

# NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY



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# NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

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THE COVER: Fremont Street in Las Vegas during the 1940s.		

*Chronicle of a Silver Mine:  
The Meadow Valley Mining Company of  
Pioche*

MEL GORMAN

HISTORY IS FREQUENTLY UNKIND to events, people, and localities which through time have come to be regarded as less important than the biggest, or the most successful, or the most famous. This is as true in mining as in other human endeavors. Thus in the state of Nevada the popular, political, and scholarly history of mining has focused on Virginia City and the Comstock Lode of the Washoe District, complete with an avalanche of superlatives. This location was favored not only for its mineral treasure but also for its future accessibility to the permanent population and tourist centers of the twentieth century. It has developed a mystique associated with bonanza kings, a manifestation of that most cherished American dream of the hard-working poor boy making good. All of this has been nurtured by attracting modern museums, renovated buildings, a restored railroad, and a flourishing tourist industry. Unfortunately, this extensive attention to the fabulous Comstock has detracted from the importance of other mining areas which contributed their share to the development of Nevada.

Driving north on Highway 93 in Lincoln County there is a sign pointing to Pioche which says, "Most Historic Mining Center in Nevada." It takes a while to reach the center of town which is off the main road, but the evidences of past mining activities are everywhere. Yet the average traveler would be skeptical about that sign. Who were the bonanza kings? Where is the old railroad? Where are all the attractions like those of Virginia City? On the literary side, did a "Mark Twain" do any *Roughing It* here? Was there a *Big Bonanza* worthy of the pen of a "Dan De Quille"? Unfortunately Pioche has none of these, yet at one time it was second only to the Comstock in silver production. Comparatively little has been written about Pioche and it deserves more attention, just as W. Turrentine Jackson gave the White Pine District when he wrote *Treasure Hill*. It is hoped that this paper on a single mine will be a contribution to a more comprehensive history.

The discovery of silver outcroppings in the vicinity of present-day Pioche,



Francois L.A. Pioche, namesake for the southern Nevada mining town, c. 1872.  
*(Nevada Historical Society)*

Nevada, in the winter of 1863-1864 is associated with the name of William Hamblin, a Mormon missionary.<sup>1</sup> In the middle of March, 1864, a group of prospectors joined Hamblin and located claims.<sup>2</sup> On March 18, miners of the area held a meeting at Warm Spring at the head of Meadow Valley with Hamblin as chairman and Steven Sherwood as secretary for the purpose of establishing the Meadow Valley Mining District. The monument point was Warm Spring, at that time in Washington County, Utah Territory. Sixteen articles defined the boundaries of the district (sixty miles square) and the usual provisions for the dimensions of individual claims and the amount of assessment work required to keep possession. Some of the articles were

repealed at a meeting on July 15, 1865, presided over by Sherwood with G.T. Fallis as secretary. Another meeting was assembled on March 11, 1867, chaired by E. Martin Smith with J. McNeil serving as secretary, for the purpose of drafting new laws for the district. A committee of five, including Charles E. Hoffman and John H. Ely, produced a document which was adopted on March 11, 1867. A new monument point was chosen five miles east of Mountain Springs; the area extended to 100 miles square. Henceforth, the district was to be known as the Ely District. Due to a boundary change effected in 1866 it was thereafter in Lincoln County, Nevada. The extent of individual locations was changed as well as the amount of assessment work. Still another meeting of January 17, 1870, amended portions of the district laws concerned primarily with assessment work, but a significant entry showing a more formalized outlook is the appearance of the district recorder's name, S. Grieves. J.M. Murphy was chairman, and J.W. Spear was secretary.<sup>3</sup>

Notwithstanding the formation of the mining district in 1864, little development took place until the end of the decade due primarily to its remoteness, hostility of the Indians, and official Mormon opposition. But the mining frontier in Nevada was expanding inexorably as prospectors and investors looked for further opportunities. One of the latter was François L.A. Pioche.<sup>4</sup> Born in France in 1818, Pioche arrived in San Francisco in 1849 where he established a mercantile house. As a successful manager of French investments, he soon was on his way to becoming wealthy. He bought land, ranches, urban real estate and buildings, mines and mining stock, and he was soon beginning to represent investors in many European countries, building a sound reputation as a financier. At the same time he became known as a booster for San Francisco, *bon vivant*, gourmet, lavish promoter and collector of all forms of art, literature, and minerals—in general, a popular, cultured, and wealthy San Francisco millionaire. He might have become the silver king of his namesake town if he had not committed suicide in 1872, just about the time when the Ely District was reaching its peak of production.<sup>5</sup> In any event, though he never visited the area, his interest in southeastern Nevada was known by many miners. Thus when E. Martin Smith and others located claims in the present town of Pioche, on January 11, 1869,<sup>6</sup> they also laid out claims for F.L.A. Pioche and Louis Lacour,<sup>7</sup> who were not present. Moreover, they called their lode the "Pioche Ledge." The surveying of the town and the manner in which Pioche's name was chosen for it are described by Davis.<sup>8</sup> E. Martin Smith later sold his holdings to Pioche.<sup>9</sup>

Lacour and Pioche conferred in San Francisco and decided to send metallurgist Charles E. Hoffman to the claim sites. Hoffman erected a smelting works of two reverberatory furnaces, a cupelling furnace and a chloridizing furnace to work the ore obtained from a forty-five-foot shaft. Letters to the *Inland Empire* (Hamilton, NV) in the latter half of 1869 painted a favorable



Located in Lincoln County, Nevada, this picture of Pioche was taken around 1873. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

prospect for the operation,<sup>10</sup> one of them claiming the mine was worth \$3,000,000.<sup>11</sup> Three tons of ore had been sent to San Francisco for analysis by three different assayists.<sup>12</sup> The results were excellent, but unfortunately Hoffman's furnaces were not efficient enough to extract the metal at a reasonable profit.<sup>13</sup> Instead the ore was sent to Swansea, Wales, for smelting and yielded a net profit of \$600 per ton. The owners then decided to build a mill to reduce the ore by amalgamation. Eighty tons of the rich ore were used as collateral for a loan.<sup>14</sup>

Meanwhile, Pioche and his associates were busy with organizational activities. The Meadow Valley Mining Company was incorporated on May 14, 1869, in San Francisco with capital stock of \$6,000,000 divided into 60,000 shares.<sup>15</sup> Among the trustees were Lester L. Robinson and Henry A. Lyons. Pioche's name does not appear because Robinson was his agent.<sup>16</sup> In the following months a long list of San Francisco's best known capitalists, including Pioche, Lacour, Isaac Friedlander, Lloyd Tevis, Darius Mills, and William Ralston, signed over their individual mining claims to the company in

exchange for shares.<sup>17</sup> A set of by-laws was published<sup>18</sup> outlining the corporate structure. Pioche was listed as a trustee, as was Augustus J. Bowie, Jr., a mining engineer. The officers were Lyons,<sup>19</sup> president, Bowie, vice-president and T.W. Colburn, secretary. The company's banker was the Bank of California whose head office was in San Francisco.

The Meadow Valley Mining Company played an important role in developing the Ely District.<sup>20</sup> By January 1870, the tell-tale signs of an incipient rush began to appear in newspapers in the form of ecstatic praise. The *Austin Reese River Reveille* declared that "The present feature of the district is the incomparable vein belonging to Pioche and company . . . a very valuable chloride of silver," assaying \$800 per ton.<sup>21</sup> The next month in this same paper the rhapsodizing continued, declaring that this mine was the largest silver mine in the world with the advantageous characteristic of having its first class ore spread evenly throughout the vein. A peculiar feature was that the vein spread out rapidly with depth, being two feet thick at the surface and eighteen feet thick at the sixty-eight-foot level.<sup>22</sup> The *Inland Empire* declared "The Pioche Mine is the great mine of the district," employing sixty men and planning one hundred.<sup>23</sup> A letter from "J.M.M." to the editor of the *Empire* made the inevitable comparison, "The Pioche mine does now compare favorably with the Comstock in its glory. A visit to the various shafts of this incomparable mine impresses one with inexhaustible wealth." The writer supports this favorable view with some statistics: 2,000 feet in length; the vein six to twelve feet wide, with three shafts averaging fifty feet in depth. The ore averaged \$200 per ton without sorting, all of which he says makes this mine the most important in the Ely District.<sup>24</sup>

The *Territorial Enterprise* (Virginia City) began to take notice of the Ely District by declaring that the "leading mine here . . . is the famous Pioche, owned by the Meadow Valley Company." The surface ore was described as exceedingly rich. The company's mill site at Dry Valley, ten miles east of town, was graded. Machinery from San Francisco was in transit.<sup>25</sup> A few months later, after the mill was in operation, and not to be outdone in superlatives by a crosstown rival, the *White Pine News* (Hamilton, NV) claimed that Pioche's mine "is probably one of the greatest properties in America" with ore assaying from \$70 to \$400 per ton.<sup>26</sup> Of course, such blandishments were applied not only to the Meadow Valley Mine. Hulse cites similar descriptions concerning the Raymond and Ely company.<sup>27</sup> Such stories were heady fare for the volatile mining fraternity, and the rush was on. The reader of the *Inland Empire* was not too far off in comparing the Meadow Valley Mine with the Comstock. The latter easily exceeded the dollar value in silver production of all Pioche area mines combined, but in the opening two years of the decade Pioche provided more excitement and favorable opinion among prospectors, speculators and the general public. Five hundred claims had been filed by the middle of March, 1870.<sup>28</sup> By July of 1870 the population



Meadow Valley Mining Company, c. 1915. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

of the town passed the one thousand mark,<sup>29</sup> and the post office opened on August 18, 1870. Pioche was made the Lincoln County seat in 1871. In all this publicity and advancement the Meadow Valley Mining Company made a substantial contribution.

A key factor in the continued exploitation of the mine was the application of the Washoe pan amalgamation process. This method involved steam-heated mixing of the crushed ore with mercury, copper sulfate, and salt in an iron vessel (pan) and was essentially a faster, mechanized, and labor saving adaptation of the Mexican patio process.<sup>30</sup> Almarin B. Paul was mainly responsible for this improvement. He went to the Washoe District in 1859 and returned to his mill in Nevada City, California, with some sample sacks of the ore from the Mexican and Ophir mines. In short order he proved to himself the success of pan amalgamation and in 1860 returned to the Comstock to build a mill which demonstrated its practicability.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, it was not immediately and universally adopted for a variety of reasons, primarily because there were so few metallurgists in the Washoe District who understood enough chemistry to devise suitably controlled experiments according to variations in the nature of the ores.<sup>32</sup>

Among the competent pioneer mining engineers were the brothers Louis<sup>33</sup> and Henry Janin,<sup>34</sup> who had studied at the Royal Academy of Mining in Freiberg, Saxony, at that time the world's most prestigious mining school. In an extensive and systematic program of research, with emphasis on analysis and use of various proportions of copper sulfate and salt, by 1868 they produced unmistakable evidence that the Washoe pan process was effective when applied to waste materials (slimes and tailings).<sup>35</sup> In 1870 Louis and Henry were joined by their younger brother Alexis<sup>36</sup> who had just finished twelve years of education in Paris and the mining school at Freiberg. He became thoroughly familiar with the work of his brothers. Later in his career he became particularly adroit at deciding what reduction process would be most effective for a given ore.<sup>37</sup> His first opportunity in this capacity presented itself when he was engaged by the Meadow Valley Mining Company as a consultant. In February or March, 1870, he was in Hamilton, Nevada. Samples of Meadow Valley ore were sent there, and Janin proved to his satisfaction that they could be worked successfully by the Washoe process. Shortly thereafter he was appointed chief amalgamator and superintendent of the company's mill.<sup>38</sup>

The mill was fired up on July 15 and began full operations on July 18, 1870 and at once demonstrated that it could handle the ore at hand, notwithstanding the presence of a considerable amount of lead. Janin overcame this difficulty by modifying one of the last steps in the Washoe process, which consisted of separating the solid amalgam of silver and mercury from the excess of mercury by straining this mixture in a sack. But Janin knew that lead amalgam was a liquid at the temperature of boiling water, so he conducted the straining with the sacks immersed in steam heated water, and thereby removed both the unused mercury and the lead amalgam at the same time. A fortuitous circumstance provided an opportunity to highlight the importance of copper sulfate. Because of a communication failure, only a limited amount of this chemical was on hand at the opening of the mill. In the first week the yield of metal was 80 per cent: when the copper sulfate was exhausted the yield plummeted to 40 per cent, only to recover with the arrival of a supply of the chemical.

Janin left the Meadow Valley Mining Company after a year, but not before establishing mill procedures which were followed by his successors. The excellent results of careful controls of salt and copper sulfate speak for themselves, but their impact on silver mining in Nevada and elsewhere would not have been as important had it not been for Rossiter W. Raymond,<sup>39</sup> an outstanding mining engineer. A graduate of Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute with further studies at Freiberg, Raymond was previously editor of the *American Journal of Mining*, a founder and president (1872-75) of the American Institute of Mining Engineers, and secretary from 1884 to 1911. Moreover, as United States commissioner on mining statistics,

his eight volumes of reports (1869-1877)<sup>40</sup> were the most widely read and authoritative publications on all aspects of mining. For the years following Paul's development he had been following the debate concerning the suitability of pan amalgamation or the Freiberg barrel process as the superior method. By early 1870 he was getting impatient, chiding the silver mining community with the advice that this question should be settled once and for all.<sup>41</sup> Later in the year he espoused enthusiastically the work of the Janin brothers and especially the initial performance of the Meadow Valley Mill. The mill accounted for 70 per cent of the processing tonnage for the Ely District. Other mines and mills are given scant attention.<sup>42</sup> In his report for 1871, he devoted an entire chapter in advocacy of pan amalgamation with the aid of chemicals. He noted that this process is used principally in the working of Comstock slimes and tailings, and deplored the failure of quartz mills generally to utilize it. He then repeated in more detail the monthly yields of the Meadow Valley which he published in 1870, once again letting the figures prove the efficacy of Alexis Janin's practice. Although he discussed the disadvantages of this method, his message is clear—many mines could operate as profitably as the Meadow Valley by using pan amalgamation.<sup>43</sup>

In this same publication Raymond described the mining activities in the Ely District, noting that in its "astonishing success" it was second only to Washoe bullion production. He was so enamored with the Meadow Valley Mine and Mill, he reprinted a complete report by Augustus J. Bowie, Jr., the company's vice-president and a mining engineer.<sup>44</sup> Bowie was another Freiberg man, and it is interesting to note that he based his evaluation directly on his experience gained at that school, and likened the Meadow Valley Mine to a few successful mines in Europe which had the same geological characteristics. The silver occurred chiefly as silver chloride, a compound very amenable to reduction, the lead was handled easily as described above, and there was an absence of antimony or arsenic to cause difficulties encountered in other districts. Underground exploration indicated 10,000 tons of ore in sight valued at \$1,600,000. Tailings and slimes at the surface added another \$700,000 in value. The average bullion yield was \$105 per ton and the cost of extraction was \$44 during 1870 and 1871. Bowie found the condition of the mine and mill was excellent. All of these factors were very favorable, and he predicted a bright future for the mine. Raymond presented in full the Company's first biennial report ending July 31, 1871, consisting of the summaries of the secretary and superintendent.<sup>45</sup> The secretary's report revealed that for the biennial term ending July 31, 1871, the company's net profit was \$814,000. Seven assessments from 1869 to 1870 totaled \$210,000 and five dividends amounted to \$330,000. The company was off to a promising start.

Raymond, who visited the mine in August, 1872, remarked that its extent of mining ground was favorably located on the Pioche vein and that the



Pioche, Nevada, c. 1890. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

Meadow Valley was a “magnificent mine.” But its preeminence as leading producer of the district was forfeited to the Raymond and Ely Company, and the Meadow Valley had to be content with second place.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, the operation as a whole presented a progressive appearance and merited much favorable comment. Employees below and on the surface numbered 250. There were three shafts varying from 300-500 feet deep, each equipped with fine steam hoisting works. There was a tunnel with its opening near Meadow Valley Street which tapped in at the 200 foot level of one of these shafts.<sup>47</sup> Originally the mill had twenty stamps but by September, 1872, thirty stamps were pounding sixty tons of ore producing \$5,000 per day. It was judged to be the most complete mill in all of Nevada. Servicing it were blacksmith and carpenter shops, a foundry, and a brick assay building. Sometimes custom work was undertaken, but during the bonanza period Meadow Valley ore usually kept it busy enough. Characteristic of such reduction works, even a single mill could support the facilities of a small village. This one was named Lyonsville after the company’s president.<sup>48</sup> It offered a boarding house, a small residential area, two stores, and a Chinese restaurant. Morale among the miners and mill men was high, attested to by the fact that \$1500 was collected for a gift to Captain Day who was resigning from the superintendency.<sup>49</sup>

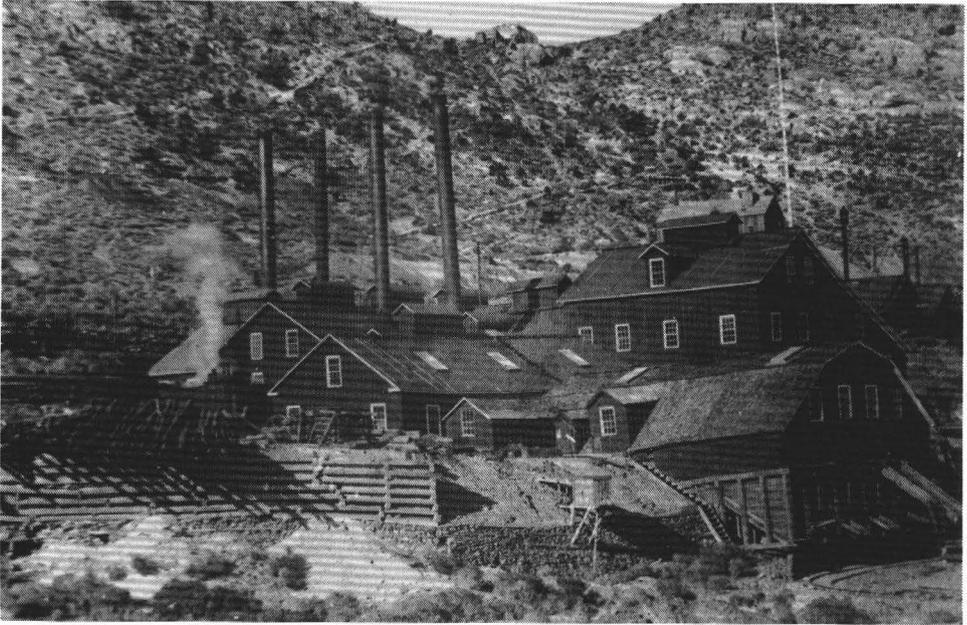
Presumably the stockholders also were satisfied because the annual report ending July 31, 1872, reported dividends totaling \$690,000 with no assessments.<sup>50</sup>

As underground exploration continued, the first glimmerings of a decline became evident with the observation that prospects at depth were not very flattering. In fact the Ely District as a whole showed in 1873 a diminution in bullion shipped of over \$1,500,000 compared to 1872. Although during the summer the Meadow Valley found \$4,000 tons of ore assaying \$300 per ton, the general outlook was not as rosy as in the previous year. Nevertheless, the annual report for fiscal 1872-1873 showed \$240,000 distributed as dividends.<sup>51</sup> As with any prominent mine, there was a price to pay for success, usually in the form of litigation by the owners of contiguous mines. In January, 1873, the Meadow Valley Mining Company was defendant in suits brought by four other companies.<sup>52</sup> The next month its safe was robbed.<sup>53</sup> But not all of the news was discouraging; the *Pioche Record* carried over forty news items, cheerfully reporting that throughout the year the company employed 200 men, extracted about 30 tons of ore per day, and had sunk all three shafts over or close to 1000 feet. The paper proclaimed that its foundry was the finest in southeast Nevada, and that the chief engineer had invented a hoisting distance indicator. When there was nothing especially interesting going on, the paper would simply write a review or another description of the mine or mill. In this way the paper fulfilled one of the missions of the typical mining town publication emphasized by James Hulse, that of expressing optimism and hope when the outlook tended to be gloomy.<sup>54</sup> But the most significant factor contributing to the ultimate demise of this and all other silver mines was not to be found in the bowels of the earth or in the pans of the mills, but rather in the world's silver exchanges where the price of the metal began to slump after 1873.<sup>55</sup> The demonetization of silver by an act of Congress which became law on February 12, 1873, did not help the situation.<sup>56</sup>

Life in general, and mining activity in particular, slowed perceptibly in Pioche as 1874 unfolded. Very little newsworthy information was forthcoming from the Meadow Valley until the beginning of May, when that nemesis of many Nevada mines, water, appeared in the deepest shaft.<sup>57</sup> The superintendent's annual report ending July 31, 1874, gave the depth at which the water level was reached as 1,314 ft. on the incline.<sup>58</sup> Since no pumping machinery was on hand, further sinking was impossible. All of the ore extracted for this fiscal year was from the higher levels. As an indication of a tightening situation, it may be noted that the company resorted to contract work with individual miners. Even though the upper levels had been worked over several times, these men and the company mutually made a profit. The miners labored at their own expense, paying the company for forty per cent of ore extracted, with the remainder to be treated at Lyonsville. Also due to lack of high grade ore, the company worked three times as much tailings as ore,

and was saving the tailings of the tailings for future reduction. The worsening situation of the mine is shown most poignantly by examining the stock prices of transactions on the San Francisco Stock Exchange Board. The highest sale registered was in January at \$15.50; after the water level was reached the stock plummeted to \$4.50 in July.<sup>59</sup> This was a long drop from its peak of \$35.00 which had been registered in April, 1870.<sup>60</sup>

The water problem appeared to bedevil the whole operation. As noted by Rossiter W. Raymond in his 1875 report, "The Meadow Valley, considering the extent and former reputation of the property, has produced an insignificant amount of bullion [and] has shown no new discoveries, though a very large amount of prospecting has been done." Inspection of Raymond's tabulations reveals that the production of ore amounted to a meager 1,256 tons worth only \$146,000.<sup>61</sup> In fact, this tonnage was too small to keep the mill at Lyonsville in operation, and the ore had to be custom processed at other mills.<sup>62</sup> The situation was critical, so the company made a bold commitment by ordering new hoisting machinery from Prescott, Scott, and Company and a pump from the Risdon Iron Works, both in San Francisco.<sup>63</sup> The equipment arrived by mid-summer 1876 and the hoisting machinery was readied for operation; however, the pump and accessories, instead of being connected, were stored in the mine where they remained idle. The company had depleted its capital in spite of assessments which had been made, and there was no cash on hand. The company proposed that all employees and merchants in Pioche accept scrip instead of cash. The editor of the *Pioche Record* exhorted his readers to show their faith in the prospects of the Meadow Valley Mining Company and accept the proposition; they responded favorably.<sup>64</sup> The mine fairly hummed with activity, but within a week, on September 28, 1876, it was shut down completely. The editor, unable to ascertain any reason for the closure, was outraged. The following day he issued a scathing denunciation of the trustees, accusing them of playing some sort of game. He claimed that they closed the mine because small stockholders refused to be frozen out, and that everybody knew the mine had a brilliant future. One unidentified trustee was accused of dominating the board and riding roughshod over the whole town as well. The editor expressed some vague collusion with the Raymond and Ely mine and ended his outburst with a statement that both mines ought to be investigated.<sup>65</sup> Although the mine remained virtually closed, there was some desultory prospecting work, and the independent contract miners were allowed to continue. Regardless of the sanguine evolution of the mine's future by the editor, the investing public registered its own opinion of the state of affairs of the Meadow Valley Mining Company on November 2, 1876, by offering on the San Francisco Stock Exchange to buy shares at four cents, down from the previous year's price of four dollars a share.<sup>66</sup> The closure had a ripple effect, because the Raymond and Ely knew that without the Meadow Valley pump, their own mine could not operate at



Raymond & Ely Mine, Pioche, Nevada. (Photograph courtesy of Lincoln County, Museum Collection)

the lowest depths. Its activities came to a standstill and Pioche went into the doldrums. As Hulse remarks, "Nothing is more damaging to a mining town than a shutdown."<sup>67</sup>

No news was available until early May, 1877, when it was announced that the pumping engine was to be put in operation. Within a month another assessment was imposed on the stockholders. The editor of the *Record*, possibly smarting under the necessity of having to reduce his paper to a weekly at the beginning of the year, expressed the hope that the Meadow Valley Mining Company would be placed under control of honest men who would work it on its merits and for the benefit of the stockholders.<sup>68</sup> The *Territorial Enterprise* was aware of Pioche's situation, but its remarks were considerably more temperate: "everyone is hoping the next election of officers will make some change for the better . . . it seems almost a pity that . . . so good a mine left unworked."<sup>69</sup> Whether or not these aspirations had any salutary effect is not known, but before the year was out the stock had risen to one dollar per share.<sup>70</sup> Operation of the mine and mill became sporadic, with an occasional flurry of excitement. For instance, during the last ten months of 1878 the value of bullion shipments was \$105,000,<sup>71</sup> a small amount compared to the high yields of peak periods, but tantalizing enough to support optimism, especially in view of a declared dividend of one dollar per share,<sup>72</sup> the first since 1873. No doubt the editor of the *Record* experi-

enced a sense of vindication for his firm convictions about the value of the property. In any event, a very favorable report of the activities of the mine and mill appeared in his paper.<sup>73</sup> Unfortunately, the good ore became exhausted, and at the beginning of 1879 all miners were removed from the payroll and offered the option of independent contracting. Some accepted, but the production of silver became miniscule. The local editor finally succumbed to despondency, writing that there was little hope that the Meadow Valley Mining Company would ever start up its pumping machinery.<sup>74</sup>

The new decade marked the beginning of the final disintegration of the Meadow Valley Mining Company. Even the trustees gave up and tried to sell the company in the spring of 1880.<sup>75</sup> But with deteriorating shafts due to age and fire, and little if any ore in sight, it is not surprising that a buyer could not be found. In March, 1881, its stock was removed from the San Francisco Stock Exchange. Legal actions came one after another: mechanics liens, attachments, a suit by the state for unpaid taxes, sheriff's sale, and marshall's sale. Naturally, the production under such conditions was pitifully small. In 1883 the year's yield was only \$6,100.<sup>76</sup> The address of the main office was no longer listed in the San Francisco city directory after April, 1885, having appeared therein since 1871. Finally in April, 1884, the mine was sold to Joseph Eisenmann and the mill and 640 acre mill site to W.E. Griffin.<sup>77</sup> Eisenmann was a dealer in hardware and mining supplies in Pioche and owned a ranch in the Pahranaagat Valley; Griffin was a Pioche banker.

With this transaction the Meadow Valley Mining Company for all practical purposes ceased to exist. But the mine itself was not totally exhausted and it is interesting to follow its story a little further. Two years later the new owners decided to sell the company and therefore had the property surveyed by the U.S. Surveyor-General of Nevada on April 6, 1886. The result was a large map (11 × 16 inches) which is the best available visual representation of the claim. The property occupies a surface area of 8.27 acres, approximately rectangular, 1800 feet long and 200 feet wide, the length being oriented east-west. The discovery monument is about 250 ft. from the east end. Each of the three shafts is accurately shown, and the outlines of each head frame and hoisting works are sketched in.<sup>78</sup> Other maps may be consulted to locate the mine within the rest of the town of Pioche; the map and sketch reproduced in *Paher* are especially helpful.<sup>79</sup> Then on May 17, 1886, the partners sold their property to William S. Godbe for one hundred dollars.<sup>80</sup> In turn Godbe, on June 24, 1886, sold the property to the Pioche Consolidated Mining Company,<sup>81</sup> which he was organizing by purchasing the Raymond and Ely holdings and others.<sup>82</sup>

The advent of Godbe to the Pioche scene was significant from a number of viewpoints. First of all, the activities of his consolidated works alleviated for the local area some of the adverse effects of the statewide depression which

had begun in the eighties. From the standpoint of entrepreneurship, the center of finance and management shifted from San Francisco to Salt Lake City. Godbe was a Mormon who defied Brigham Young by advocating the development of a mining industry in Utah. He was excommunicated, ruined financially, and ostracized socially, forcing him to leave Salt Lake around 1870. He entered the mining field, investing in and managing mining properties,<sup>83</sup> and eventually returned to Salt Lake. Six years before acquiring the Meadow Valley, Godbe had purchased some of its tailings at Lyonsville.<sup>84</sup> His object was to experiment with the Russell leaching (lixiviation) process.<sup>85</sup> This marked a technological turning point away from the pan amalgamation process and proved successful. After consolidation, he erected leaching facilities at Pioche.<sup>86</sup> The Meadow Valley property is mentioned sporadically in the *Record* for about ten years longer, mostly sad news of cave-ins, collapsings, dismantling of surface buildings, and an occasional rehabilitation.<sup>87</sup> Judging from company records, the Pioche Consolidated Mining Company ceased activities in late 1894.<sup>88</sup> The last mention in the local paper was in 1904, stating that mining engineer George Maynard was inspecting the Meadow Valley and other mines.<sup>89</sup> This timing fits in symbolically with the demise of the original Meadow Valley Mining Company. Its legal existence did not stop with its sale to Eisenmann and Griffin, although it became an entity without assets. But finally it died at the hands of the State of California when its corporate charter was revoked for non-payment of a renewal fee, and now carries the stamp, "Forfeited, December 14, 1905."<sup>90</sup>

Central though the technological and financial aspects may be to a mining community, its history is not complete without some knowledge of the impact the industry had on its society; however, the transient nature of a mining camp is not conducive to the production of extensive historical records of ordinary people. This is particularly true when it comes to learning about the effect of an individual mine on daily lives. Fortunately Pioche has an excellent chronicle in the example of a resident of whom Hulse states, "No man tells us more of early Pioche than Franklin Buck."<sup>91</sup> Buck arrived in Pioche in early 1870, and started a business that included ranching. He recorded his experiences in letters to his sister.<sup>92</sup> Of greatest interest to this article is the fact that in 1872 he owned 100 shares of the Meadow Valley, paying him \$100 a month. The company was earning a profit of \$60,000 a month. A typical mining camp citizen, his spirits ebbed and flowed with the fortunes of the mines. After the water level was reached, his business suffered a loss of \$2,000 in the first five months of 1874. Two years later, when the immense Meadow Valley pump arrived, he had "no doubt a Bonanza equal to the Comstock will be found." But he was deflated again when the company stopped installation. When the prospect of resuming erection appeared in February of 1878 his doubt disappeared. "We believe firmly that they have only to pump out the water and sink deeper to find a bonanza equal to the Comstock." But it never

happened. By July, he informed his sister that the town had "completely gone in. Petered out. Everybody is leaving who can." Franklin Buck could, and did on March 22, 1879. He never mentioned how much money he lost on the Meadow Valley Mining Company stock.

Aside from Buck's fine contribution, there is only scattered mention of the Meadow Valley by individuals. Edward Howe was a mining engineer who spent the winter of 1872-1873 in Pioche looking for a job. In addition to his description of the Meadow Valley Mill (ref. 38), he throws light on the practice of brokers and others who paid miners and office workers for "inside" information. He relates that the superintendent of the Meadow Valley, George Maynard, found that people on the street knew more about the mine than the head office in San Francisco. He discovered who the paid informers were and fired them. Apparently Howe did not regard the company very highly, for in a letter on January 10, 1873, he informed his correspondent that the Meadow Valley Mining Company declared a dividend of one dollar a share, "but why nobody knows."<sup>93</sup> Joseph Poujade, a prominent businessman and investor of Pioche, provided some notes on politics and mining for Hubert H. Bancroft's historical enterprise. Poujade judged that the Meadow Valley Mining Company suffered from mismanagement.<sup>94</sup> According to a letter from M.G. Gillette to George Roberts in 1871, the mine was doing splendidly and never looked better.<sup>95</sup>

Aside from the local scene, the Meadow Valley Mining Company had an impact in the broader world which is not generally appreciated. For instance, Samuel Davis in his well-known history states specifically that this mine was "as famous in the mining world as the Bonanza Mines at Virginia City."<sup>96</sup> An incident which occurred in the summer of 1872 concerning the very problem which confronted Maynard was pointed out by Rossiter W. Raymond as indicative of the sensitivity of the San Francisco stock market to news about the Meadow Valley. When a rich looking body of ore was discovered, and before it could be evaluated, spies secretly informed their employers in San Francisco. This produced a wave of buying which increased the value of the mine close to a million dollars.<sup>97</sup>

In spite of accusations of mismanagement in its latter years, the Meadow Valley Mining Company was a positive factor in the development of the silver mining industry in Nevada. Locally, it contributed to the opening of southeastern Nevada by providing jobs for miners and supporting occupations such as teamsters, woodcutters, and ranchers in and around Pioche. It provided a training ground for superintendents, millmen, and engineers, especially such Freiberg men as Alexis Janin, Augustus J. Bowie, and G.F. Williams. These men were typical of an elite band of foreign educated metallurgists and engineers responsible for the transference of German mining expertise to the Far West. The problems they encountered and solved in the operation of the Meadow Valley Mine increased their expertise which they carried with them

when they moved on to other states and countries.<sup>98</sup> From the financial point of view the Meadow Valley Mining Company registered some significant achievements; its gross yield was \$5,769,000.<sup>99</sup> In a list of mines in Lincoln County, including modern mines as late as 1958 and other metals, it ranks number eight from the top in production value.<sup>100</sup> Finally, in the comparison of dividends and assessments, most silver mining companies were no bargain. For instance, Charles Shinn notes, "Out of 103 Washoe mines listed only six ever paid more money in dividends than they leveled in assessments."<sup>101</sup> But for the Meadow Valley the opposite was the case, and by a good margin. As of April 1880, assessments amounted to \$510,000, whereas dividends disbursed reached \$1,260,000.<sup>102</sup> Very few silver mines could match this performance of dividends over assessments.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> For some doubts about the exact date of discovery see John M. Townley, *Conquered Provinces: Nevada Moves Southeast, 1867-1871* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1973), 5-6 and John M. Bourne, "Early Mining in Southwestern Utah and Southeastern Nevada, 1867-1873: The Meadow Valley, Pahrangat, and Pioche Mining Rushes" (M.A. Thesis, University of Utah, Salt Lake, 1973), 21.

<sup>2</sup> For additional details of the opening of the region to mining, the following may be found in Myron Angel, ed., *Reproduction of Thompson and West's History of Nevada, 1881* (Berkeley: Howell-North, 1958), 476-492; Samuel Post Davis, ed., *The History of Nevada*, 2 vols. (Reno: The Elms Publishing Co., 1923), 927-949; Russell R. Elliott, *History of Nevada* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1973), 107-10; Charles Gracey, "Early Days in Lincoln County," *First Biennial Report of the Nevada Historical Society: 1907-1908* (Carson City: State Printing Office, 1909), 103-114; James W. Hulse, *Lincoln County, Nevada, 1864-1909: History of a Mining Region* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1971), 5-31; hereafter referred to as *Lincoln County*. James W. Hulse, *The Nevada Adventure: A History*, 3rd ed. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1972), 134, 144-148; Francis C. Lincoln, *Mining Districts and Mineral Resources of Nevada* (Reno: Nevada Newsletter Publishing Company, 1923), 124-126; Lloyd K. Long, "Nevada and Early Mining Developments in Eastern Nevada" (M.A. Thesis, University of Nevada, Reno 1975), 5, 15, 58-61, 67-71; Rodman W. Paul, *Mining Frontiers of the Far West, 1884-1880* (San Francisco: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), 105-106; Ralph J. Roske and Marta Plaszo, *An Overview of the History of Lincoln County*, 2 vols. (Las Vegas: Bureau of Land Management, 1978), vol. 1: 4, 11-17; Lewis G. Westgate and Adolph Knopf, "Geology and Ore Deposits of the Pioche District, Nevada," *U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper*, no. 171 (Washington: GPO, 1932), 4-6; George M. Wheeler, *Preliminary Report Concerning Explorations and Surveys Principally in Nevada and Arizona* (Washington: GPO, 1872), 42-43; Writers Program of the Works Progress Administration in the State of Nevada, *Nevada: A Guide to the Silver State* (Portland: Binford and Mort, 1957), 173-175. For a historiographical discussion of some of the above, as well as additional titles, see James T. Stensvaag, "Seeking the Impossible: The State Histories of New Mexico, Arizona, and Nevada—An Assessment," *Pacific Historical Review* 50 (1981): 518-24.

<sup>3</sup> This sequence of events is described in a ten page pamphlet in the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, entitled *Laws of the Ely Mining District, Lincoln County, Nevada* (Hamilton, Nev.: White Pine Daily News Print, 1870). A.F. White states that the reorganization of the district when its name was changed took place on March 10, 1869, which is two years later than the correct date. See his *Third Biennial Report of the State Mineralogist*, p. 101, separately paginated in an "Appendix to the Proceedings of the Senate," *Journal of the Senate during the Fifth Session* (Carson City: State Printing Office, 1871). Townley, *Conquered Provinces*, 37, used White as a source.

<sup>4</sup> Townley, *Conquered Provinces*, 35-41.

<sup>5</sup> *San Francisco Bulletin*, 2 May 1872: 2 and 4 May 1872: 3; *Territorial Enterprise*, 3 May 1872: 2; 5 May 1872: 2; Anon, "François Louis Alfred Pioche," *California Mail Bag* 2 (May 1872): i-viii; David G. Dalin

and Charles A. Fraccia, "Forgotten Financier: François L. A. Pioche," *California Historical Quarterly* 53 (1974): 17-24; Julia Altrocchi, *The Spectacular San Franciscans* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1949), 155, 163-4; Philip S. Rush, "The Strange Story of F. L. A. Pioche," *The Southern California Rancher* (December 1950): 12-15. The Ely District is mentioned very briefly or not at all in these sources.

<sup>6</sup> Long, "Mining Developments," 58-9.

<sup>7</sup> Lacour was a friend and countryman of Pioche. He was among those who laid out the town, and his name was given to one of the principal streets. He died on May 25, 1873, in San Rafael, California; *San Francisco Alta*, 5 May 1873: 1; 28 May 1873: 2.

<sup>8</sup> Davis, *History of Nevada* 2: 930. Hulse, *Lincoln County*, 11, disputes the timing in Davis's account.

<sup>9</sup> Gracey, "Early Days," 106.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in *Mining and Scientific Press* 19 (July 1869): 23; and (6 November 1869): 295.

<sup>11</sup> *Inland Empire*, 15 Dec. 1869: 2.

<sup>12</sup> *Mining and Scientific Press* 19 (November 1869): 309.

<sup>13</sup> The failure of smelting was due to the small content of lead minerals in the ore; see S. F. Shaw, "Notes on the Pioche Mining District," *Engineer Mining Journal* 88 (1909): 548.

<sup>14</sup> *Pioche Record*, 30 May 1885: 3.

<sup>15</sup> Archives, State of California, Sacramento.

<sup>16</sup> *Alta California*, 23 June 1873: 1.

<sup>17</sup> *Lincoln County Mining Deeds*, Book A, Recorder's Office, Pioche, Nevada, 506-9, 525-27, 561-73.

<sup>18</sup> "By Laws of the Meadow Valley Mining Company," (San Francisco: Womens Union Print, 1870), in Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

<sup>19</sup> Edward J. Johnson, "Henry A. Lyons," *Journal of the State Bar of California* (July-August 1946): 305-6. Lyons (1809-1872) was a member of the California State Supreme Court from 1849 to 1852. After that he devoted all of his time to business interests.

<sup>20</sup> For a concise overview of the period 1870-1876 see Hulse, *Lincoln County*, 21-22, 31-33.

<sup>21</sup> *Reese River Reveille*, 26 January 1870: 2.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 February 1870: 2.

<sup>23</sup> *Inland Empire*, 9 February 1870: 3.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 February 1870: 2.

<sup>25</sup> *Territorial Enterprise*, 8 April 1870, quoting an undated dispatch of the *White Pine News*.

<sup>26</sup> *White Pine News*, 28 July 1870: 2.

<sup>27</sup> Hulse, *Lincoln County*, 21.

<sup>28</sup> *Territorial Enterprise*, 23 March 1870: 1.

<sup>29</sup> Hulse, *Lincoln County*, 22.

<sup>30</sup> An excellent treatment with many illustrations is given by Ernest Oberbillig, "The Development of the Washoe and Reese River Silver Processes," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* 10 (1967): 5-43. A contemporary description is given by J. A. Adams, "Treatment of Gold and Silver Ores, by Wet Crushing and Pan Amalgamation, without Roasting," *Transactions of the American Institute of Mining Engineers* 2 (1873): 159-71. See also Rodman Paul, *Mining Frontiers of the Far West, 1848-1880* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), 64-7.

<sup>31</sup> First hand accounts of Paul's contributions are his *Reminiscences, 1878-83*, MS 3010, California Historical Society, 213-227 and *Writings of Almarin B. Paul*, second unpaginated sheet, recto, and p. 77. The latter is a scrapbook of mostly unidentified newspaper clippings by and about Paul from 1850 to 1893 in the Huntington Library, San Marino, California. See also Eliot Lord, *Comstock Mining and Miners* (Berkeley: North-Howell, 1959), 84-88 and Grant H. Smith, "The History of the Comstock Lode, 1850-1920," *University of Nevada Bulletin* 37 (July 1943): 41-45.

<sup>32</sup> Almon Hodges, Jr., "Amalgamation at the Comstock Lode," *Transactions of the American Institute of Mining Engineers* 19 (1891): 204.

<sup>33</sup> *Directory of American Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), 9: 608-9; *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (Chicago: James T. White & Company, 1922), 18: 11-12; *Mining and Scientific Press* 108 (March 1914): 440; *Engineering and Mining Journal* 97 (March 1914): 632; Rossiter W. Raymond, "Biographical Notice of Louis Janin," *Transactions of the American Institute of Mining Engineers* 49 (1915): 831-37.

<sup>34</sup> Rossiter W. Raymond, "Biographical Notice of Henry Janin," *Bulletin of the American Institute of Mining Engineers* 53 (May 1911): xxviii-xxxvi.

<sup>35</sup> Almon Hodges, Jr., "Amalgamation" 211-3 and *Mining and Scientific Press* 100 (May 1910): 757-8;

Charles Shinn, *The Story of the Mine* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1896), 88; James D. Hague, "Treatment of the Comstock Ores" in Clarence King, *United States Geological Exploration of the 40th Parallel*, 7 vols. (Washington: GPO, 1870), 3: 254-55; Louis Janin to Louis A. Janin, Virginia City, Nevada, 5 July 1862; Empire City, Nevada, 29 March 1863, Janin Family Collection, Box 21, Huntington Library.

<sup>36</sup> Alexis to Juliet Janin, Pioche, 19 March 1872, Janin Family Collection, Box 19, Huntington Library.

<sup>37</sup> *San Francisco Call*, 14 January 1897: 14.

<sup>38</sup> Rossiter W. Raymond, *Statistics of Mines and Mining in the States and Territories West of the Rocky Mountains*, 8 vols. (Washington: GPO, 1869-1877), 3: 164-65 (hereafter referred to as *Statistics*). Raymond enumerates the number and specifications of the machinery. Additional details are provided by the *White Pine News*, 19 July 1870: 2. A mining engineer, Edward R. Howe, educated at Freiberg and L'Ecole des Mines was favorably impressed after visiting the mill in operation. He stated that "It is the most complete mill I have yet seen, and it is very successful in its workings, bringing out higher percentages than other mills about here;" Howe to Dr. John Hastings, Pioche, 29 November 1872, in letter press book, p. 84, Howe papers, Bancroft Library.

<sup>39</sup> *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), 15: 414-15.

<sup>40</sup> See footnote 38.

<sup>41</sup> Raymond, *Statistics* 2: 126.

<sup>42</sup> Raymond, *Statistics* 3: 165-68, 401.

<sup>43</sup> Raymond, *Statistics* 4: 427-33.

<sup>44</sup> Augustus J. Bowie, Jr., *Report on the Meadow Valley Mine* (San Francisco: Cosmopolitan Printing Company, 1871). Copies of this report are in the Western America Collection, Yale Library, and the Library of Congress. A reprint is in Raymond, *Statistics* 4: 224-229. For some of Bowie's other mining activities see Mel Gorman, "Augustus J. Bowie, Jr., Nineteenth Century Gold Mining Engineer," *Proceedings International Symposium on the History of Mining and Metallurgy, Freiberg, East Germany*, 1 (September 1978): 67-72 and "Financial and Technological Entrepreneurs in the Black Hills: The San Francisco-De Smet Connection," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 45 (1982): 137-54.

<sup>45</sup> Alexis Janin resigned from the Meadow Valley Mining Company in the spring of 1871. Charles Forman is listed as superintendent in this report. Copies of this report are in the Hamilton Smith Collection, University of New Hampshire Library, Nevada Historical Society, Reno, and the California Historical Society, San Francisco; reprinted in Raymond, *Statistics* 4: 229-41.

<sup>46</sup> Raymond, *Statistics* 5: 176-83. A monthly tabulation (p. 177) from August 1871 to July 1872 reveals that the total Meadow Valley production was \$1,628,000 and that of the Raymond and Ely was \$2,972,000. But the former shows a steady decline and the latter an increase per month.

<sup>47</sup> *Mining and Scientific Press* 25 (September 1872): 146.

<sup>48</sup> Lyonsville does not appear on many maps, but it is on the back cover insert of George M. Wheeler, *Preliminary Report Concerning Explorations and Surveys Principally in Nevada and Arizona* (Washington: GPO, 1872). However, the locations of Lyonsville and Bullionville are mistakenly interchanged.

<sup>49</sup> *Pioche Record*, 8 September 1872: 3; 15 September 1872: 3; *Pioche Record*, 28 February 1873: 3; 9 December 1873: 3. For the founding and name change of this paper see, John Folkes, "Three Nevada Newspapers: A Century in Print," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* 13, no. 3 (1970): 22.

<sup>50</sup> Copies of this annual report are in the Nevada Historical Society, Reno, and the California Historical Society.

<sup>51</sup> Raymond, *Statistics* 6: 233-36, summarizes the annual report and notes the decline in the Ely District generally.

<sup>52</sup> *Pioche Record*, 12 January 1873: 2.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 February 1873: 3.

<sup>54</sup> Hulse, *Lincoln County*, 2.

<sup>55</sup> Hulse, *Nevada Adventure*, 165.

<sup>56</sup> Elliott, *History of Nevada*, 177-79; Allen Weinstein, "Was There a 'Crime of 1873'? The Case of the Demonetized Dollar," *Journal of American History* 54 (1967-68): 307-26.

<sup>57</sup> *Pioche Record*, 10 May 1874: 3.

<sup>58</sup> The complete superintendent's report and a summary of the secretary's financial report are given by Raymond, *Statistics*, 7: 284-90. A copy of the entire report is in the Nevada State Historical Society, Reno.

<sup>59</sup> *San Francisco Daily Stock Report*, 12 December 1874, quoted in Rossiter W. Raymond, *idem*, 498-502.

<sup>60</sup> *San Francisco Daily Stock Report*, quoted in Raymond, *Statistics*, 3: 109.

- <sup>61</sup> Raymond, *Statistics* 8: 137, 142, 195-6.
- <sup>62</sup> *Pioche Record*, 13 June 1875: 3, and 5 September 1875: 3.
- <sup>63</sup> *Annual Report of the Meadow Valley Mining Company for the Fiscal Year Ending July 31, 1876* (San Francisco: Cosmopolitan Printing House, 1876), 8-9. A copy is in the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.
- <sup>64</sup> *Pioche Record*, 21 September 1876: 3.
- <sup>65</sup> *Pioche Record*, 29 September 1876: 3.
- <sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 November 1876: 3, quoting the *San Francisco Daily Stock Report*, 2 November 1876.
- <sup>67</sup> Hulse, *Lincoln County*, 32.
- <sup>68</sup> *Pioche Record*, 17 July 1877: 3.
- <sup>69</sup> *Territorial Enterprise*, 17 August 1877: 1.
- <sup>70</sup> *Pioche Record*, 1 September 1877: 3.
- <sup>71</sup> Meadow Valley Mining Company bullion book (unpaginated) in the Lincoln County Museum, Pioche.
- <sup>72</sup> *Mining Record* (New York) 7 (April 1880): 383.
- <sup>73</sup> *Pioche Record*, 22 June 1878: 3.
- <sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 July 1879: 3.
- <sup>75</sup> For a concise summary of the decline of the whole Ely District see Hulse, *Lincoln County*, 40-43.
- <sup>76</sup> *Report of the Director of the Mint Upon the Production of Precious Metals in the United States* (Washington: GPO, 1884), 536.
- <sup>77</sup> *Pioche Record*, 5 April 1884: 3. I was unable to locate the official record of this transaction. On October 14, 1884, Eisenmann sold for \$2,500 a one-half undivided interest in the mine to Griffin. Included was the discovery claim and claims 1-8 which were recorded by Lacour and others: see *Lincoln County Mining Deeds*, Book O, 399-401.
- <sup>78</sup> U.S. Bureau of Land Management *Mineral Survey*, Survey No. 40, Office No. 1386, Reno, Nevada, 1886. The survey was under the direction of Rufus S. Clapp; see also *Mineral Survey Field Notes*, Bureau of Land Management, 444.
- <sup>79</sup> Stanley W. Paher, *Nevada Ghost Towns & Mining Towns* (San Diego: Howell-North Books, 1970), 290; see also John M. Townley, *Conquered Provinces*, 39 and George M. Wheeler, *Report upon Geographical and Geological Explorations and Surveys West of the One Hundredth Meridian*, 7 vols. (Washington: GPO, 1875-1889), 3: 258. See also Charles A. Sumner, *A Trip to Pioche* (San Francisco: Bacon and Co., 1873), 1-13.
- <sup>80</sup> *Lincoln County Mining Deeds*, Book O, 499-501.
- <sup>81</sup> *Idem*, 502-3.
- <sup>82</sup> *Salt Lake Tribune*, 26 June 1884; *Pioche Record*, 3 July 1886: 3.
- <sup>83</sup> William Samuel Godbe, *Statement* (September 2, 1884): 1-9. This is a thirty page handwritten document in the Bancroft Library. It is valuable from the standpoint of social history because of the unusual circumstance that a church member suffered during the Mormon-Gentile conflict over the spreading of the mining frontier. Most accounts focus on the disadvantages of Mormon policy on Gentile mining. The last two-thirds of the paper deal with Mormonism in general and polygamy in particular.
- <sup>84</sup> *Pioche Record*, 14 August 1880: 3.
- <sup>85</sup> Ellsworth Daggett, "The Russell Process in Its Practical Application and Economic Results," *Transactions of the American Institute Mining Engineers* 16 (1887-88): 362-95. The leaching agent used was sodium hyposulfite (modern name, sodium thiosulfite, used today in processing photographic film). With the aid of other chemicals, it extracted silver by converting the ore to silver sulfide. The latter then could be reduced by smelting.
- <sup>86</sup> An unidentified newspaper clipping, hand dated July 1887, in Nevada Bureau of Mines, mentions screenings from the number 3 shaft of the Meadow Valley.
- <sup>87</sup> For example, the *Pioche Record*, 23 June 1892, describes the reopening of the number 3 shaft, with fifteen men working a strike assaying 400-500 ounces of silver per ton. It is interesting to note in the Pioche Consolidated Mining & R[education] Company's invoice book two items for expenses for the Meadow Valley number 3, 1 July 1892, pp. 85 and 94. The latter is from Eisenmann's supply house. This book is in the County Clerk Records, Lincoln County Court House, Pioche.
- <sup>88</sup> There are two invoice books, one in the County Clerk Records, and the other in the Lincoln County Museum, Pioche. The former's first entry is 1 May 1886 and the latter's last entry is 19 September 1894.
- <sup>89</sup> *Lincoln County Record*, 20 May 1904: 4. See also Hulse, *Lincoln County*, 50.

<sup>90</sup> *Pioche Record*, 30 May 1885: 3.

<sup>91</sup> Hulse, *Lincoln County*, 36.

<sup>92</sup> Franklin A. Buck and Katherine A. White, comps. *A Yankee Traveler in the Gold Rush* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1930). The Meadow Valley Mine appears on pp. 232, 241, 246-7, 261-2, and 266.

<sup>93</sup> Howe to Hastings, Pioche, 29 November 1872, Howe Papers, Bancroft Library.

<sup>94</sup> Poujade Papers, 1887, Bancroft Library.

<sup>95</sup> M. G. Gillette to George Roberts, 21, 26 November 1871, George Roberts Papers, Bancroft Library.

<sup>96</sup> Davis, *History of Nevada* 2: 931.

<sup>97</sup> Raymond, *Statistics* 5: 179.

<sup>98</sup> The role of German trained mining engineers in the development of American mining has received scant attention from historians of technology. For one example see Mel Gorman, "Deutscher Einfluss auf den Bergbau Amerikas: Augustus J. Bowies Verbindung zu Freiberg," *Der Anschnitt* 33 (1981): 7-16.

<sup>99</sup> B.F. Couch and J.A. Carpenter, "Nevada's Metal and Mineral Production (1859-1904)," *Nevada University Bulletin* 37, no. 4 (1943): 88.

<sup>100</sup> C.M. Tschanz and E.H. Pampeyan, "Geology and Mineral Deposits of Lincoln County, Nevada," *Nevada Bureau of Mines Bulletin* 73 (1970): 115.

<sup>101</sup> Charles H. Shinn, "Nevada Silver," *Popular Science Monthly* 49 (October 1896): 747.

<sup>102</sup> *Mining Record (New York)* 7 (April 1880): 383.

# *Tasker Oddie in Belmont*

EVELYNE WASH-PICKETT

AT THE HEAD OF RALSTON VALLEY, a sandy, gravelly, stony desert with little vegetation except gray-green sagebrush, the ghost town of Belmont spreads itself among the dwarfed pinion and juniper on the slopes of the Toquima Range in Nye County, Nevada. This little village, located almost in the center of the state, is one of a host of other towns which were established after the Comstock rush in the 1860s by argonauts in quest of precious metals. The first gold in this area was discovered by an Indian in 1865; by October other locations were made and a ten-stamp mill was erected. The Philadelphia Mining District was organized, and the ore, located in quartz veins found between slate and porphyry was worked by milling and roasting. Abundant spring water and available wood made Belmont an attractive mining center, and by 1867 an orderly town of shops and stores was laid out. At the height of prosperity the ore yielded \$1,000 per ton, and the deep Belmont shaft penetrated to a depth of five hundred feet.<sup>1</sup> The mines and mills were worked by Irish, Cornish and Germans who chose to live apart from each other in different sections of town.<sup>2</sup>

In 1867 the Nye County seat was moved from Ione to Belmont, and the town became an important center for trade.<sup>3</sup> The town declined in 1868 and 1869, and flourished again in 1873-74, at which time the population reached its peak of 1,500. However, by the time the majestic courthouse was built from brick in nearby kilns in 1874, at a cost of \$34,000, the little hamlet had already begun its downhill slide.<sup>4</sup> In 1898 it was a sleepy village which awakened twice a year during "court days."<sup>5</sup> Historical references to Belmont are not as voluminous as those of Virginia City, or other boomtowns of the West. When mention is made of this area, focus is centered on its early beginnings, with little reference made to Belmont's declining years. This article presents a detailed view of Belmont at the turn of the century through the eyes of an Easterner.

It was to this high desert county seat that Tasker L. Oddie, a tall, balding, twenty-eight-year-old New York attorney, came on September 23, 1898. He was employed by the Nevada Company, a western interest of the Anson Phelps Stokes family and was rooming at the rectory in Austin, sixty miles northwest of Belmont. He was paymaster of the Nevada Central Railroad and a member of the Board of Trustees of the State Bank of Nevada.<sup>6</sup> This young



Tasker L. Oddie, a New York lawyer who came to Belmont in 1898. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

man figured prominently in Nevada politics. He served as governor from January 2, 1911, to January 2, 1915, and was identified with the Progressive Party.<sup>7</sup> He was elected to two terms in Congress as senator from Nevada

(1921-1933), and was a conservative defender of the state's interests, especially in the Boulder Dam Project.<sup>8</sup>

When Oddie moved west he wrote many letters to his mother, to whom he was devoted. He filled each one with colorful descriptions of his new life in Nevada. This source was not available until 1982 when the family donated the letters to the Nevada Historical Society. These letters reveal new facts about Oddie which were only speculated upon before. They are filled with significant references to the Tonopah Boom, but since that aspect merits its own story, only Oddie's life in Belmont is recounted here. The letters reveal a side of Oddie heretofore unseen, and give insight into the mind of a man who cared a great deal for friends and family. He became awestruck with the stark beauty of central Nevada, and was taken with its inhabitants. Armed with a sense of humor, he approached both with trust and innocence. This wide-eyed innocence could possibly have been a catalyst that created problems later in his life with regard to business affairs.

Although there are many letters in this collection, information for this article was gleaned from his correspondence dating February 2, 1898, to February 19, 1901. This self-assured young man had a fine command of vocabulary, and therefore an attempt has been made to utilize his "turn of a phrase" wherever possible in order to convey Oddie's moods and feelings, and to bring the reader closer to the young Nevada newcomer and his relationship to the old Nevada town.

On September 21, 1898, Tasker L. Oddie traveled on horseback toward Belmont, taking as baggage a pair of socks, a toothbrush, a handkerchief, and a sweet smile on his face. The purpose of this journey was to examine some court records for The Nevada Company, and to look at prospective mining claims. The trip introduced this New Yorker to a new way of life. Oddie traveled into Smoky Valley, which afforded a spectacular view of the Toiyabe and Toquima Ranges. This valley is from eight to twelve miles wide, and Oddie counted thirteen ranches in seventy miles. The trail then wound up Jefferson Pass to a point 11,500 feet, just a mile south of Jefferson Mountain. When he descended the narrow canyon into Monitor Valley, he had to dodge bushes, as the trail cut through them like a tunnel. The panorama was very beautiful to this "dude," as he called himself at first, and he viewed it as a grand magnificence.<sup>9</sup>

Oddie was charmed with his first sight of the mining town, sitting right in a pocket of the mountains and shut in on all sides but the South. At this time there were only about one hundred people left in Belmont, and these comprised county officers and tradespeople who served the ranches in the surrounding area. The town had no railroad or telegraph, but the stage brought mail three times a week from Austin, the nearest railhead. There was another stage which came once a week from Sodaville, a station to the southwest on the Carson and Colorado Railroad. It was difficult for Oddie to



From left, Tasker Oddie, J.H. Jenkins, and Mr. & Mrs. Jim Butler in Tonopah. Note the original monument below the arrow, c. 1901. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

realize that there were indeed people here who had never seen a railroad train. He stayed at the boarding house owned by the elderly Mrs. Leon, whose husband had made big money years before in mining. They had packed up and traveled all over the world and like many miners, they lost everything so she opened a boarding house in Belmont. At supper the first night Oddie sat next to a prisoner whom the Sheriff had brought over from the court house, and the County Commissioner waited on the table.<sup>10</sup>

Oddie was delighted to meet many of the locals, particularly Wilson Brougner, the County Recorder and Auditor, whom he entered into business with at a later date.<sup>11</sup> With much candor he related meeting other folks also:

“I was invited to the house of the judge last night. I was there to hear some music. I had never met His Honor’s daughter, so was surprised to find that she was a half-breed as her mother was an Indian squaw. She played and sang for us, but I have heard better music, I *think*. I know I have heard worse. Of course, it is important for us to keep on the right side of the officials so I made myself as agreeable as possible. I met some very pleasant men there, men who would not shine in eastern society, but who have very fine traits of character . . . and I enjoyed listening to them greatly . . . There are some wild Irishmen in this country.”<sup>12</sup>

On his way back to Austin, winding through the golden canyons of aspen and cottonwood, Oddie was excited at seeing wildcat tracks for the first time.

He watched a swift-footed muledeer and glimpsed an elusive pronghorn antelope. He shot at a badger and a coyote, but his hunting acuity had not yet reached its potential, so he missed them both.<sup>13</sup>

In January, 1899, when Oddie was embroiled in litigation while functioning as an investigator, informer, and attorney for The Nevada Company, he made a return trip to Belmont, this time with interests in mining.<sup>14</sup> Oddie's letters reveal that he plunged into prospecting and mining with an intense interest, and that as early as February, 1899, he made a contract with Walter Gayhart, whom he calls a geologist, and an old prospector named Mr. McNeil, and began ordering equipment. On February 22 he asked Fred Siebert to join the business, and by March 9, 1899, they had established a company and elected officers with Oddie as president. From this point on his letters are full of excitement about his mining interests, and on April 6, 1899, he wrote to his mother on his own letterhead, "The Pacific Mining and Development Company." He directed his maximum efforts toward mining from that time on, and though he wandered east, north and south of Austin making locations, Oddie centered most of his efforts on the Belmont area.<sup>15</sup>

Clearly his interests were directed more toward scrambling up and down hills than tending to the mundane legalities of The Nevada Company, and he complained about the Stokes:

"I don't say that the Stokes do not appreciate what I have done for them because they do, but they don't show it in a way that other people would, so I am very anxious to be in an independent position."<sup>16</sup>

Oddie told Stokes that he wanted to enter mining rather than continue working for the Nevada Company. His employer agreed, advanced him a year's salary, and gave him permission to use his own time as he wished.<sup>17</sup>

Oddie was ecstatic. He had been studying geology, and had moved to Belmont permanently in August. Oddie went there full of hope, as he had the greatest faith in a quick-silver mine which he had laid claim to just a few miles northeast in a wild part of the mountains. He was delighted with this claim, but became frustrated when he had to draw up some papers for himself which he thought the town lawyer should have done.<sup>18</sup> This man, Granger, was often indisposed, and Oddie spoke of him in no uncertain terms:

"He is an old scamp and is always drunk, especially if he has anything to do. He would not last a minute in a town of any size, but he has been here for years and manages to pick up money now and then to buy whisky with. He never gets away because he is always drunk . . . as in all mining towns, there are some very interesting characters."<sup>19</sup>

By September of 1899 Oddie was staying up in the mountains most of the time, living as other prospectors and miners.<sup>20</sup> It is easy to assume that



This 1901 photo of Kendall and Carey's Saloon in Tonopah was at one time the Tonopah Club. Wilson and H.C. "Cal" Brougner are sitting in left foreground. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

Tasker Oddie was a genteel New Yorker who dabbled for a time in working at mining, but his letters indicate serious interest and hard work.

Oddie took pride in being able to do as much work as any regular miner. When the weather was good it was a glorious life, and he loved to lie awake on his pallet on the ground and look up at the stars. On those rare occasions when he had to go into Belmont he found he disliked sleeping in a room and longed to be out of doors where he could sleep like a top. As the bleak and cold winter advanced he still slept out, and the snow formed a white night-cap on his bald pate. It took a bit of skill to make a fire when the snow was constantly drifting, and he admitted that cooking out of doors was difficult. He dug his own tunnel into the mountain, and carried timber that weighed over two hundred pounds on his shoulders up the side of the mountain in order to jack up the oft-occurring cave-ins. He boasted of wielding a four-pound hammer, and of being able to determine the amount of powder necessary for blasting by studying the formation of the rocks. It was very hard work, but he considered it fascinating.<sup>21</sup> He cautiously revealed an altruistic nature, coupled with a gambling streak:

"When one is working for himself, with good prospects ahead, he is almost always expecting to strike it rich. It is somewhat of a gamble, but it is a clean business. When a man makes money at it, he is benefiting the community and himself and hurting

nobody. It is not like so many other lines of business where one will succeed at the expense of someone else. A man must take chances if he wants to succeed.”<sup>22</sup>

Oddie’s biggest problems at the mine were with Jane and Jim. These jackasses had been long-time residents of Belmont, and Oddie saw their potential in hauling wood and equipment to and from his mine. Jim, for the most part, was very cooperative, and would sit down on his haunches and slide down steep places; Jane was a different story. As soon as she was loaded she would fall down the side of the mountain all rolled up like a porcupine. Oddie would reload her and lead her a few steps, and then she would repeat the process. One day she did this so many times it was too dark to load her up again. The next morning when she resumed her shenanigans Oddie administered the soft end of a rope with a knot in it, accompanied by a swift kick or two, and then she led all right for awhile. Oddie would laugh at himself when he rode the jackasses because, since he was tall, his feet would touch the ground. He considered Jim and Jane not only partners, but aggravationists as well.<sup>23</sup>

“If the devil ever selected a living thing to embody, all the amazing qualities to poor suffering humanity, such as mischievousness, meanness, etc., I think he picked out old Jane. She is so old and cunning that she will not carry anything of a load without laying down and rolling it off. She has such an innocent, sorrowful expression on her devilish little face too. When you put the empty pack saddle on her she starts to groan in such a pitiful way . . . It sounds something like a Scotch bagpipe and a swarm of bumble-bees going together with a coffee grinder for an accompaniment. She will keep that tune up for as long as she thinks she is working. It is almost impossible to keep her moving at all [sic] if she has even a light load on, but just let her see your attention turned to something else . . . and away she will go as if she were on wheels.”<sup>24</sup>

Jim and Jane liked to amuse themselves by getting into the bags of rice or giant powder, and then shaking them like a pup with a shoe. Oddie could not separate them because they would both cry violently and loudly. The Arizona nightingales did give him a certain notoriety; the residents of Belmont got quite a kick out of this city-slicker struggling with the jackasses.<sup>25</sup>

“When I got into town tonight Jane and Jim began to howl in their usual musical cadence, and immediately everybody in town said, “There comes Oddie.”<sup>26</sup>

The description of his problems with the jackasses reveals an attractive sense of humor.

As the snow grew deeper, the trail to the mine high in the Toquimas became impassable, and Oddie moved into Belmont. He collaborated with Wilson Brougher, and they purchased the old Pete Bartulli house, a stone and brick one-story building which had been built during the “good times” at a cost of at least \$1,000. They purchased the Courthouse Mine, so the novice



The Belmont Mill around 1900. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

miner did not rest long upon his laurels, but began working at this location in town. Living in town was a different situation. Oddie started eating at the boarding house again, and found it queer to be sitting at a table and using crocker ware after his sojourn in the mountains. Meals were fifty cents apiece, and his bed for the night was fifty cents also. Even though he now had his own house, it was some time before he could get a springbed moved from Austin, so he took advantage of Mrs. Leon's hospitality. He was the only boarder for the most part, except when strangers came into town, especially during court term twice a year.<sup>27</sup>

At that time Judge Fitzgerald would come from Eureka, and Belmont would be active for a few days. Every room in town was engaged ahead, and families would double up in order to rent their rooms and pick up some extra money. When court term was not going on there was an old judge in Belmont who would handle local cases, but Oddie did not have much respect for him or for the expertise of the District Attorney.<sup>28</sup> This office was an elective position and did not require a legal education. It had gone from bad to worse, and by the time Oddie arrived in town, the job had passed from Andy

Johnson, a muleskinner, to Jim Butler, a rancher in Monitor Valley and a part-time prospector.<sup>29</sup> Oddie often acted as defending attorney against Jim Butler, who was prosecuting.<sup>30</sup> Oddie was quite put out with frontier law, and was very outspoken about this type of justice:

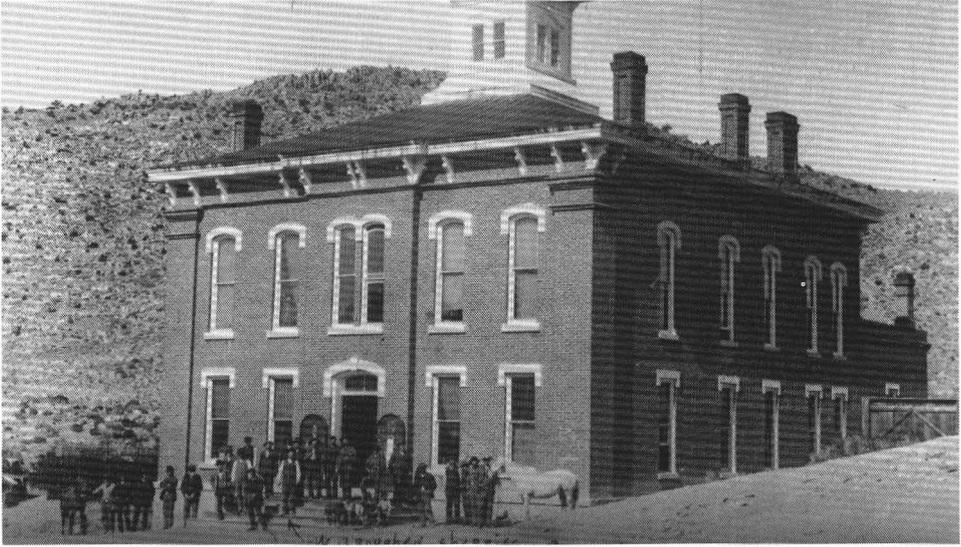
“Butler is an ignoramus (about law). The trial was very amusing as old “Stein” the judge knows absolutely nothing. Old Stein is the man who is taken home on the two-wheeled truck when he gets too drunk to walk with his own leg. I believe the wooden one will work all right whether he is drunk or not. He knows nothing about keeping order. He did refuse to allow the contesting party to get a bottle of whisky while in court though.”<sup>31</sup>

The evenings in Belmont were quite pleasant. The young and old alike would meet together at various homes to sing and talk. A very light side of Oddie is revealed when he speaks of singing funny songs and playing the guitar for these get-togethers. His friend Siebert would play the mandolin with him, and these were happy times. Occasionally there would be social dances, and there were no social castes at these—everyone would dance with everyone else. This would have been quite surprising to Oddie who had been raised in a social caste situation back east. His very favorite shindig was the “masque ball,” at which time his neighbor, Mrs. Hollie, dressed him up in ruffled pantalettes and a dress.<sup>32</sup>

“I had a petticoat on and fixed it so I could untie it, which I did before the evening was over, so it came down. As soon as it did I commenced to scream and yell and kick. I made for the saloon which was at one end of the hall . . . yelling all the time and out into the street. Everybody nearly died laughing at me. Very few knew who I was.”<sup>33</sup>

This type of masquerade was popular at that time, and it helped to lighten long, hard days of work. The women and children would help prepare the costumes for the masque balls.<sup>34</sup> Sometimes it is easy to forget that prominent people were involved in everyday activities and enjoyed laughing and singing like everyone else. Many times they are enthroned on a pedestal of somberness. Oddie was no exception, but these letters show he brought joy and laughter to a lot of people.

The town saloon was the gathering place for everyone in Belmont. In the evening Oddie would change from his checkered flannel shirt to a blue one, though still wearing his overalls, brogans and wide-brimmed hat, and go to the saloon for a chat or to watch a game of dice. Paper money was not used there, and everything was paid for in gold and silver coin. Sometimes a stranger would raise the roof, and occasionally even a local such as the judge, when he would have to be taken home in the wheelbarrow (those times when his wooden leg was sturdier than his real one).<sup>35</sup> Oddie noted that there was not as much brawling and drunkenness in Belmont as there had been in Austin:



The Belmont Courthouse, c. 1880s. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

“Austin is as wild and tough a place as can be found in this western country . . . these miners are a hard lot. When they get their pay they drink and gamble it all away, and then pack themselves to some other camp to begin again in the same way. They have a bundle of possessions that they carry on their backs . . . they go on foot and live on the country as they can . . . the trouble is they get drinking and fight among themselves.”<sup>36</sup>

He did indicate that Belmont could be as rowdy as Austin when the Indians caused a fracas because they could get pretty bad when they had some whisky in them.<sup>37</sup> Oddie was adamant in his opinions of the native Americans, but his attitude was no different than that of most white men who came to Nevada:

“They are a mean, treacherous race, and the people in this country despise them although they have them do different kinds of work for them. The Indians do not know what gratitude is and are never so happy as when they can cut someone up. They are only kept from doing this by fear.”<sup>38</sup>

This quotation is included to point out that Oddie was a man of his times. The earliest English-speaking visitors regarded Indians as little better than animals and treated them as such.<sup>39</sup> Oddie’s attitude was that they were untrustworthy and a threat to life. This ethnocentricity emerged in strength when he was governor, not only towards Indians, but any “non-English-speaking” people. It emerged in his attitude toward Greek strikers at McGill when he called these people “wild” and declared martial law in 1912 when he was governor. Indeed, one of the platforms for his 1920 senatorial campaign

was based on Great Basin provincialism and directed at the "Yellow Peril." While in Congress he worked for enactment of a protective tariff, opposition to the League of Nations, and upheld American intervention in Haiti, all based on his socially acceptable racist demogogy.<sup>40</sup> Oddie did have an Indian who worked for him at the Courthouse Mine in Belmont, but this gesture appears to have been based on the circumstance of the day rather than concern.<sup>41</sup>

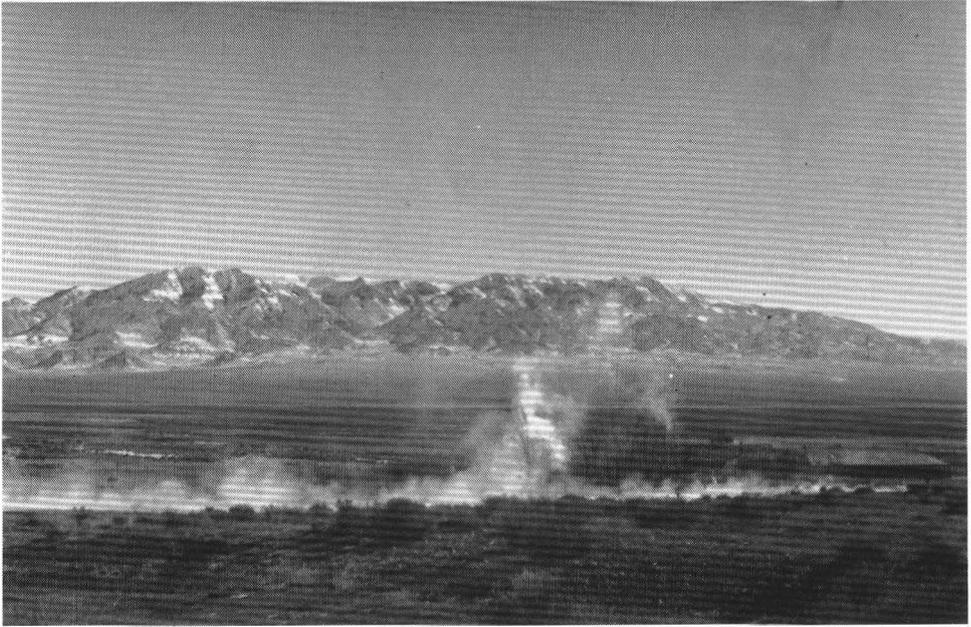
There was one old Indian, Aleck, whom Oddie talked about often. This fellow wore goggles, moccasins, and carried his possessions with him wherever he went, including his bow and arrow, his gun, and an old broadcloth frockcoat. Aleck appeared to be deaf if you talked to him about work, but if you mentioned grub, Oddie claimed he could hear this for a mile.<sup>42</sup>

"A few weeks ago he (Aleck) was sent down to South Klondike with a letter. He took the whole outfit along with him although he came right back again. When he returned he had a letter for five different people in town and he took them around and ate a big breakfast at five different houses. Different ones were joking him about it afterwards. He said, "Charley Anderson say me eat five breakfast one morning. He heap ishern (lie)." He would eat all he could hold and tie the rest up in a rag and hang it on a fence while he would go to another house and say "heap hungry" and gorge himself some more. He begs like this: "You gottem little piece of flour, sugar, bacon, pants, shirt, etc., etc." and last fall Old Aleck bothered my men up at the mine so much that they were on the point of giving him some grub with a strong dose of medicine (physic) in it, but he left just in time to save himself."<sup>43</sup>

Oddie stated that the Indians were very superstitious about shooting mountain lions and coyotes because they thought that Indians turn into these animals when they die; however, they would shoot deer for meat.<sup>44</sup>

Funerals were a great event in Belmont. The coffin was carried to the graveyard from town in a wooden wagon drawn by a team of mules. There was no such thing as a hearse or closed carriage in Belmont at this time. Some people had buckboards or open buggies for light roads, but mostly the wagons were built strong for the mountain roads. There was a Catholic church and an Episcopal church, both small frame chapels, but there were no ministers as it was hard to raise money to support this cause; therefore, no services were held.<sup>45</sup> In 1908 St. Patrick's Mission, the Catholic church, was moved to Manhattan because of the lack of parishioners. It is still perched on the side of a steep slope, and there are still no regular services held there.<sup>46</sup>

Oddie really enjoyed visiting the surrounding ranches, both in Smoky Valley and in Monitor Valley. When he rode to his claims he usually carried sardines, crackers, and a flask of whisky, but whenever he had to ride to Austin from Belmont he did not have to carry provisions because the ranchers were so hospitable. Many would insist that he stop and spend a day or two with them, or at least eat a meal and socialize for a while. Even a fresh horse was offered if needed.<sup>47</sup>



Smoky Valley was an area frequently traveled by Tasker Oddie. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

The ranchers often had parties, and in 1900 a big Fourth of July celebration was held at the Roger's Ranch in Smoky Valley. People from all over attended and had a great time. On his way there Oddie stopped at Moore's Creek Ranch, located in a canyon sprinkled with delicate blue lupine and Indian paintbrush at the foot of Mount Jefferson.

"This is a beautiful spot. The house is right in a bunch of trees and a fine stream of water runs close to it. There are some birds in the trees around the house. The mountains rise up very abruptly a few miles from the house and are very high and grand. There is a lot of meadowland near the house, and fine gardens, so it is an attractive place. Johnny Moore used to be very poor. He leased a mine east of here with another man without getting a dollar. He was about to give it up when his wife persuaded him to try it another week which he did. In that week he struck a rich ore body and he and his partner cleared \$30,000 apiece out of it. He then bought the ranch and a lot of cattle and today is comfortably well off. He has about six or seven children."<sup>48</sup>

Another ranch which Oddie enjoyed visiting was in Monitor Valley. This large spread was owned by a Scotsman named Potts. He was a rough old fellow who liked to read and enjoyed getting into an argument with anyone who would take him on. The Potts's had a piano, and encouraged Oddie to sing comic songs. Potts was a sheepman and would take his sheep south in the

winter, though he summered them east of his ranch. He seldom had trouble with the cattlemen because he respected their rights, unlike most of the other sheepmen in the area.<sup>49</sup>

Ranching did have its hazards and Oddie wrote sadly about a terrible incident that happened to some of his friends. Mr. Compton had gone to Belmont to vote, a two-day journey from his ranch; while he was gone the place caught fire. Mrs. Compton was burned, evidently while trying to save the harness from the stable, and then the hogs ate up most of the body that was left. At another ranch two Indian boys ambushed John Rainall, and he took some buckshot in his lung. This ranch was so far out that it was two weeks before the sheriff was notified.<sup>50</sup>

Oddie dearly loved Monitor Valley, and later bought six ranches in the area that became his pride and joy. He lost them by 1907 through reckless speculation in mining and lack of caution,<sup>51</sup> but in the early days at the turn of the century this valley brought him much happiness. Oddie particularly enjoyed visiting the Devil's Punch Bowl, which was about five miles from Potts's Ranch.<sup>52</sup> This geological phenomena was described in Thompson and West as being located almost in the center of Nevada.

"This remarkable feature of nature is known as the Devil's Punch Bowl. It consists of a butete in the form of an inverted wash-bowl . . . the bottom is a seething cauldron of boiling water of unfathomable depth which is incessantly foaming out and exhaling hot vapors and steam."<sup>53</sup>

#### Oddie's description:

"It is a wonderful curiosity and would be of world wide fame if it were near a railroad or civilization. It is an unassuming hill or mound about 100 feet high and about 300 feet across. It is limework, and has little holes on the side from which hot water runs. When you get to the top you suddenly find yourself on the rim of an immense well about eighty feet in diameter. The walls are perpendicular and about thirty feet down from the rim is the water which is about boiling temperature . . . At one time a squaw was holding an Indian's feet while he got some eggs from a bird's nest below the rim. She went to take the eggs and let go of the Indian and he went down and never came up. A short time afterwards his hair was found in a hot spring some distance below Potts's house. The Punch Bowl is certainly a great curiosity, and is very inspiring. Some people cannot look down in it as it frightens them. I mean some women."<sup>54</sup>

This unusual formation is now known as "Diana's Punch Bowl," both locally as well as officially, but all of the older references to it indicate "Devil's Punch Bowl." It is accessible by car either north from Belmont or south from Route 50 down Monitor Valley. There is a sign, but when viewed from the road only appears as a hillock. The blue water in the bowl is awesome compared to the serenity of the surrounding country. One should be careful not to get into the hot water which flows from the base of the hill as there are tiny insects which



Belmont, Nevada, c. 1902. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

bore into human skin, an unpleasant episode experienced by this writer. Oddie did not mention this, but perhaps he was wise enough not to wade in the water flowing at the base of the hill.

Another geological formation about ten miles to the southwest is Northumberland Cave. Oddie visited the cave on August 30, 1900, and noted that the entrance was bad because he had to crawl and wiggle for some distance (through rat droppings) in order to enter the cave. However, it was worth the struggle because of the beautiful needlelike crystal formations that were on the walls.<sup>55</sup> This cave is located high up on the side of Northumberland Canyon. Today, it is scarcely visible from the dirt road which runs by it. It is necessary to climb a steep talus to reach the entrance. The first chamber is of fair size, but most of the "cave rock" in this outer chamber has been broken off by vandals. As in Oddie's time, the entrance to the rest of the cavern is a narrow, long tunnel about fifteen feet in length. This tunnel opens into several small chambers where there are beautiful needle-like formations on the walls, and the true spelunker can enjoy this cave and yet not disturb its beauty.

Oddie liked the cow camps where he could find the company of cowboys. He was surprised to discover that despite their rough and tough way of life, at times they could be quite gentlemanly.

“When the rodeo outfit was southeast of here two squaws came by the camp from the south. One of the boys (cowboys) whom I know well frightened their horses in some way, and one of the squaws fell off and broke her arm. The thing was an unfortunate accident as the boys were all fooling together, but this one boy seemed to be at fault . . . The squaw came to town and two of the men tried to set her arm. It was not set right and was mortifying so this young fellow got on a horse and started for Austin for a doctor. He left here Friday morning and had the doctor here Saturday afternoon on the stage, a distance there and back of nearly 190 miles. The doctor found the arm in a bad state, but thinks he can set it. The other Indians are a good deal excited over it. It is hard to keep some of them away from here. They are superstitious and believe in howling all night to drive away the bad spirit. They use crazy things too. They will sometimes cut a hole in the arm or leg and put in a dead snake, lizard or something of that sort. Of course, it causes blood poisoning and the patient usually dies.<sup>56</sup>

The cow camps had beef every day, so Oddie particularly enjoyed visiting them. His diet in Belmont was less sophisticated than it had been back east. He would boil a pot of brown beans on Sunday to stretch through the week as they seemed to give him more strength than any other food. He also ate potatoes, canned corn, peas and tomatoes but he had to use condensed milk as there was no fresh milk in town. He liked canned jams and jellies, and Mrs. Hollis, a neighbor, would satisfy this sweet tooth occasionally by baking mince pies for the single men in town.<sup>57</sup>

There was often trouble between the cattlemen and the sheepmen over range rights. The cattlemen did not want the sheepmen on their range. The sheepmen, at times driving over one hundred thousand head, needed to obtain water for their flocks when they were headed south. The cattlemen complained that the sheep tramped out the feed that the cattle needed, and sometimes resorted to even poisoning the water at the springs. Oddie stated that the sheep were closely herded by “Dagoes and Chinamen” in order to keep the coyotes from making short work of them. He made no mention of the Basques. In the wintertime there was so much snow in the mountains that all herdsmen would drive their animals south to eat the white sage. Extreme caution was taken in the south country due to the frequency of cattle thieves marauding the herd and then driving them to Arizona; no cattleman ever took his herd south alone.<sup>58</sup>

The curse of the whole country seemed to be the wild horses. They ate the cattle feed and were almost impossible to kill. The cattlemen delighted in shooting them by the hundreds, and if there were no cattle around they would poison the springs where they drank. Oddie shot one down because he believed the cattle were having a hard time with his competition.<sup>59</sup> One time Oddie’s mule ran off with a band of mustangs, so he helped two cowboys and two Indians who were trying to round up mustangs to sell for cavalry purposes:

“We started several hundred head down the valley, but most of them got away. We were going to corral them at Pine Creek (in Monitor Valley) about twenty miles

down. It takes regular maneuvering to corral these wild mustangs. Men have to be stationed at different points on both sides of the valley with fresh horses, and when the band gets near one of them he turns them back towards the other side of the valley where it takes hard and fast moving to head them. I ran my horse, Joe, about twenty miles hard but without much success as the men got scattered and I did not have anyone to help me when I needed someone . . . . These wild mustangs are terrors to run and are wilder than deer. They are not large, but have wonderful endurance so are in demand now by the distant governments for cavalry purposes. The German government is buying horses in the vicinity of Austin now."<sup>60</sup>

In a letter dated May 29, 1900, Oddie mentions for the first time taking a trip to an area south of Belmont (that later became the Tonopah camp) to prospect. By September 4, 1900, he had made a deal with Jim Butler in regard to a one-third partnership on Butler's claim in return for getting samples assayed. Oddie sent these samples to his friend, Gayhard, offering him half-interest of his share.<sup>61</sup> He made another trip to that area in October, 1900, and was very excited about this new country and its prospects:

"I am satisfied that our trip will result favorably as the new prospects look very encouraging from surface indication. The new camp is called "Tonopah," an Indian name for the spring two or three miles from there. It has been called by this name by the Indians for generations. It means "greasewood water," "tona" being the name for greasewood and "pah," or "pa" for water. Greasewood is a kind of brush something like sagebrush that grows near springs . . . the whole country around these mines for miles are porphyry of various colors . . . and the yellow porphyry is a fine indicator for gold."<sup>62</sup>

From this point on his letters are full of reference to Tonopah and offer new insight to a much-researched subject.

Early 1900 was a difficult year for Oddie. He had no money coming in and was forced to borrow. He contacted J.A. Yerington, of the Carson and Colorado Railroad and tried to interest him in buying the mines around Belmont. He also asked his former employer for money:

"Mr. Stokes (damn him) did not care to (loan money that is) because the man named A.E. Luck has told him lies about me. I hope to see him in the gutter someday. I will be in a shape to tell Mr. Stokes what is what someday."<sup>63</sup>

By May of 1900 Oddie had substituted for both Wilson Brougner and Jim Butler in their respective offices of County Recorder and District Attorney, developing political connections. He had the full support of the people in Belmont and Monitor Valley, and by September decided to run for the office of District Attorney of Nye County. He believed that no competent man had held the office for a number of years.<sup>64</sup> Indeed, the office of District Attorney had become a joke when an old muleskinner with a stringy handlebar moustache and a penchant for going unbathed, unbrushed and uncombed was elected to the position in 1894. He thought he was set for a lifetime tenure in

this position which yielded \$50.00 a month, and was upset when Jim Butler won the election against him in 1896. He was beside himself and refused to relinquish his office for nine days by locking the doors, opening them only to proven friends who brought food and liquid fortifications. He finally surrendered the office to Jim Butler and moved back to his ranch on Mosquito Creek in Monitor Valley. Butler, who was also a rancher and a part-time prospector, at least had the reputation of bathing occasionally, and the fact that he was married added to his popularity in winning the election.<sup>65</sup> Needless to say, the residents of Belmont were happy to have a man of Oddie's education and background in their midst. He had served as a deputy for Jim Butler a couple of times and believed he would have very little to do, except twice a year when court met, so this would enable him to continue his mining. The Office of County Superintendent of Schools went with this position, and he particularly believed that he would be able to fill the office of School Superintendent well. The children in the county had little opportunity for learning, and before he was elected he promised that he would visit all the schools in the county at least twice a year. The superintendent would also be Chairman of the Examining Committee for applicants for teachers' certificates. The law required that there should be five children in a district to enable it to have a school, so there was often squabbling among the different trustees of the districts. Since there was very little money allotted for education in the county, the districts could only afford to hire a teacher a few months during the year.<sup>66</sup>

In November the election was held in Belmont. There were only about two hundred fifty voters in the county, and Oddie ran with no opposition. However, there was quite an uproar when the lawyer, Granger, registered several Indians to vote. Oddie drew up a petition to the Judges of Election who enforced a prohibition, but several men in town had been quite upset.<sup>67</sup> Aside from that incident, he was pleased with the election and danced all night at the Candidate's Ball.

By January 14, 1901, Oddie was ensconced in his office in the courthouse, located in the southeast corner on the second floor with large windows. He was working hard to get things running smoothly so he could spend most of his time at the Tonopah claim. He was staying in Tonopah most of the time, and only had to meet with the County Commissioners the first Monday of every month. His happiness in office was soon tainted with some disagreeable duties in connection with school matters. He had to take schools away from several districts since they did not contain the five children the law required in order to entitle them to school monies. These children lived many miles from another school house, but he believed that he had to enforce the laws as they were. There were 212 school children in an area of 17,000 square miles.<sup>68</sup>

Tasker Oddie, who had come to Belmont seeking his fortune, believed that he was now a better man.

"I don't suppose there are any of my old girls who would have me now as I am no more a gilded frivolous dude, but a rough mountaineer with hard, rough hands and tanned face, but if my suppositions are true they would show very poor taste because in my opinion I am worth a good many city chaps now."<sup>69</sup>

The Tonopah camp mushroomed into one of the best camps in Nevada, and it also greatly improved Oddie's financial status. By February 7, 1905, he was instrumental in getting the county seat moved from Belmont to Tonopah. Oddie then made a step first to the Nevada Legislature, then to the governorship of the state, and finally to Washington, D.C. as congressmen.<sup>70</sup>

The town of Belmont, which had been so instrumental in teaching a city man the ways of the west, struggled to maintain its position as a town. There was a slight surge in mining during the early twentieth century, but this did not prevent its decline.<sup>71</sup> It stood as a ghost town for many years and for a while only one lady, Rose Walters, was adventuresome enough to stay there alone. Gradually, people began seeking out Belmont because of its grand sense of history. In the last decade the town has experienced growth. There are seventeen families who have moved into town (forty-three people) and though most of them come in only on weekends, or for summer residence, they all share an interest in maintaining the historical integrity of the area.<sup>72</sup> They do not seem to mind that there are no electric or phone lines to this remote area. A few of the old houses have been restored, and they stand proudly among weathered ruins.

Today the brick and stone ruins of Belmont still cluster around the stately old court house, as if waiting for a loving hand to bring back the old days when a young man from New York started his Nevada career there.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Myron Angel, ed., *Reproduction of Thompson and West's History of the State of Nevada* (1881; reprint New York: Arno Press, 1973), 519-520.

<sup>2</sup> Andy Eason, interview with author, Belmont, Nevada, 9 August 1985.

<sup>3</sup> Angel, *History of Nevada*, 615.

<sup>4</sup> Angel, *History of Nevada*, 520.

<sup>5</sup> Tasker Oddie to his mother, 20 February 1900, Tasker L. Oddie Papers, Nevada Historical Society, Reno: hereafter cited as the *Oddie Letters*.

<sup>6</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 10 February 1898; 27 February 1898; 20 September 1898; 25 September 1898; Tasker Oddie to Lester Carlisle, Jr., 22 November 1898.

<sup>7</sup> Loren Briggs Chan, *Sagebrush Statesman: Tasker L. Oddie of Nevada* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1973).

<sup>8</sup> James Hulse, *The Nevada Adventure* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1969), 182, 242.

<sup>9</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 12 September 1898; 28 September 1898; 17 August 1899; 22 January 1899; 28 September 1900.

<sup>10</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 28 September 1898; 19 December 1899; 13 February 1900.

<sup>11</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 28 September 1898.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 12 January 1899; 19 January 1899; 17 August 1899.

- <sup>15</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 12 February 1899; 14 February 1899; 22 February 1899; 2 March 1899; 9 March 1899; 6 April 1899; 11 May 1899.
- <sup>16</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 27 July 1899.
- <sup>17</sup> Chan, *Sagebrush Statesman*, 20.
- <sup>18</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 17 August 1899.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>20</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 18 September 1899.
- <sup>21</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 11 June 1900; 18 June 1900; 20 November 1899; 29 September 1899; 18 September 1899.
- <sup>22</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 1 January 1900.
- <sup>23</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 26 October 1899; 11 June 1900.
- <sup>24</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 20 November 1899.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>27</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 28 October 1899; 10 October 1899; 19 December 1899; 4 June 1900.
- <sup>28</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 20 February 1900.
- <sup>29</sup> Nell Murbarger, *The Ghosts of the Glory Trail* (Los Angeles: Westernlore Press, 1956), 47.
- <sup>30</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 20 February 1900.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>32</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 19 December 1899; 26 December 1899; 1 January 1900; 6 March 1900; 20 March 1900.
- <sup>33</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 20 March 1900.
- <sup>34</sup> Scottie Lathrem, interview with author, October, 1983.
- <sup>35</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 19 December 1899; 13 February 1900; 16 January 1900.
- <sup>36</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 26 June 1898.
- <sup>37</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 8 October 1899.
- <sup>38</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 19 December 1899.
- <sup>39</sup> Hulse, *Nevada Adventure*, 15-16.
- <sup>40</sup> Chan, *Sagebrush Statesman*, 97-98, 105.
- <sup>41</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 20 March 1900.
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>43</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 18 June 1900.
- <sup>44</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 28 August 1900.
- <sup>45</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 1 January 1900; 13 February 1900.
- <sup>46</sup> *Inventory of the Church Archives of Nevada, Roman Catholic Church*, Historical Records Survey, Division of Professional and Service Projects, Works Projects Administration, August, 1939.
- <sup>47</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 13 January 1899; 1 January 1900; 22 November 1899.
- <sup>48</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 3 July 1900.
- <sup>49</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 9 April 1900.
- <sup>50</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 7 March 1901; 10 November 1900; 13 February 1900.
- <sup>51</sup> Chan, *Sagebrush Statesman*, 34.
- <sup>52</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 9 April 1900.
- <sup>53</sup> Angel, *History of Nevada*, 519.
- <sup>54</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 9 April 1900.
- <sup>55</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 20 August 1900.
- <sup>56</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 24 May 1900.
- <sup>57</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 13 February 1900.
- <sup>58</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 19 January 1899; 19 December 1899; 30 January 1900.
- <sup>59</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 30 January 1900; 1 January 1900.
- <sup>60</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 2 October 1900.
- <sup>61</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 29 May 1900; 4 September 1900.
- <sup>62</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 18 October 1900.
- <sup>63</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 6 March 1900; 30 July 1900.
- <sup>64</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 4 May 1900; 19 August 1899; 4 September 1900.
- <sup>65</sup> Murbarger, *Ghosts of Clory Trail*, 47.
- <sup>66</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 4 September 1900.

<sup>67</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 6 November 1900.

<sup>68</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 14 January 1901; 19 February 1901.

<sup>69</sup> *Oddie Letters*, 19 February 1901.

<sup>70</sup> Chan, *Sagebrush Statesman*, 9

<sup>71</sup> *Manhattan Post*, 28 March 1914; *Tonopah Sun*, 7 July 1905.

<sup>72</sup> Andy Eason, interview with author, 9 August 1985.

*Desert Mirage:  
Casino Gaming and the Image of Nevada*

PETER L. BANDURRAGA

NEVADA IS A LAND of deserts and mountains, sagebrush and pines, open spaces, blue skies and sparkling lakes. But if you ask anyone in New York or San Francisco or Hong Kong what Nevada is, you'll hear of dazzling lights, show-stopping entertainment, beautiful women and, above all, gambling—the chance to win instant fortune on the pull of a lever or the turn of a card. For most of the world, Nevada is a fantasy wonderland that promises forbidden delights, but without penalty.

Certainly, it was not always this way. The image of Nevada—the mirage in the desert—is the result of a good deal of very careful and patient work by a large number of skillful creators. The men and women who operate Nevada's casinos have struggled hard to promote gaming and this image. From April 27 through October 12, 1986, the Nevada Historical Society presents in the Changing Gallery in Reno an exhibition which explores the elements that comprise that image for the two major urban centers, Las Vegas and Reno, "Desert Mirage: Casino Gaming and the Image of Nevada." Advertising art is an important part of the image, but it goes far beyond to include architecture, signs, interior design and entertainment.

Although both are in Nevada, Reno and Las Vegas have approached the subject of promotion in rather different ways. Casino gaming was made legal by an act of the Nevada legislature in 1931. For the first decade or so, however, legalization had little effect. The gambling clubs merely opened the doors to the back rooms and the second storeys where the roulette wheels and card games had always been. The clientele remained generally local and predominantly male. Most of the clubs in Reno were along Commercial Row—the old center of town—and Virginia and Center Streets, with several opening onto Lincoln and Douglas Alleys. The out-of-town trade usually came from the guests at the divorce ranches. In fact, the short residency requirement that made divorce relatively easy gave Reno its notoriety in those early days. In Las Vegas the bars and gambling clubs followed a similar pattern and congregated along Fremont Street, leading to the train station.



A busy night at Harolds Club in Reno during the 1960s. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

Few of the clubs in either Reno or Las Vegas did much in the way of promotion. In part the gamblers feared too much notice would revive the reform movement that had made gambling illegal in 1910. And in part they were content with what they had. It was Harolds Club, established in Reno in 1935, that led the way in promoting gaming. The Smith family, proprietors, early on realized the importance of attracting people to Reno from all over the country. "Harolds Club or Bust" signs sprouted up everywhere and benefitted the entire community. The Smiths also understood that they were selling fun. Harolds Club promoted a friendly atmosphere, welcomed the small wager, made women feel comfortable and made a fortune. Around 1945 the Smiths began decorating Harolds Club with western artifacts, especially



The Flamingo Club in Las Vegas was made famous by owner Benjamin “Bugsy” Siegal. Photo-postcard, c. 1955. (*Nevada Historical Society*)



This photograph of the Dunes, located along the Las Vegas Strip, was taken in 1956 not long after it opened. (*Nevada Historical Society*)



Center Street in Reno during the 1930s was a bustling area after gambling was made legal. (*Nevada Historical Society*)



*Lido de Paris*, Stardust Hotel, Las Vegas, 1975. (*Las Vegas News Bureau*)

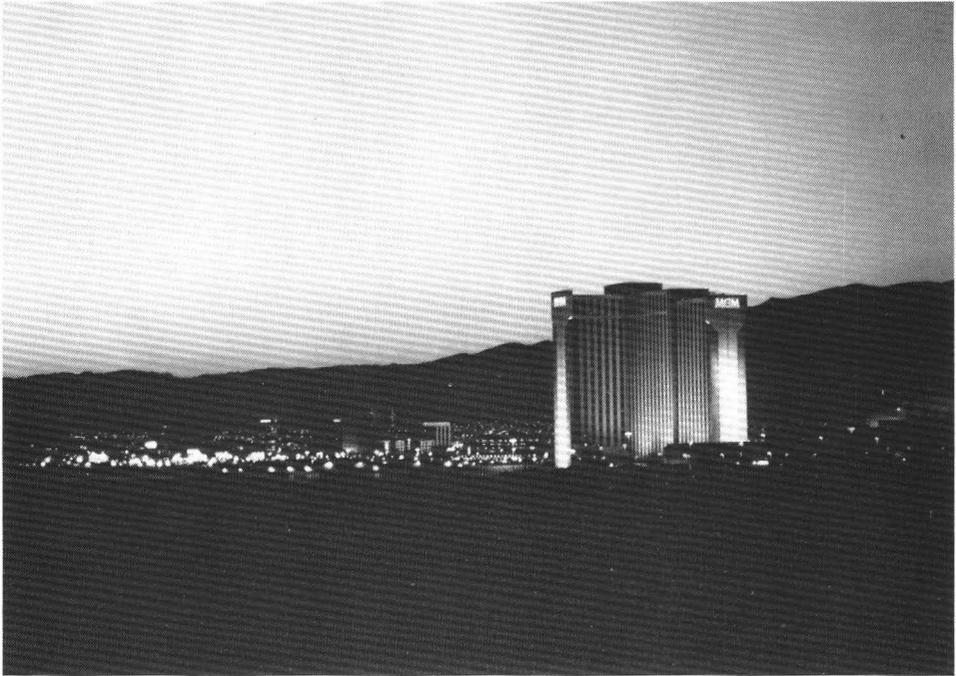
the now-famous Gun Collection. In four years average daily attendance went from 5,000 to 20,000.

Another pioneer in promoting Reno gaming was William F. Harrah. The results of a study he had done by the Stanford Research Institute led him to sponsor twenty-four-hour "gambler's special" bus tours from the San Francisco Bay area and Sacramento. His world-famous automobile collection grew into another attraction drawing people to Reno. Where Harolds Club ardently pursued a western theme, Harrah's has used a variety of images. Currently they present international sophistication and elegance. Many of the newer clubs, such as the MGM Grand Hotel and the Peppermill Inn, are as sumptuous and elaborate.

While promotion of gaming in Reno has until recently been primarily a matter of individual enterprise, Las Vegas early on recognized the advantages of cooperative efforts. The first clubs along Fremont Street catered to locals and to travelers passing from Los Angeles to Salt Lake City. With the construction of Hoover Dam and Lake Mead in the 1930s, tourists began coming to southern Nevada. Boosters capitalized on the more rip-roaring aspects of Las Vegas and promoted an Old West atmosphere. The first hotels on the "Strip," the Los Angeles highway, were El Rancho Vegas in 1940 and the Last Frontier in 1942. They contributed to the western theme.

World War II brought thousands to Las Vegas, to the gunnery range at Nellis and the Basic Magnesium plant at Henderson. After the war casino interests realized they had a lucrative market available throughout the nation. The Flamingo, built on the Strip by Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegal in 1946, led away from the Old West toward a more sophisticated, international style. The Thunderbird, the Desert Inn, the Sahara, the Sands, the Riviera, the Dunes and many others along the Strip created an environment that is uniquely Las Vegas and has been imitated countless times. When the Last Frontier remodeled after a fire, it became the Frontier and adopted the new style. While the clubs Downtown were at first reluctant to change, they have recently caught up in splendor. Promotion has continuously stressed glamor, excitement, adventure and the chance to become rich.

The art and architecture of Las Vegas have become the subjects of serious study. Not tied to any school or theory, they serve entirely to promote the function of the casinos. In some cases the building itself makes a statement about the experience to be had inside. In many other cases, the exterior of the building is merely a prop for the huge sign that proclaims to the world the casino's message. Inside the design and the decor are carefully planned to promote excitement and to ensure that the visitor cannot miss the gaming tables and slot machines. Without windows or clocks inside, time in a casino literally stands still and one lives for the thrill of the moment. Neon has been raised to an art form in Las Vegas. The variety and splendor of the signs on the Strip and Downtown stagger the viewer. No design is too bold. They all



The MGM Grand Hotel glitters in the desert in Reno. *(Photo courtesy of the Reno News Bureau)*

make a statement about the sheer bravado of Las Vegas that is recognized the world over. Their effectiveness is demonstrated by the number of times they are imitated in every town in the country.

The activity inside the casinos in both Las Vegas and Reno is as important as the advertising and the signs in creating the image. The gaming is complemented by the excellent restaurants, the pleasant hotel rooms, and most of all by the entertainment. Las Vegas is called, “The Entertainment Capital of the World.” Every casino has a lounge or a showroom with a singer, a comedian, a band or some other act. The biggest headliners in the world—from Frank Sinatra to Barbra Streisand to Diana Ross—play Vegas. The revues, with the beautiful women, the glittering costumes, the production numbers, have produced a catchword for beauty—“Las Vegas showgirl.” The people come to see the shows and to eat in the restaurants. They stay to gamble.

The fact that gaming continues to be the major industry of Reno and Las Vegas, and that it continues to prosper in spite of recessions and rivals, shows that the image-makers have done their job superbly. There is another Nevada, but the one everybody knows best glitters and shimmers in the desert.

## NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

### *Frontier Justice in El Dorado: Charles Gracey's Story*<sup>1</sup>

W. ROSS YATES

THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION campaign of 1896 kept Joseph Wharton, Philadelphia industrialist, busy opposing the Democrats' and Populists' platform of silver money and free trade. After William McKinley had safely been inaugurated, Wharton turned his attention to another project: mining. Prosperity was returning to the country after a lengthy depression, and he had money to spare, some of which he put to work improving mining operations in El Dorado Canyon, Nevada. For years he had been a prominent stockholder in the Southwestern Mining Company, which owned the most promising mines there. Originally he had carried the stock of the company on his books under the heading, "Nevada Silver Mine," although gold was the principal metal sought and found. In fact he had no more interest in silver than he had love for the silverites whom he so relentlessly fought, repeatedly warning that bimetallism would be a national disaster, and that what the country needed to relieve the shortage of money was gold. In 1894 to W. S. Mills, the company's resident manager, Wharton wrote, "As gold is about the only thing in the world that has not depreciated it is a pity we can't dig out a few hundred million to relieve the existing stringency, or even if we could dig out a much smaller sum to relieve individual stringency it would be edifying."<sup>2</sup> Now, perhaps, Wharton could supply the country with something he thought it lacked.

His belief that he might be able to make the mines in El Dorado do more than pay their way had substance. El Dorado is one of many canyons branching out on both sides of the Colorado River where it forms a border between Arizona and the southern tip of Nevada. Gold had been discovered (or rediscovered) there around 1858. The El Dorado Canyon Mining District (first called the Colorado District) was organized in 1861. Over the following forty years prospectors worked hundreds of claims in the El Dorado District as well

as other canyons on the river. Companies were organized and soon the most promising sites were gone. The most dominant incorporated venture in El Dorado Canyon was the Southwestern Mining Company.<sup>3</sup>

A small group of Philadelphians associated with the banking house of Barker Brothers and Company supplied most of the capital for the Southwestern Mining Company. A report issued in 1880 listed five persons as holding a majority of the stock: George Burnham, president, Wharton Barker, secretary-treasurer, A. B. Nettleton, Abraham Barker, and Joseph Wharton. Abraham and Wharton Barker, father and son, were the most active partners in Barker Brothers and Company. Joseph Wharton was brother-in-law to Abraham and uncle to Wharton. None of the three had seen the properties owned by the company. They had invested on the basis of reports of experts, who attested to the existence of large quantities of low grade ore in the hills of El Dorado; they knew that where there was low grade ore, rich veins may also sometimes be found.<sup>4</sup>

In truth, gold was there. From time to time various mines of the company were successful, especially the Techatticup, Wall Street, Savage, Quaker City, Silver Queen, Mocking Bird, Jubilee, Honest Miner, Morning Star, Red Butte, and Rover. But expenses were also heavy. Supplies had to be boated up the swiftly flowing river from Needles, California, about eighty miles to the south. Later, after the Santa Fe Railroad was completed, supplies were transported overland by wagon from Kingman, some sixty miles away in the Arizona Territory. The country was arid and treeless except for sparse growths of cottonwoods and willows in places along the river and on the islands. Fuel to run the mill came from driftwood carried down by spring freshets. In 1880 the cost to the company was the very high price of three dollars a cord.<sup>5</sup> Also, the mines were several miles from the mill, which together with the company store and houses formed a settlement at the confluence of the Colorado and the wash draining the canyon.<sup>6</sup> The floor of the canyon sloped steeply up from the river.<sup>7</sup> The mines began at a point about two miles back and extended from there along both sides of the wash for another ten miles and into side canyons. Large ore wagons and teams added to the expenses of mining and smelting. Cloudbursts, at least once filled the wash from bank to bank and damaged much of the company's property.<sup>8</sup> Year after year the Southwestern Mining Company took out gold and a little silver, sometimes enough to pay expenses, but not often. In 1890 a small strike excited the stockholders. The value of gold extracted that year was \$64,855.46 and of silver, \$11,609.32. The net profit was \$22,985.47, all of which was immediately put to use financing operations.<sup>9</sup> At no time during the twenty or so years of the existence of the Southwestern Mining Company did it pay a dividend.<sup>10</sup>

Wharton was determined to change this situation. His association with the company had begun in 1879 when he purchased notes of "the Nevada Silver



Southwestern Mining Company settlement in El Dorado Canyon, c. 1890s. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

Mine” in the amount of \$22,500. The following year he applied these to buy twenty-eight thousand shares of the company’s total capitalization of one hundred thousand shares (par value \$100). In subsequent years he had done nothing to realize a full value for this investment. Like the other shareholders, he had waited for Mills to make a strike and had from time to time responded to an assessment for money to continue work. Wharton had set down the value of his 28,000 shares as being \$280 in 1880, \$21,000 in 1890 (the year of the small strike), and \$100 in 1894.<sup>11</sup> By this time, Barker Brothers and Company had become bankrupt and been reorganized. All of the large stockholders except himself were willing to write the venture off as a total loss. But Wharton was not accustomed to accepting failure when it might be avoided. He was an expert at the mining and refining of metals. He was the first person in the United States profitably to manufacture metallic zinc, had begun the nickel industry of the country, and had overcome major metallurgical problems in refining both metals. He went into the business of iron mining and smelting, was the principal stockholder of the Bethlehem Iron (later Steel) Company, and had put together a network of mines, railroads, and smelters in north central New Jersey to become one of the nation’s largest producers of pig iron. While pursuing these interests, he was a proponent of high protective tariffs, had founded the Wharton School of Finance and Economy at the University of Pennsylvania, and (good Quaker that he was) supported Swarthmore College as president of its board of

managers. He developed a considerable reputation as a scientist and within a few years was serving as chairman of the Visiting Committee for the Chemical Laboratory at Harvard University.<sup>12</sup>

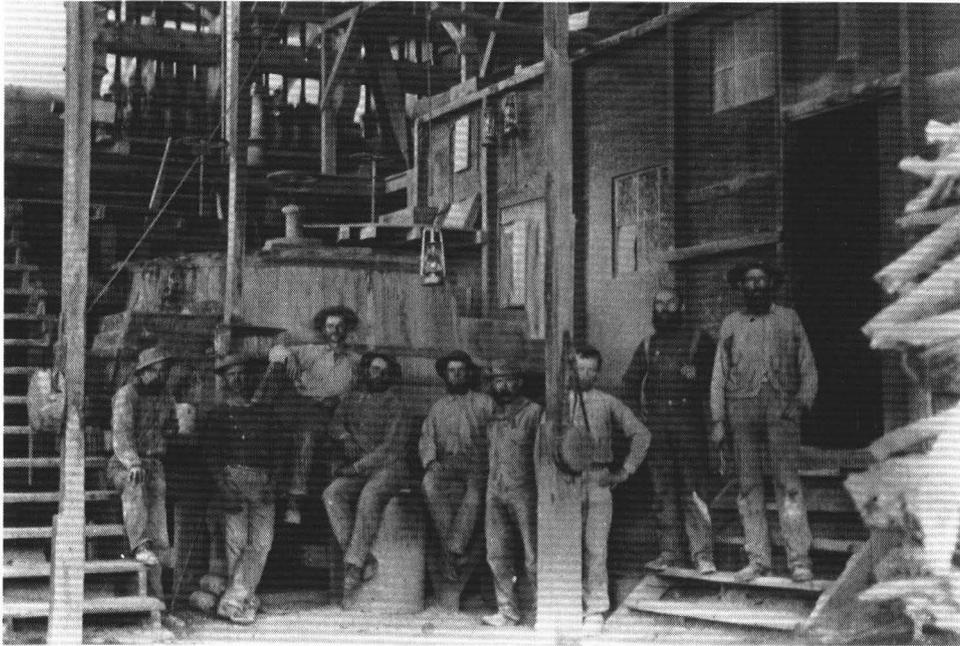
He was determined to buy out the other shareholders, put the company out of business, and purchase its properties. He would then give personal attention to modernizing equipment, introducing scientific ways, and tightening up management. He needed a competent resident manager. As matters turned out, he found one in Charles Gracey. Mills had done well, but was old. Early in 1896 he had a breakdown and several months later died. The company's officers named his son-in-law, G. B. Waterhouse, as manager *pro tempore*. At the time, the real power of direction passed to Gracey, Mills's former assistant. Little is known of this able man, whose courage and resourcefulness soon became apparent. He was young, married, and intelligent, reasonably well-educated, and loyal to his employers. He had prospected on his own along the Colorado River and knew the area and its people thoroughly.

No sooner had Mills become incapacitated than Gracey faced a crisis. A Paiute named Avote, an employee of the company, murdered five white men, thereby bringing the lands along the Colorado River to the brink of open warfare between Indians and whites.

In those years, the inhabitants of the lower Colorado consisted of a few scattered prospectors, small groups of workers in mines and mills, an occasional rancher, and many Paiute and Mojave Indians, who mostly followed the river. The nearest officer of the law was the Sheriff of Lincoln County, headquartered in Las Vegas, fifty miles away. Under these circumstances, some sort of vigilante justice could be expected. The initial reaction of the whites was that of mobbing together with an intent to murder all Indians who, however, appear to have been more numerous and better armed. Gracey had to act quickly to prevent disaster, using the extra-legal means at his disposal. When order was restored and the whites had a sense of security, he journeyed to Philadelphia, met Burnham, Wharton Barker, and Joseph Wharton, and received from them a permanent appointment as manager.<sup>13</sup>

Joseph Wharton then carried out his master plan. He purchased all the stock of the Southwestern Mining Company (paying for his last purchases at a rate of two cents a share)<sup>14</sup> and forced the company into bankruptcy. He then acquired its property, paid its debts and became the sole owner. He kept Gracey on as manager, awarded him a share of the profits, and proceeded to overhaul and modernize the business, all at the age of seventy-two. Before he died in 1909, he made seven trips under difficult conditions to the canyon and succeeded in making the mines and smelters an efficient venture.

In 1904 he asked Gracey for a more detailed account of the Indian troubles of 1896. Gracey obliged and sent the following letter, given here with minor editing. The original today forms part of the collection of Wharton Papers in the Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College.



Interior view of Quartz Mill and workers at the Southwestern Mining Company.  
(*Nevada Historical Society*)

El Dorado Canyon, Nevada April 21st, 1904

To Mr. Joseph Wharton,  
Philadelphia, Penn.

Dear sir:

You ask me for particulars about the Indian—Avote, that killed the two teamsters that were driving your ore teams in 1896, at this place, and also three other men in the near vicinity:

These Indians that live here on the Colorado River claim the right of the river as far down as Cottonwood Island, twenty miles below. They also claim the Island and have occupied it for a long time; they do not know how long. None of these Indians know their age, or have any correct idea of time; none that I have met. I have talked with many of them, but their only idea is that as they say, 'Indians no come, Indians all time here.'

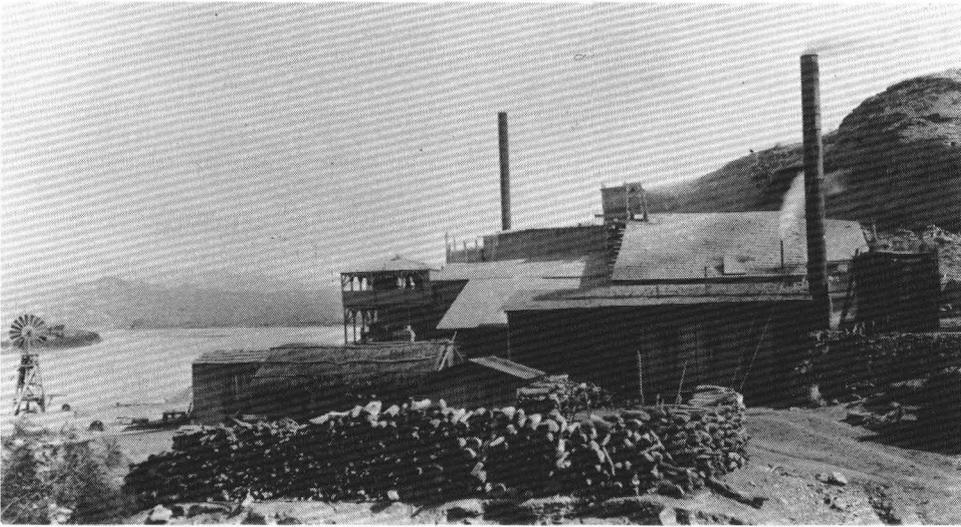
Below Cottonwood Island is another tribe called *Chemewevers*; they are about the same as these Piutes, but claim to be a different family. Their territory extends for about twenty miles along the river; and there are not many of them, but they live between the Piutes and Mojaves, who live farther down. The Mojaves are a large tribe and extend for several hundred miles along the lower Colorado River. The Mojaves and the Piutes are not friendly, neither are they at war, but have an understanding. They did fight years ago; and an old Indian said to me, that they met and had a big talk, and Mojave said that he would not come on Piute ground any more to catch rabbits, and the Piute agreed not to catch fish or eat them. The Piute along here are keeping the treaty; they will not catch or eat fish out of the river, for they say

that when a Mojave Indian dies he becomes a fish. The Mojave comes no more up this far, so I think they are keeping the treaty.

Before Avote did the killing here, the Mojave and Piute tribes were getting quite tolerant to each other, and as the white man needed workmen on the river, both tribes are very good river men, and they were working together pretty well under the white man, but when this Piute, Avote, shot Chas. Monahan, watchman, at the Monahan & Murphy's mill (and brother to Frank Monahan, the merchant at Needles, California) it made very hard feelings between the two tribes . . . Monahan & Murphy employ many Mojave Indians in their large Ice plant and other large works they have. And when Frank Monahan's brother was killed by a Piute, the Mojaves said they would revenge the death of their friend's brother, and the Piutes will not now go down the river into Mojave Territory. Several times before the killing, I had the Piutes take me down to Needles, but since that, they will not go. There are about sixty or seventy of these Piutes that belong around here; they have never been put on the Reservation on the Muddy river north of here, as they could make a living, and were a benefit to the white men furnishing wood, as they were about the only men that could stand the heat at the season when the wood comes down.

About 1890 or 1891, things were pretty lively here. Mr. W. S. Mills was running the S.W. mill and taking out considerable money, and money was plenty with Indians, and all were gambling, for it seems that all Indians are gamblers, and the white men were willing to gamble with the Indians. The man that carried the mail in from Chloride,<sup>15</sup> camped on the opposite side of the river in Arizona, and came over the river to gamble with the Indians. He won their money, and won all the money one young Indian had. This Indian's name was Mo-wa-wich, the Indian name for mosquito. Mowawich and the stage-driver had some words, and the stage-driver taunted the Indian by showing him what a large amount of money he had won—all in silver. The Indians could get whiskey at that time and were drinking some. Sometime in the night the stage-driver crossed the river to his camp, and it is supposed that the Indian, Mowawich, either swam the river or crossed in a boat when nobody saw him, and with a rock killed the stage-driver; and, as his camp was near the river, the Indian put the body in the river, and, as the river was very shallow the body was in sight in the morning, but no one paid any attention to it; but the stage-driver was due to come for the mail, and as he did not turn up some white men crossed the river and found his body—and it was plain that a murder had been committed, as his head was badly broken. Inquiry was made, and it was known by the Indians that Mowawich had lost all his money the night before and that morning had shown quite a large sack of silver. He was suspected, and when he was wanted, it was found that he had left the camp when the body was discovered, and he could not be found. The Indians did not try to shield him in any way, but were anxious to deliver him to the whites. The whites made this demand, that the Indians deliver him or the whites would kill all the Indians. The Indians had meetings among themselves and came to a decision that his younger brother, Avote, would know best where Mowawich was in hiding and that he must go and kill him. This Avote did, fetching as evidence to Mr. Mills the foot of his brother that had a deformity in some of the toes. This satisfied the white settlers and matters went on again as before and little was thought of the event. But Avote was a changed man, for he had great love for this, his only, brother, and as the Indians had forced him to kill his brother, he was not very friendly with them, and [as] he knew that the white man had forced the Indians, he was no friend of the white man. And I learned after Avote's death that he had said that he would kill five *Hicoes* (white men) to avenge Mowawich's death, and he made his threat good.

Mr. Mills had told me of the killing of the mail carrier some years before and how



Southwestern Mining Company Mill in El Dorado Canyon, c. 1890s. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

the Indian had been killed by his brother. But as Avote at that time was not in this camp, I did not know that he was the Indian, as Mills had not told me his name, or if he did, I had not remembered. In the fall of 1895, Avote came to El Dorado Canyon with his squaw. They were both sick and without means, as the mill below where he had been at work had shut down and had not paid the Indians. In the early summer of 1895 Avote had caught on the river a large Barge or Ferry boat that would be useful here, as our ferry boat was rather old and small. He asked me to advance him grub and take the boat for security until spring, when he would catch wood and pay me. This I did, and advanced him during the winter, provisions from the store to the amount of \$76.00. The river was up early that spring, 1896, and by May 5th wood was running very plentiful on the river, and fifty or sixty Indians were at work along the river for a few miles, up and down the river, all catching wood; and it is very nice to hear them when they are at work and doing well. As the wood comes in sight above, the Indians above have a peculiar cry that is answered up and down the whole length of the band, and as the cry is frequent you hear them all day, and it is rather a pleasant sound as they all join in.

On the 12th of May, all were at work; Avote's place was here by the store, and he and his squaw had about 20 cords of wood caught, and as I thought were doing very well; but he and his squaw quarreled, and she went to the other camp above and worked with other Indians. Avote could not catch wood alone, and the other Indians did not like to work with him. At noon he went to the camp above and tried to get his squaw to come back, but she would not, and he gave her a beating and tore her clothes off of her, and hurt her pretty badly. He then went to another Indian camp near by—Bataviam camp, and took Bataviam's rifle and started out on his raid to get even with the white man. He had just a day or two before got a pair of new shoes. These he took with him, wearing them part of the time, as he went on his rounds of death.

His first move was up the El Dorado Canyon Wash to an old stone cabin, where he had dinner with John Huess, and many think that he told Huess his mission. After

having his dinner he continued up the wash to Mr. McGregor's cabin, and McGregor was not at home, he then continued up the wash to the falls and the Huess Spring where my teamsters were watering their teams, and as it takes some time to water twenty head of stock, ten head in each team, he crept up the rocks in the side of the wash to a small bush and there hid until the teamsters came along, and as they came around the sharp bend, they were almost out of sight of each other, at about 100 yards apart, and the Indian being on the high point both teams were in full view of him. It will never be known which he shot first, but Jones, the hind team, was shot dead at one shot through the heart, and the head teamster, Frankson, was shot twice, once through the left arm, and once through the body. Jones had fallen dead from his seat, but Frankson had gotten down from his wagon and was found lying under the wagon, as if he had lain down to sleep. The time of day that the teams were due at the Spring was about two o'clock, and I think they were on time, and the teams stood there until seven, not making a move. The teams were due at mill at four p.m., but sometimes the teamsters would have some work done on wagons at mine, and several times had been after six o'clock in getting to mill, so I was not very anxious when they were late, but I had noticed that the Indians were making no noise in their wood catching; all were silent, and as I went from camp to camp, many were idle, and I also noticed that they all looked at me in a strange silent manner. The Indian that could speak English best was away, having gone down the river with a boat load of goods to a camp seven miles below. He came back about seven p.m. and I said to him, what is the matter with the Indians, no sing to-day when they catch wood? He said, "Avote, he mad, he go away, maybe so, he kill your teamsters." I told him to take his pony and ride up the wash and see; sometimes the teams would stay at mine over night when they could not get a full load, and as they had not come yet at seven p.m., I felt sure they were staying at the mine, as there was feed at the mine for their teams. The Indians went up six miles to the Falls and found what I have described. And this was the first intimation that I had of what had happened.

This was about nine p.m., on May 12th, 1896. This Indian had no sooner got back to camp here with the word, when he said something to several of the Indians that stood around, and a shot was fired, and in less than five minutes over fifty shots were fired all up and down the river, as far as the Indian camps extended, and in less than one hour, every Indian was gone—the shots were the warning.

I immediately shut down the mill and started a party up the wash to bring down the dead bodies and the teams and sent a man to go to the mines and warn the miners. The party only went a short distance and returned, as they thought the Indians would ambush them and they had no arms, and it was well known that every Indian was well armed. I had no arms here at that time, but after considerable talk all started out again, and at about 2 a.m. came with the teams and bodies. The next morning some thought they would go to Nelson's camp and see if he was safe; his camp was about one and a half miles above where the teamsters were shot—in Copper Canyon;<sup>16</sup> about one mile below Powers' Mill<sup>17</sup> where we went into Copper Canyon at Wall St. Mine, there they found Charles Nelson shot through the heart, as Jones the teamster had been. We then organized a party and took the Indian's trail and found that after leaving John Huess, he went to McGregor's cabin and not finding him at home, he continued up the wash until he met the teamsters, and shot them both. He then took off his shoes and left the El Dorado Canyon and went up Copper Canyon, and shot Nelson at the mouth of Copper Canyon. He then went two miles to a point on El Dorado Canyon where I had a team of your animals hauling ore from Quaker City to Wall St. Mine where big teams could get it, and he took his stand behind a bush that commanded a view of the road, much the same as at the lower



Horse team and ore wagon from the Southwestern Mining Company, c. 1890s.  
(*Nevada Historical Society*)

place, and from his tracks must have remained there about half an hour. The teamster was fixing his wagon and missed that trip and so missed his death. Avote now put on his shoes and turned back to Copper Canyon and went to a small bush near John Powers' cabin and seemed to have stood there for some time. Powers was out on the mountains and so was missed. He was then nine miles from the river and had got three men; he now started back to the river to strike it five miles below El Dorado Canyon at the Monahan & Murphy mill. Chas. Monahan was watchman and was in bed, so it might have been night by this time, for the tracks showed that he had wandered around as if in the night, and came to the cabin where Monahan lay by the open window, and he put the muzzle of his gun very close to his head and shot him dead. He then started up the river toward the Canyon, and one mile below at Dolly Mill he found a boat. This must now have been about daylight, or a little before. He took this boat and went down the river to Gold Bug mill. J. C. Morton was watchman there; it was now daylight, for he stopped with Morton, and Morton had given him his breakfast. After eating breakfast, and as Morton was about to take up the dishes, he shot him through the heart and went down the river in his boat. It was noon the next day before all these things were found out. The trailing party got his track at daylight the next morning and followed on until they lost his track where he had taken the boat; so we did not know of J. C. Morton's death for a day later. But the country was aroused and feeling against the Indians, and some wanted to kill them all. That was easy to say, but hard to do, as the Indians were hid and were known to be well armed.

We buried the victims the next day, and the next day after I went up the river past the Lincoln mill<sup>18</sup> with my big field glasses, and there on the hill I saw an Indian put his head out from behind a rock. He could not tell whether I saw him, but I did, and I knew him. It was Bataviam. I motioned him to come, and he was afraid, he wanted me to come out on the open. This I did going toward him. He then came to me (he is a half-breed, that is Piute father and Chemiwever mother), he told me that Avote had

stolen his rifle and all of his cartridges. I told him that white men were very mad now; last winter, Mouse, he kill two white men, and now Avote, he kill lot more. White man now kill Indians. Indians must catch Avote. He said Avote got his rifle, it very good gun, shoot long ways, he afraid Avote shoot Indians if he think they catch him. I told him that they must catch him. He asked, "How much you pay?" I told him that he had better not talk that way, but catch him. He said he had no gun and no grub, and if I would pay \$50.00 to him and his brother Steve and two others, they would go out and catch him and kill him—if I would let them have guns. I got some rifles from the mines that the miners had, and gave them all the cartridges I had and started them out. I was pretty well satisfied that they were friendly and would find Avote. In a few hours after I had done this, about twenty or thirty white men came in from different parts and were bent on killing every Indian that they could find. I said that would not be right, as I thought that the other Indians were not to blame, and I thought they were friendly. I also told them that I had armed four Indians to catch Avote, and that these Indians would make a hard fight if they came on them. This was taken very badly by the white men and they blamed me very much for arming the Indians, and some said that this Company had always thought more of Indians than of white men, and was the cause of these Indians being here and doing work cheaper than white men would, and they would hold me responsible if any white man was hurt. I would have to suffer. I was now more afraid of the white men than I had ever been of the Indians. But I knew the sheriff of Lincoln County was at Vegas Ranch, fifty miles away, and I wanted him here very badly, as the white men around this section then were very rough men. I had this same pair of mules that took us to Marvel the other day, and I told one of the men to hitch them to the buck-board and see how fast they could make a hundred miles. And I wrote a note to the Sheriff to come! and in just twenty-four hours the Sheriff was with me—and the mules are alive and well to-day. Mrs. Gracey and I were in hiding while the trip was made, not for fear of Indians, but for fear of white men. For I did not know what these Indians might do with the guns I had given them. As soon as the Sheriff came, I took the team of work horses out of the corral and made up a posse with the Sheriff at their head to go, and if possible, find the Indians I had sent out, for the white men were afraid to move out on account of my having armed the Indians. The Sheriff and his posse proceeded down the river about ten miles and found my four Indians returning. Did you find Avote? was asked. "Yes, we find him." Where is he? "We shoot him." And they had a letter for me from John Apple and Fred Wagner saying that, Bataviam and his brother Steve had surprised Avote in the early morning and shot and killed him, and they had both viewed the corpse and were both well acquainted with Avote in his life time.

This was a great relief to me, and I paid the Indians \$50.00 cash, then and there. I now said to these brothers, Bataviam and Steve, now you go and shoot Mouse! They said, "He long way off, way off timber mountains." I said, Mouse, he kill two white men last winter, Avote he killed five men, white man very mad. He (white man) said, "I must not give Indians any more work; make Indians go on Reservation, you go and kill Mouse, white man say, good Indian, 'let him stay here and work.'"

They said, "how much?" I said \$50.00—same as Avote. They say, "Mouse a long way; three sleeps; hard mountains, very high." I said, how much you want? They said, "\$100." I said, alright, you go! And I gave them 25 lbs. of dry figs and six cans of tomatoes. They were gone for about ten days and came back with letter from Bishop Jones of Overton, saying, that he was acquainted with Indian, Mouse, in his life time, that the Indians had shot and killed him, having startled him in his hiding place in timber mountain and ran him almost fifty miles across the desert, Mouse and them

exchanging shots once in awhile on the chase, until Mouse's ammunition gave out, when they closed in on him and shot him to death. The Indians came to me with that letter and I paid them their \$100 for killing Mouse, and that ended the Indian trouble in this part; and most of these Indians are with me yet, and are friendly, and I look for no more trouble.

There was considerable money offered as bounty on Mouse by the County, and I think by the State, and friends of the two men that he killed, but I do not think that it was ever paid. I could never find out anything about it.

Yours truly,  
/s/ Chas. Gracey

P.S. If you want any more information write me and I will answer the best I can. This is all I can think of at present. C. G.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Most of the material in this article is based on correspondence, account books, and other documents in the Joseph Wharton Papers, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College (hereafter cited as Joseph Wharton Papers). Another useful source of information has been the collection of Wharton Barker Papers, Library of Congress.

<sup>2</sup> 26 March 1894, Joseph Wharton Papers.

<sup>3</sup> For a history of early operations at El Dorado see John M. Townley, "Early Development of El Dorado Canyon and Searchlight Mining Districts," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* 11 (1968): 2-25. A brief account of the district and its productivity over the years can be found in Bertrand F. Couch and Jay A. Carpenter, "Nevada's Metal and Mineral Production (1859-1940)," *Geology and Mining Series* 38 (November 1943): 27.

<sup>4</sup> Report to the Board of Trustees of the Southwestern Mining Company (12 February 1880), Joseph Wharton Papers.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>6</sup> An outline map of the El Dorado District, showing the location and names of the principal claims, can be found in *Bulletin #62, Plate II*, Nevada Bureau of Mines. The Savage Mine, which is not shown on the map, was located near the Techatticup. See Wharton to Gracey, 11 June 1906, Joseph Wharton Papers. *Bulletin #62, Plate II* also includes a cross-sectional diagram of the Techatticup Mine.

<sup>7</sup> According to Wharton, the slope was approximately 320 feet to the mile. Wharton to his wife, 14 March 1898, Joseph Wharton Papers.

<sup>8</sup> Wharton to his wife, 14 March 1898, Joseph Wharton Papers, ". . . this channel discharges the volumes of rain water that fall over the whole region (perhaps 50 square miles) that the Canyon, with all its tributary valleys, drains, the violence of which may be guessed from the fact that the torrent is sometimes several feet deep and in places as wide as from our house to the annex. A few years ago two of our great ore wagons weighing about 3 tons each were swept away by such a flood into the Colorado River and there lost." In 1904 another cloudburst wiped out many houses and much equipment and brought operations to a halt for about eighteen months." Wharton to Gracey, 19 January 1905, Joseph Wharton Papers.

<sup>9</sup> Balance Sheet for 1890, attached to *Annual Report of the Southwestern Mining Company*. Wharton Barker Miscellaneous Papers, Box 25, Library of Congress.

<sup>10</sup> Wharton to Torreyson & Summerfield, 24 December 1897, Joseph Wharton Papers.

<sup>11</sup> Joseph Wharton, entries under headings "Nevada Silver Mine" and "Southwestern Mining Company," *Private Accounts: 1876-1884*; and various entries, *Private Accounts: 1885-1898*, Joseph Wharton Papers.

<sup>12</sup> W. Ross Yates, "Samuel Wetherill, Joseph Wharton, and the Founding of the American Zinc Industry," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 98 (October 1974): 469-514; W. Ross Yates, "Joseph Wharton's Nickel Business," *Ibid.* 101 (July 1977): 287-321; W. Ross Yates, *Joseph Wharton: Quaker Industrial Pioneer* (book length Ms. in preparation).

<sup>13</sup> Wharton to Wharton Barker, 10 May 1895; Wharton to Mills, 4 June 1896; Wharton to Waterhouse, 18 September 1896, 9 October 1896; Wharton to Gracey, 16 June 1896, Joseph Wharton Papers.

<sup>14</sup> A list of the stockholders dated Oct. 22, 1894, includes sixty-five names. The list is attached to a letter from Wharton to his lawyer, J. D. Torreyson, 19 July 1898, Joseph Wharton Papers, which reads in part: "It may be money thrown away to give anything for the stock, but, on the other hand it may diminish the number of those who could otherwise urge a right of redemption, and also if most of the stock comes in I could venture to bid higher on the property in case of any real competitive bidder appearing."

<sup>15</sup> The settlement of Chloride was about forty miles southeast of El Dorado in Arizona Territory. At the time of which Gracey wrote the mail was probably delivered to Chloride by stagecoach. By 1900 a branch railroad line connected Chloride with Kingman.

<sup>16</sup> Nelson's camp (or a place in the vicinity) became in 1908 the post office and headquarters of Wharton's venture, then styled "Wharton Gold Mines." The change of location came about as a result of improvements in transportation. By 1906 a branch railroad line had been established northward from Barnwell on the Santa Fe route to Searchlight in the Searchlight Mining District. Searchlight was only about thirty miles south-southwest of Nelson's camp. On his last trip, made in 1907, Wharton travelled by rail to Barnwell, by wagon via Searchlight (as the train did not run every day) to Copper Canyon, and rode down the canyon to the Nelson camp, which was centrally located with respect to the most important mines. From there Wharton travelled down El Dorado Canyon to the river, where the smelter was still located. On the return trip he went by wagon up El Dorado and Copper Canyons to Searchlight and then to Nipton, California, at which point he boarded "Clark's new R. R. from Los Angeles to Salt Lake City." Wharton to his wife, 15 May 1907, Joseph Wharton Papers. The smelter was moved from the settlement by the river to Nelson shortly thereafter.

<sup>17</sup> Probably the arastra mill referred to in a letter from Wharton to his wife, 14 March 1898, Joseph Wharton Papers. "We passed the narrow pass where our two teamsters were shot dead by Avote, the cabin of John Huess and the spring which he tries to claim as his property, the cabin and arastra mill where a Scotchman toils for months to get out gold enough for an animal spree in San Francisco, the Lucky Jim mine which we shall visit another day and at last arrive at the Wall Street Mine."

<sup>18</sup> The Lincoln Mill was probably a remnant of another mining venture, which the Southwestern Mining Company had absorbed. Wharton in 1898 listed among the deeds of the Southwestern company in his possession that of "Lincoln Silver Mining Company's Mill site & bldgs." Wharton to Torreyson & Summerfeld, 14 February 1898, Joseph Wharton Papers.

## Book Reviews

*Gunfighters, Highwaymen & Vigilantes—Violence on the Frontier.* By Roger D. McGrath. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984. 291 pp. Illustrations, maps, footnotes, appendix, bibliography, index, \$16.95.)

MANY PERSONS SPECULATING on the historical origins of violence in contemporary America claim that our nation is a product of a violent frontier heritage. But should we accept that assertion at face value? Certainly not according to Roger McGrath, a professor of history at UCLA, in his detailed and fascinating study of the “trans-Sierra” frontier. McGrath’s conclusions will surely stir controversy in and outside the historical profession for years to come.

The work focuses on two colorful mining towns, and their environs, during the boom years: Aurora, Nevada, for the period 1861-65; and nearby Bodie, California, for the period 1877-82. The research methodology, which includes the examination of all pertinent government records and area newspapers still available, is impressive and exhaustive. The narrative is highly readable, although sometimes tedious because of McGrath’s penchant for detailing practically every crime committed, large and small. This book is by no means the general impressionistic analysis of frontier violence, but more an example of a quantitative study of the subject without the aid of a computer, or an overabundance of statistics.

McGrath tells us the trans-Sierra frontier was unquestionably violent and generally lawless, but the types of crimes committed in Aurora and Bodie could be reduced to a few distinctive categories. Using the same scale the FBI uses to index crime today, he compares crime rates and the nature of crime in his two model frontier communities with urban areas in both nineteenth- and twentieth-century America, and concludes that “the old, the young, the unwilling, the weak, and the female—with the notable exception of the prostitute—were, for the most part, safe from harm” in Aurora and Bodie. Rape, for example, was apparently nonexistent in the trans-Sierra frontier. Obviously, one can never know absolutely how many acts of rape may have been committed as this crime has been traditionally underreported. But the fact that there is no record of a rape in Aurora and Bodie is highly significant when compared to the statistics on rape in contemporary urban America.

Heavy drinking, and even drug use, contributed to much of the violent crime on the trans-Sierra frontier, especially lethal violence. For the most

part, men killed men over "who was the better man, affronts to personal honor, careless insults, challenges to the pecking order in the saloon, and loyalty to friends," according to McGrath. Generally homicides were committed with a handgun which, contrary to popular belief, was usually worn concealed. While the carrying of six-shooters contributed to violent crime, McGrath goes on to suggest that citizens "armed with various types of firearms and willing to kill to protect their persons or property, were evidently the most important deterrent to larcenous crime." The implications of this statement in light of the recent spate of "urban vigilante" motion pictures and the Bernhard Goetz case in New York City may be far-reaching but assuredly controversial.

McGrath's essential argument that "there seems to be little justification for blaming contemporary American violence and lawlessness on our frontier heritage" appears to hold up reasonably well under closer scrutiny. A random check of Nevada State Prison records of the late nineteenth century indicates that while there were convictions for rape, child molestation, incest, and serious juvenile offenses these crimes, when reported, were rare. On the other hand, robbery, burglary, and theft made up a substantial number of the crimes for which persons had been imprisoned, contrary to McGrath's findings in Aurora and Bodie. Obviously more comparative work needs to be pursued in the study of violence on the American frontier and its relation to violence in contemporary society in order to corroborate, challenge, or revise Professor McGrath's conclusions. No doubt, *Gunfighters, Highwaymen & Vigilantes* will be considered a seminal work in the Western history field for years to come.

Guy Louis Rocha  
*Nevada State Archives*

*A River Flows: The Life of Robert Lardin Fulton.* By Barbara Richnak.  
(Incline Village, NV: Comstock-Nevada Publishing Company, 1983. 188 pp., bibliography, notes, illus., \$9.95.)

LOCAL HISTORY IS A PECULIAR, parochial, and generally non-professional part of the study of our past. It is grudgingly recognized by the more prestigious scholarly journals and its practitioners rarely lauded by organizations such as the American Historical Association. Yet, despite the wide variety of merit in local history publications, if there is a grass roots movement in the study of American history, it is found in community historical societies and the rare individuals working in virtual isolation on the interpretation of their own locale. These groups and private persons publish an

amazing amount of data, some good, some bad. Regardless, these works represent concern and affection, not to mention hard work, and are the stepping stones utilized in broader studies of these United States. At the bottom of local history's scale of perfection has long been the "mug book." Well, here is a mug book with a difference. *A River Flows* is an example of what might be done with the biography of a person with purely local prominence, given time for research, a considerable body of personal correspondence, and the opportunity to fit the subject into his time.

Robert L. Fulton is examined both as an individual, particularly as a part of a large and active family, as well as a community leader in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Reno. To some readers, the extensive coverage given family matters might prove bothersome. Yet, there is much there for the social historian and even for the individual who simply becomes interested in how family relationships affect community decisions. We find that blood ties, then as now, often result in favored status. Often, these difficult to establish ties are omitted, if not ignored. Here, we have a good opportunity to see kinship at work. Fulton's youth and career pre-Reno are discussed during the first fifty pages.

The bulk of *A River Flows*, as the title suggests, concerns Fulton's grand concept—the benefit of reclamation to Nevada (as one acquaintance recalled "Bob Fulton's Water Cure for Nevada"). While the book gives more than adequate detail on Fulton's position with the Central Pacific Railroad, his management of the *Reno Evening Gazette*, and complicated family developments, its theme is the convoluted course he followed in promoting reclamation. Here is the detail that later researchers will probe in better understanding the ebb and flow of politics and business at the turn of the century. Here, too, is the best reading. Even those not unilaterally enthralled with Reno's past will enjoy the interplay of self-interest and public service. Fulton was part of a delicate, complex, even national, movement and had an important part in its triumphs and defeats. While I might disagree in several points with the author, there is none of the blind admiration so often a part of local biography. There is balance here.

This reviewer salutes the author and Fulton family in giving to students of Nevada history an admirable interpretation of an influential figure. Without support, this biography would probably never have been completed. It is a blend of those unique features of local history and should appeal to western Nevada specialists and students of reclamation in the West. It is rare to learn so much of the local roots of a national program that today sustains its fair share of challenge and failure.

John M. Townley  
*Great Basin Studies Center*

*The Making of a Town: Wright, Wyoming.* By Robert W. Righter (Boulder, CO: Roberts, Rinehart, Inc. Publishers, 1985. x + 203 pp. Bibliography, notes, illustrations, index.)

SINCE THE "IRON HORSE" FIRST invaded Wyoming in the late 1860s, investors have recognized the potential wealth locked into the state's coal fields. But several factors combined to limit development for more than a century. For many decades eastern coal was both cheaper and more efficient, its high sulphur content yielding a third more BTUs of heat per ton than its western counterpart. In addition, the concomitant rise of the petroleum and internal combustion eras after 1870 further diminished coal markets everywhere. As a result, Wyoming mining languished while ranching and agriculture powered the state's economy. But conditions changed suddenly in the 1970s thanks to three events. First, the Clean Air Act of 1970 established federal pollution standards which forced electric utilities running coal-fired generating plants to burn the less sulphuric, and therefore cleaner, western coal. Next, the 1973 OPEC oil embargo raised fuel prices to prohibitive levels, forcing a new reliance upon coal. And lastly, improvements in the technology of coal gasification and liquification (making it cost effective to extract oil and natural gas from coal) prompted oil companies to begin developing leased tracts in the coal-rich lands of Wyoming and Colorado.

This book traces the creation of Wright, Wyoming, a town begun by the Atlantic Richfield Oil Company in 1975 near its massive Black Thunder Mine in the remote Powder River Basin of northeast Wyoming. ARCO, anxious to reduce the predictably high turnover and low productivity of a transient work force, decided to build a substantial community to attract a permanent population of skilled workers and their families. Righter traces the story from the beginning, providing a useful review of town-making on the nineteenth-century frontier followed by an insightful survey of the early popularity and later decline of the "company town" movement in the west. ARCO's decision to buck the current trend and build the town of Wright is ably portrayed as an effort to avoid the "boomtown bifurcation" which has afflicted small ranch towns across the west, overwhelming them with sudden invasions of energy workers and their families. This sudden growth has resulted in "trailers strewn across the countryside," overcrowded schools, strained municipal services and social tension. Ironically, ARCO's good intentions were bitterly opposed by nearby Gillette, Wyoming, which apparently wanted all the "Black Thunder" growth for itself. In vindictive fashion, Gillette forces resisted ARCO in all county agencies including the Campbell County Planning Commission and the Unified School District Board. At the same time, however, the state of Wyoming took ARCO's side, approving new roads, environmental studies and assisting in the overall development of Wright.

Righter's coverage of the planning and construction is impressive. ARCO

has provided him with detailed company records and oral interviews concerning every aspect of the process from land development to infrastructural financing. In addition, since Wright is, in the strict sense, not a company town, but rather a "social experiment" where the workers own their homes and control the government, Righter places his findings in the broader context of "new town theory" which is currently being used to explain the development of Reston, Virginia, Columbia, Maryland and other planned communities across America. Righter also portrays Wright as a microcosm of the modern west. For instance, while tracing the rise of the community in Wright, he notes the emergence of a strong anti-Mormon sentiment (after only five years of settlement) by Protestant groups anxious to retain control of the government. Residential segregation by class also made an early appearance, as the "managerial class" (living in new single-family homes on the hills) opposing the approaching zone of blue-collar families (in the mobile home and RV parks below).

To his credit, Righter has done a lot with an admittedly small subject; his work is a fine "contemporary history" of a town of less than 2,000 people. But, the author should have postponed his study for a few more years because key events are still unfolding. For example, we are told abruptly in the Epilogue that Wright residents have just voted to incorporate; in fact, a whole series of events are left in mid-air because the story is still evolving. On another front, the book itself is a bit one-sided. The author's research has benefitted greatly from the cooperation of ARCO executives which might explain why his sympathies lie with the company on perhaps too many issues. Nevertheless, Righter has provided an excellent chronicle of the modern-day obstacles even powerful companies face in their efforts to bring social order and stability to the boomtown centers of America's new energy frontier. Readers interested in the west and especially the political and social dynamics of nascent communities will enjoy this book.

Eugene P. Moehring  
*University of Nevada, Las Vegas*

*Daughters of Joy, Sisters of Misery: Prostitutes in the American West, 1865-90.* By Anne M. Butler. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985. Pp. xx + 179. Preface, introduction, bibliographical note, index.)

THE FRONTIER PROSTITUTE—will we ever really know her? She has flirted her way through innumerable western novels and films, and anyone who has written about frontier towns would agree that there were thousands of her profession plying their trade in those fledgling communities. Yet until quite

recently, she has been portrayed mainly in terms of the most grotesque stereotypes. The last five years, however, have seen a few serious studies of the prostitute, her business, and the part she played in frontier development. To this short list now can be added this book by Anne M. Butler, and it is a fine addition indeed.

Part of the reason for the prostitutes' enigma lies in the fact that these women left behind virtually no words of their own describing their experiences and their feelings about their situation. Researchers have had to rely instead upon a wide range of circumstantial evidence, in particular public documents. Butler has turned to newspapers and a few collections of personal papers, but much of her story comes from census reports and police and court records from a healthy scattering of western urban centers—Denver, Austin, Laramie, Butte, Cheyenne, and the Kansas cattle towns. She found military records especially helpful, and she has a separate chapter on the business in the “hog ranches” found inevitably near army posts. Butler uses these documents with intelligence and common sense, and as have others, she has found in them quite a bit of colorful (and often sordid) details.

The first three chapters—on the backgrounds of prostitutes, their personal relationships, and their lives within the community and their financial prospects—confirm the image of the degraded hussie living out a grim and hopeless life. Most come from poverty and cultural circumstances in which women were consistently exploited. Once in business, they did have relationships other than with clients; not a few had husbands and children. But this part of their lives seems to have been uniformly bleak. Marriages were short-lived and turbulent. Far from remunerative, whoring apparently kept even those in the more comfortable brothels close to poverty. In some informed speculation on Wichita, for instance, Butler concludes that a typical prostitute made about thirty dollars a week, then paid out nineteen for expenses. No champagne baths here. Life on the line was wildly unstable, violent, dreary, and poorly paid.

Some of Butler's most interesting and original conclusions concern prostitutes' relations with law officers and with the emerging legal systems of western communities. The women learned how to use the law to their advantage, and ironically the court came closest to a friendly forum in which they felt at home. They contributed to the community through the periodic fines that were, really, an informal taxation. Through their civil cases they increased the “corpus of local authority,” while their high visibility in criminal cases encouraged a greater appreciation for institutions of social order and tradition, such as the family, church, and schools. Like Marion Goldman in her work on prostitution in Virginia City, Nevada, Butler finds an intimate, symbiotic connection between the respectable and disreputable in western towns and cities.

The use of other kinds of documents, particularly property and tax records,

might have modified Butler's conclusions somewhat, especially on the economic promise of the trade. But her book, the first serious study encompassing the entire western region, adds much to our understanding of frontier society. Clearly and concisely written, it deserves high praise.

Elliott West  
*University of Arkansas, Fayetteville*

*The Indian Rights Association: The Herbert Welsh Years, 1882-1904.* By William T. Hagan. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1985. xi + 301 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, and index. \$21.95.)

FOUNDED BY HERBERT WELSH in 1882, the Indian Rights Association (IRA) recently celebrated a century of involvement in Indian affairs. Although the organization's membership never has exceeded 1,500, it occasionally has been an influential national voice in the continuing debate over the proper relationship between the federal government and Native Americans. This was especially true during the period covered by William T. Hagan's book, when the IRA promoted the passage of the Dawes Severalty Act, called attention to the plight of Wounded Knee survivors and lobbied effectively for the extension of civil service rules to the Indian Service.

Much of the IRA's early success derived from the character and personal circumstances of its founder. Herbert Welsh was born into a prosperous Philadelphia family, falling heir to a fortune sufficiently large to support him while he pursued interests not calculated to improve his financial standing. As an enthusiastic Episcopalian, Welsh was infused with the fervor of Christian responsibility. He became caught up in the general reformist movement of the late nineteenth century, choosing to concentrate on Indian affairs following a visit to four Sioux agencies in the summer of 1882. With several friends Welsh established the Indian Rights Association in December of that year. For the next two decades, from his position as corresponding secretary of the IRA, he committed the organization to the reform not only of the Indian Service—long plagued by corrupt or incompetent agents—but also of the culture of the Indians of the United States. In the former, Welsh and the IRA could claim considerable success, as they were instrumental in the eventual incorporation of the Indian Service into the broader federal civil service system. Their efforts to change the Indian way of life were less successful.

Drawing heavily upon IRA archives, William T. Hagan has documented thoroughly the early years of the Indian Rights Association. A picture emerges of an organization owing both its success and its shortcomings to the dynamism of Welsh and a few close associates. The IRA was not the least bit

unconventional in the policies it advocated. Like most of his contemporaries, Welsh embraced the possibility of full and rapid assimilation of the Indian into American society. To this end he prescribed for the Indian a strong dose of Christianity combined with manual arts education, the forced division of communally held land into private holdings, and the adoption of agriculture. The early accomplishments of the IRA were due in some measure to the fact that this formula was already so widely accepted. Welsh's particular contributions were his drive and his recognition of the need for national publicity and intense lobbying in Washington. Hagan leaves little doubt that the IRA had not coherent plan and no organizational priorities that did not spring from the will of Herbert Welsh. The result was a piecemeal approach to Indian affairs which lost its impetus as Welsh's health began to fail in 1901.

*The Indian Rights Association* is a particularly fine example of the monographic approach to historiography. Its author immersed himself in a deep pool of primary sources, apparently surfacing only when he was satisfied that he had captured every detail. Unfortunately for the average reader, no detail has been omitted from the finished work, and practically no historical context has been provided. The result is a book that reads like a compendium of the sources from which it is drawn. If this is a flaw, it reflects not on the author, but on his editors, who could have requested a little less in the way of minutiae and a little more about the place of Welsh and the IRA in the America of the late nineteenth century. This is a truly scholarly work by a noted expert on Indian affairs; it will find its readers primarily among other students of Indian affairs.

R. T. King  
University of Nevada-Reno

*Washo Shamans and Peyotists: Religious Conflict in an American Indian Tribe.* By Edgar E. Siskin. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1983. xvii + 236 pp. Introduction, preface, diagrams, notes, bibliography, index.)

*Straight with the Medicine: Narratives of Washoe Followers of the Tipi Way.* As told to Warren L. d'Azevedo. (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1985. ix + 52 pp. Preface, illustrations, \$5.95.)

TWO RECENT WORKS OF SCHOLARSHIP on Washo culture have provided new insight and perspective into the process of acculturation within the Washo spiritual world. *Washo Shamans and Peyotists: Religious Conflict in an American Indian Tribe* by Edgar E. Siskin, and Warren L. d'Azevedo's *Straight with the Medicine: Narratives of Washoe Followers of the Tipi Way* add a new

and important element to the growing body of literature linking the Washo experience to the forces reshaping Indian life in America.

Siskin's focus on acculturation as it pertains to the societal tension between traditional shamanistic power and the threat of peyotism began with the author's doctoral fieldwork from 1936 to 1939. Unpublished at that time, Siskin undertook additional fieldwork in 1974 and 1981 to provide an anthropological follow-up to his original conclusions. The book's epilogue incorporates recent scholarship as well as a forty-year perspective on the acculturation process among the Washo.

A major thesis of Siskin's study is the centrality of witchcraft in Washo culture. The primacy of sorcery, as well as the absence of a traditional chief, resulted in a position of power for shamans unique among Great Basin Indians. The elevated status of shamans nurtured a pattern of resentment and distrust toward them which provided an opportunity for the acceptance of peyotism as a counterbalancing force among the Washo. The resulting tension between shamanistic power and Ben Lancaster's peyote cult permanently weakened the traditional role of the shaman, though not before the shamans rose to destroy the new faith through repeated recourse to witchcraft.

Siskin's analysis of Washo shamanism is admirable, particularly in his study of features which distinguish Washo practitioners from their counterparts in other areas. He places particular emphasis upon the lack of specialization among Washo shamans, the infrequency of ghosts as sources of power, and the virtually exclusive role of witchcraft as an explanation for serious illness. The dream experience, unlike the celebrated vision quest of the Plains culture, is involuntary and often resisted. Once the shaman's source of power is identified and mastered, the shaman can invoke his power for altruistic or malevolent purposes. Washo shamanism is also characterized by a virtual absence of natural phenomena as sources of power.

The brief though enthusiastic embracing of Ben Lancaster's peyote cult in 1936 punctured the monopoly of power and status traditionally held by the shamans. Washo peyotism, though derived primarily from the Kiowa-Comanche pattern, nonetheless assumed distinctive features under Lancaster. Lancaster's flamboyant and highly personal leadership during the ceremonies, as well as the prominent role that he assigned to women, have no parallel in mainstream peyotism. The heart of Siskin's work, however, assesses the effects of acculturation on Washo shamanism. Peyotism, as promulgated by Lancaster, provided a temporary outlet for fears of and accelerating frustrations toward the capriciousness of the shamans. Though the initial reaction to Lancaster was favorable, traditional fears of sorcery as practiced by the shamans could not sustain peyotism as a major force in Washo culture. Shamans reasserted their power, but the successful challenge, albeit temporary, weakened the roots of their power. Today there are no Washo shamans; the last one died in 1974.

*Straight with the Medicine* represents an appropriate complement to Siskin's work, particularly for those aspects of Siskin's book dealing with peyotism. Warren d'Azevedo has provided transcripts of personal testimonials regarding various aspects of *The Tipi Way* from Washo adherents of the Native American Church.

Taken as a group, the inclusive statements of faith represent a summary of the ethical system of the cult of peyotism as practiced by the Washo. The Tipi Way rejected Lancaster's practices and adhered to the more ritualized and collective Native American Church. The transcriptions present, in the words of d'Azevedo, "a search for a more meaningful life, for personal dignity, and the rediscovery of the positive values of an Indian past. . . ."

A persistent theme of *The Tipi Way* is the universality of peyotism. Not only do adherents welcome Indians of all tribes, but any person of "peace and good mind." The sacramental role of the peyote cactus eclipses the role of the road chiefs, drummers, and other trained spiritual leaders, and the essence of a "collective endeavor" permeates the book. In marked contrast to Siskin's emphasis on Ben Lancaster's brand of peyotism, which revolves around the showmanship of the leader and the role of the individual, the tipi way concentrates on the sense of brotherhood that pervades the meetings and on the attempts to attain a unity with nature.

One of the outstanding features of d'Azevedo's compilation is his care in preserving the essence of peyote spiritualism. By transcribing the rhythm and cadence of Washo speech, d'Azevedo retains the eloquence of the true believer, and adds a dimension not readily available through the written word. Perhaps his peyote testimonials are best summarized by one follower's reverent description of "The Herb"; "The whole world is in there." d'Azevedo's transcriptions sustain Siskin's conclusions regarding peyotism among the Washo. Though Siskin's major focus concerning peyote among the Washo is the rather individualistic peyote leadership of Ben Lancaster and his followers, the two works combine to provide a multi-dimensional view of the role of peyotism among the Washo. Though peyotism was always confined to a minority following, a point repeatedly emphasized by Siskin, the narratives of *The Tipi Way* point to peyotism as a legitimate religious alternative among the Washo.

Both books should appeal to numerous reading constituencies. *Washo Shamans and Peyotists* is a solid anthropological contribution toward an understanding of how acculturation created religious strife that eventually led to the destruction of shamanism among the Washo. Written within a classical anthropological format, yet nearly devoid of jargon, Siskin's clear, concise writing style should appeal to the reader with general as well as scholarly interests in Nevada history, Native-American life, and the process of cultural change, growth and decline.

*Straight with the Medicine*, though quite distinct from Siskin's work in its

approach and writing style, should also attract the attention of both serious scholars and amateur devotees of folklore and the modern Indian experience. d'Azevedo's transcriptions retain the sincerity as well as the devout belief of his informants. The heart and soul of the believer shines through each page of the book.

Each of these studies of Washo religion contains much merit in its own right, yet together they provide a multi-dimensional look at the twentieth-century Indian experience with peyotism. Both books clearly reflect the tenacity of modern Washo life and project the modern religious experience of a small but vital American subculture.

Doris D. Dwyer

*Western Nevada Community College*

*Adventures On and Off Interstate 80.* By Eleanor Huggins and John Olmsted. (Palo Alto: Tioga Publishing Company, 1985. 254 pp. Index, bibliography, maps, illus.)

AUTO TRAVEL, even on a high-speed interstate, can be enjoyable and educational according to Eleanor Huggins and John Olmsted. In their travelogue *Adventures On and Off Interstate 80*, the authors have identified recognizable landmarks, seldom-visited points of interest and, obviously, their favorite haunts along the 300-mile corridor between San Francisco and Lovelock, Nevada.

From the shoreline of San Francisco beach to the alkali sink of Nevada's Great Basin, travellers will delight in minicourses on geology, botany and history as the car ascends the Sierra Nevada summit. Straying off the west-east highway as much as twenty-five miles on either side, one becomes awed by California's mountain ranges, valleys, gold country and snow belt. Salt marshes, vernal pools, chaparral, pine, ponderosa, alpine rock gardens are but a few of the natural landmarks that demarcate changes in terrain and elevation.

Biographical sketches of John Sutter, John Muir and even the plight of George and Jacob Donner's doomed trek across the High Sierra put history in geographic perspective. Stories of other pioneers who have left their mark on portions of Interstate 80, goldmining operations, Indian and local folklore and excerpted writings add to the plethora of information.

The journey along Interstate 80 is divided into seven segments (chapters), both natural and historic backgrounds on each stretch precede suggested alternate loops and favorite diversions which leave and reenter the main highway at various points. Local museums, picnic areas, hikers' trails, and wheelchair facilities are listed within the individual chapters. Participants are

encouraged to pick up sand dollars along the beach, stroll through the marshlands of the East Bay estuaries, look for ruts left by covered wagon tracks of trans-Sierra emigrants, or walk across the Yuba River inside the 120-year-old Bridgeport Covered Bridge.

While the authors do know many areas of the Interstate corridor like the back of their hands and have travelled the sideroads on numerous occasions, they have assumed the first-time-out driver to know as much. Their directions fail to indicate any mileage distances from one point to the next, particularly where favorite (and out of the way) diversions are involved. Quite often these "down the road, make a left" directions leave readers wondering how many actual miles are involved and how much time to allow for the total alternate loop. Moreover, unless the driver watches his gas gauge some of the back-country routes may not have all available services.

Sketches of plant life are helpful but the schematic maps are too simplistic and do not provide enough details or landmarks for those unfamiliar with the area. Walking tours, such as in Nevada City, have no distance measurement. Historic sites within San Francisco's city limits are selective and driving information confusing, particularly going through Golden Gate Park. Disappointingly, Nob Hill, Coit Tower, Telegraph Hill and Chinatown are among locations not mentioned, all are well within Huggins and Olmsted's corridor and have significant historic impact on California's history.

A full scale, fold-out map would have been a welcome addition; however, armed with a well-plotted road map, hiking shoes, drinking water, time and a full tank of gas, educators, naturalists and those seeking a little something different on short weekends may find Huggins & Olmsted's travelogue of interest.

Sylvia Sun Minnick  
*Research Historian*

## *New Resource Materials*

### *Nevada Historical Society*

#### HAROLDS CLUB RECORDS

For more than forty years, Harolds Club has been a Reno landmark. Established in 1935 and operated by Harold Smith, Sr., his brother Raymond A. Smith, and their father, Raymond I. "Pappy" Smith, it became one of Nevada's leading and most publicized casinos. During the 1940s and 1950s, a national advertising campaign mounted by the Thomas C. Wilson Advertising Agency made it perhaps the most widely recognized of all Nevada gaming establishments. Harolds Club remained a Smith family business until 1970, when it was sold to Howard Hughes's Summa Corporation. Today, under its new owners, it continues to be one of the brightest and liveliest spots in downtown Reno.

The Society has been fortunate in acquiring a large group of financial records of Harolds Club. Although this material covers a period of almost four decades, from 1935 to the early 1970s, the bulk of it consists of journals and ledgers from the first twenty-five years of the Smith era which detail casino, restaurant and bar operations. Records of the two Harolds Club motels, architectural drawings for remodeling work at the club, and records of the Smith family's involvement with mining stocks and other investments are also included.

We thank Harolds Club and Greg Taylor, the club's museum curator, for making this very significant group of records available to us and to future researchers.

#### LEWIS MINING DISTRICT RECORDS

The mining camp of Lewis in northern Lander County was founded in 1874 and flourished for about ten years. At its height in the early 1880s, the community boasted a population of about 700, a post office, a weekly newspaper, and even a short line railroad, the Battle Mountain and Lewis Railway. The Starr Grove, Eagle, Betty O'Neal, and other mines supplied several mills with ore. After the middle 1880s, production in the Lewis district was sporadic. Not until the 1920s, when Noble Getchell reopened the Betty O'Neal, did prosperity return, and then it was only for a decade.



Interior of Harolds Club in Reno, c. 1940s. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

Because the Lewis district was a significant gold and silver producer, we are pleased to have acquired its official records for the years 1874-1913. These consist of district recorder's books 1, 2 and 3, which were kept by Edw. T. George, Frank Friley, E.B. Ramsdell, Jonathan H. Green, Edward Tembey and R.J. Eads, and contain minutes of miners' meetings, location notices, proofs of labor, district bylaws, and an account of the formation of the district in August, 1874.

The records were generously donated to the Society by Addison Millard of Carson City, on behalf of the Andrew and Dorothy Kinneberg family.

#### THOMAS H. WILLIAMS CORRESPONDENCE

A series of letters to Thomas H. Williams, a prominent Democratic political figure in Nevada during the Comstock period, has been acquired from D. Anson Reinhart of Oakland, California.

"General" Williams, a Kentuckian who had settled in California in 1850 and been elected state attorney general later in that decade, was a leading attorney of Virginia City, Nevada, in the 1860s and 1870s. He served as

assemblyman from Storey County in 1871, chaired the state Democratic central committee, and was an unsuccessful candidate for the U.S. Senate in 1867, 1872 and 1874. Wealthy from mining investments on the Comstock, Williams left Nevada in the later 1870s and returned to California where he continued to practice law and engage in various lucrative business pursuits. He died in San Francisco in 1886.

The Williams correspondence that has come to the Society includes eight letters, written by William Garrard, George G. Berry, Charles E. Abbot and others of the general's political allies, which deal with his 1874 senate candidacy and efforts to elect state legislators friendly to him. The material is important to historians not only because it pertains to a leader of the Nevada Democratic party at the time, but because it provides some rare glimpses into the inner-workings of a major Comstock era political campaign.

Eric Moody  
*Curator of Manuscripts*

### *Nevada State Museum and Historical Society, Las Vegas*

#### ELMO BRUNER DRAWINGS

The Nevada State Museum and Historical Society, Las Vegas, has recently acquired architect Elmo Bruner's drawings and engineering specifications. Bruner was responsible for the design of many local buildings, including the original McCarran Air Terminal in 1949, parts of Las Vegas High School, John S. Park Elementary School, the cafeteria at the Atomic Test Site in 1969, Bishop Manogue High School Complex in Reno in 1958, and numerous churches throughout Nevada, the most outstanding of which was St. Anne's Catholic Church in Las Vegas in 1963.

Thanks to the generosity of Lucile Spire Bruner, noted local artist, the museum has obtained the bulk of Mr. Bruner's work, drawings, and plans. They are an excellent learning tool for aspiring architects and can be used for the study of local history, restoration and rehabilitation of buildings, and the history of architecture in southern Nevada.

#### THE JOHN CAHLAN COLLECTION

John Francis Cahlan donated a great deal of his life's work to the Nevada State Museum and Historical Society in Las Vegas. His collections, papers, and photographs reflect over 60 years of dedicated service to Las Vegas, Clark County and the entire state of Nevada.

Educated in Reno and a graduate of the University of Nevada, Cahlan

joined the *Nevada State Journal* in 1927 as sports editor. He moved to Las Vegas in 1929 and was with the *Review-Journal* until 1961 as editor and managing editor. He was director of the state Centennial Commission, an officer of the Bicentennial Commission, a regent of the University of Nevada, and a juvenile officer for Clark County. He was responsible for the founding of the State Archives.

The collection includes over one hundred manuscripts written by Cahlan and his wife, the late Florence Lee Jones Cahlan, concerning a wide variety of Nevada topics. There are also over eight hundred photographs, including many rare, historic shots of Las Vegas from its birth in 1905. A collection of historic Las Vegas phone books highlights a vast amount of memorabilia the Cahlans acquired in their six decades of southern Nevada living. Diaries, stories, and clippings from their days on the *Review-Journal* complete the collection. Our museum is very proud of and grateful for Mr. Cahlan's gift.

David Millman  
*Curator of Collections*

*University of Nevada-Reno, Library  
Special Collections Department*

#### MARY L. GOJACK PAPERS

The papers of Mary L. Gojack, former Nevada legislator, were recently acquired by the Special Collections Department of the University of Nevada-Reno Library following her death on November 12, 1985. A native of Iowa, Mary Gojack came to Nevada in the late 1950s and began her political career in 1972 when she was elected to the Nevada Assembly from Washoe County. After completing one term, she ran successfully for the Nevada Senate and served until 1978. Mary Gojack, a Democrat, championed causes of women, the poor and the elderly. She was the first legislator to call for the removal of the sales tax on food and was an enthusiastic supporter of the Equal Rights Amendment. She sponsored legislation for the creation of parks and for government reform.

In 1980, she unsuccessfully challenged Paul Laxalt for one of Nevada's U.S. Senate seats. She was defeated again in her bid for the Second Congressional District seat in 1982. At the time of her death, she was engaged in the real estate business.

Included in the papers, which are currently being inventoried, are political papers from her terms in the Nevada State Legislature, material from all her political campaigns, papers concerning women's issues and the ERA in Nevada, and personal papers.

## ROBERT LAXALT PAPERS

Robert Laxalt recently donated his papers to the Special Collections Department of the University of Nevada-Reno Library. Well-known author and director of the University of Nevada Press from 1961 to 1983, Laxalt was named Distinguished Nevadan by the regents of the University of Nevada System. He was recently appointed by President Reagan to the National Council on the Humanities, and is the first Nevadan to serve on the council.

Robert Laxalt grew up in Carson City in a prominent Nevada family made famous, in part, by his best-known book, *Sweet Promised Land*, a story about his father, a Basque sheepherder. Laxalt is the author of numerous short stories and some internationally acclaimed novels. In recent years, he has been associated with the *National Geographic Magazine*, contributing a number of articles on Basque culture and Western America. He authored the official bicentennial history of Nevada for the 1976 series. He is presently a distinguished visiting professor in the University of Nevada School of Journalism.

The Robert Laxalt papers contain original manuscripts, galley proofs, reviews, correspondence, copies of published works, newspaper articles and clippings, personal and family memorabilia and photographs. A box inventory is available for the collection.

## CARNELIAN BAY WATER COMPANY RECORDS

A small collection of records from the Carnelian Bay Water Company was recently given to the Special Collections Department of the University of Nevada-Reno Library by the officers of the now disbanded company. The water company, incorporated in April, 1929, existed as a public utility, engaged in the business of supplying and distributing water to residents of the Carnelian Bay area at Lake Tahoe. The company sold and transferred its property and water rights to the North Tahoe Public Utility District, State of California in 1975.

The records include articles of incorporation, bylaws, minutes of meetings, correspondence, financial accounts, tax statements, stock ledgers, stockholder and membership lists and documents of dissolution. The collection is being processed.

Lenore M. Kosso  
*Manuscript Curator*

*University of Nevada-Reno, Library  
Oral History Program (OHP)*

The Oral History Program at the University of Nevada, Reno recently completed a biographical oral history of Frederick M. Anderson, M.D., begun in 1978 by Mary Ellen Glass, then the director of the OHP. The interviewing was interrupted shortly thereafter, not to be resumed until the fall of 1983. By the summer of 1985 over fifty hours of tape-recorded interviewing had been concluded. Following transcription, editing and binding the work was recently placed in the collections of the UNR and UNLV Libraries.

Fred Anderson was born in White Pine County, Nevada, in 1906. He graduated from the University of Nevada in 1928, attended Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar, and graduated from the Harvard School of Medicine in 1934. Following internships in surgery, Dr. Anderson returned to Nevada in 1938, practicing medicine in Carson City until World War II broke out. Shortly after returning from military service, he moved his practice and residence to Reno. In the 1950s, Dr. Anderson was elected to the Board of Regents of the University of Nevada (on which he served for 23 years) and campaigned without success for the Democratic nomination for United States Senator.

This oral history is an important source of much previously undocumented information about: the University of Nevada in the 1920s; the Minard Stout affair; the growth of the University System; the origins of the UNR School of Medicine; the Board of Regents, 1950s-1970s; Nevada politics, 1950s-1970s; and many of the people who figured prominently in the above topics. The transcription is in two bound volumes. It is available to the public during working hours at the UNR Oral History Program and in the Special Collections Departments of the UNR and UNLV Libraries. Those interested in purchasing a copy of all or part of the oral history should contact the program coordinator of OHP at (702) 784-6932.

R. T. King  
*Director*

*University Nevada-Reno, Library  
Government Publications Department*

The Government Publications Department has recently received *Farm Security Administration Historical Section: A Guide to Textual Records in the Library of Congress* by Annette Melville. The microfilmed records are divided into four series: office files, captions, supplementary reference files,

and scrapbooks. The office files include budgetary items, exhibit information, statistical and personnel information. The caption sheets enumerate all negatives made for each assignment. The FSA photographers provided two captions for each print; a short one for exhibits and a longer one for background information. The supplementary files contain additional material, such as the photographer's impression of the subject. The scrapbooks have newspaper and journal articles about the prints and the agency.

The department also acquired a new two-volume guide to the census, compiled by Suzanne Schulze, entitled *Population Information in Nineteenth Century Census Volumes* and *Population Information in Twentieth Century Census Volumes: 1900-1940* (Oryx Press, 1983). This index covers demographic, social and economic characteristics; density; vital statistics; and foreign data. Using the guide on the inside of the front cover, the researcher can easily identify the correct census volume. More detailed information about the individual tables is provided for each entry. Both volumes include a glossary, a list of microfilmed population schedules, information about state censuses, and a list of census questions.

Teri W. Conrad  
*Library Assistant III*

### *Nevada State Library and Archives Division of Archives and Records*

The Nevada State Library and Archives, Division of Archives and Records recently acquired the Nevada State Legislative Commission Minutes of Meetings 1945-1974. The Nevada State Legislative Counsel Bureau was created in 1945 to meet the informational needs of the state legislature. In 1953 the Legislative Commission was created to exercise general policymaking and supervising authority over the operations of the Bureau. The Commission reviews and studies requests for legislation from state agencies, local governments, public officers and legislators, and may receive recommendations and suggestions from private groups. Between sessions of the legislature, it fixes the work priority of all studies and investigations assigned to it by concurrent resolutions of the legislature. The minutes, in twenty-six volumes, contain information about the creation and function of this Commission and important legislative issues from the early 1950s to 1974.

The Division of Archives and Records also acquired the *Secretary of State Federal Campaign Practices Act, Financial Disclosure Statements 1972-1982*. This record series contains information on the contributions and spending of

candidates for federal offices, 1971-1982. Each file lists individual contributors, contributions and expenditures by candidate. These records also contain information on Nevada Political Action Committees (PACs) including financial statements and itemized disbursements.

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Karen Johnston, *Las Vegas*  
Russell W. McDonald, *Reno*  
Barbara Meierhenry, *Las Vegas*  
Edna B. Patterson, *Elko*  
Mary Rivera, *Las Vegas*  
Marjorie Russell, *Carson City*

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.

