, but oversimplified image.

In contrast to questions of interpretation, Canfield's handling of fact is on the whole sound. The worst shortcoming in this regard is a confusion over the identity and chronology of a number of native religious movements (e.g., pp. 86, 100, 159).

Canfield's writing style is understandable and non-technical. After a clumsy first chapter which attempts to introduce the Paiute cultural background, the early history of Anglo-Paiute contact, and the beginning of Sarah's life all at once, the narrative settles to a nice pace. There is a persistent difficulty with transitions and a tendency to leap from one topic to the next without rationale; about half-way through the manuscript the editor began to try to gloss over these rough spots with the infamous blank line. There are a number of other irritating editorial problems which are unworthy of a press of this caliber: undiscovered typographical errors (p. 157, "allowed him to to to Yakima" instead of "to go to"); failure to inset paragraphs (p. 134); repetition of phrases within a single sentence (p. 216, "Finally, in August 1884, acting under order from Washington, Lieutenant Henry D. Huntington came onto the reservation, acting under orders from Washington . . ."); inclusion of details irrelevant to the topic of the book and unnecessary for context (e.g., p. 18 on Ormsby's hotel interests in Carson City, p. 19 on Simpson's welcome by ladies, a 13-gun salute, and the American flag); and mismatching of Mud Flat north of Pyramid Lake as Mud Lake where a massacre of Paiutes occurred (although the author herself has the geography correct, p. 44).

On the whole, Canfield's *Sarah Winnemucca of the Northern Paiutes* is a worthy addition to the literature on Sarah Winnemucca, Great Basin women, and Nevada Indian history. Using a biographical format, she concentrates on describing Sarah's life within the context of regional events, while minimizing

the controversial nature of that life. Canfield has presented the best coverage of Sarah Winnemucca's life to appear since Sarah's own autobiography in 1883, but has still left opportunities for other scholars to explore the many subtle facets of this remarkable woman's life and influence.

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Borax Pioneer: Francis Marion Smith. By George H. Hildebrand. (San Diego: Howell North Books, 1982. 317 pp. Maps, illustrations, bibliography, index. \$15.00)

IN THE LATTER PORTION of the nineteenth century, there were many men who gained wealth, power, and notoriety by exploiting the multitude of opportunities then existing in the American West. Francis Marion Smith certainly was not untypical of this genre of western entrepreneur. Author

George H. Hildebrand provides in this book the first full-length account of the life and accomplishments of "Borax" Smith. The author, in fact, compares the career of Smith to those of W. C. Ralston and C. P. Huntington. He could have also included a comparison to Colonel William Greene and to Smith's great rival in railroad building in southern Nevada, Senator William Andrews Clark.

Smith was born in rural Wisconsin in 1846. Like many of the energetic young men of the period, he left home to sample, first-hand, life and opportunity in the western mining camps. He had little success until his migrations brought him to the isolated deserts of southern Nevada in the early 1870s.

At Teel's Marsh, a few miles north of the silver camp of Candelaria, Smith discovered a rich borax deposit that propelled him to national prominence. More than any other individual, he was responsible for the creation of the borax industry. For the last sixty years of his life, he would be identified with the development and marketing of borax and its by-products. Smith had made and lost one fortune by 1913. He started over again to earn a second fortune when he was sixty-seven years old.

George Hildebrand, a professor of economics at Cornell University, has produced an admiring biography of Smith. The fact that he finds much to praise in Smith the man, the builder, and the optimistic visionary, should not be surprising. Hildebrand was born and raised in Oakland near Smith's impressive Arbor Villa estate. He has enjoyed friendship with members of Smith's family and was allowed sole access to Smith's papers while preparing this book. Just as important in the shaping of this account, however, are the author's credentials as an economist both in academia and in responsible government service. This critical background has enabled him to sort out and to present analytically the complexities of Smith's entrepreneurial endeavors.

Like so many others who found a source of wealth in the mineral deposits of Nevada, Smith invested most of his money elsewhere. By 1881 he had located permanently in Oakland, California. His increasing interest in Oakland and in the East Bay region absorbed his energies and financial commitments in the following decades, but to the detriment of his borax holdings. Smith envisioned a grand plan for the East Bay region which included the development of an interurban and street railway system. This vision included the completion of a future bay bridge connecting San Francisco with Oakland. It was Smith's decision to enter into a high-risk real-estate investment partnership in the bay region that led to his financial difficulties in 1913.

As a result of this disastrous involvement, Smith lost control of his major holdings in the borax companies, in the Key system of East Bay railroads, and in his real-estate investments in the bay region. Smith's determination to recover from his forced retirement from the borax industry and his depressed financial circumstances, and his goal of repaying personal debts incurred as a result of the 1913 difficulties, dominated his life following that period. By the

time he died in Oakland in 1931 at age 85, he had regained much of his former wealth and power. His ability to recover from these difficult circumstances is indeed testimony to his industrial genius and personal integrity.

One wishes that in telling Smith's story the author had dealt at greater length with some of the interesting people around him. Men such as Chris Zabriskie, John Ryan, Ben Edwards, and Clarence Razor were involved with Smith and were also contributors in their own right to the development of Nevada and eastern California. These men certainly are worthy of further attention in some future publication.

Hildebrand valiantly struggles to convey a sense of Smith the man. He includes much information about his family and his personal lifestyle, but the dominant contribution of this book is the competent presentation of Smith's rather complicated financial involvements. To accomplish this task, the author has developed a series of tables and charts that clearly illustrate a chronology of Smith's corporate empire-building.

Over fifty years after his death, "Borax" Smith is still remembered (along with the famous Borax 20-mule team) for the development and promotion of the borax industry. He should also be recognized for his philanthropy and for his contribution to the development of the Oakland-East Bay region.

Serious scholars will find this book stimulating and rewarding.

Don Bufkin
Arizona Historical Society

Historians and the American West. Edited by Michael P. Malone. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983. x + 449 pp., footnotes, index. \$24.95).

"A VOLUME OF SERMONS is not the book at which the general reader first grasps when an hour of leisure intervenes in his plodding toil, and he desires for the moment to unbend the bow of life, and luxuriate in some sprightly recreation." So wrote a reviewer in the *New York Times* back on October 22, 1861 about a long forgotten book. Lest readers think *Historians and the American West* falls into that same category, let them be assured they need not worry. Michael Malone and his co-authors have produced a volume that makes stimulating reading and is a significant milestone on the road of Western historiography.

Editor Malone defines the goal when he writes in the introduction:

This common history and historiography of the West—its evolution, current state, and future prospect—is the subject of this volume. In seventeen historiographic essays, each by a historian of the West who is accomplished in his or her field, the

reader will find assessments of the 'state of the art' of historical writing and interpretation on a wide range of subjects. (p. 2)

The West is herein defined, as it has been before, as the region lying west of the 98th meridian.

Each chapter examines a different subject. Some are traditional, such as Indians, Spanish Borderland, and the fur trade; others probe the newer fields of urbanism, women, culture, and environment. Within the chapter, each author provides an annotated guide to the important books (and sometimes articles) dealing with his or her topic. The reader is advised to scan carefully the footnotes at the end of every chapter for the valuable information and references to be found there.

The chapters emphatically measure up to the standard set forth for them by Malone. There is something to savor, something to learn in each one, as the authors, with their individual approaches, tackle the problems set before them.

The reader who fails to find a panful of golden nuggets of Western history should probably consider some other area of study. A mere reading of these chapters starts the research juices flowing and should serve to stimulate fresh ideas and research projects in both the buff and the scholar. The authors propose ideas and challenges sufficient to keep researchers and writers busy for the next generation. Rodman Paul states it well in the foreword: "professional and amateur historians alike will find that this is the place to start from when they set out on a new journey of historical exploration."

A few examples will suffice to illustrate the book's high quality, there being no intent to slight uncited authors, who are equally stimulating. F. Alan Coombs writes of the twentieth century and presents not only a fine overview of the current state of research, but also a challenge to his readers to begin delving into these eighty neglected years. This is in many respects the most virgin of Western history territory. Dennis Berge, in a thought-provoking essay, discusses the idea of manifest destiny and its role in the West. Richard Etulain's "Shifting Interpretations of Western Cultural History" should motivate a host of scholars to change their approach to the subject in subsequent research. Finally, Sandra Myres' polemic on women and their role will undoubtedly generate controversy. She concludes with a statement that may stand for all the authors and their chapters: "More importantly, by adding to our knowledge of yet another aspect of the westering experience, new work on western women will help us better evaluate the significance and impact of the frontier and the West on American character and development." (pp. 379-80)

Every person will find a chapter or two which speaks to his or her particular interest. In particular, the mining chapter by Clark Spence stands out for this

reviewer. However, the book itself needs to be read from cover to cover, and with enough time to relish each chapter as a whole, not in bits and snatches.

One of the extraordinary facts which *Historians and the American West* highlights is the continuing prominence and resiliency of the subject's founding father, Frederick Jackson Turner, and his writings. Hardly a chapter does not mention or analyze his ideas, and his is the longest listing in the index. Now, nearly a century after his essay on the importance of the West was first published, it still has an impact on current research.

Malone and all the authors are to be commended for a job well done. They have accomplished a difficult task, one that has cried for attention for many a year. This book will provide a fertile field for potential researchers for years to come. Implicit in its pages, however, are two points that Western historians need to heed. First, Western history is not dull, but some Western writers are. Second, the subject's historians need to stop writing so much for themselves and reach out to the larger audience which has a yearning to learn more about this fascinating region.

This reviewer's one small complaint is that there is not more information on state histories, neither in the general surveys nor in specific studies. That could perhaps be the subject for another volume in the future.

It has been charged that Western history is a dying, antiquarian specialty. This volume wholeheartedly and vigorously refutes that contention. As Mark Twain observed, "The report of my death was an exaggeration." So it is for Western history.

Duane A. Smith
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American Environmentalism: Values, Tactics, Priorities. By Joseph M. Petulla. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1980. xiv + 234 pp., maps, notes, index. \$18.50)

PROFESSOR PETULLA has made an important contribution to the historiography of American environmentalism. In his first book, *American Environmental History* (San Francisco: Boyd & Fraser, 1977), he reconstructed the historical setting in which our nation's natural resources were exploited, and he delineated the connection between that exploitation and our contemporary ecological crisis. In this volume Petulla has successfully "attempted to . . . clarify the many qualities and values mixed into what is known as the environmental movement" in the United States (p. xii). The author views the growing concern about man's habitat as having emerged in the last two decades, and he examines the background of the earlier preservation and conservation traditions. Petulla is especially interested in the "ideas, ac-

tivities, values, and priorities of modern environmentalism" (p. x). One of the major strengths of this book is its insightful treatment of the interplay between what Petulla refers to as "environmental ethics" and the crusading activities of the environmentalists themselves.

The complexities, inner tensions, and contradictions within the value system of the environmental movement are masterfully elucidated. Although the spokespersons of the crusade have assumed that they share a common value system, Petulla's probing analysis of the ideological basis of the movement helps the reader appreciate its complexity. The author emphasizes the conflicts about policies, tactics, values, and priorities among the leaders of the ecologists.

By analyzing the assumption of the luminaries of the movement—Aldo Leopold, George Perkins Marsh, Lewis Mumford, John Muir, Barry Commoner, Roderick Nash, and others—Petulla establishes its breadth and diversity. In his last chapter, "Environmental Ethics," he is at his analytical best. He sees the new ethic as a curious mixture of Aldo Leopold's "land ethic" (with its emphasis upon granting natural rights traditionally assigned only to humans), the natural law tradition, and the Calvinistic emphasis upon thrift and efficiency. Never satisfied to analyze environmental thought apart from the practical world of politics, Petulla elaborates at length on his assertion that the "question of environmental ethics should not be construed as a problem of rights of nature versus rights of people but . . . as interest groups competing for wider support" in the public arena (p. 208-09).

In his conclusion the author tells us that his "perspective . . . has been that most value orientations about environmental matters have been rooted in historical experience" (p. 224). He identifies three environmental perspectives the American experience has yielded: (1) the biocentric found in the thought of nineteenth-century writers like Emerson, Thoreau, and John Muir; (2) the ecologic exemplified in the writings of George Perkins Marsh and Aldo Leopold; and (3) the economic orientation found in conservation leaders such as Gifford Pinchot and Franklin D. Roosevelt. According to Petulla, the biocentric approach places a high value on nature for its own sake and insists that it be protected from human exploitation; the ecologic tradition allows for human use of natural resources, but insists upon the preservation of the natural balance within nature itself. The third perspective underscores the wise use of natural resources, and emphasizes efficiency and the frugal harvest of nature's bountiful gifts to man.

Since this is the first volume of an "Environmental History Series" to be published by the Texas A&M University Press, it is fortunate that it advances our knowledge of the subject. It will become a standard secondary source in the growing historiography of environmental history. Unfortunately, it is not without flaws. The volume suffers from poor organization, and a prose style which is uneven at best and at worst is like an outline. At times, this book

reads like unedited lecture notes. Professor Petulla acknowledges that "some material in the book has been presented in various forms in a course at the University of California, Berkeley." (p. xi) Fortunately, most of the book is readable. The only other weaknesses of the volume are the index (which is riddled with errors) and the lack of a bibliography. Professor Petulla obviously is very knowledgeable about the secondary and primary sources on this subject, and the reader would like to benefit from his bibliographic wisdom.

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Las Vegas

Now That the Buffalo's Gone. By Alvin M. Josephy, Jr. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982. xv + 263 pp. Illustrations, bibliography, index. \$15.95)

NOW THAT THE BUFFALO'S GONE is a valuable popular history of American Indians using concepts derived from modern cultural anthropology and archeology. As such, it is superior to many scholarly histories which are merely expository, legalistic, or based upon simplistic ecological theory. For the most part, it also rises far above the plethora of popular histories which portray the persecutions of American Indians by Whites, but omit Indian wrongdoing and Indian creative responses. However, Josephy misleads us with his assertion that "this is a book about Native Americans in the U.S. today, about their modern day feelings and viewpoints . . ." (p. xiii). That is true only in the sense that we are all products of the past. *Buffalo* is really a sweeping history which brings us to a better understanding of modern day American Indians.

Josephy's narrative device is to use the history of one tribe, or a group of related tribes, to illustrate historically important themes, including White denial of Indian cultural survival, the damaging persistence of ethnic stereotypes, Indian efforts to recover lost spiritual domains, the struggle for land and water, the defense of hunting and fishing rights, and the movement for self-determination. One chapter is devoted to each theme. While these are all important topics, he also should have written a separate chapter on the fight for control of tribal energy resources, a topic discussed only haphazardly under the issue of self-determination.

Buffalo opens in a popular style with the case of Fred Coyote, the Wailaki who proclaimed "I will *die* an Indian," in refutation of an article which implied Wailaki extinction in the Smithsonian Institution's California volume of its *Handbook of North American Indians* series.

In spite of the promise of the introduction, the style soon shifts to plain vanilla expository prose which sometimes drags, maintaining only a very

tenuous hold on the major themes. With all the detail, one might expect footnotes, but Josephy chose instead to provide only chapter-headed reference sections at the end of the book. This gives the book an unfinished quality. It could be improved by making it either more popular with less detail (my preference), or more scholarly with adequate references in the text. While it is not a good reference work, and it is a little too ponderous in places to catch the attention of a huge popular audience, it is nevertheless useful as a fairly comprehensive introduction to Indian history, and it therefore might be appropriate as a text for university undergraduate courses.

The first chapter of *Buffalo* describes the history of the Indians of Florida and their transformation into Seminoles. While the historical account is excellent, maps would have been useful. In this chapter, and in the following two, I was particularly impressed with Josephy's ability to blend archeology, ethnology and history.

In Chapter 2, Josephy presents the Mohegan Uncas's unsuccessful matrilineal claim to the Grand Sachemship of the Pequots. I have reconstructed Uncas' kinship network from the author's account as follows:

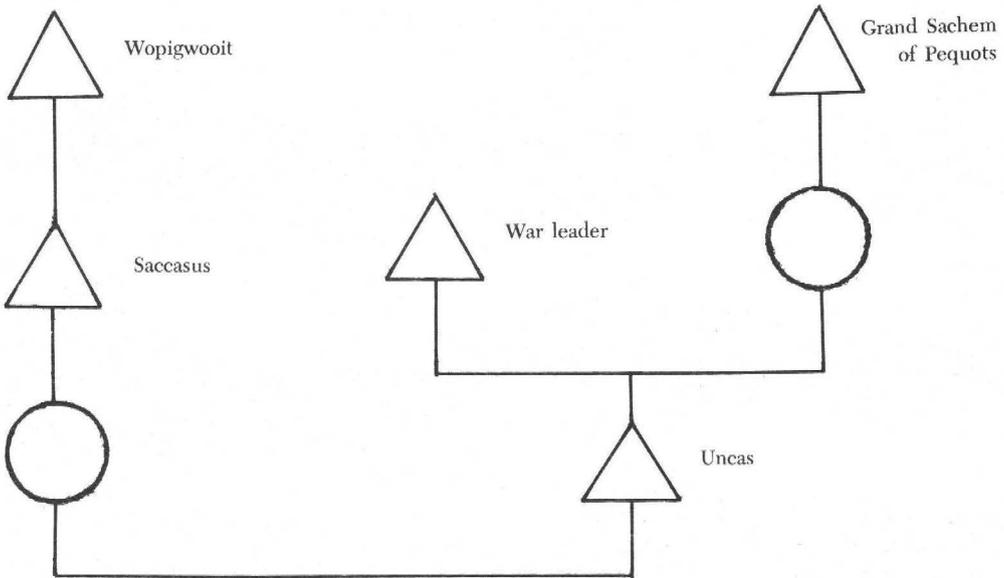


Figure 1: Partial Genealogy of Uncas (information from Josephy, 1982).

But if succession were strictly matrilineal, Uncas's mother would have no claim to the sachemship of her father, which would fall instead to a sister's son of the former Grand Sachem. Salwen¹ cites evidence that the rules were flexible enough to accommodate an aggressive opportunist such as Uncas. In view of Josephy's claim to be writing about contemporary Indians, there should be more information about the Western Pequots and Narragansetts who survived to press a lands claim against the United States in the 1970s. Josephy seriously mars this chapter with a brief decline into the *Bury My Heart* version of Indian history by presenting almost irrelevant vignettes of historical and modern day massacres suffered by the Northern Paiutes, Nez Perce, and Cayuse.

Chapter 3 presents the long struggle of the Taos Pueblo to recover Blue Lake. Here Josephy does what he does best, using ethnography and archeology to write an enlightening, almost poetic analysis of Pueblo philosophy, prehistory, and society. This is the best popular introduction to a Pueblo culture I have seen. His fourth chapter presents an historical summary of federal Indian lands policy and a good synopsis of Seneca Iroquois history, with a useful, but rather dull, summary of the battle over Kinzua dam.

For the Nevada reader, the most relevant portion of Josephy's book is contained in chapter five, which has an extensive and informative discussion of the Pyramid Lake Paiutes' struggle over water rights to the Truckee River, in order to preserve Pyramid Lake (pp. 154-172). The author carries the complex story of the historical background and the contemporary litigation to 1982; and he effectively summarizes several related topics, such as the Newlands Project's impact on the competition for water from the Truckee and Carson rivers, the Winter Doctrine, the Orr Ditch decree, and especially the Paiutes' legal struggles since the 1950s. His picture is that of an Indian group asserting its right to enough water to maintain Pyramid Lake as a fishery, and to develop a recreational area so that impoverished Indians in the area can achieve self-sufficiency. His view is that the Paiutes involved have been developing and pressing their claims with a "new voice, unity, and self-assertiveness." In sum, Josephy clearly delineates the Indian side of the case, and he also outlines the dilemmas and the problems of the White farmers of the Fallon area, who for decades have relied on Newlands Project water and the protection of governmental agencies. Josephy's attention to a Nevada problem in such detail is then linked to the more general problem of a wide variety of Indian tribes in the West now pressing their claims to water. The Pyramid Lake Paiutes, according to the author, have "demonstrated to other tribes that they could put an end to the continuing theft of their resources, including water" (p. 173).

¹ Bert Salwen, "Indians of Southern New England and Long Island: Early Period," in *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. 8, Bruce G. Trigger, ed. (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1978), p. 167.

Chapter 7 recounts the history of the Oglala Sioux and their troubled government under the Indian Reorganization Act. The problems of the Sioux provide an opportunity for the author to discuss the Department of the Interior in the exploitation of tribal resources, those of the Navajo, Hopi, Northern Cheyenne, and Crow in particular. This is Josephy's most contemporary chapter, covering the founding of the pan-Indian National Congress of American Indians, the National Indian Youth Council, the militant American Indian Movement, and the Council of Energy Resource Tribes. He regains his story-telling form in a description of the struggle matching AIM and the traditional leaders against the elected tribal officials and the BIA. In this chapter, the Nixon administration appears sympathetic to Indian self-determination, but handicapped by inert bureaucracy in the BIA. Further, the treatment illustrates how Josephy often discovers important motifs which deserve more development, such as the swing from abundance to scarcity. He points out that a "gusher of federal funds" prior to Reaganomics coopted Indian leaders; but under Reagan, Indians have experienced budget cuts ten times greater than those affecting non-Indians.

In summary, *Now That the Buffalo's Gone* is a sometimes marvelous popular introduction to Indian history, marred by too much detail and an insufficient highlighting of themes, occasional loss of balance, and shifting style. While I recommend it, I hope that Josephy will continue to revise and update. If he does, the book will more effectively improve American understanding of Indian history.

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Edward F. Beale and The American West. By Gerald Thompson. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983. xvi + 306 pp. Preface, maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography)

THOSE WHO KNOW Edward Fitzgerald Beale for his role at San Pascual and his camel experiment will find a far different Beale here: millionaire businessman, explorer, United States Ambassador, spy, Nicaraguan canal promoter, Washington D.C. social lion. Until now, readers of western history have only caught glimpses of Beale as he figures briefly in events before moving back into the shadows. Now, Gerald Thompson has written a thorough biography of Beale, from his experiences as a young midshipman to his last days in the nation's capital, where friends touted him, by then a familiar figure in society and politics, for the presidency.

Beale traveled a long path to Washington, where he gloried at being at the

center of things. He had been the ultimate jack-of-all-trades. After serving creditably as sailor-cum-soldier in California during the Mexican War, Beale became an official courier, carrying news of the California gold discovery and the state's first constitution to the East, beginning the back-and-forth journeys that surely gave him the Guinness record (if there had been one) for the most transcontinental crossings before air service eliminated time, space and discomfort.

He returned to California where he served as the state's first Superintendent of Indian Affairs. Later, he was caught up in the vigilante turmoil in San Francisco. When Buchanan was elected President in 1856, Beale hastened to Washington, jobhunting. He had served the Democratic Party well in California, and the president-elect was a family friend.

Buchanan came through and appointed Beale to lead a survey for a military wagon road between New Mexico and California. This assignment included the famous experiment to test the usefulness of camels in the Southwest. That expedition successfully completed, Beale headed another party to improve the road from Fort Smith, Arkansas, that stretched to California by way of Albuquerque. Beale served later as Surveyor-General of California, an appointment he received from the recently-inaugurated Lincoln after switching political parties.

From the early 1860s, Beale devoted most of his time to becoming rich. He prospered from his California mining and stock-raising properties, and speculated in oil in California and salt in Mexico. At the same time, Beale became more involved in the political scene. He traveled frequently between his Rancho El Tejon in California and the East, eventually purchasing Decatur House in Washington and making it his home. He became a radical Republican and spoke out frequently for union and abolitionism. Eventually becoming a close friend of President Grant, he was named United States Ambassador to Austria-Hungary.

Following his diplomatic service, Beale returned to Washington. He had arrived, in more ways than one. He was rich and respected, he knew all the best people, and Decatur House was the center of the Washington social scene. He was mourned at his passing. And he was almost forgotten.

Now that Gerald Thompson has smartly rescued Beale from the dustbins of history, where do we put him? For what shall we remember him? His ambassadorial appointment was a political reward, not a recognition of merit. He soon resigned after the honor had been noted. He unsuccessfully sought positions: United States Marshal in California; Democratic nomination for California congressman; sheriff of San Francisco County. When he secured appointments, he habitually ignored instructions and overspent budgets. He was fired from the posts of California Superintendent of Indian Affairs and Surveyor-General of California for disobedience and incompetence. He lied

before official tribunals in order to cover questionable practices, and he used his Surveyor-General position to advance his personal fortunes.

Indeed, Beale's single-minded lifelong purpose, whatever the cost or risk, was to become a "man of rank." He eventually achieved that goal, at least according to his own definition, as much by shenanigan as solid accomplishment. At the end, he was a leader of the Washington social set and was the friend of great men. But wealth, influence, even position, are not synonymous with significance. He remains a figure on the fringe.

This is a carefully-researched work. The author has used primary and secondary materials skillfully and has written a fine biography. The maps are excellent and the illustrations well-chosen. There are occasional distracting typographical errors, five on three pages. The index is inadequate.

Thompson's *Beale* will prove a useful volume in western libraries.

Harlan Hague
San Joaquin Delta College

Inventing Billy the Kid: Visions of the Outlaw in America, 1881-1981. By Stephen Tatum. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982. 242 pp.; illustrations, bibliography, index. \$19.95)

THIS BOOK, published on the occasion of the centennial of Billy the Kid's death on July 14, 1881 at Fort Sumner, traces the changes his image has undergone during that century. Handsomely produced by the University of New Mexico Press, this book can be assured a welcome reception because the bibliography on the Kid, swelled with entries by professional as well as amateur historians, journalists, playwrights, poets, filmmakers, etc., has grown unwieldy and much of the material is not readily available.

Stephen Tatum has not written yet another history of Billy the Kid (or Henry McCarty, Austin Antrim or William H. Bonney) in the sense of Leopold von Ranke's "objective" approach to history, but he does provide a survey of the often fanciful treatment accorded to the sparse facts of a brief life. For those interested in the facts of the "historical" Kid, chapter two offers a concise introduction to the state of research into the life of this gunman, whose importance as a symbol overshadows the "factual" life of a relatively minor figure in the history of the West. The chronological journey through hundreds of mythical and fictional Kids documents an astonishing change in popular sentiment from the initial revulsion ("He was a low down vulgar cut-throat," stated *The New Southwest and Grant County Herald*, July 23, 1881) to his ultimate elevation to a status as a tragic hero, a "Southwestern Prometheus," by the mid-twentieth century.

The lure of Billy the Kid to writers is traced to "a formula combining an archetypal story pattern and specific social concerns." In other words, Billy the Kid as history and as myth deals with the relation of the American individual to society. The fact that much that has been written about the Kid is myth and not history does not detract from its importance, but rather highlights the conflict between civil and moral law. How a nineteenth-century outlaw ultimately came to represent moral law—the innate property of Western heroes—is the fascinating content of this book.

The author proceeds from the assumption "that all Westerns—and by extension all visions of the Kid—possess ideological content" and he claims that historiographic objectivity is an impossibility, for "there can be no innocent eye, ear, or language." (198, 176) Tatum lists several reasons for the impossibility of creating an ultimate and objective Billy the Kid. First: "If reality can be considered a transaction between mind, environment, and community, then the interpreter of the Kid is subservient to any data but is rather a participant in the creation of his evidence." Second: "the interpreter cannot be a mere finder, but is rather a maker who endows the perceptual field of potential 'facts' with significance." And finally: "the interpreter's narrative presentation of his facts can no longer be expected to correspond to external reality." (176) The author accepts in equal measure historical fact and myth, a step essential for the proper appreciation of the Western, lifting criticism above the level of a shouting match of what is historically true or untrue in each creative work dealing with the West. Tatum explains this process as one of placing "emphasis on a transactional interplay of mind, environment, and community [which] allows us to view myth and legend not as distortions or perversions of the truth—but rather as in fact different forms of reality and different forms of truth." (175) This study of the treatment of Billy the Kid in the past century comes to two specific conclusions, "that the elements of the Kid's life, his trial and his death, have their own kind of importance that has eluded his interpreters" and second, that "the quest for the definitive Billy the Kid is fruitless." (177)

Should these assumptions be startling to the historian, it is good to recall the title of this work and to note in particular the terms *inventing* and *visions*. If the early chapters are plentiful in the review of rare material, it is the later chapters which confront the reader with the book's real purpose, the discussion of the treatment of Billy the Kid in the works of "outlaw," underground, or Beat poets of the 1950s. This is not to say that Tatum is bad in his treatment of the Kid during earlier periods, but to emphasize that he is superb in the later period. Chapter 6, "Into the Shattered Mirror," with its discussion of the writings of Jack Spicer, Michael McClure, the Canadian poet bp Nichol, and Michael Ondaatje, alone makes the book eminently worthwhile.

Although Tatum acknowledges that "the movies did the most to establish the Kid as a figure in popular culture," he neither lists all the movies dealing

with the Kid nor does his bibliography contain even the basic secondary material on the films he discusses. In the case of the *Left-Handed Gun* there is no mention of Terry Bolas's article in *Screen* 10 (No. 1, January-February 1969) or of Bobin Wood's book on Arthur Penn, the film's director, which has a chapter on *Gun*. In the case of *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*, Doug McKinney's book on Sam Peckinpah features an excellent chapter on the film, but mention is omitted from Tatum's work. There is also no reference to the earliest Kid movies, such as the silent one-reelers *Billy the Kid* (1911) directed by Lawrence (also: Laurence) Trimble, starring Tefft Johnson in the title role (Vitagraph Studio), and *Billy the Bandit* (1916) directed by John Stepping for Universal.

Some of the parallels drawn between political events and the change of the Kid's image are debatable and unconvincing. The author states: "The 1950 Audie Murphy *The Kid from Texas* resurrected the Kid as a tragic figure whose fatal willingness to fight injustice rather than to negotiate a peace seemed more in tune with the heated up atmosphere of the Korean War years than either the arbitrate-and-wait-until-provoked attitude of Brian Donlevy's 1941 character, or the avenging protector image of the Depression-era Kid." (115) The claim of finding such ideological content in this film runs into some specific difficulties. *The Kid from Texas* is a 78 minute action film from Universal-International, a studio with no known history of reflecting actuality such as Warner Brothers had in the 1930s. Kurt Neumann, the director, specialized in low-budget entertainments such as the *Return of the Vampire*, *Tarzan and the Amazons*, and *Tarzan and the She-Devil*. Furthermore, the film was released on March 19, 1950, and the North Korean invasion did not occur until June 25; only on June 30 did Truman authorize an involvement of American air, naval and ground forces. When one considers the lengthy planning procedure of film productions, it appears plausible that this project originated in 1949. Hollywood's serious political participation in the Korean War begins with Samuel Fuller's independent production of *Steel Helmet* in October, 1950. The hero's "fatal willingness to fight" would seem to originate not with the filmmaker's ideological concerns but rather from the studio's exploitation of Audie Murphy's fame as the most decorated American soldier in World War II, appearing here in his first Western.

Such considerations should not detract from the very real merit of this scholarly work. It is an engrossing and exciting examination of turbulent and changing attitudes during a century which saw the elevation of a teen-age killer to America's immortal frontier legend. After reading Stephen Tatum's book the reader will agree with the statement by the (mythical) Kid of Michael Ondaatje: "I'll be with the world till she dies."

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Arizona—Historic Land. By Bert M. Fireman. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982. xii + 270 pp. \$16.95)

BERT FIREMAN (who died before seeing this book published) has tried to write a popular revisionist history of Arizona. Instead of possessing a romantic, exotic, adventure-filled history as characterized in most glorified frontier clichés, the region was grim and unpromising. Fireman claims Arizona was won by sweat and shovels, not vigilantes and six-guns. And the place was *hot*. Arizona, he says, was more comparable to hell than to a "land of promise."

Fireman, as do most other popular historians of Arizona, traces the state's development geologically, archaeologically, historically, and geographically. He includes biology and demographics, biography and technology. His net assessment: "A history so rich in accomplishment that it needs no fabrication or exaggeration to stir pride in every citizen." And Fireman, himself, speaks proudly and admiringly of a state where

. . . man, highest in the order of the creatures that evolved in the process of natural survival, came to Arizona, . . . did trifle with the environment, and thereupon produced an economy which now supports 2.5 million inhabitants who export the produce of their technology and tillage systems to far corners of the earth.

Throughout *Arizona—Historic Land* many such facile and simplistic statements pop up. Fireman loves people—at least he loves to write about people—but his strongly-biased comments are more gossip than biography; his characters are flat and, in some cases, incorrectly identified. Fireman is no ardent environmentalist; he praises the development of hydro-electric power, huge and "efficient" mining equipment, air conditioning and irrigation systems, "modern" manufacturing and transportation facilities.

To a substantial degree the book serves as an overview and a tourist's guide to Arizona chronology with an emphasis on technological, social, and economic evolution in a God-forsaken desert. With pardonable hyperbole, Fireman notes, "Without irrigation there would be no Arizona." Appropriately, he spends several pages recognizing the "simple bit of American ingenuity" that produced the evaporative cooler, and, eventually, air conditioning. Fireman observes, "It is this factor more than any other that has allowed Arizona to take advantage of the accelerated westward movement." Without it, he says, "Arizona still would be bypassed." (One wonders how fast the place would be vacated if someone discovered Freon to be lethal.)

While he tries to project a detached and sophisticated attitude regarding the popular notions of the American Southwest, Fireman eventually embraces the clichés. His orientation never really transcends the conventional imagery shared by history buffs, junior leaguers, television newscasters, and genteel patrons of "Southwest culture." A conspicuous absence of shrewd political insight makes Fireman appear to be a political naïf.

"History" is mostly subjective, book reviews even more so. But *Arizona—Historic Land* patently endorses values and visions that more scholarly sources have, for some time now, called into question. An affected and awkward use of the English language, numerous minor but irritating factual errors, the absence of depth and other fuller dimensions, and an almost sophomoric perspective constitute a book that gives us, ultimately, nothing but more of the same old western platitudes: rugged pioneers, bloodthirsty Indians, modern sybaritic life-styles, simple but honest frontier justice, and vital and constructive businessmen and politicians.

The book utilizes only the most available, general and out-of-date secondary sources. But Fireman never did have a love for serious scholars. He once pejoratively referred to academic historians as "slope-headed intellectuals." *Arizona—Historic Land*, however, suggests that Fireman had his own phrenological limitations. The book reflects no meaningful historiographic sensibilities, no thoughtful motifs, no useful analyses.

Recent years have produced a spate of history books on Arizona, but elementary, secondary, and college level teachers continue to complain that nothing truly useful to the classroom has yet emerged. They will find no improvement in this condition when they review *Arizona—Historic Land*.

James W. Byrkit
Northern Arizona University

New Resource Materials

Nevada Historical Society

EVERETT W. HARRIS COLLECTION

The late Dr. Everett W. Harris, who for many years was a professor of engineering at the University of Nevada, Reno, and also a recognized authority on the overland emigrant trail through Nevada, has bequeathed an extensive collection of history-related materials to the Society. Included in the donation are a large number of books, journals, pamphlets and newspaper articles pertaining to the emigrant trail, railroading, and the history of Nevada and the West. There are also maps, photographs, and Dr. Harris's manuscript notes on the history and marking of emigrant routes through Nevada. Correspondence and other records of the Nevada Emigrant Trail Marking Committee, which erected markers along the route in western Nevada and the Sierra during the 1960s and 1970s, are also included. Dr. Harris was an active member and officer of the marking committee.

The Society greatly appreciates the gift of this unique collection from a Nevadan who, during his lifetime, did so much to identify and preserve some of the most significant remnants of the state's early history.

FALLON CITIZEN FILES

John Evasovich, publisher and editor of the *Fallon Citizen*, has donated a complete file of the weekly newspaper which was issued from January, 1963, to November, 1967. Previously, only a broken run of the paper was available to the public, and this in a microfilm format. The Society extends its thanks to Mr. Evasovich, a long-time Nevada newspaperman, for this significant gift.

M. F. JUKES PHOTOGRAPHS

A collection of 47 photographs of northeastern Nevada by prominent Elko photographer M. F. Jukes was recently acquired by the Society. All dating from about 1915, the postcard prints include numerous scenes of the Elko Rodeo—horseback riding events, automobile races, a cowboy band, performing aerialists, and rodeo participants in the streets of the town. Among half a dozen scenes of Midas (Gold Circle) is one of the town's citizenry at a flag raising. These colorful photographs have been added to a larger collection of



Members of cowboy band on streets of Elko during rodeo, c. 1915. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

Jukes pictures, most of them depicting Elko in the 1920s, which the Society has held for several years.

GOLDFIELD WOMAN'S CLUB RECORDS

The year 1906 found Goldfield, Nevada, nearing the height of its glory as the state's richest mining camp and most populous city. That year also saw the founding of the community's first women's organization. Established by wives of some of the city's leading business and professional men, the Goldfield Woman's Club was both a social and a charitable association, and it assumed a place of prominence in the cultural life of Goldfield. The membership and activities of the club from 1906 to 1924 are recorded in a journal and other documents recently purchased by the Society. These records provide some interesting new information on Goldfield society during the community's early years, and thus constitute an important addition to our manuscript holdings relating to the history of the city.

Eric Moody
Curator of Manuscripts

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

EGLINGTON COLLECTION

Earl Frost Eglington and his wife Olive Lake Eglington, members of pioneer Las Vegas families, have deposited manuscripts, memorabilia, and photographs in the Special Collections Department of the Dickinson Library at UNLV since 1975. The Lake-Eglington Collection is a rich source of research materials for early southern Nevada history.

The Eglington family came to Las Vegas in the fall of 1911 and soon established the Eglington Ranch. The ranch, in the vicinity of present Decatur and Smoke Ranch Roads in Las Vegas, then was isolated and far from town. It was a showplace in its day, and in the teens the Chamber of Commerce featured its flowing artesian wells in brochures promoting the Las Vegas Valley as an agricultural center. Photos of the ranch between 1911 and 1917 are included in the collection.

Olive Lake Eglington's family arrived in the Las Vegas valley in November, 1904, and prior to the townsite auction lived in a tent at the Stewart Ranch. Among Olive Eglington's memorabilia is a series of letters to and from her mother that give insights into daily life in early Las Vegas, the chatty bits of gossip that a daughter away at school is eager to learn. There are also school and theater announcements and programs, early Chamber of Commerce brochures, postcards, clippings, and a large photo collection.

The Eglington photos depict activities of a gregarious, fun-loving family,



"My first school in Paradise." (Courtesy, Lake-Eglington Collection, University of Nevada, Las Vegas Library)

and coincidentally document aspects of early Las Vegas and southern Nevada history and people. Most recently Mrs. Eglington permitted Special Collections to copy about eighty additional photos from a family album still in her possession. Of particular interest in this latest addition to the collection are the series of photos taken at the McGriff Ranch when Olive taught in the primitive ranch school house; scenes from her father's Potosi mining operation; and athletic events connected with Las Vegas High School, including a trip by school boosters to a Goldfield ball game.

Olive Eglington has taped oral histories which are deposited in Special Collections. She continues to write letters and notes elaborating on various items in her collection, and when she visits Las Vegas from her California home she always spends time with our staff. It was a rare privilege to visit with her and her sisters Ada, Alice, and Emily and to hear them reminisce about early Las Vegas times and people.

In addition to their donations to the Library, the Eglingtons have given a collection of clothing, including Olive's wedding dress and garments handmade by her mother, to the Museum of Natural History, UNLV. Other family members, Mary E. Lake and Ada L. Bearden, contributed Indian artifacts, tools, and mineral specimens collected by Robert E. Lake to the Nevada State Museum.

Through their generous contributions to several state agencies the Lake and Eglington families have not only provided research materials for scholars and writers, but they have also memorialized their pioneer families' participation in the development of southern Nevada.

Elizabeth Patrick
Special Collections, UNLV

News and Developments

NHS Manuscript Processing Project

After three years, the ongoing manuscript processing project at the Nevada Historical Society in Reno came to an end in June, 1984, with the departure of Elizabeth Raymond. Begun in 1981, with funds from the Max C. Fleischmann Foundation, this project resulted in the organization of several major manuscript collections and the preparation of guides for two of them.

Dr. Raymond completed the index to the William M. Stewart Papers, which had been begun several years earlier. This index, with citations by both name and subject, currently fills sixteen library card-file drawers at the NHS in Reno. In 1983, as an outcome of that effort, the Society published *William M. Stewart: A Guide to His Papers at the Nevada Historical Society*.

Dr. Raymond also sorted and organized the extensive George Wingfield Papers, which remain closed to the public until 1997 by stipulation of the donor. A guide to the Wingfield Papers, which describes in detail the scope and contents of the 150-box collection, has been prepared for publication. In addition to these two major collections, other manuscript groups processed under the grant include: the Walter S. Baring Papers, the Patrick A. McCarran Papers, the records of the Works Progress Administration in Nevada, the Nevada Federation of Women's Clubs Collection, the Byrd Wall Sawyer Collection, and the manuscript file collections at the Nevada Historical Society in Reno.

Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal Index

In June, David Millman of the Nevada State Museum and Historical Society in Las Vegas completed a four-year project of indexing the *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal*. This index, which covers the years 1930 to 1947, is one of the best organized sources for researching early-day Las Vegas, and contains over 50,000 cards and approximately 200,000 entries. Las Vegas has grown dramatically in a short period of time, and its history is often difficult to trace. This index will be a valuable research tool for both the professional scholar and the interested amateur.

In 1922, Frank Garside of Tonopah bought the *Clark County Review* and changed its name to the *Las Vegas Review*. In 1929 he purchased the *Las Vegas Journal* from ex-Governor Scrugham; the two papers merged and became the *Las Vegas Evening Review-Journal*, the major southern Nevada newspaper from that date to the present.

The editors, Al E. and John F. Cahlan, were prominent citizens of Las Vegas, influential members of the Democratic party, and Chamber of Commerce officials; they were involved in almost all aspects of Las Vegas development. The *R-J* was committed to the community, and was a powerful force and opinion maker in southern Nevada politics. In Las Vegas, many projects—from sewers to streets to airports—were planned through the cooperation of the City Commission and the Chamber of Commerce. The *R-J* would then prod and inform the community through reporting and editorials in order to build a consensus of support for each enterprise.

Las Vegas was a small city for much of its existence, and the *R-J* in the 1930s was a typically small town newspaper, covering local society and business news, sports, births and deaths, and items of human interest, as well as the larger issues of the time. While there are many hundreds of subjects in the index, some of the major areas covered included Las Vegas during the Depression and World War II; the Chamber of Commerce publicity push in the post-war years; the origins of the gaming and resort industry; mining, merchants, and organizations of all types; labor activities; crime; and New Deal projects in southern Nevada.

The index is divided into subject and personal name categories, with an extensive cross-reference system to aid the researcher. The staff of the Nevada State Museum and Historical Society in Las Vegas welcome personal, mail, or telephone inquiries about any topic or person of interest that the index might cover. For those residing outside of Las Vegas, the *R-J* is available on microfilm in many areas of the state, and copies of index cards can be mailed. Also on our premises are indexes to the *Las Vegas Age* from 1905 to 1939, and the *Pioche Weekly Record* from 1872 to 1904.

NAER Industrial and Engineering Survey

In July, 1980, the NHS received a grant from the Nevada State Historic Preservation and Archaeology office to conduct a National American Engineering Record (NAER) survey of Nevada. Robert A. Nylen was selected by the Society for the project, which involved locating historic engineering and industrial sites and structures within the state, including railroad bridges, tunnels, water tanks, and stations, as well as dams, irrigation canals, pipelines, mines, mills, salt works, charcoal kilns, beer and soda bottling works, ice plants, power plants, and several other types. These sites and structures were photographed and located on USGS topographical maps. NAER cards were completed on each, and these contain valuable information, including a brief history, map coordinates, photographs, a small sketch map, and a bibliography, plus other data.

Mr. Nylen was the only researcher employed under the grant. He spent fourteen months conducting the survey in the northern half of the state,

including Washoe, Humboldt, Pershing, Lander, Elko, Eureka, White Pine, Churchill, Lyon, Mineral, and Douglas counties, and Carson City. The NAER cards on sites in these counties are located at the State Historic Preservation office in Carson City. Unfortunately, because of limited funds the project was not completed for the remainder of the state. Eight months of research in central and southern counties did result in the gathering of a considerable amount of information and photographs, and these materials are now located at the NHS office in Reno.

After an association with the Society on a number of different projects and grants for a period of seven years, Mr. Nylén became the Acquisition Registrar for the Nevada State Museum in Carson City.

Contributors

SHEILAGH BROOKS, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, received her Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of the American Board of Forensic Anthropology, and she has published a number of articles dealing with the analysis of prehistoric, historic, and recent human skeletal remains.

CAROLYN R. STARK received her M.A. in physical anthropology at UNLV, and since her graduation has been working as a deputy coroner in Reno.

RICHARD H. BROOKS received his Ph.D. from the University of Colorado, and is Research Professor of Anthropology and Principal Museum Anthropologist at UNLV. He has published several reports on the archaeology of the Great Basin and northwestern Mexico.

ROGER SMITH is a Lecturer in the English Department of the University of Nevada, Reno, and is also continuing work on his Ph.D. at Stanford University. He has been an associate editor of *Nevada* magazine. His co-authored article "Mark Twain and the Nevada Notary Stampede" appeared in the Summer, 1983 issue of the *NHS Quarterly*.

ALBIN J. COFONE is a Professor of Anthropology at Suffolk Community College, Selden, New York. He is a specialist on the Italians of Nevada. His most recent article to appear in the *NHS Quarterly* is "Reno's Little Italy," which appeared in the Summer, 1983 issue.

VERONA PASQUALE is a member of the Nevada State Museum & Historical Society Volunteer and Docent Council. Before moving to Las Vegas she worked as a television producer/director and reporter for the Atlanta PBS station, and as an assignment editor for KCST-TV in San Diego. She received her A.B. in Journalism from the University of Georgia.

CHERYL ROSE CROCKETT graduated with a B.A. in American History from Smith College; she received her law degree from Washington University in St. Louis. She and her husband recently moved to Las Vegas.

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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.