

Nevada

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SUMMER 1991

NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

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Front Cover: Railroad Day Parade, Goldfield, 1905. (Nevada Historical Society)

POWER TO RULE OR RUIN

Goldfield's Long Shadow over Nevada Politics

Sally S. Zanjani

Get an axe . . . look up around you and use your axe at the system that makes slaves of you, makes you old before you are young . . . your mind atrophied with the monotonous daily grind of toil. Unite, brothers, under the banner of Industrial Unionism.

—Harry Jardine, Socialist Party
congressional candidate from Goldfield, 1906

I hope you break the backs of everyone of those suckers down there.

—Instructions from George Wingfield's Reno office to
subordinates at the Goldfield Consolidated Mines Company

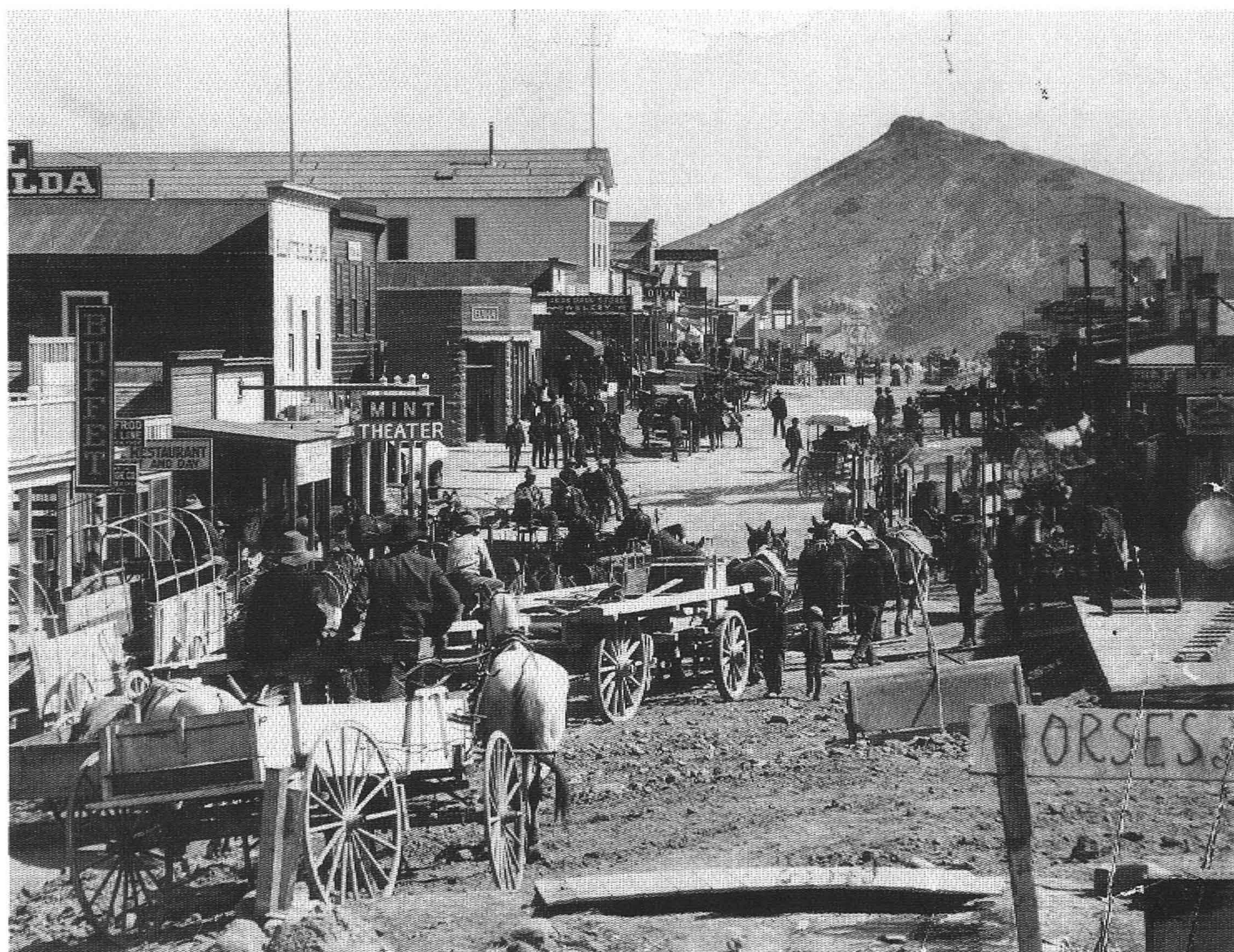
Long after large-scale mining ceased in 1919 and Goldfield shrank to a shell of its former self, the city was to cast a long shadow over Nevada politics. The central Nevada mining boom that commenced with the discoveries of Tonopah in 1900 and Goldfield in 1902 had triggered a long-lasting partisan realignment in state politics and produced the new elite that would later dominate the state. Moreover, Goldfield witnessed two major political reform movements of twentieth-century Nevada, Progressivism and Socialism. The streets of Goldfield became an arena in which the ultimate ideological battle between capitalism and socialism was waged in 1907—and the final solution imposed.

Against this backdrop of high stakes and large ambitions, local government in Goldfield remained crude and elementary throughout the boom years from 1903 to 1907. In the manner of miners ever since the California gold rush, Goldfielders had organized and christened their district in the autumn of 1903, with the election of a recorder for their mining claims as the primary order of business. Aside from setting wages and hours at the top of the union scale, they appar-

Sally S. Zanjani is the author of numerous works on Nevada history, including *Goldfield*, to be published next year by Swallow Press/Ohio University Press. This article was taken from that manuscript.

ently made no attempt to regulate camp life in other spheres. Most traditional governmental authority remained in the hands of the county commissioners in Hawthorne, the Esmeralda County seat, some 135 miles distant.¹

As the camp's population swelled into the thousands, government by a body far removed from local needs became increasingly untenable. After an explosive meeting at which Goldfield demanded home rule and lambasted the commission's neglect, the commissioners authorized the election of a town council for Goldfield. The council would act upon much needed improvements and other local matters, subject to the subsequent approval of the commission. While this stop-gap measure fell short of home rule, Goldfielders accepted it in the belief that the problem would be solved when the city incorporated at the next session of the legislature in 1907. In view of the general mining-camp tendency to award political offices to professionals and merchants, the membership of the five-person council elected in the summer of 1905 included some surprises. Saloon-keeper W. S. ("Ole") Elliott garnered the most votes, a testament to the influential position occupied in the community by saloon proprietors, and several other candidates were outdistanced by a socialist waiter named Joseph William Smith—later to be known far beyond the boundaries of Goldfield as one of the defendants in the infamous Preston-Smith murder trial.²



Booming downtown Goldfield, c. 1904. (Nevada Historical Society)

Local government ground along under this two-tier system, while services lagged and the emoluments of local officials soared, until the legislative session convened in 1907. Then Goldfielders of all political persuasions, spearheaded by the Chamber of Commerce, united for one objective—moving the Esmeralda County seat from Hawthorne to Goldfield and ending the expense and inconvenience of traveling to Hawthorne to transact legal business. Although the commission had thwarted a 1906 attempt by Goldfield to hold a special election on the county-seat issue, changes following a shift in a county's population center had ample precedent. Hawthorne itself had won the county seat from the old mining camp of Aurora, and in 1905 nearby Tonopah had wrested the prize away from Belmont, the old Nye County seat. Thus, Goldfielders had every reason to anticipate success. But, just to make certain, they threw their money around in royal style.³

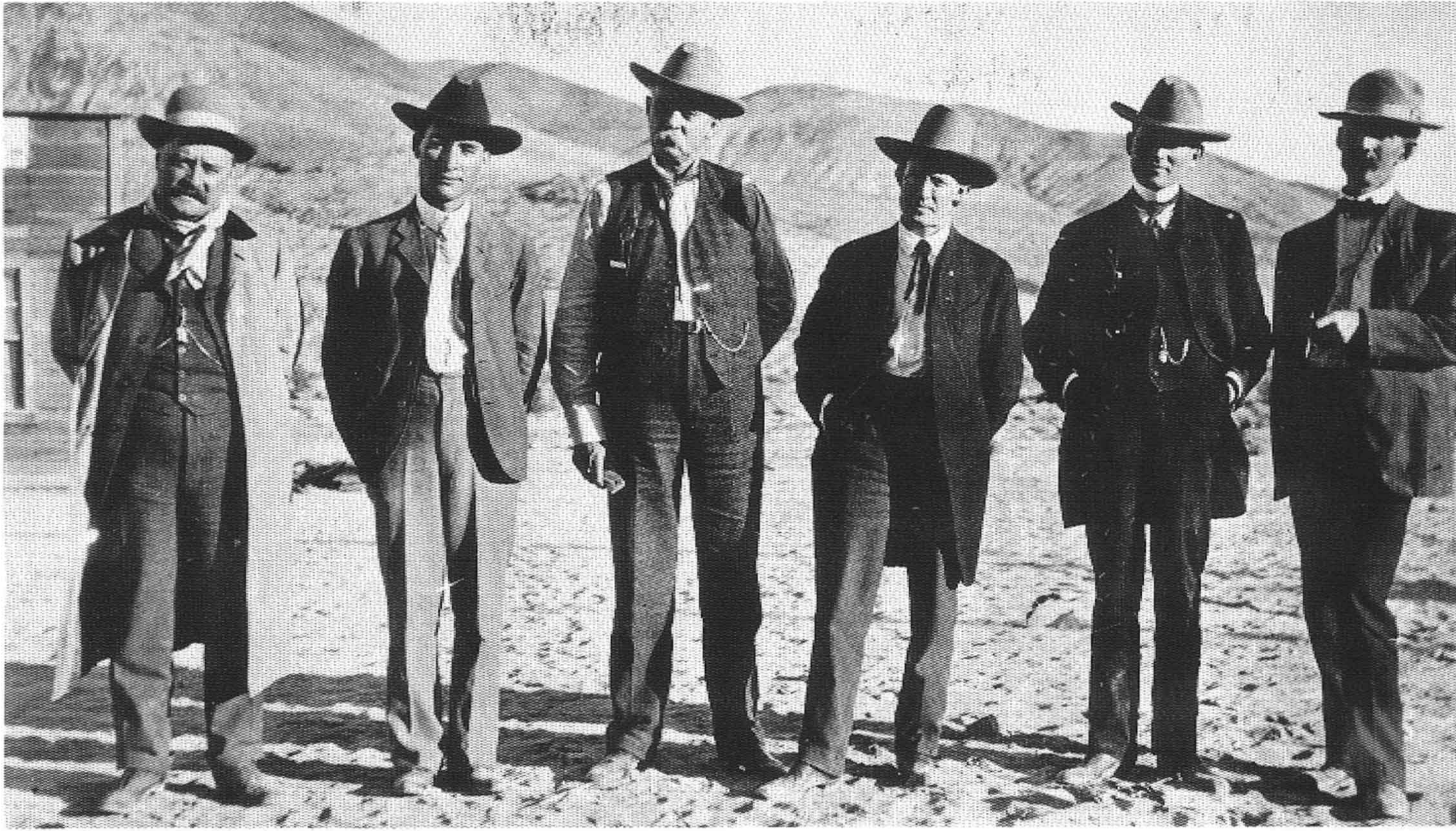
The struggle, the *Carson Appeal* called Nevada's "liveliest county seat fight," commenced with a blitz in the state Senate, where the measure whipped through on the second day of the session without a dissenting vote. Hawthorne fiercely resisted, however, and the Assembly delayed action. The legislature permitted Alfred McCarthy, editor of Hawthorne's *Walker Lake Bulletin*, to appear on the Assembly floor for an impassioned speech in which he characterized the populace of Goldfield as "bums and loafers" (in contrast, of course, to the sterling citizens of Hawthorne).⁴

Bums and loafers they may have been, but they far outnumbered the tiny population of Hawthorne. Moreover, as the *Appeal* candidly admitted, "They had the golden dope to do business and they paid cash." Following a "monster mass meeting" at the new stock exchange in Goldfield, a special train bedecked with streamers and loaded with boosters from business and organized labor departed for Carson City to lobby the legislature. To sustain themselves during the journey, the delegation reportedly imbibed forty cases of Old Rye and sixty of champagne, with double these amounts on hand for the siege at the capitol. Carson treated the visitors to a grand ball, and the Goldfielders lavishly reciprocated. "They spent money like water and kept a local bank on the jump all day and night," related the *Goldfield Tribune*. "Such a flow of champagne and jingling of twenty-dollar gold pieces has never been seen here in years." Lest the merrymaking be too abruptly curtailed, the Assembly delayed a few days before making Goldfield the new county seat without a dissenting vote. Goldfielders topped off the festivities by shooting up the town.⁵

Shortly afterward Governor John Sparks and a large party of legislators and their wives arrived in Goldfield to be wined and dined at a reception in the Montezuma Club and a dance at Union Hall, to which the entire city was invited. The reception committee announced, "Everybody will be allowed to go to bed when he pleases but until daylight shall appear, it will not be deemed the thing to do." The legislative party, less accustomed to all-night celebrations than Goldfielders, no doubt retired first.⁶

After the Esmeralda county commissioners took up the reins of local government in Goldfield, superseding the town board, the drive to incorporate lost momentum. Though the Chamber of Commerce and the *Goldfield Chronicle*, among others, continued to press for incorporation, several factors undercut the effort. Many apparently believed that incorporation would mean an expensive duplicate set of officials in a city already noted for wasteful spending. The existing officials showed little disposition to share the power and perquisites of office with a new set of rivals. Moreover, in a camp with Goldfield's mobile population, the legal requirement to secure the signatures of a majority of the taxpaying voters in the last election posed a considerable hurdle to those circulating petitions for incorporation. Finally, while none would have openly admitted it, doubts as to the permanence of Goldfield had started to surface. The declining market in mining stocks and the bitter lockout against the unions in the spring of 1907 were eroding the booster ethic. By summer the *Goldfield News* gave voice to the once unspeakable thought that Goldfield's duration was "purely problematical." Many camp residents with no intention of making Goldfield their permanent home showed little interest in incorporation, and the mercantile middle-class sector represented by the Chamber of Commerce proved too weak to prevail. As a result, the town that was, for awhile, the largest city in Nevada never became a city. This did not prevent Goldfield from making a farcical and unsuccessful attempt to snatch the state capital from Carson City in 1909.⁷

The *News* praised the quality of government provided by the commissioners on the ground that Goldfield "practically has no government at all and still is the best governed city of its size and business importance throughout the land." Few would dispute that Goldfield had almost no government at all, but not everyone saw it as an asset. The *Chronicle* constantly blasted the commissioners' extravagance and incompetence—at least, until the demise of the newspaper permanently silenced its criticisms. In fairness it should be borne in mind that the need for a courthouse, schools, and other public facilities in a new and populous settlement where none had previously existed compelled the commissioners to embark upon an expensive building program funded primarily by bond issues; decline then set in before the new infrastructure had been paid for. Yet the building program failed to explain the disappearance of the bountiful revenues from taxes and licenses that were pouring into county coffers (an audit revealed that \$200,000 had mysteriously evaporated through embezzlement or misappropriation, never to be recovered). It appeared that the *Chronicle's* scathing editorials on the county commissioners' "power to rule or ruin" and on the looming bankruptcy of the richest county in the state had some foundation in fact.⁸ By 1908 rebellious citizens, believing themselves "taxed to the limit of human endurance," demanded a tax reduction to levels commensurate with other Nevada counties. As the camp's decline accelerated, auction sales of Goldfield property for delinquent taxes proliferated. Early in 1909 the



Governor John Sparks (third from left) and friends: (left to right) C. D. Van Duzer, future Governor Denver Dickerson, George Bartlett, James Sweeney and Frank Mannix. (Nevada Historical Society)

county that had squandered its funds in such profligate fashion began negotiating a bank loan to meet its bills.⁹

Even before this day of reckoning arrived, the commissioners generally starved essential services or attempted to have them performed without payment. Teachers and firemen worked without pay for periods as long as five months at a time. Streets were graded and cleared by a chain gang of prisoners from the local jail, a practice strongly opposed by Constable Claude Inman, whose enlightened views often set him at odds with the commissioners. Graft became an integral part of the system when the county commissioners reportedly authorized lawmen to secure salaries for a new force of deputies by covertly assessing the inhabitants of the tenderloin, an old system that had moved westward from the eastern cities, where it probably originated, to gold rush California and later to Kansas.¹⁰

The concept of poverty as a public responsibility was alien to the county commissioners, as it was to many other local officials at the turn of the century. They personally scrutinized every bill presented to the county with Scrooge-like intensity. They compelled patients suspected of malingering at the county hospital to take the pauper's oath before granting them assistance. Providing a destitute individual with a railroad ticket out of the county was the only other form of public assistance they undertook. While the call by *Goldfield News* for a charity organization to provide systematic assistance to Goldfield's poor produced no results, private acts of charity relieved the misery of some.¹¹ For

instance, a piece of embroidery might be raffled to assist a "lady in unfortunate circumstances," or the Ladies' Aid Society might hold a benefit to "alleviate the sufferings of the unfortunate." The fraternal lodges gave some aid to their destitute members, and the benevolences of churchmen like Father James Dermody also did much to assist Goldfield's poor. Nonetheless, even before the mine owners multiplied the privation by blacklisting union men in late 1907, poverty was assuming alarming proportions in the very camp known for easy money and big spending. In the early autumn of 1907, the *News* noted the presence of hundreds of unemployed men, stranded in Goldfield with their families and too impoverished to leave town.¹²

Vagrancy was seen as a problem in law enforcement rather than a matter of poverty, and the sheriff periodically arrested "hoboes," offering them a choice of jail and work on the chain gang or departure from Goldfield. Yet it appears that many of these men were really the working poor. Nearly all of those arrested in a sweep against "vags" camping out in Rocky Canyon during the summer of 1907 could prove that they held jobs.¹³

If the town ordinances provide a reliable clue to the concerns of Goldfield officials, the danger of fire overshadowed all else. The bulk of the ordinances passed by the Goldfield town council was devoted to outlawing fire hazards in minute detail, including home barbeques and sales of gasoline within the town limits. Though Goldfield's vulnerability to fire obviously worried the city fathers, they showed complete indifference to that complex of pastimes that assembles under the broad umbrella of "vice." At a time when other communities were busily enacting laws to regulate morality, Goldfield harked back to the wide-open traditions of the old frontier. With the exception of a vague prohibition against drunkenness, no ordinance attempted to regulate drinking, gambling, drugs, or the conduct of business on Sundays.

Controlling prostitution was apparently the only real concern in the moral realm. While prostitution was never forbidden, ordinances barred women other than employees from saloons, and the commission confined dance halls and bordellos to an area officially designated the "Red Light district." The commissioners actually closed a few establishments that violated these rules, including *The Idler*, a notorious "refreshment and amusement resort" where worthy matrons allegedly fell into sin and ladies of doubtful virtue prowled in search of a mining camp Midas.¹⁴

While the commission appeared in theory to share power with other elected officials, most notably the district attorney, the sheriff, and the town constable, they had ways of influencing these officeholders. The commissioners used their appointment powers freely, especially when they made the brother-in-law of one of their number an assistant district attorney and, later, justice of the peace despite his doubtful qualifications. When a vacancy failed to occur naturally through the death or departure of an elected officeholder, the commission sometimes created one by raising to an impossible level the amount of bond an official

was required to post. By this means, they deprived Socialist District Attorney J. E. Davidson of his office in 1906, appointing in his place a conservative Republican, John Douglas, who was more to their liking. The commission instantly reduced the district attorney's bond to a minimal level, and Douglas occupied the office until the voters rejected him at the next election. Besides maneuvers with the bonds of other officials, the commission's financial powers proved useful when a host of deputy sheriffs were reportedly hired in 1908 to work for the re-election of the local triumvirate—the commission, the sheriff, and the district attorney.¹⁵

Of these offices, the combined position of sheriff and tax assessor was seen as the political plum, probably because it entailed such lush financial rewards through the so-called fee system prescribed by state law. Under this mode of governance, the sheriff augmented his annual salary with fees for all taxes and licenses he collected. Other local officials received similar fees. The district attorney, for instance, collected fees for felony convictions extending upward to \$100 for a successful first-degree murder prosecution. The office of district recorder, initially occupied by Claude Smith, was reputedly one of the most lucrative, with fees that swelled the occupant's remuneration to \$1,000 a month (exceeding the salary of the United States president, when multiplied into today's dollars). Goldfield justices of the peace also received fees, which may have stimulated the volume of legal business they processed. Justice Isaac Solomon, for one, was called to explain to the county commissioners how he had managed to hear thirty-one cases in a single day.¹⁶

The press strongly decried this "vicious and obsolete" form of government:

Office holders fatten at the expense of the taxpayers, and accumulate fortunes through encouraging litigation. If an official is worth his hire he should receive a suitable stipend that will abundantly reward him for his services A peace officer can graft through meretricious arrests by raiding disorderly houses at his pleasure. The justice, constables, and district attorney come in for their share of the plunder, and an endless chain is established, with the helpless taxpayer wearing the collar that compels him to pay an exorbitant levy for the conduct of his business.¹⁷

Considering that a good deal of money, along with power and prestige, was at stake, it is scarcely surprising that lawmen sometimes fought for their pieces of the turf with drawn guns, and arrested each other. When the sheriff and the constable finally arrived at detente in the summer of 1907, the diplomatic ramifications of the resulting peace treaty recalled a settlement between nations at war.¹⁸

If fees, legitimate percentages allotted to lawmen upon recovery of ore stolen by highgraders, and graft from the "corrupt fund" regularly collected in the tenderloin provided a sheriff with insufficient remuneration, the standards of the day posed no barriers to private business ventures in the saloon-dance hall world. William Ingalls, a lean, stooped, elderly man with a drooping white



Esmeralda County Sheriff William A. Ingalls, c. 1908. (Nevada Historical Society)

mustache, had held the office of Esmeralda County sheriff in Hawthorne long before the Goldfield rush began; and he kept it for most of the boom period, another instance in which an old-timer managed to hold onto office because thousands of newcomers were too passive and disorganized to wrest it from him. Throughout these years, Sheriff Ingalls remained a part owner of the Palace Saloon, where he maintained his offices. Political enemies charged that he was also the landlord from whom many cyprians in the red-light district rented their cribs. While newspaper cartoonists satirized him in the tattered velvet and ermine robes of high office, no one publicly suggested that Ingalls's solid-gold badge, encrusted with diamonds, rubies, and sapphires, a gift from his deputies in 1907, might have connotations disquieting to advocates of good government.¹⁹

How easily Goldfield's minimal government of lawmen and county commissioners could be elbowed aside was memorably demonstrated in the spring of 1907, when the camp gained a new de facto government. Popular hysteria in the wake of the shooting of restaurateur John Silva by union organizer Morrie Preston in a picketing dispute on March 10 led to the formation of the Goldfield Businessmen's and Mine Owners' Association at a meeting in the Montezuma Club. For George Wingfield, a principal owner of the Goldfield Consolidated

Mines Company, the shooting proved providential. Public fears that violence by the radical unions was an immediate threat enabled him temporarily to unite Goldfield's individualistic mine owners and leasers behind his supreme objective—destruction of the radical unions. Indeed, the Association ledger clearly announced "but one purpose," the denial of employment to all members of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).²⁰

"The vigilante has traditionally rationalized his action by convincing himself that he lives in a state of anarchy . . . since the authorities are unwilling or unable to protect him from predators," observed William E. Burroughs in *Vigilante*, "so he is really trying to preserve the essence of law and order until he is relieved of that burden by effective lawmen and judges." Since similar rationalizations were voiced in Goldfield, a question should be raised at this point: Did the Silva shooting signify a breakdown in law enforcement that demanded a vigilante response? First, no one could seriously suggest that the Silva shooting was but one in a series of union crimes that the Goldfield legal system had failed to punish. Despite their violent reputations, the radical unions had conducted themselves with remarkable restraint in Goldfield. Nor was Preston likely to elude punishment. He had turned himself in to legal authorities and remained in custody pending his probable indictment and trial. In fact, the Goldfield law-enforcement system could scarcely have failed, having had as yet not much opportunity to proceed. Vigilantism in Goldfield arose not as a response to any real deficiency in law enforcement but rather from the misperception of an isolated crime as a major public threat.²¹

To accomplish its stated purpose of destroying the union, the Association proceeded to usurp the functions of local officials. It employed a special prosecutor, John Douglas, who largely took over the Preston-Smith case from the district attorney. While the case against a list of radical union leaders for their part in the so-called assassination plot eventually crumbled, the indictments provided a useful weapon for driving out of town leading radicals who might have resisted destruction of the union. The Goldfield Businessmen's and Mine Owners' Association also levied assessments upon its members and apparently employed detectives working under cover inside the unions. It foisted upon local lawmen thirty-five special deputies of its own, commanded by Goldfield Consolidated's security chief, Clarence Sage, and his lieutenant, "Curly" Lovell. Association records also reveal expenditures for large numbers of rifles destined for its supporters. During the prolonged lockout against the union in March and April of 1907, the Association ruled the city.²²

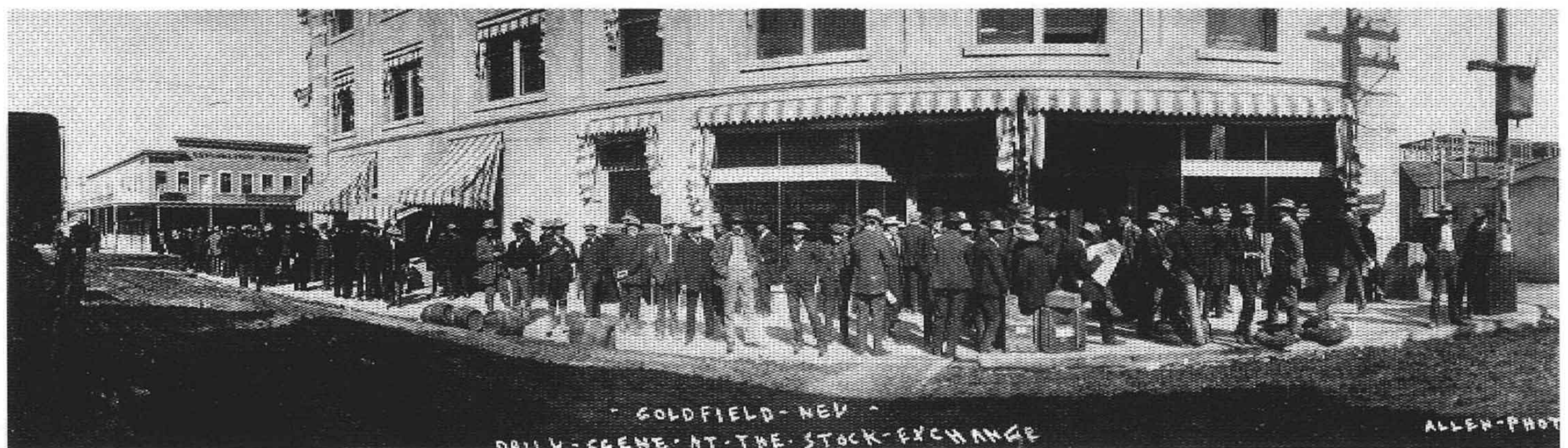
Unanimity nonetheless proved elusive in a community of frontier businessmen accustomed to following their own pursuits as the spirit moved them. Saloonkeepers refused to join the Association, and stockbrokers rejected Senator George Nixon's plea to close the exchanges for the duration of the lockout. All the same, the Association achieved Wingfield's main objectives. After more than a month of soup kitchens and standing idle in the streets, the union men who

had dreamed of making Goldfield a workers' paradise knuckled under to most of the mine owners' demands. This victory was completed the following December when the mine owners eradicated the unions under cover of federal troops, and Association representatives paraded the Preston-Smith case before federal investigators as one of the principal justifications for action against union violence.²³

Having served its purpose, the Goldfield Businessmen's and Mine Owners' Association faded from the scene. As Richard Maxwell Brown rightly notes, "Vigilante movements were characteristically in the control of the frontier elite and represented the elite's social values and preferences." Although the elite assumed their accustomed role in Goldfield, their concerns had broadened from horse thieves and criminals to include labor leaders and political radicals, and their methods had acquired a sophistication unknown to the San Franciscans of the 1850s, the Missouri Bald Knobbers, and other frontier vigilante groups. By engineering the convictions of Preston and Smith, they succeeded in turning a run-of-the-mill self-defense shooting that would otherwise have attracted little notice in a mining camp into an anti-union public-relations coup with statewide repercussions. No such effect could possibly have been achieved by taking the law into their own hands through the crude methods of earlier vigilantes.²⁴

From the perspective of almost a century, the triumph of capitalist values through modernized vigilante tactics may seem a foregone conclusion. Yet it is important to bear in mind that in the first decade of the twentieth century the socialist challenge from political outsiders appeared strong and real. The American Socialist Party founded by Eugene Debs in 1901 garnered only a small percentage of votes, but its potential alarmed mainstream politicians from President Theodore Roosevelt to the state capitols. In Nevada, politicians had great cause for alarm because in a state so scantily populated a small number of votes could easily alter electoral results. In the 1906 election, no state candidate polled as many as 9,000 votes and no winning margin exceeded 4,000. Moreover, the Socialist vote was rising in every election, nurtured by the organizers in the avowedly Socialist Western Federation of Miners.²⁵

The same fragile electoral equation that alarmed the ruling elite quickened the



The Goldfield Stock Exchange, c. 1907. (Nevada Historical Society)

hopes of Goldfield's socialist dreamers, men like Vincent St. John, Harry Jardine, and Joseph Smith. Of these, St. John, a slight, clean-shaven, gray-eyed young miner and union organizer of thirty, with a calm face and demeanor and a heart seething with fury, was already a figure well known to American radicals. His participation in the armed resistance during a miners' strike in Cripple Creek in 1901 gained him a lasting reputation for violence, and his successful union organizing in Idaho's Coeur d'Alene marked him as doubly dangerous to the mining corporations. By the time he arrived in Goldfield in the autumn of 1906, he had emerged as one of the most radical leaders in the anarcho-syndicalist IWW, a missionary dedicated to emancipating the entire working class by organizing its members in a single union—or, as he put it, "an organization which asks no quarter and will give none; whose battle cry is 'an injury to one is an injury to all'; an organization which recognizes no division among workers." Wingfield's spies inside the union reported that St. John saw Nevada as an isolated state where the radicals could gain control.²⁶

St. John later remembered the winter of 1906–1907 as a kind of golden age in which these visions seemed on the verge of realization through the citywide union of the combined WFM and IWW. For a brief time, the union's word was law and the employers came humbly to Union Hall instead of the other way around. The influence of Goldfield's radicals crested at the Bloody Sunday parade held on January 20, 1907, to commemorate the Saint Petersburg massacre of Russian revolutionaries and to support union leaders then awaiting trial in Idaho. Thousands marched while thousands more watched from the board sidewalks. That night an overflow crowd massed in Union Hall to hear St. John and other union leaders speak upon the "coming revolution."

From this point onward, however, St. John's influence in Goldfield steadily waned. Though his followers idolized him, many miners did not share his radical views, and his conservative opponents within the union detested him almost as much as his corporate enemies. Perhaps his persuasive powers, his infinite patience, and his charismatic personality prolonged the spring lockout, but in the end, the Saint could not dissuade the membership from caving in before George Wingfield's "compromise be damned" policy. Although union meetings rejected St. John's radical positions during the ensuing months, his mere presence may have harmed the union by fueling public fears of the radicals and alienating potential union supporters. Even before the crippling bullets of a union opponent put an end to St. John's Goldfield career and federal troops moved in at the mine owners' behest, the golden age of union radicalism had passed.²⁷

In keeping with his syndicalist ideology, St. John had acted on the belief that union organization was the means to political power. Other Goldfield radicals combined union organization with conventional politics and sought public office. Harry Jardine, a miner and union organizer and an old friend of St. John, with a similar background in Colorado and Coeur d'Alene, contended for Ne-

vada's single statewide congressional seat on the Socialist ticket in 1906. Though the Democratic candidate easily defeated him, Jardine made a notable showing that appeared to demonstrate the incipient danger that socialism posed to politics as usual. While he won only 1,251 votes (8.8 percent of the congressional vote), 30 percent of his votes came from Esmeralda County. This suggested both his local popularity among those who knew him best and the future possibilities of a mining camp dominated by the radical unions as a Socialist power base. Within Esmeralda County, Jardine garnered 20 percent of the congressional vote, placing him only 7 percent behind the Republican candidate.²⁸

Jardine's flamboyant radicalism made his showing particularly alarming to the proponents of politics as usual. Unlike Grant Miller, the Reno attorney whose mainstream appeal later made him the most popular Socialist to contend for national office in Nevada, Jardine may well have been the most extreme candidate ever to take the field in the state. In the pages of *Miners' Magazine*, the official publication of the WFM, he issued many a burning manifesto that lambasted union conservatism as, for example, a "shallow-brained painted woman, whose thoughts do not rise above her hips," aimed a few shots at "conventional respectability that boweth down to platitudes, phrases, and perfumed wind: fell in love with the fleshpots of Egypt," and preached the gospel of the One Big Union. "Get an axe," he advised, "and use your axe at the system that makes slaves of you."²⁹ None could doubt that a vote for this Socialist firebrand was a vote for revolution. It may have been no coincidence that Jardine, along with St. John and Joseph Smith, was among the union leaders indicted for conspiracy in the wake of the Silva shooting. A year after his congressional campaign, Jardine agreed to leave Goldfield in exchange for the dismissal of these charges.³⁰

In retrospect, the only successes achieved by Goldfield Socialists occurred in the early years when the radical unions formed a large component of the local electorate and the opposition had not yet mobilized. In 1904, while Goldfield was still a tent camp, the Socialists fielded a full county ticket, electing J. E. Davidson as district attorney and James Russell as constable. A nasty struggle to retain these positions ensued. Within four months of taking office, both Davidson and Russell, together with the non-Socialist justice of the peace, were threatened with removal in a graft scandal. Winning their petition to the Nevada Supreme Court, they succeeded in keeping their offices, but the county commissioners subsequently ousted Davidson by raising his bond to a level that a Socialist, lacking wealthy supporters, could not meet, and Constable Russell's unsuccessful suit against the commissioners for full payment of his fees dragged on for years.³¹

The principal remaining achievement for Goldfield Socialism was the election to the town board in 1905 of a dark-haired British immigrant in his mid thirties, with brown eyes and a bushy handlebar mustache, named Joseph William Smith (the absence of party labels makes it difficult to determine whether some other candidates may also have been Socialists). In gaining this office, Smith, a waiter

and union organizer, had outdistanced the expected winner, a well-known local attorney, as well as a pioneer mining entrepreneur and other notables. Smith's domineering methods in advancing the union cause and his strong rhetoric made him an anathema in some quarters—quite possibly the reason that he was tried and convicted along with Preston, although he had nothing to do with the Silva shooting. At the same time, Smith seems to have been a simple and compassionate man who lived his egalitarian faith, sharing his own family's meager portion with impoverished neighbors and providing free meals to the hungry at the small restaurants he occasionally operated. These qualities accounted for his failure as a businessman, but they also probably had much to do with his popularity in the community.³²

Collusion between the major parties may have forestalled other Socialist successes. For instance, the Republicans endorsed Democratic candidate William Ingalls for the important and lucrative office of sheriff in 1906, no doubt because they feared that fielding a candidate of their own might split the major-party vote sufficiently to turn the Socialist 43 percent into a victory. As this suggests, the Socialist candidates did not compete upon a level field.³³

Despite the obstacles, Socialism was still on the upswing in the state as a whole: Nevada Socialists would elect a state senator and two assemblymen, as well as a number of local officials, and Grant Miller, as United States senatorial candidate, would win nearly 30 percent of the vote in 1916. Perhaps more important, many of the reform issues championed by the Socialists, in such areas as labor conditions and women's suffrage, would be co-opted by the major parties and enacted into law. Yet these successes signified a rejection of Goldfield's revolutionary brand of Socialism for a more moderate variety with broader popular appeal. The downfall of the Goldfield Socialists was evident in the election statistics. In 1906 Esmeralda County had contributed a quarter of the state Socialist gubernatorial vote. In 1910 the figure had dropped to 11 percent—and this at a time when the Socialist proportion of the vote was rising and the number of voters in Esmeralda County had climbed, despite the precipitate decline in population. The destruction of the unions and the diaspora of radicals from the city had done its work. Despite all the *sturm und drang* of the Bloody Sunday parade, revolution had failed at the polls, just as it failed in Union Hall.³⁴

As the dream of radical socialism evaporated, the Democrats emerged as the principal winners in Goldfield politics. Goldfield voters were no "yellow dog Democrats," who, in Texas parlance, would even vote for a yellow dog if he had the right party label. Rather, they showed enough independence at the polls to split their tickets for popular candidates of either party, throw the rascals out of office on occasion, and reject an unappealing Democratic presidential candidate. Thus, Goldfield, along with most of the West, rejected Democratic presidential candidate Alton Parker in 1904 in favor of Theodore Roosevelt. In 1908 they ousted the incumbent Democratic sheriff and district attorney in favor of Re-

publicans at the same time that they gave a resounding victory to Democratic presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan. Indeed, so overwhelming was the increase in the Esmeralda County Democratic vote—sevenfold over that in the previous presidential election—that Bryan awarded Major Minnemascot, the Democratic mule, to Goldfield. Much ceremony, as well as much humor from Republicans, accompanied the arrival of the big black gleaming mule at the train station. Minnemascot was said to live up to his role by bucking any Republican voter who climbed upon his back into fragments. No Republicans volunteered to put the matter to a test.³⁵

The symbolic gift of Minnemascot was an appropriate one because the new Democratic voters in Goldfield and other localities undergoing rapid population growth were realigning Nevada politics. After Nevada became a state in 1864, the Republicans predominated, and the political machine of the Pacific railways soon came to rule from behind the scenes. During the 1890s, the Silver Party coalesced around the locally popular free-silver issue and swept Nevada elections. While the 1890s have sometimes been mistaken for a realigning era in Nevada politics, the Silverites remained under the control of the old party elite, principally Southern Pacific boss Charles “Black” Wallace, and, after 1896, the Nevada electoral system began reverting to the pre-Silver party norm. This process was reversed when the influx of Democratic voters to Goldfield and other booming counties produced a lasting realignment in 1908. The state’s total presidential vote more than doubled in the span of just four years, labor in the mining camps responded strongly to Democratic appeals, and Nevada became one of the Democratic islands in a nation where the Republicans were the normal majority party. The old Republican realm of nineteenth-century Nevada gave way to a competitive state system, tilted in the Democratic direction, that was to endure for decades. In this fundamental political change, Goldfield played a substantial part.³⁶

Though the Republicans failed to regain their majority status, Goldfield politicians invigorated the state Republican party and infused it with the new spirit of progressivism. Elsewhere in Nevada, the new reform movement then sweeping the nation faced great difficulties. In Goldfield, however, factional fighting in the local party presaged the emergence of Republican reformers as early as 1908. Augustus Tilden’s successful race for district attorney in that year showed that reform could win a popular following. Tilden, then nearing forty, was a self-taught lawyer and a man of liberal sympathies. He had fought boss Abe Ruef within the San Francisco Republican Party and, after moving to Nevada in 1904, had defended the WFM against the mine owners in a major injunction suit. Voters evidently approved his sizzling condemnation of incumbent District Attorney Henry Swallow for failing to take prompt action against banker Thomas Rickey after the collapse of the State Bank and Trust. Labor’s displeasure with the Preston-Smith prosecution may also have contributed to Tilden’s electoral victory.³⁷

Once in office, the Tilden administration lived up to its promise of reform. Tilden's chief deputy, George Springmeyer, was primarily responsible for pursuing the Rawhide graft case, in which local officials stood trial for defrauding the county through fictitious billings, and for the criminal indictment of Pittsburgh Silver Peak mining corporation officials for failing to pay their bullion tax. The county commissioners tried and failed to oust this inconvenient reformer from office by the same maneuver that had ended the public career of Socialist district attorney Davidson.³⁸

As Nevada's first direct primary approached in 1910, progressivism broke forth from Goldfield to the arena of state politics under the leadership of two Goldfield attorneys, "Lighthouse Harry" Morehouse and Springmeyer, who had decided to make a second bid for the attorney general's office. Despite his credentials as a former California legislator opposed to the Southern Pacific machine, Morehouse, a Southern-born ex-Confederate soldier wounded in the Battle of Mobile Bay, scarcely fit the progressive prototype. Nor did Springmeyer. In the movement historians have seen as "a veritable Protestant religious crusade," he was an atheist; among reform leaders whom historians have contended were typically drawn from old Yankee stock, he was the son of German immigrant ranchers. Nonetheless, Springmeyer was the man who would lead the Nevada Progressives until they ceased to exist as a distinct political movement in 1916. Because the Southern Pacific and the regular Republican organization were obviously campaigning for his opponent, Tonopah attorney Hugh Brown, Springmeyer set out alone to canvass the cow camps and mining towns, armed only with a set of posters proclaiming him "The Unspiked Rail in the Path of Railroad Domination."

Late in August Lighthouse Harry entered the fray. He was the moving spirit behind the large meeting held in Goldfield to form a Lincoln-Roosevelt League to back the Nevada insurgent in the same way that California's league of the same name supported progressive Hiram Johnson in his drive for power outside the regular party organization. These grass-roots activities contrasted with the approach of Nevada Democratic Senator Francis G. Newlands, who sought to advance progressivism from the top down by influencing national policy. Although Goldfield's new Lincoln-Roosevelt League endorsed various progressive reforms, notably the direct primary, recall, and popular election of United States senators, the overriding preoccupation of its members was the Southern Pacific, an acute issue in the party long controlled by the railroad. The League's declared purpose was "to overthrow this evil power in the Republican party."³⁹

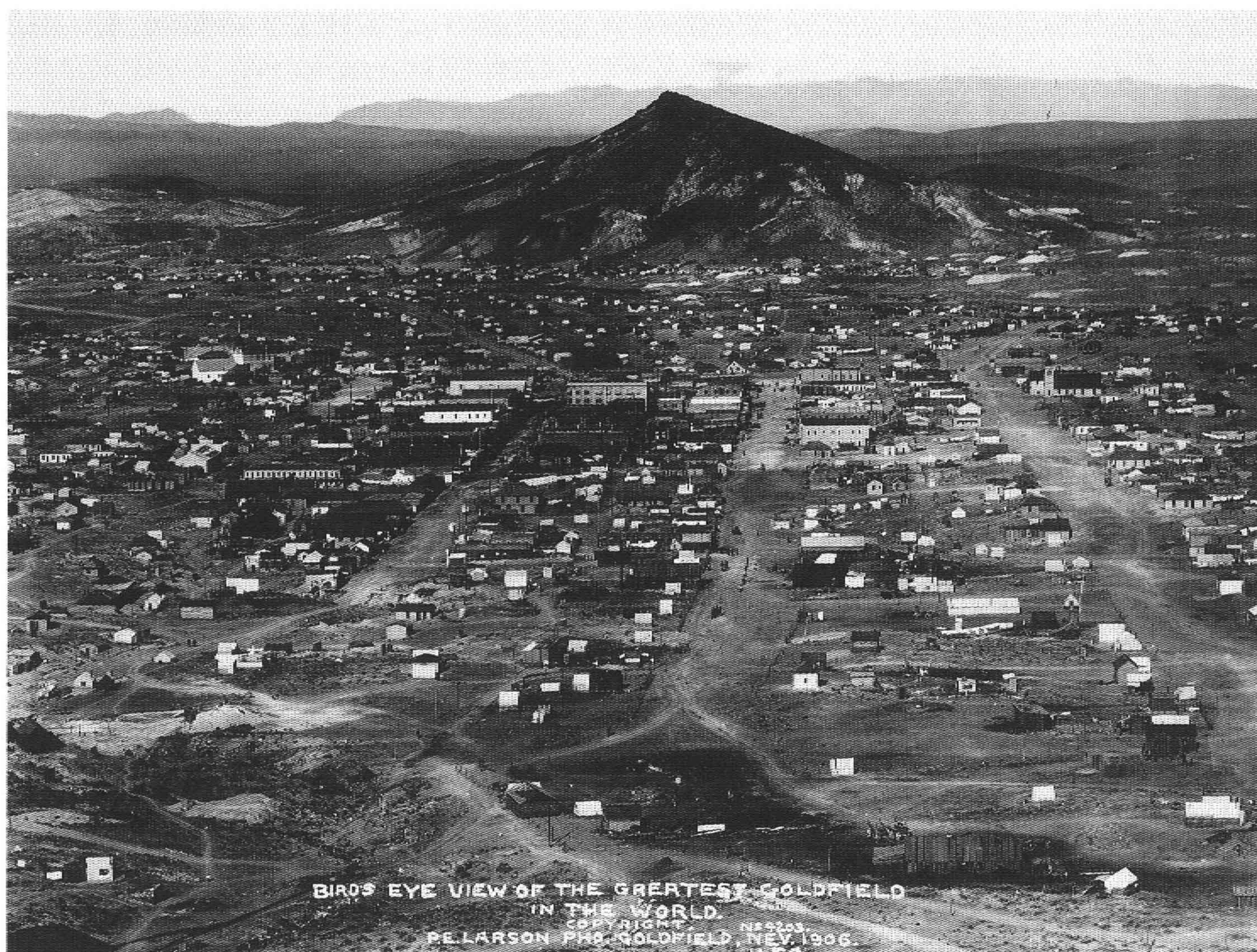
Springmeyer won the Republican primary, but reports of foul play by the party regulars began to appear as the general election drew nearer. A legion of Southern Pacific employees received two-weeks' furlough to work for the ticket and, from his Reno mansion on the bluff high above the Truckee River, Senator Nixon conveyed a final message to Springmeyer: "We've turned loose a river of gold against you." Springmeyer lost by sixty-five votes, badly hurt by losses in

Reno, the longstanding stronghold of the machine and major population center of the traditionally Republican northwestern region, and on which Republican candidates were dependent for a sizeable proportion of their totals. Future Democratic senator Key Pittman's election-day post mortem charge, "extensive bribery" by Nixon and the Southern Pacific machine to defeat Democratic candidates, was also true in their defeat of progressive Republican insurgents. Democratic newspaper cartoonists, who depicted Nixon and Wingfield distributing coins from the "corruption sack," reached the same conclusions.⁴⁰

Though neither the socialists nor the progressives would have acknowledged common features, these two early-twentieth-century Nevada reform movements, both drawing much of their strength from Goldfield, shared similar corporate enemies—the mining companies and the Southern Pacific. They elevated leaders with similar strengths—impassioned and uncompromising idealists whose rhetoric outdistanced their skills at combating machine tactics. Both movements saw their leaders defeated at the polls, yet witnessed the eventual triumph of many of the ideas they had championed. Having repulsed both the socialist and progressive assaults, corporation politics continued to reign supreme, but the new leadership emerging from central Nevada would soon end the long domination of the old elite rooted in Comstock wealth.

As Goldfield increasingly resembled a company town, George Wingfield exerted political control through the staff and security detectives at Goldfield Con and various compliant local officials. Among the latter, the principal "man to see," as hopeful job seekers put it, was Deputy Sheriff John Donnelley (later to become Nevada's director of prohibition when the Wingfield machine was at the apex of its power during the 1920s). From his Reno office, Wingfield instructed his men on the spot in Goldfield: "I hope you break the backs of everyone of those suckers down there."⁴¹ Security chief Sage checked the suitability of political candidates and investigated alleged "adgitators" [sic.] on the Goldfield Con work force. The general manager of Goldfield Con dutifully reported to his superiors in 1910, "I have endeavored to carry out fully the suggestions of yourself and Mr. Wingfield. I have started cautiously to see how our employees will line up on a question of law and order regardless of candidates. I hope to know soon how they stand and if they don't stand right we shall have to get rid of the bad ones."⁴² The electoral defeat of the few "dynamiters" (that is, Socialists, in the lingo used at Goldfield Con) who still dared to contend on the local ballot in 1910 demonstrated the effectiveness of these activities.

In addition to breaking the backs of the Socialists, Wingfield made the defeat of Democratic congressional candidate Charles Sprague, the editor of the *Goldfield News*, a top priority. To this end, Wingfield made vigorous and successful use of his increasing influence over the Nevada press through loans and other favors.⁴³ During this period, his behind-the-scenes political manipulations meshed with the old Southern Pacific railroad machine led by his former partner, Senator Nixon. In time the venerable Southern Pacific machine, buckling under the assault of the California Progressives, would give way to the new



A panoramic view of Goldfield, c. 1906, taken by P. E. Larson. (Nevada Historical Society)

bipartisan political machine headed by Wingfield. After Goldfield's eclipse, the machine reached the zenith of its power in the 1920s, when numerous Wingfield associates from the boom days assumed political office.⁴⁴

During the brief rush in the first decade of the twentieth century, the last great boomtown of the mining frontier bloomed and died without ever incorporating or developing local governmental institutions beyond a rudimentary level. Widespread lack of interest in politics allowed the county commissioners who had ruled when Esmeralda County was a depressed and depopulated wasteland to continue their sway while Goldfield was bursting at the seams. Yet, at the same time, the new camp was the scene of ideological ferment. Goldfield reformers had furnished the ideological sustenance of early-twentieth-century state politics, and the Goldfield vote played a substantial part in the emergence of Nevada's new Democratic majority. No less influential was the bond afterward shared by the men who had lived through the boom years together and who later became the new political elite under Wingfield's aegis.

NOTES

¹M. B. Aston, "Esmeralda County," in *The History of Nevada*, Sam P. Davis, ed. (Los Angeles: Elms Publishing Company, 1913), II, 866–67.

²*Tonopah Bonanza* (hereafter cited as TB), 1 August 1905; *Goldfield News* (hereafter cited as GN), 21

July 1905. On the social backgrounds of officeholders in two California mining towns, see Ralph Mann, *After the Gold Rush: Society in Grass Valley and Nevada City, California, 1849–1870* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982), 22.

³GN, 1, 19 September, and 13 October 1905, 19 January, 2 February, and 16 February 1906.

⁴*Carson Appeal*, 24–26 January 1907; Nevada Legislature, *Journal of the Senate*, 1907, 9. Since no issues of the *Walker Lake Bulletin* survive from this period, Hawthorne's resistance cannot be readily chronicled.

⁵*Goldfield Tribune* (hereafter cited as GT), 25, 30 January 1907; *Carson Appeal*, 26, 29 January 1907. Also see the *Goldfield Chronicle* (hereafter cited as GC), 12 October 1907; Nevada Legislature, *Journal of the Assembly*, 1907, 28. Four years later the legislature enacted a plan discussed in 1907, and Hawthorne regained county-seat status in Mineral County, a new entity carved out from the northern portion of Esmeralda County.

⁶GT, 8 February 1907.

⁷GN, 8 June 1907. Also see the issues of 13 and 20 July, and 9 March 1909.

⁸GN, 13 July 1907; GC, 17, 25 September, and 21 October 1907. Also see Russell R. Elliott, *Nevada's Twentieth-Century Mining Boom: Tonopah, Goldfield, Ely* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1966), 68.

⁹GC, 24 September 1908; GN, 13 October 1909. Also see the recurrent reports on auction sales of Goldfield property for delinquent taxes in Esmeralda County Commissioners, *Records* (hereafter cited as *Records*), e.g., vol. K, (4 August 1910), Nevada Historical Society, Reno.

¹⁰*Goldfield News*, 24 September 1907; GN, 26 January 1906, 2–3 January 1907, 13 October 1909. On this method of municipal finance, also see Robert S. Dykstra, *The Cattle Towns* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), 126.

¹¹GN, 12 October 1907; *Records*, vol. I (5 May 1906), 140, vol. K (3 August 1909), 190.

¹²GN, 12 October 1907, 15 December 1905; GC, 26 February 1908. On Father Dermody, see Anne Ellis, *The Life of an Ordinary Woman* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), 271.

¹³GT, 2, 23 January, and 19–20 June 1907.

¹⁴*Records*, vol. I (7 August 1905), 326–27, 336–37, (6 March 1906), 445, vol. K (5 October 1909), 291; GC, 25 September 1907.

¹⁵GN, 11 July 1909; *Records*, vol. I (6 March 1906), 467–68, (8 May 1906), 457, (12 May 1906), 488–89; GC, 21 October 1908. Also see Sally S. Zanjani, *The Unspiked Rail: Memoir of a Nevada Rebel* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1981), 132–38.

¹⁶Sources on the fee system include *Russell v. Esmeralda County*, Nevada Supreme Court, 32 Nevada Reports 305 (1909–10); *Tilden v. Esmeralda County*, *ibid.* 324; *Bradley v. Esmeralda County*, *ibid.* 166; and Aston, "Esmeralda County," 868.

¹⁷GT, 21 February 1907. The Nevada legislature altered the salaries and fees of Esmeralda County officials in 1905 and 1907 but did not abolish the fee system; see Nevada Legislature, *Statutes* (1905), 210–11; *ibid.* (1907), 98–99.

¹⁸GT, 5, 21 June, and 3 July 1907.

¹⁹GC, 30 May, 24 September, 7 December 1907, 28 October 1908. As W. Turrentine Jackson notes, mining camp democracy in Treasure Hill quickly became politically passive and self-interested; since few voted, a small minority easily gained control. See W. Turrentine Jackson, *Treasure Hill: Portrait of a Silver Mining Camp* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1963), 93–94.

²⁰Goldfield Businessmen's and Mine Owners' Association ledger, 13 (Central Nevada Historical Society, Tonopah); Sally S. Zanjani and Guy L. Rocha, *The Ignoble Conspiracy: Radicalism on Trial in Nevada* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1986), esp. chs. 2, 3.

²¹William E. Burrows, *Vigilante* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 8; Zanjani and Rocha, *Ignoble Conspiracy*, chs. 2, 3.

²²Goldfield Businessmen's and Mine Owners' Association ledger, 12, 17, 27, 53, 57. Zanjani and Rocha, *Ignoble Conspiracy*, esp. 113–14, 147.

²³Zanjani and Rocha, *Ignoble Conspiracy*, 115–16. On the downfall of the unions, also see Russell R. Elliott, "Labor Troubles in the Mining Camp at Goldfield, Nevada, 1906–1908," *Pacific Historical Review* 19 (1950), 369–84; Guy L. Rocha, "Radical Labor Struggles in the Tonopah-Goldfield Mining District, 1901–1922," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* 20 (Spring 1977), 3–45.

²⁴Richard M. Brown, *Strain of Violence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 22. On past vigilantism, also see Burrows, *Vigilante*, 18–20, 160–92.

²⁵Zanjani and Rocha, *Ignoble Conspiracy*, 18–19.

²⁶Sally S. Zanjani and Guy L. Rocha, "A Heart for Any Fate: Vincent St. John in Goldfield," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* 27 (Summer 1984), 76–78, 82. Also see *idem*, *Ignoble Conspiracy*, 76–77. A recent study, Toshio Hisada, "The Brain" of American Syndicalism: Vincent St. John [in Japanese] (Japan: 1990), stresses St. John's intellectual contributions.

²⁷Zanjani and Rocha, *Ignoble Conspiracy*, 12–13, 27; *idem*, "Heart for Any Fate," 81–84, 88–91.

²⁸Zanjani and Rocha, *Ignoble Conspiracy*, 59. On electoral figures, see John L. Koontz, *Political History of Nevada*, 5th ed. (Carson City: State Printing Office, 1965), 188; GC, 16 November 1906.

²⁹Zanjani and Rocha, *Ignoble Conspiracy*, 59.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 113–14.

³¹*Walker Lake Bulletin*, 23 September, and 25 November 1904; TB, 1 April 1905; Bell v. District Court, Nevada Supreme Court, 28 Nevada Reports 280–99 (1905); Russell v. Esmeralda County, *ibid.* 304–15.

³²GN, 21 July 1905; Zanjani and Rocha, *Ignoble Conspiracy*, 11–12, 135, 137.

³³GT, 15 October, and 8 November 1906.

³⁴Wilbur S. Shepperson, *Retreat to Nevada: A Socialist Colony of World War I* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1966), 52; Sally S. Zanjani "A Theory of Critical Realignment: The Nevada Example, 1892–1908," *Pacific Historical Review* 48 (May 1979), 259–80. Miller's 1914 Goldfield victory suggests that moderate socialism had strong appeal to the town's electorate during the declining years.

³⁵GN, 28 May 1909; GT, 12 June 1909; Phillip I. Earl, "Nineteen-eight Vote Won Esmeralda Fame and a Mule," *Reno Gazette-Journal* (28 August 1988), p. 2E.

³⁶Zanjani, "Theory of Critical Realignment," 262–64, 271–77.

³⁷GC, 18, 22 June; and 27 October 1908; Zanjani, *Unspiked Rail*, 135.

³⁸Zanjani, *Unspiked Rail*, 132–38.

³⁹Sally S. Zanjani, "Losing Battles: The Revolt of the Nevada Progressives, 1910–1914," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* 24 (Spring 1981), 17–25. On Newlands's progressivism, see William D. Rowley, "Senator Newlands and the Modernization of the Democratic Party," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* 15 (Summer 1972), 25–34.

⁴⁰Fred L. Israel, *Nevada's Key Pittman* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963), 24. Also see Zanjani, "Losing Battles," 17–25, 35–38.

⁴¹Though it is believed that controversial material had been purged from the George Wingfield papers before they were given to the Nevada Historical Society, Reno (hereafter cited as GW Papers), a few hints of Wingfield's political activities during 1910 remain. See Unsigned to J. W. Finlay, 4 May 1910; N. H. Mix to Wingfield, 19 October 1910.

⁴²Finlay to J. H. MacKenzie, 23 April 1910. Also see Finlay to Wingfield, 1 July and 3 August 1910, GW Papers.

⁴³Wingfield to W. J. Bell, 28 August 1910; Wingfield to Lindley C. Branson, 19 May 1910; Unsigned to W. S. Johnson, 2 September 1910; Unsigned to V. L. Ricketts, 2 September 1910; Unsigned to W. J. Bell, 2 September 1910, GW Papers.

⁴⁴Sources on Wingfield in politics include Jerome E. Edwards, "Wingfield and Nevada Politics—Some Observations," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* 32 (Summer 1989), 128–31; C. Elizabeth Raymond, "George Wingfield's Political Machine: A Study in Historical Reputation," *ibid.*, 95–110; Howdy Wilson, interview with author, 14 September 1989, Reno, Nevada; and Zanjani, *Unspiked Rail*, 322.

RISING FROM THE RANKS

Socialism in Nye County

Joseph Sullivan

There are some popular and persistent notions about the nature of the Socialist party in the United States from the time of its inception at the turn of the century through World War I. Most prominent are those which assert, first, that the Socialist party was a radical organization composed of working-class heroes and supported by impoverished wage slaves, socially alienated and, frequently, foreign-born; second, that within the national continuum, the Socialists of the western states tended to be the most radical; and third, that votes for Socialist party candidates reflected a real desire for an economic system in which workers owned and managed the means of production.¹

The first characterization has been adequately dispelled by several recent investigations into the origins and accomplishments of the Socialists in areas where they managed to win elections, namely, in the cities of the Great Lakes and industrial Northeast. In Haverhill, Massachusetts; Flint, Michigan; New Castle, Pennsylvania; and especially in Milwaukee, the home of genteel municipal socialism, Socialist supporters and candidates—persons possessed of a middle-class outlook, if not a middle-class paycheck—conducted successful campaigns for adequate sewers, clean streets, and fiscal honesty, but not revolution. Far from being composed of foreign mill workers, Socialist membership in these communities was drawn largely from the ranks of skilled, prosperous native-born artisans and small business owners who were among the least alienated citizens in America and whose first concern was the maintenance and growth of their prosperity.²

At this juncture, a new definition of *middle class* is in order. In his examination of Depression-era demagogues Huey Long and Father Charles Coughlin, Alan Brinkley asserts that their middle-class supporters—small-town shopkeepers and white-collar workers—owed their membership in the middle class “less to their level of material comfort than to a certain social outlook.”³ “Americans,” says David Shannon, “have generally believed it easier and more desirable to

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rise *from* their class than *with* their class."⁴ Consonant with the views of Brinkley and Shannon is that of Henry Grayson, who defines a member of the middle class as "an individualist who may be anywhere in the social scale from bottom to top. The fundamental characteristic which marks him out as a member of the middle class is . . . his attitude toward society. . . . If he is determined to move into a preferred position in the social scale, he is middle class." Efforts to move into a preferred position are evident in the men and women who led the Socialist party nationally.⁵

The idea that western socialists were somehow more radical than their eastern counterparts may stem from the common image of western miners and timber workers as stereotypical Wobblies; tough, Bill Haywoodesque levellers shaped by the harsh conditions of the western frontier. In his work on the Socialists of Butte, Montana, Jerry W. Calvert disproves, to some extent, the idea that Montana Socialists were so many Marxist Paul Bunyans. Calvert's demographic breakdown of Butte, a sophisticated city in 1911 that did not resemble a rough mining camp, shows that the administration of Socialist party Mayor Lewis J. Duncan received its most unqualified electoral support from wards inhabited by miners, tradesmen, and small merchants whose living standards were by no means uncomfortable. In fact, it was a decline in wages due to the monopolization of Butte by the Rockefeller interests, and not the static condition of low wages, that occasioned the election of Socialists to the city government.⁶ Similarly, the Socialists in Nevada, despite the Silver State's extraordinary electoral support for Eugene Debs in 1912, evinced little of the radical-proletarian mentality ascribed to western socialists. Far from an intent to raise the ranks of the workers to revolution, the chief aim of prominent members of Nevada's Socialist party seems to have been to raise themselves from the ranks of manual workers to the summit of middle-class respectability.⁷

The alleged success of the Socialist party in Nye County, Nevada, the main focus of this article, has been attributed to the bold, though futile, organizing efforts by the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.) in nearby Goldfield (Esmeralda County), and to a lesser extent in Tonopah, in 1906 and 1907.⁸ However, there is little evidence that the I.W.W. was responsible for sowing seeds of discontent or contributing in any lasting way to a radical frame of mind. After briefly organizing virtually every worker in Goldfield, the Wobbly movement was crushed by federal troops sent in by a duped President Theodore Roosevelt. In neither town does the Wobbly presence necessarily account for the development of support for Socialist candidates in these communities later on. It was not until 1912 that Socialist candidates won local elections and even then, most of these successes occurred in Nye County, not in Goldfield.⁹ While it is true that many Wobblies were Socialists and vice versa, the two organizations were neither conterminous nor reciprocal. Indeed, the relationship between the union and the party sometimes approached enmity, especially after the party's 1913 expulsion of Big Bill Haywood from its National Executive Committee.¹⁰ If

any movement contributed to the development of socialism in Nevada it may have been the People's party. A survey of the Nye County returns reveals that John A. Ohlander was elected clerk of Nye County on the Silver Populist ticket in 1896, 1898, and 1900. In 1902, Ohlander was the Socialist party's unsuccessful candidate for the same office. Ohlander's party switch would seem consonant with socialist origins elsewhere. Among the Socialist party's delegates to its first organizing convention in 1901 were former Populists such as Kansas ex-Governor Lorenzo Lewelling, Oklahoma farmer-organizer J. T. Cumbie, Kansas City Populist leader George Clemens (a cousin of Mark Twain), and, perhaps most notably, Eugene V. Debs.¹¹

What sort of person supported the Socialist party in Nye County? A demographic sketch of the county, and particularly its population center, Tonopah, is difficult to form because of the extraordinary fluctuations of the population. Tonopah was a boom town, a mining center whose residents came and went as mineral prices, discoveries, and the availability of other employment dictated. One observer of the 1912 election results noted that many of Tonopah's voters "had a poll tax deducted from their wages and had already paid a poll tax not only in some other State for the current year, but from [sic] other Counties in the State as well."¹² It is difficult in the extreme to organize a political movement under these conditions. Moreover, many of the relatively permanent residents in Tonopah, including at least half of the merchants, were foreign-born.¹³ Serbs, Croats, Germans, and Austrians made up much of the population together with significant numbers of Italians, Greeks, and Finns. Many of them were not citizens and many others, because of their native culture, had no concept of or interest in voting. What is left is a group composed of native-born Americans and natives of the British Isles, whose political culture closely resembled that of North America. This description corresponds to the men who led the Socialist party in Nevada generally, and in Nye County particularly. An examination of these party leaders may shed some light upon the sort of person who followed.

Of the twenty Nye county and township offices contended for in 1912, the Socialists won only three; one of Nye County's two seats in the state senate, one of five seats in the state assembly, and the office of justice of the peace for Tonopah. Commenting on the results, the *International Socialist Review* concluded that the elections were "very evidently real working class victories," an inference based solely on Tonopah's reputation as a western mining town. The Socialists, continued the *Review*, "made no attempt to catch the middle class reformers, but appealed directly to the workers and 80 percent of the registered workers vote for Socialism,"¹⁴ an assertion not borne out by the official returns (see Table 1).

If the voters of Tonopah were not middle-class, the men they selected had some pretensions to be. Nye County's Socialist state assemblyman, Ira F. Davis, owned a barber shop in Tonopah. State Senator Martin J. Scanlan, a native of Massachusetts, was a veteran of several mineral rushes who finally settled in

Table 1: Socialists in Nye County Elections 1912–1922
(With number of township and county offices up for election)

1912 (20 offices)
State Senator, 38.6% (2nd place of 2)
State Assemblyman, 32.1% (4th place of 7)
Justice of the Peace, Tonopah 31.1%
1914 (18 offices)
Justice of the Peace, Tonopah 50.6%
1916 (16 offices)
Justice of the Peace, Tonopah 59.7%
Sheriff, 49.5%
1918 (16 offices)
No Socialists elected
1920 (16 offices)
Sheriff (no figures available)
1922 (16 offices)
Sheriff, 47.3%

Tonopah in 1906. He was elected president of the Tonopah local of the Western Federation of Miners (W.F.M.) and continued to identify himself as a miner until 1915, when he was admitted to the bar, moved to Reno, and established himself as a successful divorce attorney. In fact, one curious feature of Nye County's Socialist party leaders is their propensity for becoming attorneys. Thomas M. Fagan, who succeeded Scanlan as president of the W.F.M. local, became an attorney in 1916. Fagan was the party's unsuccessful 1914 candidate for county treasurer. Harry Dunseath, a native of England and Tonopah's Socialist police judge, tried his hand at a medley of occupations including prospector, mining investor, grocery-store owner, and a stint as a Wells Fargo stage driver. Demonstrating entrepreneurial skills one normally does not associate with the working class, Dunseath attempted, unsuccessfully, to establish his own stage line. He served three terms as Tonopah's magistrate, until he, too, was admitted to the bar in 1918, after which he also established a Reno law practice. Two other Nevada Socialist leaders, John E. McNamara of Tonopah, a 1916 candidate for supreme court justice, and A. Grant Miller, a Michigan native who polled an impressive 25 percent of the vote in his 1914 race for the United States Senate, were also attorneys. Thomas McManus, secretary-treasurer of the Tonopah W.F.M. local and a frequent candidate for legislative and county office, seems to have restrained any urge to become a lawyer.¹⁵

Although Nye County was considered a Socialist stronghold, the party won few races after 1912. Neither Davis nor Scanlan was re-elected for another term. The Socialists' biggest victory in 1916, aside from Dunseath's re-election, was the election of William H. Thomas as sheriff. A Nevada native, Thomas left the mines to operate a successful meat market in Tonopah.¹⁶ On the other hand,

William A. Morgan, a candidate for statewide offices, and Francis M. Wall, an Assembly candidate in 1912, seem to have remained genuine miners, while George Ludwig of Manhattan, Assembly candidate in 1910, 1912, and 1916, was a harnessmaker, a skilled tradesman. Therefore, of these eleven Socialist leaders, only seven could be said to have spent any amount of time in the mines, and four of these soon left the mines for careers in business and law.

Despite the presence of a vigorous party, when Eugene Debs ran for president of the United States in 1912, he attracted only 30.4 percent of the Nye County vote, coming in third of four candidates. Debs narrowly won Tonopah with 34.6 percent, contrasting with Woodrow Wilson's 33.9 percent. In his 1914 race for the United States Senate, A. Grant Miller carried Nye County with 37.1 percent of the vote—a good showing, but hardly a mandate. During this same year, the Socialists re-elected Justice Dunseath, but state Assemblyman Davis was defeated for re-election and William H. Thomas lost his first bid for sheriff.¹⁷

The Socialists were important contenders in central Nevada, but they certainly did not dominate the political landscape in terms either of votes or of respect toward their world view. Their conventionality and respectability is evident again in their attitudes toward America's involvement in World War I. At the height of the war, as America's pro-British neutrality stance began to sway toward intervention, the Socialist party nationally faced its biggest crisis. Meeting at an emergency convention in Saint Louis in April 1917, two thirds of the party's delegates issued a resounding declaration against American involvement



A. Grant Miller, 1916 candidate for the United States Senate on the Socialist ticket, c. 1914. (Nevada Historical Society)

and called upon all workers to resist the war. Consistent with the party's philosophy, the idea of workingmen killing each other in a dispute among capitalists and kings demanded worker opposition.

Among rank-and-file Socialists, the response to the Saint Louis declaration was mixed. In the United States Congress, Representative Meyer London voted against President Wilson's declaration of war, but he later voted for war appropriations. The party's other congressman, Victor Berger, was expelled from his seat for publicly criticizing the war and for vowing, upon his election, to oppose every war measure. Socialist party mainstays such as Charles Edward Russell and Algie M. Simons quit the party, vilified Debs and Berger, and called for the prosecution of men and women to whom, just weeks before, they had been loyal comrades. But for the most part, the party maintained its opposition to the war. Berger, Debs, Rose Pastor Stokes, Kate Richards O'Hare, and other national leaders were indicted, convicted, and jailed for violation of the Espionage Act.¹⁸

In Nevada and elsewhere, national defense committees were organized, frequently by business interests and veterans, to ferret out saboteurs, war critics, and draft evaders. For all their political activity, Socialist party members of Nye County seem to have raised few hackles about their war views. In a letter to the director of the Nevada Council of Defense, attorney Hugh H. Brown of the Tonopah Loyalty League related a series of miscellaneous incidents that suggested some disloyalty or pro-German sentiment in Nye County. Brown's letter reveals only one case of actual disloyalty involving a Socialist. Al Shidler, a smelter worker and a candidate for clerk of Nye County in 1916, was discharged from his Belmont job for his vocal opposition to conscription. Sheriff Thomas then appointed Shidler a deputy until the Loyalty League complained to the county commissioners. (Thomas investigated but could find nothing wrong with Shidler's views.) Shidler was removed from office and eventually convicted of sedition, for which he received a sentence in federal prison.¹⁹

Nevada's labor commissioner had visited Tonopah in the previous year to sound out the community's war sentiments. He reported that Socialists Thomas Fagan and John McNamara were both disposed toward American involvement. Attorney Fagan had in fact given talks encouraging contributions to the Red Cross, while Sheriff William Thomas and "the majority of Socialist members appear to be supporting Liberty Loans in much the same spirit as members of other parties."²⁰ Evidently, the Nevada Socialists took pains to disassociate themselves from the national party's stand against the war lest they seem disreputable. Aside from Shidler (and the Paul Walters episode at Nevada City the same year), Nevada's "revolutionary Socialist" position toward the war was precisely that of Woodrow Wilson and the Loyalty League.²¹

Although there is little evidence of real government repression of the Socialist party in Nevada, by the end of the war most of its prominent members had left it altogether. Grant Miller and Harry Dunseath went on to other campaigns as

Republican and Democratic candidates, respectively. Martin Scanlan became the Nevada coordinator for Robert M. La Follette's Progressive party and campaigned for Democratic candidate R. T. Baker in his 1925 run for the United States Senate. Others who abandoned the Nye County Socialists to run on more conventional tickets included George W. Robb, who won election to the state Assembly in 1926 as a Democrat after Socialist victories had eluded him.²²

For his loyalty to Al Shidler, and also for using striking miners as deputies during a 1917 labor disturbance at Tonopah, Sheriff William Thomas lost his 1918 re-election bid. Politically durable, Thomas was again elected in 1920 as an Independent (and allegedly philosophical socialist) candidate, and as such continued to win re-election until his retirement in 1958.²³

Sheriff Thomas's career suggests voter indifference to party labels in general and to socialism and the Socialist party in particular. There is no proof that any significant portion of Nevada's electorate ever desired the sort of economic system propounded by the Socialist party, despite the insistence of the *International Socialist Review* that the results of the 1912 elections reflected a "real working class victory." The Socialist party failed to achieve uniform results, electing some, but not all of its candidates. In 1912, Martin J. Scanlan, miner, won a seat in the Nevada state Senate with 910 votes, while fellow socialist, William A. Morgan, also a miner, won only 735 votes and thereby lost. Assuming that Morgan was a less desirable candidate than Scanlan does not address the issue of voting for an ideal rather than a personality. If Nevada's voters truly wanted socialism, one would not expect to find such large vote disparities among Socialist party candidates. William Thomas's 1,348 votes for sheriff in 1916 and G. T. Peirce's 500 votes for public administrator the same year indicate that Nye County's voters wanted a good sheriff, not socialism. If anything, hard-line socialism may have lost more votes than it gained. Despite a successful first term, Thomas failed to win re-election apparently because of his use of striking miners and the antiwar Al Shidler as deputies.

Perhaps the real measure of the Nye County Socialists' radical challenge to the economic system is revealed by Sidney R. Moore, a Republican capitalist who regarded the 1916 election of Socialists as a contributing factor to the over-all "pleasant outlook." Moore voiced no objection to "our Socialist friends, as long as their Party will not dictate their policies."²⁴ Moore had little to fear—by 1916, there was scant evidence that party policies went much beyond progressive reform issues. The legislative career of Martin Scanlan is another case in point. In office, Scanlan sponsored measures identical to those of pro-labor progressives. During his four years as state senator, Scanlan introduced eighteen bills dealing with working conditions and hours, election laws and education. Of these, four managed to pass: They extended the poll closing time by three hours, instructed all mine inspectors to post copies of inspection reports at mine entrances, directed that a commercial course be taught in the state's high schools, and provided for a child pension program.²⁵ While these measures were un-

doubtedly desirable and important, neither they nor Scanlan's unsuccessful bills, such as those prohibiting inaccurate electrical meters or abolishing capital punishment, reflected specifically socialist content.²⁶ At no time did Scanlan introduce bills that would result in the actual transmission of the means of production from the capitalists to the workers, socialism's central tenet.

Typical of other Nevada Socialists, Martin Scanlan strove to create a better working environment, not a better economic system. His legislative agenda asked for no more than what was being demanded at that time by Samuel Gompers and the American Federation of Labor, hardly radical credentials. Despite popular visions of a Socialist party that sought to prepare the ranks of the workers to rise in revolt against capitalism, Nevada's Socialists chose the relatively conservative path of reform, and rose from the ranks to a "preferred position" within the capitalist economic system.

NOTES

¹For a Marxist perspective on the Socialist party, see Ira Kipnis, *The American Socialist Movement, 1897-1912* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1968). The popular stereotypes of those who advocated socialist ideas as crackpots or dangerous fanatics were created and enhanced from time to time by propaganda crusades funded by big business, the churches, and the two major political parties. For more on these crusades, see David Shannon, *The Socialist Party of America, a History* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1967); Julian F. Jaffe, *Crusade Against Radicalism* (Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1972); Robert Keith Murray, *Red Scare* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980).

²For Haverhill, see Henry F. Bedford, *Socialism and the Workers in Massachusetts, 1886-1912* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1966). For Flint and New Castle, see Richard W. Judd, *Socialist Cities* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988). There are a number of works dealing with Milwaukee, the best of which is Sally M. Miller, "Milwaukee: Of Ethnicity and Labor," in *Socialism and the Cities*, Bruce M. Stave, ed. (Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1973). This work also discusses the Socialist victories in Schenectady, New York; Bridgeport, Connecticut; and Reading, Pennsylvania. In each case, voters punished the corruption, graft, and favoritism of the Democratic and Republican parties when they believed their middle-class lifestyles were in jeopardy.

³Alan Brinkley, *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and the Great Depression* (New York: Vantage Books, 1983), 198.

⁴Shannon, *Socialist Party of America*, 266. In response to a remark that his presidential campaigns were simply his way of "rising from the ranks," Eugene Debs retorted, "when I rise, it will be *with* the ranks, not *from* the ranks!" Bernard J. Brommel, *Eugene V. Debs, Spokesman for Labor and Socialism* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1968).

⁵Henry Grayson, *The Crisis of the Middle Class* (New York: Rinehart and Co., 1955), xi.

⁶Jerry W. Calvert, *The Gibraltar: Labor and Socialism in Butte, Montana, 1895-1924* (Helena: Montana Historical Society Press, 1988).

⁷Nevada gave Debs the largest percentage of votes of any state in the union except Oklahoma, fully 16 percent. See Paul H. Douglas, "The Rising Tide of Socialism," *National Municipal Review*, 21 (March 1918), 131.

⁸Clearly, Nye and Esmeralda counties contained a plurality of Nevada's Socialist party membership. Of the forty-seven delegates to the 1916 Nevada Socialist State Convention, fourteen, or 30 percent, were from Esmeralda and Nye counties. These delegates were apportioned on the basis of party membership rather than county population. W. H. Cordill, State Socialist Chairman, declaration to the Secretary of State of Nevada, Reno, 8 July 1916 (courtesy of Guy L. Rocha, Nevada State Archives, Carson City).

⁹It should be noted that both Goldfield and Tonopah were unincorporated townships administered by their respective county commissioners under the Town Board Act of 1881. The only town officials who were directly elected were a justice of the peace and a constable. Since the Socialists won the elections for constable in Goldfield and for justice in Tonopah, the Socialist party could be said to have won half of the elected offices in both towns. Russell R. Elliott, *Nevada's Twentieth-Century Mining Boom: Tonopah, Goldfield, Ely* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1966), 58.

¹⁰James Hulse, "Socialism in Nevada, 1904–1918: Faint Echoes of an Idealistic National Movement," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 31 (Winter 1988), 247–58, has repeated this assertion of Wobbly-induced socialist sentiment without offering a clear line of descent. The early activities of Socialists in other parts of the state have not been traced to the experiences in Nye and Esmeralda counties either. Similarly, the I.W.W. managed the successful 1912 strike of textile workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts. However, within a matter of months, the I.W.W. simply evaporated, leaving no trace of its earlier, sensational presence in the city. The Socialist party in Lawrence was practically nonexistent both before and after the strike. By contrast, in Haverhill, just ten miles distant, the Wobblies made no effort to organize the workers who, between 1898 and 1921, elected three Socialist mayors, several aldermen, and two members of the state legislature. See Bedford, *Socialism and the Workers*. However, Barton W. Currie, "How the West Dealt with One Labor Union," *Harpers Weekly* (2 November 1906), 909, attributed the I.W.W. organizing effort to the preaching of Eugene Debs. Returns for Nye County indicate that F. L. Coburn, Socialist, won election as constable of Manhattan in 1908. "Nevada Political Directory—Counties" (compiled by the Nevada Historical Society, Reno). Coburn's subsequent political campaigns were not successful.

¹¹"Nevada Political Directory." While the People's party managed to recruit some dissatisfied Democrats and Republicans, the Populists and their tradition of protest and opposition to monopolies provided the greatest share of energy and leadership to the Socialist cause. James Green, *Grassroots Socialism: Radical Movements in the Southwest, 1897–1943* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978). Edward Bellamy, whose novel *Looking Backward* has been cited as the single most important socialist work by an American, was a Massachusetts Populist. Daphne Patai, ed., *Looking Backward 1888–1888: Essays on Edward Bellamy* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988).

¹²"Total Vote A.D. 1912 for Presidential Electors," single page showing township and county returns, with comments (courtesy of Guy L. Rocha, Nevada State Archives, Carson City).

¹³Wilbur S. Shepperson, *Restless Strangers* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1973). See also M. J. Mighel, "When Mammon Builds a Town," *Harpers Monthly*, 110 (April 1905) 758.

¹⁴"News and Reviews," *International Socialist Review* (January 1913), 439.

¹⁵Hulse, "Socialism in Nevada"; Guy L. Rocha, "Washoe Portraits: Harry Dunseath" *Washoe Rambler*, 1 (Summer 1977), 31–34; "Tonopah, Socialist Attorneys," single page (courtesy of Guy L. Rocha, Nevada State Archives, Carson City). Scanlan later became a law partner with, of all people, red-baiting future United States Senator Patrick McCarran.

¹⁶*Tonopah Times-Bonanza and Goldfield News*, 22 July 1966.

¹⁷*New York Times* (16 November 1916); "Nevada Political Directory"; "Total Vote A.D. 1912 for Presidential Electors."

¹⁸Shannon, *Socialist Party of America*, 266.

¹⁹Hugh H. Brown, letter to H. A. Lemmon, Director, State Council of Defense, Tonopah, 31 January 1918, World War I Council of Defense Collection, Nevada State Archives, Carson City; S. H. Brady, campaign letter for U.S. Senate Candidate Charles B. Henderson, 1916, Tasker Oddie Collection, Nevada Historical Society, Reno.

²⁰State Labor Commissioner, letter to Hal Lemmon, Chairman, State Council of Defense, Reno, 8 January 1917, World War I Council of Defense Collection, Nevada State Archives, Carson City.

²¹Paul Walters, a resident of Job Harriman's Nevada City cooperative community, was gunned down by a posse after allegedly killing the sheriff of Churchill County, who had tried to arrest him for draft evasion. See Wilbur Shepperson, *Retreat to Nevada: A Socialist Colony of World War I* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1966).

²²Hulse, "Socialism in Nevada"; *New York Times*, 22 September 1925. In 1927, Dunseath, Miller, and McNamara, three former Socialists, ran against each other in the race for Reno city attorney. "Nevada Political Directory—Reno."

²³*Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 23, 28 February 1958. Upon Thomas's retirement, the National Association of Sheriffs honored him as the "oldest acting Sheriff in the United States." He was eighty-three. *Tonopah Times-Bonanza and Goldfield News*, 22 July 1966.

²⁴Sidney R. Moore, letter to R. E. Morrow, Tonopah, 9 November 1916, S. R. Moore and Company Records, Nevada Historical Society, Reno.

²⁵"Socialist Legislation in Nevada," *American Labor Yearbook*, Alexander Trachtenberg, ed. (New York: Rand School, 1915), 51.

²⁶Phillip I. Earl, "By the Knife: Tonopah's Gregovich-Mircovich Murder Case," *History and Humanities. Essays in Honor of Wilbur S. Shepperson*, Francis X. Hartigan, ed. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1989) 32, says that the Nevada Senate "unanimously" passed a bill changing the form of judicial death from hanging and shooting to electrocution. This bill was passed in March 1915. It is difficult to imagine that Senator Scanlan would have voted in favor of this measure in light of his opposition to capital punishment.

THE WISCONSIN IDEA IN NEVADA

William D. Rowley

In many aspects of its geography and economy Nevada stands as an exception in the family of states. But it is no exception when it comes to reflecting political currents and social movements that have often dominated the national scene. At the beginning of the century national progressivism became a popular rallying cry of those who desired to reform American society and root out the corruption and gross governmental mismanagement rampant in late nineteenth-century America. Probably the leading national progressive produced by Nevada was its United States senator, Francis G. Newlands. As congressman from 1893 to 1902 and senator from 1903 until his death in 1917, Newlands sought to prod Nevada toward adoption of progressive reforms. This meant democratic election reforms, regulation of public services offered by private companies, an attempt to offer to society's weaker members protection from adverse employment conditions, and, finally, fulfillment of the civic duty of government to protect individuals from their own weaknesses for drink, gambling, prostitution. What Newlands and other progressives saw emerging was a new, more directive relationship between government and society in the twentieth century.

An offshoot of this expansive view of the function of government was the search by progressive political figures for the personnel and knowledge to perform newly enhanced regulatory roles for government in the society and economy. Government needed help beyond the ranks of politicians and their patronage entourages to execute its enlarged responsibilities. To offer the efficiency, service, and accountability it sought to provide, the reformed government needed expert personnel and above all knowledge to implement taxation reform, new accounting systems, education reforms, and the many other changes necessary to the emerging regulative state. As a western progressive, Newlands determined to foster progressive reform in Nevada and transform it into his vision of the model commonwealth in the first decade of the century. All of this he pursued in the midst of the new mining boom spawned by the Tonopah and Goldfield discoveries and the development of a major reclamation project that transformed the desert around Fallon into an agricultural enterprise.

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In some states, and especially in Wisconsin under the leadership of Governor Robert La Follette, the progressives turned to their state universities for the expertise required to staff new governmental offices and the studies to plot the direction of reformed governments. The University of Wisconsin in Madison is one of the universities most widely recognized for the manner in which it led the way in developing this service role to the state and the people of Wisconsin in the cause of progressive government. By 1912, as progressive reform politics became popular, the Wisconsin Idea, as it was called, had spread to other states. In Nevada, too, the professorate offered a resource to be tapped by progressive-minded political officeholders like Senator Newlands. A name called upon by Newlands on the small land-grant state university campus in Reno was Ramonzo Adams, professor of education and sociology at the University of Nevada. As the Wisconsin Idea made a brief appearance in this far western state, Adams represented what one historian has termed the service intellectuals in the tradition of the Wisconsin school or idea.¹

In 1911 former President Theodore Roosevelt had occasion to comment on the political-reform movement going forward in Wisconsin shortly after a visit to Madison. He noted that America constantly looked to Europe and even Australia for guidance in solving the emerging problems of an industrial-urban society. But now, he wrote enthusiastically,

We can . . . look for leadership to Wisconsin when we desire to try to solve the great social and industrial problems of the present and the future, instead of being forced to look abroad. It is noteworthy that in Wisconsin when one speaks of such leadership it is possible to include therein the student [he might have also said university professors] as well as the political leader. In no other state of the Union has any university done the same work for the community that has been done in Wisconsin by the University of Wisconsin.²

The close working relationship between the state and the university at which Roosevelt marvelled was the Wisconsin Idea. Governor Robert La Follette had come to the governorship in 1900 as a progressive reform governor with ideas about efficiency, service, the use of experts in government, more democracy and justice to consumers, and tax reform.³ His national fame—based on his work as governor, his record in the United States Senate, and his own newspaper, *La Follette's Weekly*—rested in part on his program to tap experts from the university to initiate and administer a whole series of reform measures in the Wisconsin state government. By 1912 the utilization by government of the university expert was synonymous with the Wisconsin Idea.

Before this date numerous articles had appeared in the national press commenting on the close relationship in Wisconsin between the state university and the reform movement taking place in the state. As early as 1907 one such article referred to "A University in Public Life." Another, in 1909, was entitled "Tutoring Lawmakers: How the State University of Wisconsin Has Established a

Working Alliance with the Legislature," and in the same year Lincoln Steffens wrote an article for *The American Magazine* under the heading "What the University of Wisconsin Is Doing for Its People." By the year 1912 the MacMillan Company had published Professor Charles McCarthy's *The Wisconsin Idea*. McCarthy was professor of political economy at the university and chief of the Wisconsin Legislative Reference Department, whose creation was in itself one of the major accomplishments of the reform movement in Wisconsin. That year also saw the publication by Scribner's of Frederic C. Howe's *Wisconsin: An Experiment in Democracy*. All of this is further affirmation that by 1912, the year of Roosevelt's ill-fated Bull Moose campaign, the term *Wisconsin Idea* was appearing frequently in the contemporary news-magazine literature.⁴

As the Wisconsin Idea gained currency, utilization of the intellectual resources of universities to serve the ever-expanding functions of state governments caught the imagination of progressives around the country. The idea was explained in sources varying from book-length monographs to flashy articles accompanied by scenic and sober pictures of the city of Madison, the state capitol, and the spacious grounds and buildings of the University of Wisconsin. President Richard C. Van Hise of the University of Wisconsin described the university as undergoing "expansion and extension." As one article put it, "The Uni-



Senator Francis G. Newlands of Nevada. (Nevada Historical Society)

versity of Wisconsin has become a kind of 'consulting engineer' in the public life of the state of Wisconsin." The journalist Lincoln Steffens wrote that "President Van Hise keeps in the faculty the professors who take public office; these teachers came into the classrooms of Madison, like the short horns, with 'dung on their boots,' the dung of the farm, of commerce, and of politics." Professors Richard T. Ely, John R. Commons, E. A. Ross, and others served on various state commissions, conducted studies, and made recommendations for new policies and the conduct of state government.⁵

One of the overriding hallmarks of the progressives in Wisconsin, as elsewhere, was the employment of commissions of appointed experts to execute the intricate tasks that government was being called upon to perform. Examples of such commissions are the Railroad Commission, Tax Commission, and the State Industrial Commission. The nearly thirty professors, who were also officials in state government, "simply provide the state of Wisconsin with the technical knowledge and the professional advice which of all places a university is best fitted to furnish." In Wisconsin the reformers of La Follette progressivism accepted the proposition that states would have to perform more duties in the modern industrial era to ensure democracy, to protect the weak from the strong, and generally provide for the common welfare. The demands on government were tremendously complex, and especially so upon state legislatures, which were generally "a heterogeneous and motley body of rough-and-ready solons." As the complications of state government grew, the university, its knowledge, and its experts offered sensible and studied answers to the labyrinth of problems in the emerging modern century.⁶

As Nevada responded to national and local pressures to become progressive, its state government began to play a greater role in regulating or overseeing business in order to protect consumers and ensure balanced economic opportunity. According to progressive tenets, government should also assume greater responsibility for protecting workers in the work place, women and children, and the old and the disabled. With these increased responsibilities, the process of government had to be made more democratic and responsive to the people, with direct primaries, direct election of United States senators, and provision for referendum, initiative, and recall—all familiar forms of direct democracy political reforms that were not achieved until the Progressive Era. In addition, progressive tax reform called for the burden of increased taxation, which was needed to pay for larger government, to be spread fairly over all sectors of the population and across all types of property, with few privileges or exemptions. Wisconsin embraced the income tax as the ultimate progressive taxation reform. The hope was to impose upon those who could pay more readily a greater share of the cost of government. Nevada, too, experienced these reform efforts, including tax reform, but the state showed no inclination then or later to adopt an income tax as part of its reform package.

Curiously, the progressive drive for democratic reforms that often embraced

women's suffrage did not address inclusion of the minority peoples within the political process. Their disenfranchisement, formal or otherwise, remained and was even endorsed by many of these same progressive reformers, including Nevada's own Senator Newlands. Newlands tried to make his views consistent with progressive ideology by arguing that the inclusion of diverse races within the democratic process would snarl the wheels of democracy, make it divisive and dangerously inefficient. This was not an immediate problem in Nevada, but nevertheless the senator developed the view, widely known, that the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution should be repealed and that minorities, especially Blacks, should be denied the franchise. Progressives generally saw nothing inconsistent or out of the ordinary in his racial viewpoints.⁷

While much of this is well known as regards Nevada progressivism, the story of Nevada's brief experience with the Wisconsin Idea is not. Although the University of Nevada of the first decade in the century does not compare to the energies of "expansion and extension" bursting forth from the University of Wisconsin, nevertheless Professor Adams and Senator Newlands moved to serve the state: Adams from the academic service realm and Newlands from the political arena.

Newlands's reputation as a national progressive is better known than are his efforts for progressivism at the state level. After his victory in the 1903 senatorial elections (following the passage of the National Reclamation Act in 1902, for which he took a great deal of credit), his attention turned to internal state politics in an attempt to make Nevada a modern progressive state or, as he wrote, "a model democracy." Like La Follette in Wisconsin, he, too, sought expert aid from university sources. Professor Adams, who had come to the state some years earlier from the Midwest, was possessed of the kind of training and motivation that made him an able candidate for servant and citizen beyond the halls of academia.⁸

Ramonzo Adams was born in Wisconsin in 1868, was graduated from Iowa State Teachers College in 1892, and received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1904. Views similar to those at Wisconsin were then being developed at the University of Chicago as to the state's growing role in bringing social and economic justice to society. Adams joined the faculty at the University of Nevada in 1902 and drew attention to himself when he played a major part in formulating the State Educational Reform Act of 1907. This act increased the centralization of state public education and standardized training for teachers while removing this power from the county district attorneys, who previously exercised arbitrary rule over their own educational fiefdoms. It provided for uniform rules, guided by the latest in pedagogical science, to be applied in all counties.⁹

Professor Adams entered the public-service sphere in the area of his expertise—teacher education—and there exerted significant influence in state educational-reform politics. As he assumed the mantle of service intellectual, his 1908



Joseph E. Stubbs, President of the University of Nevada. (Nevada Historical Society)

pronouncements on the success of the educational reform act rang with the optimism of his progressive belief that there were remedies for societal problems if knowledge could be effectively applied to them. He said, "It is not sufficient, however, that there be a general statement in favor of progress. It is necessary to make definite plans, practicable working plans, and then to make the plans work." Professor Adams believed in progress and the ability of laws to promote progress. He worked for laws against gambling and alcohol as early as 1906, as did Joseph Stubbs, president of the University of Nevada, who also campaigned vigorously against legalized prostitution in Reno and urged the male students at the university, in stern moral tones, to avoid the temptations of Reno's town life. President Stubbs is a good example of the university president in the Progressive Era—committed to uplifting the community, protecting the weak, and also insulating individuals from the profiteers who preyed upon the weaknesses of people in various unsavory ways. These ways included gambling, drinking, prostitution, and boxing matches, to mention but the most prominent of the vices that then afflicted Reno, the home of the university.¹⁰

Adams's work in achieving school-reform legislation marked him as a ready recruit for Senator Newlands's summons to help design progressive legislation for Nevada. Newlands's list of reforms lengthened as progressivism became politically popular in the new century. By 1909 they included referendum and initiative, but he believed that voter decisions should only be advisory to the legislature. Later he yielded to the idea that the voters could act in place of the

legislature by passing laws through either referendum or initiative legislation. While he also saw the need for a simplified process of constitutional amendment, he was opposed to a constitutional convention to rewrite the constitution:

I very much fear that, if we have a constitutional convention, the tendency would be to put into the Constitution an entire code of laws, as in the case of Oklahoma. Whilst that Constitution is, in many ways, admirable, recent examination convinces me that it is unwise to place so much of the law in so fixed a form as that involved in constitutional enactment.

Adequate and attractive pay for service in the legislature and state government was another attribute of the modern state that Newlands espoused; he hoped to spark the interest of talented individuals and not just those with time and money.¹¹

Newlands called in 1909 for a legislative reference bureau similar to that of Wisconsin:

In a number of States, notably in Wisconsin, there has been established a Legislative Reference Bureau, whose work it is to furnish members of the Legislature with data for the study of public questions and to give expert aid in framing of laws.

He also saw such a bureau as helping members of the legislature "to inform themselves on the legislation of other states to keep them in touch with current movements for progressive legislation." (It should be noted that Nevada did not obtain a legislative counsel bureau until 1945.)¹²

A primary-election law that would allow the election, at public expense, of party delegates to party conventions was also on Newlands's agenda. He saw severe problems with a direct primary that would force candidates into additional expenses and problems with crossover voters from other parties. He wanted Nevada's newly founded Railroad Commission (1907) to be given powers over all public utilities in the state. He wanted taxation reform through the establishment of a state board of equalization. Such a board existed in the 1890s, but was abolished. Later on the State Board of Assessors was organized, "the purpose being to give them the power jointly to assess the railroads, public utilities, and certain other classes of property, so as to secure uniformity throughout the State." While he realized it would not be possible to return to a board of equalization, he did urge greater professionalization of the State Board of Assessors by adding the governor to the board. He pushed for a broader tax base with lower taxation rates, and for banking reform to guarantee safety of the banks, which could be assured only through closer state regulation. In his letter to Democratic Governor Denver Dickerson in 1909, Newlands stated his position:

As a citizen and resident of the State of Nevada, I feel an intense interest in all its legislation and am solicitous that in the future, as in the past decade of Democratic

control, we should demonstrate to the country that Nevada is a State of progressive legislation intended to secure popular rule, to maintain peace and promote justice, to place the burthens of taxation justly and proportionately upon all property, to reduce the taxes to the lower point consistent with good government, and to expend the taxes for the highest good of the entire people.¹³

Clearly, taxation reform placed high on Newlands's progressive reform agenda for the state. Usually progressives sought more direct democracy, consumer protection through regulation of corporations, and finally tax reform. Newlands fits nicely this pattern. But to effect reform, especially in taxation, Newlands needed accurate information and expert studies to make his case. For this he called upon Professor Adams, whose name was already prominent in the state because of his involvement in public affairs.

By 1912 Newlands was actively promoting a state tax-reform movement. In newspapers throughout the state in December 1912 there appeared a Newlands letter to the Reno Commercial Club, outlining a statewide movement for the consideration of plans to reduce state expenditures and reform the tax laws. In this letter Newlands concurred with Governor Tasker Oddie and Lieutenant Governor G. C. Ross that the best method of proceeding would be to ask the Reno Commercial Club to initiate an organization composed of representatives of the various commercial clubs and boards of trade in Nevada, as well as other representative bodies, such as the Board of County Commissioners, the Cattle and Sheep Growers' Associations, the Mining Association, and the Bar Association, which, "with the aid of experts," would ascertain the facts regarding retrenchment, the facts regarding loss of revenue, and the facts regarding the proper equalization of assessments, and suggest legislative action thereon.

Newlands suggested that the make-up of this committee not include any elected officials from the legislature or the executive branch, so that "the governor, the lieutenant governor and the legislature could exercise their functions of approving, rejecting or modifying any suggestion that might be made, without being committed before hand to its approval or acceptance." Again he wrote with reference to experts that "it might be well to give such a committee not only the power to avail itself of expert advice, but to organize such sub-committee or sub-committees as it may deem advisable."¹⁴

Pursuant to these suggestions, Newlands laid before the Reno Commercial Club a letter from Professor Adams and a report of the professor's research on the general taxation structure in the state. In his report to Newlands, Adams included a synopsis of a larger study of the entire financial system of the state. He pointed out that the revenues of the state over the past three years had fallen short of expenditures. The situation demanded a more equitable taxation system that would generally lower taxes, but make them more broadly based to raise the necessary revenue. He offered his various statistics and compilations in the hope that they would serve the needs of a study committee that would be established to analyse the taxation situation and make recommendations to the legislature.¹⁵

Shortly thereafter the Nevada Committee on Economy and Taxation was established, with Ramonzo Adams a prominent member as the expert from the university. It was no accident that the 1913 legislature passed tax-reform legislation and established the Nevada Tax Commission, which superseded previous efforts with boards of equalization and boards of state assessors. In 1918 Adams's full study appeared in his book, *Taxation in Nevada: A History*. In addition to his work in educational reform, taxation reform, and support of efforts to reform Reno's civic life, Adams was involved in revising the state's primary law in 1917. He also addressed the problems of Nevada's open range lands in a 1916 article in *The American Journal of Sociology* entitled "Public Range Lands—A New Policy Needed." This article influenced the thinking of Anne Martin as she made her bid for political office and in her general assessment of the fundamental problems facing the desert state of Nevada. Adams argued that public range lands could be leased in such a manner as to encourage establishment of a small-rancher population to reverse the trend toward monopolization of public ranges by the few: "The general aim should be to encourage the multiplication of small farms and small live-stock owners and range users."¹⁶

Of course this did not occur in the form he hoped. There was a Ranch Homestead Law in 1918, which he denounced as he had an earlier proposal by Senator Key Pittman to cede public range lands to the state for sale to stock interests. The revenues from these sales were to go to the university, but no matter, Professor Adams opposed it, and did so in spite of orders from his boss, the university's new president, Archer W. Hendrick, to keep quiet. Marvelling at the injustices that could be committed and advocated "under the cloak of education," Adams asserted that he did not work for President Hendrick, but for the people of Nevada.¹⁷

His difficulties with the university administration, which began after the departure of President Stubbs in 1913, and general problems at the university prompted Adams to move to the University of Hawaii in 1920. There he continued in the tradition of public service he had established in Nevada, conducting studies in race relations, crime, and land reform in the islands. He died in Honolulu in 1942 after developing pneumonia while digging a bomb shelter. Some years later on the campus of the University of Hawaii the Romanzo Adams School of Social Sciences was created in his honor.¹⁸

Professor Adams's career in Nevada should best be remembered as a prime example of the Wisconsin Idea at work, especially in his labors toward educational reform, tax reform, reform of public range-land policy, and finally direct-democracy election reform. On the political side, it was Senator Newlands who exerted efforts to apply the Wisconsin Idea in Nevada; as the state's key progressive political figure, he utilized the expertise of the university faculty to push Nevada toward a more progressive, modern statehood. This he did in the face of the strong reactionary forces in the state, who actually spoke more accurately to the course of the state's future than did either Newlands's brand of progres-

sivism or Adams's acts as an intellectual in the service of the state, but that is another story for another time.

NOTES

¹Richard S. Kirkendall, *Social Scientists and Farm Politics in the Age of Roosevelt* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1966), 1–7, devotes the introductory chapter to the rise of the service intellectual during the progressive period.

²Theodore Roosevelt, "Wisconsin: An Object Lesson for the Rest of the Union," *The Outlook* 98 (27 May 1911), 144.

³David Thelen, *The New Citizenship: Origins of Progressivism in Wisconsin, 1885–1900* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1972), 1–4.

⁴William Hard, "A University in Public Life," *Outlook* 86 (27 July 1907), 659–67; Charles Johnston, "Tutoring Lawmakers: How the State University of Wisconsin Has Established a Working Alliance with the Legislature," *Harpers Weekly* 53 (27 March 1909), 15; Lincoln Steffens, "Sending a State to College: What the University of Wisconsin is Doing for Its People," *The American Magazine* 67 (February 1909), 349–64.

⁵Hard, "University in Public Life," 667; Steffens, "Sending a State to College," 364.

⁶Hard, "University in Public Life," 662; Johnston, "Tutoring Lawmakers," 15.

⁷William D. Rowley, "Francis G. Newlands: A Westerner's Search for a Progressive and White American," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* 17 (Summer 1974), 69–79.

⁸William D. Rowley, "Francis G. Newlands and the Promises of American Life," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* 32 (Fall 1989) 171.

⁹Obituary, *Nevada State Journal*, 15 October 1942; John Koontz, ed. *Political History of Nevada* (Carson City: State Printer, 1960), 35; Sam P. Davis, *The History of Nevada III* (Reno: The Elms Publishing Co., 1913), I, 522.

¹⁰Adams to Nevada State Teachers' Institute and Educational Association, 14–18 December 1908, Romanzo Adams Papers, Nevada Historical Society, Reno (hereafter referred to as Adams MSS), Samuel Bradford Doten, *An Illustrated History of the University of Nevada* (Reno: University of Nevada, 1924), 97; James Hulse, "Reformers and Visionaries," *East of Eden, West of Zion: Essays on Nevada*, Wilbur S. Shepperson, ed. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1989), 65–67.

¹¹Newlands to Denver S. Dickerson, Acting Governor of Nevada, 5 January 1909, Newlands Papers, Sterling Library, Yale University (hereafter referred to as Newlands MSS).

¹²*The Nevada Constitution: Origin and Growth*, 6th ed., Eleanore Bushnell and Don Driggs, eds. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1984), 104–5.

¹³Newlands to Dickerson, 5 January 1909, Newlands MSS.

¹⁴*Lyon County Wasp*, 19 December 1912.

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶Romanzo Adams, *Taxation in Nevada: A History* (Reno: The Nevada State Historical Society, 1918); An Act to Provide for the Nomination of Candidates for Elective Public Offices, 1917, Adams MSS; James G. Scrugham, *Nevada: A Narrative of the Conquest of a Frontier Land*, 3 vols. (Chicago: The American Historical Society, Inc., 1935), I, 482–83; Romanzo Adams, "Public Range Lands: A New Policy Needed," *The American Journal of Sociology* 22 (November 1916), 324–51; Anne Martin, "Nevada: Beautiful Desert of Buried Hopes," *Nation* 115 (July 1922), 91.

¹⁷Adams to E. E. Caine, 3 February 1917, Adams MSS.

¹⁸*Nevada State Journal*, 15 October 1942.

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

Double Divorce: The Case of Mariette and John von Neumann

Tibor Frank

John von Neumann (1903–57) was one of the greatest mathematicians of this century. He was born in Budapest into an upper-middle-class Jewish family, and his father had been one of the last to receive a title from Hungary's King Francis Joseph I. A child prodigy in mathematics, John von Neumann received the finest possible education. He attended one of Budapest's best high schools, the Lutheran Gymnasium, and after 1921 continued with university studies mainly in Berlin and Zürich, although he was also enrolled as a student of mathematics at Budapest University, where he received his doctorate in 1926. He was awarded another degree at Berlin's university in 1927, and was invited in 1929 to become a visiting professor at the newly established Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. Arriving in January 1930, he continued to teach part time in the United States until 1933, when the rise of Hitler in Germany persuaded him to stay in Princeton. He became a naturalized citizen in 1937 and is considered one of the leading figures of American science during the 1940s and 1950s.

A Princeton professor through most of his life, he was also a consultant to the Manhattan Project and supported the war effort in various other capacities through World War II. He became one of the pioneers of game theory and the computer, and ended his short life as one of the commissioners of the Atomic Energy Commission in Washington, D.C. Broad-minded, enormously versatile, and many-sided, he was a superbly creative and playful scientist whom most of his contemporaries considered to be a genius.¹

Von Neumann first married, at the very end of 1929, the daughter of a well-known Budapest doctor, Dr. Géza Kövesi. His young wife Mariette came from the same privileged background as von Neumann himself, bringing a luxurious dowry as well as an annual income of princely proportions.² They moved to Princeton in the fall of 1933, and their only daughter was born in New York City

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in 1935. The relationship, however, soon lost its meaning, and Mrs. von Neumann sought a quick divorce.

Mariette Kövesi von Neumann arrived in Reno, Nevada, in September 1937. Throughout her stay in Reno and at Pyramid Lake she corresponded with her husband in what certainly seem today to be terms of endearment. It is important to see these letters as documents of their continued love, as well as evidence of the undisguised disgust and contempt with which some of Reno's visitors viewed the city more than fifty years ago as they conducted the business of a Nevada divorce.

Mariette von Neumann's first letter, dated September 22, 1937, was sent to her husband in Princeton from The Riverside Hotel in Reno. What follows is a literal English translation from the Hungarian, which preserves, as far as possible, the original sentence patterns and punctuation of her letters.³

Johnny Sweetheart, I believe that Hell is certainly very similar to this place. It is undescrivable, everybody is constantly drunken and they lose their money like mad 5–6 hundred dollars a day, the roulette table stands in the hall just as a spittoon some other place. The ranch where I allegedly go out today a 35 mile journey through the desert is a wonderful sight for a day but not for six weeks. The place itself is terribly primitive it is arranged like Sanibel if you remember and all this for 60 dollars per week without extras This place is hellish expensive everything costs cca twice as much as in New York. There is no telephone or telegram at this place that of course I did not report back home [i.e., to her parents], mail once a day. I will probably rent a small car it is impossible without it and it doesn't seem to be so very expensive. How are you sweetheart how is the apartment how do you live and do you love me a bit write about all these at length. I have the howling blues.⁴

Mariette

Mariette's second letter, undated, was written from The Ranch at Pyramid Lake (Telegraph and Post Office, Sutcliffe, Nevada), evidently some time after the first.

Johnny Sweetheart it is entirely crazy here and I would not feel so miserable if I were not meant to stay here for 6 weeks I believe I won't survive. I live in the midst of an Indian reservation there is a beautiful lake and the country is so divine that it is difficult to imagine. But these horrible females it is impossible that there are so many kinds of women in the world There is everything here starting from New Zealand through Boston and tuxedo all sorts and even some quite likable ones but almost all of them leave already Next week it will already be after season I didn't know that this procedure has also got a season but it seems to be the case. Here I haven't yet received letters from you nor from my mother but I hope tomorrow will be different. Riding is very beautiful but the evenings are deadly, imagine dinner at six and night goes until 10 o'clock. How are you sweetheart write about everything what you do and what bad things people talk about me. If you have time love me a bit. [Daughter]Marinka seems to do very well.

Million kisses

Mariette

Mariette's stay in Reno did not remain a secret in Budapest. The gossip-hungry daily paper *A Reggel* reported on October 18, 1937, some (not exactly accurate) "Divorce news from overseas."

The young Hungarian mathematician who some time ago *married the daughter-with-a-million of a superbly rich Budapest internist and who worked for a time also with Einstein* in America arrived for a brief stay in Reno, the *divorce-Mecca* of the United States. According to the gossip that reached Budapest—*not for vacationing* (italics in original).⁵

Both John and Mariette von Neumann took second spouses almost immediately after their divorce.

Mariette was able to remarry without difficulty because her second husband was an American citizen, and the ceremony was performed in the United States. John von Neumann, however, planned to marry a Hungarian lady early the next year; although he had become an American citizen, he had retained his Hungarian citizenship also, and Hungarian law therefore did not recognize the validity, in Hungary, of the Reno divorce. Article 114 of the Hungarian marriage law made it absolutely clear that only a Hungarian court was authorized to make decisions about divorce cases of Hungarian citizens. In order to get married again, this great Hungarian scientist was forced to renounce his claim to Hungarian citizenship, though, admittedly, for a nonpolitical reason.⁶ The Document of Dismissal, as the official permission of the Royal Hungarian minister of the interior was characteristically called, was granted on July 11, 1938.⁷ It must be noted, however, that no legal expert in Hungary ever seriously questioned the validity, *within the United States*, of von Neumann's Reno divorce.

It was ironic and cruel that von Neumann's new marriage immediately brought him additional problems of the same nature. He faced the danger that his new wife would automatically lose her Hungarian citizenship upon marrying him, but without simultaneously acquiring United States citizenship. Von Neumann was desperate, as he indicates in his letter of October 13, 1938, to Abraham Flexner, director of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton.

. . . the present political situation of Europe is still highly troublous, and anything may happen in a few months—and in this part of Central Europe there are many additional dangers and here even the next weeks are critical. And in this situation [my new wife] would be without any definite citizenship, and therefore most probably unable to go anywhere outside of Hungary.⁸

The von Neumanns were finally able to marry and leave Europe just before the war broke out.

The 1937 letters that Mariette Kövesi von Neumann wrote from Reno to her first husband are interesting documents of Nevada history. They record not only the enduring and tender relationship of this pair, but also the image of Reno as seen by upper-class European immigrants in the late 1930s. The case of John von

Neumann may also reflect the value outside the United States of Reno divorces at that time.

NOTES

¹There is a growing literature on John von Neumann: see, most recently, Ferenc Nagy, ed., *Neumann János és a "magyar titok" a dokumentumok tükrében* [János Neumann and the "Hungarian secret" in documents] (Budapest: Országos Műszaki Információs Központ és Könyvtár, 1987), a documentary on von Neumann's Hungarian connections, including a facsimile of an early handwritten résumé (pp. 17–18). The John von Neumann Papers are in the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

²Dr. Géza Kövesi to Dr. János Neumann von Margitta, Budapest, 31 December 1929; list of property to be transferred from Budapest to Princeton, New Jersey, 6 September 1933 (both in Mariette–Johnny, divorce correspondence, Box 8, John von Neumann Papers).

³Mariette von Neumann to John von Neumann, Reno, 22 September 1937; *ibid*, The Ranch at Pyramid Lake, undated (both in Mariette–Johnny, divorce correspondence, Box 8, John von Neumann Papers).

⁴The final sentence is in English in the original.

⁵A *Reggel*, 18 October 1937, clipping (Mariette–Johnny, divorce correspondence, Box 8, John von Neumann Papers).

⁶Dr. Károly Wilhelm (Budapest attorney) to Dr. János Neumann, Budapest, undated [spring 1938], with detailed legal arguments based on a meeting with Dr. Miklós Staud, counsellor in the Hungarian Ministry of Justice (John von Neumann, divorce and other official documents, Box 7, John von Neumann Papers).

⁷*Elbocsátási okirat* [Document of dismissal], Royal Hungarian minister of the interior, Budapest, 11 July 1938 (John von Neumann, divorce and other official documents, Box 7, John von Neumann Papers).

⁸John von Neumann to Abraham Flexner, draft in original English, Budapest, 13 October 1938 (Family 1938–1942, Box 8, John von Neumann Papers).

BOOK REVIEWS

Winged Words: American Indian Writers Speak. By Laura Coltelli. (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1990, 209 pp., introduction, illustrations, notes, bibliography.)

The publication of N. Scott Momaday's novel *House Made of Dawn* in 1968 forced critics and readers alike to take a closer look at the work being produced by native American writers and to acknowledge the importance of their stories to the world's modern literary tradition. Assessing native writers' perceptions of their individual places in this constantly evolving province became Laura Coltelli's objective in *Winged Words: American Indian Writers Speak*, interviews with eleven contemporary native American authors in 1985.

The writers assembled in this collection represent a vast array of talent and approach; the poets, novelists, and essayists included are Paula Gunn Allen, Louise Erdrich, Michael Dorris, Joy Harjo, Linda Hogan, N. Scott Momaday, Simon Ortiz, Wendy Rose, Leslie Marmon Silko, Gerald Vizenor, and James Welch. Coltelli has designed a question-and-answer format to facilitate continuity from one interview to the next.

Coltelli asks each author to discuss writing techniques as well as sources of literary inspiration. Asked to cite their literary preferences, these writers pay tribute, for the most part, to established classics. James Welch (*Fools Crow*), for example, reads Elio Vittorini, Ernest Hemingway, John Steinbeck, N. Scott Momaday, and Leslie Marmon Silko. It was interesting that the less commercially successful writers interviewed here are apt to look to the less well-known, though equally important, authors—those who write black, tribal, or colonial studies whose orientation tends toward personal philosophy.

Coltelli asks each author to address the focus on mixed-blood characters that seems to pervade contemporary Native American literature and poetry. Most authors ascribe this phenomenon to the need of the individual to survive in today's multiethnic environment. Their characters, like Able in *House Made of Dawn*, seek and re-seek their identities. That search for self has reinforced pan-Indianism, where each individual's journey reveals universal themes that transcend cultural differences.

That inescapable conclusion explains why the term *Native American literature* does a disservice to the writers collected here. These are talented writers and,

like all writers, they bring their cultural heritage to their craft. But their individual genius is just that. As Louise Erdrich, author of *Love Medicine*, observes, "I don't think American Indian literature should be distinguished from mainstream literature. Setting it apart and saying that people with special interests might read this sets Indians apart too" (p. 47). This mainstream approach will ensure these contemporary Native American writers their rightful places in the literary tradition of the world.

Richmond L. Clow
University of Montana

Stump Ranch Pioneer. By Nelle Portrey Davis, with a new introduction by Susan Hendricks Swetnam. (1942; rpt. Moscow: University of Idaho Press, 1990, 245 pp.)

This impressionistic autobiography is a well-written tale of a woman whose prairie roots made her reluctant to leave eastern Colorado even when the screaming gales of dust storms brought desolation to her family home, Manana Ranch. The dust and the wind and the worry eventually caused the family to forsake the chosen pattern of their lives, put the farm and all of their belongings up for auction at public sale, and head to northern Idaho, where the dust would be but a memory.

Dust Bowl refugees began arriving in Idaho in 1932, the migration peaking between 1934 and 1936, as they were driven from their homes by crop failure and drought. Settlement, rather than deforestation, was the accepted way of salvaging logged-off lands in the northern tier of forests during the first forty years of the twentieth century. These lands were usually desolate and unproductive wastes strewn with huge stumps and shattered trees. Promoters lured settlers with pamphlets depicting a promised land for "stump ranchers."

The Davis family made a successful new start in the northern panhandle of Idaho, which Nelle refers to as "the bottleneck." They arrived with only \$160 in their pockets, but purchased a lot, worked long days finishing their log cabin, and promptly fell in love with the forested beauty surrounding them. While her husband and son cleared the land, Nelle built kitchen cabinets, fashioned a dressing table from orange crates for her daughter, and purchased car springs from a salvage lot to make living-room furniture. An old typewriter had escaped the farm sale, so she wrote articles describing her new environment for the local newspaper, *Whisperings from Paradise Valley*; she sold other articles to magazines for \$2 each, with which she bought material for upholstery and curtains. Through her lyrical descriptions, even the most insignificant chores become

noble ventures set against a backdrop of “newly-verdured tamarack, the rusty green of the lacy cedar, the silvery sheen of the white fir, the light and dark of the hemlocks, the deep green of the long-needled pines, and the rich, dark tones of the beautiful red fir” (p. 42). Accounts of days filled with canning, gardening, and preserving are intertwined with vignettes which tell how a bear ransacked the neighbor’s grocery stash, and how a small smudge fire built in the front yard alerted five forest-fire lookout men to send the ranger to the spot. The author tells of simple things, eloquently confirming that Paradise Valley answered the dreams of the Davis family. Their hard work in the Dust Bowl had not paid off, but hard work in Idaho did.

In her effort to present the idyllic setting of northern Idaho as the embodiment of the American dream, Davis skirts the reality of the majority of stump ranchers in the Pacific Northwest in the 1930s. Nearly all of the Dust Bowl migrants who went to Idaho and Washington had been farmers, but most had farmed in a totally different environment, and their preoccupation with water led them to overrate the cutover lands, where lush growth seemed to promise abundant crops. Promoters enticed migrants by saying that fuel was readily available and that the rains would make things grow, neglecting to mention that it would take months, or even years, to clear the debris of logging waste. Most logged-off lands produced relatively little income, and many owners hovered near poverty as they struggled with infertile soil, which was leached by heavy winter rains, and easily eroded when vegetation was removed. Hard work in this environment did not always lead to prosperity and serenity, although some farmers took to dairying, poultry raising, and berry growing, leaving the stumps still in place.

Herein lies the weakness in *Stump Ranch Pioneer*. The author’s cheerful insistence that energy and self-sufficiency will result in every day being “a challenge as well as a promise” (p. 112) to all who “clear their own land, harvest the logs with which to build their own home, and carve out a home site in the heart of the wilderness” (p. 95) seems a bit euphoric because she seldom mentions hardships. Nelle’s biggest disappointment appears to have been the failure to obtain a library for the local women’s club. But her effervescent optimism should not detract from the value of the book, which lies in the fascinating accounts of life in the woods and of struggles in the Dust Bowl.

In an excellent introduction, written in 1990 for the second printing, Susan Hendricks Swetnam argues that Nelle Portrey Davis was not a historian, but a professional writer whose themes of cheerful hope and optimistic resiliency appealed to New York publishers at a time when writers such as Hamlin Garland and John Steinbeck believed that the promise of new land was often empty. Swetnam comments that Davis wrote the book as though she were attempting to prove Steinbeck wrong (p. ix). This analytical introduction serves to bring the Turnerian bent of the book into focus, and allows the reader to sit back and thoroughly enjoy the flowing, poetic prose of a time past.

The days of getting a hemlock hardwood floor for only a few dollars per thousand feet are gone, but as the reader is led along the historic Kootenai Trail through the eyes of the author, an impudent pine squirrel does appear to be sassing the intruder from a fallen cedar log. Kaleidoscopic wildflowers line that ancient pathway which leads to a verdant meadow surrounded by jagged, brooding mountains. These are the images of *Stump Ranch Pioneer*, a book to read when the mind is weary, and the spirit needs uplifting.

Evelyne Stitt Pickett
University of Idaho

The Struggle for the Land: Indigenous Insight and Industrial Empire in the Semiarid World. Edited by Paul A. Olson. (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1990, 317 pp., preface, introduction, maps, index.)

This interdisciplinary inquiry examines a series of case studies of semiarid environments in which industrialized regimes have replaced indigenous peoples and their lifestyles. Contributors to *The Struggle for the Land* include anthropologists, economists, environmental scholars, historians, an attorney, specialists in native studies, and employees of international organizations. The theme for the essays originated as part of a 1986 symposium, one of the annual series sponsored by the Center for Great Plains Studies at the University of Nebraska. For purposes of publication, the symposium papers are grouped into four parts, centering on institutional transformation, the history of land use in semiarid environments, the industrial institutions created to exploit those environments, and the extent to which indigenous religions might influence the industrialized world.

The most constant refrain running through these essays is the imposition of the institutions and values of industrial capitalism on fragile, semiarid ecosystems. The consequences for the affected lands and peoples, according to Paul Olson, were disastrous both "because of deliberate European-based exploitation but also because of European's [sic.] inexperience in the dry worlds" (p. 15). In his essay, "Human Adaptations to the Great Plains," John W. Bennett points to the parallels between the human occupation of the North American plains region and of semiarid lands elsewhere. Inhabitants of the Great Plains have moved in expanding and receding waves in concert with the natural cycles of drought and adequate precipitation. Variability is the key to understanding systems of human adaptation in these environments, according to Bennett; energy-intensive use of semiarid areas leads to abuse "because their extractive

processes are extensive and exhaustive and the external demands for such resources are so high" (p. 49).

Anatoly Khazanov's comparison of pastoral practices among inhabitants of the Great Plains and the Kazakhs of the central steppes of Eurasia contends that pastoral nomadism and modern industrial societies are incompatible. While mobile pastoralism may still be viable and environmentally sound, its subject populations have all experienced the painful and wrenching twists that accompany modernization. Russel Barsh argues that the substitution of cattle for bison altered the ecology of the Great Plains and in the process destroyed the social ecology of the population dependent upon the bison for survival. The irony is that bison are more successful on the plains than cattle: "they can utilize more of the habitat, are affected less by overstocking, and can survive winters better" (p. 17). Hence, the transition from bison to cattle proved ecologically destructive to what historically had been a relatively stable environment.

A short review can serve to draw attention to only a select few of the excellent contributions to this volume. One deserving of mention is Peter Iverson's comparative essay, "Plains Indians and Australian Aborigines in the Twentieth Century," which emphasizes the remarkable resilience and survival of these indigenous people in the face of the overwhelming forces arrayed against them. Iverson attributes that survival to several elements: their concern for sacred sites, resistance to the erosion of existing rights, and the continued efforts by native leaders to improve the well-being of their people. In the United States, pan-Indian organizations have given Indians an identity beyond that of the local group. But for Plains Indians and Australian Aborigines alike, it is the legal claim and right to the land that have been at the center of the struggle. In the late twentieth century it behooves non-natives to gain similar wisdom from a more careful feel for the land, which is "at the heart of it all" (p. 182).

William Grover Robbins
Oregon State University

Yosemite: The Embattled Wilderness. By Alfred Runte. (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1990, 271 pp., introduction, illustrations, notes, source notes, index.)

This is an important book for students of environmental and western history. It is well written, meticulously researched, and represents a valuable follow-up to the author's prior work, *National Parks: The American Experience* (1979). Runte traces the development of Yosemite from its designation as a park in 1864 to the present, with emphasis on how and why one of America's most popular parks

has deteriorated to little more than a tourist trap (p. 221). The story focuses on the park's adverse effects on the natural environment and what should have been done to protect the landscape.

Runte's bias in favor of the preservationist viewpoint is clear from the outset. He makes no apology for it. For Runte, the villains are all too clear—local politicians, park concessionaires, and the National Park Service, which promoted development in the name of tourism for profit (p. 36). Indeed, growth was the yardstick by which progress was measured at Yosemite. Concessionaires and park-service officials, who more often than not were on the same side in the rush for more visitors, systematically and progressively degraded the park's natural state. Thus, in Runte's words, "any resource open to everyone is eventually destroyed," and Yosemite is a classic case of "overexploitation in pursuit of economic self-interest" (p. 181).

Runte is correct in his assertion that Yosemite is today awash in a sea of visitors to the hotels, motels, cocktail lounges, and other tourist spots patrolled by park rangers on the lookout for drunks, muggers, and rapists. But Runte identifies only the surface cause of the degradation—concessionaires and park-service employees who have succeeded in turning a spectacular wilderness area into a diversified shopping mall. Runte's work lacks a definitive understanding of culture and culpability, and this is the book's shortcoming.

The root cause for the destruction of America's "crown jewels" lies beneath the surface of Runte's book. The American Judeo-Christian tradition and frontier heritage meant that the natural environment would be seen in utilitarian terms. Moreover, by placing a high premium on individualism and free enterprise, American society necessarily relegates preservation of resources to a low priority. In short, the capitalist economic system, where profit knows no bounds, is the antithesis of resource conservation. Viewed in these terms, park concessionaires are not good or bad guys, only bureaucratic capitalists following the American dream of owning an expanding and growing business. Economic growth has always been seen as a good thing whether in downtown Pittsburgh or Yosemite National Park. The same is no less true of the National Park Service, which measures progress by counting tourist heads instead of dollars. Thus, in a larger sense, the demise of America's most impressive natural beauty, no matter how regrettable and repulsive, is understandable and predictable.

In sum, Runte has written a major work that has application beyond the Yosemite experience. Today, America's national parks are being destroyed by the unrestrained commercialism that Runte chronicles so effectively. His work is stimulating, thought provoking, and valuable for its insights into one of America's most pressing environmental problems.

Gary E. Elliott
Riverside, California

In Search of the Golden West: The Tourist in Western America. By Earl Pomeroy. (1957; rpt. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1990, 233 pp., preface, illustrations, notes, index.)

Americans found themselves with increasing leisure time following the Civil War, and more and more of them spent it away from home. As they did, tourism developed in the American West. Early visitors, their expectations shaped by the tastemakers of the day, saw in the West what they came prepared to see. Westerners responded by tailoring the West, or at least that part of it they held out to visitors, to outsiders' expectations. This reciprocal relationship continued over the years, even as tourists, their modes of transport, and their destinations changed. Earl Pomeroy traces the evolution of this relationship and the ways in which it shaped the West—and Westerners—in his pathbreaking volume *In Search of the Golden West*, first published in 1957 and now reprinted, with a new preface, by the University of Nebraska Press.

Pomeroy anticipates ideas later associated with Roderick Nash and Alfred Runte. Unlike most who have followed, he emphasizes the sociocultural side of tourism rather than politics, administrative policy, and the contributions of individuals. Interpretive and analytical rather than a narrative history, Pomeroy's work presents impressions built up by "slow cumulative processes" as he examines "practically every extant volume of Western memoirs, travel, and description, and every magazine published in a Far Western territory or state" (p. 233). Pomeroy draws heavily on quotations from these diverse sources to craft a rich textual mosaic appropriate to the complex mix of attitudes behind the story; the result is a work that causes one to pause at allusions, implications, and ideas, a work to be savored rather than devoured at a gulp.

In spite of the time that has passed since it first appeared, *In Search of the Golden West* still seems fresh and timely. The University of Nebraska Press should be congratulated for making it available once more, this time in an attractive paperback edition.

Thomas R. Cox
San Diego State University

Growing Up in a Company Town: A Family in the Copper Camp of McGill, Nevada. By Russell R. Elliott. (Reno: Nevada Historical Society, 1990, 211 pp., illustrations, index.)

A lifetime of scholarly work has established Russell Elliott as the premier historian of Nevada. Now, in his *Growing Up in a Company Town*, Elliott sets out

not only the fascinating personal story of what life in McGill was like in the first part of the twentieth century, but also a careful social and economic analysis of the company-operated copper town and the Elliott family's ongoing connection with it from 1907 to the 1980s.

James Thomas Elliott brought his wife, Mary Jane, and small children to McGill in 1907, when he became bricklayer foreman at the Nevada Consolidated Copper Company's concentration plant. The family grew to include two girls and five boys, of whom Russell was the middle one. James died in 1925, but the Elliott family continued to be closely associated with McGill for another half a century. Seen through the window of his own experience, *Growing Up in a Company Town* is Russell Elliott's story and his family's story; at the same time it is the story of McGill and to a lesser extent that of Nevada Consolidated—and it is a warm, charming chronicle, full of human beings, and deftly told with perception, sensitivity, and a wry sense of humor.

The book paints a positive picture of the company town. Nevada Consolidated, which became a part of Kennecott Copper Corporation in 1933, was in complete charge, even to the extent of controlling which businesses came in and which continued. If it perpetuated the racial, social, and economic divisions in the six different "towns" that made up McGill, its ongoing "welfare capitalism" did much to improve the quality of life of its employees. It provided housing, paved roads, street lights, and hospital facilities; and it established a dairy, a clubhouse, athletic leagues, a band, and camp and park programs, especially under the management of John C. Kinnear and his son John C. Kinnear, Jr. Elliott is especially good in showing the interaction of town, company, and the younger generation.

For anyone who grew up in a small town, reading this volume is an exercise in nostalgia. It gives a delightful picture of ordinary people on an everyday basis: the details of what they did and what they ate; how they celebrated their holidays; how they coped with incessant wind, dust, and heat in the summer; or the sheer luxury of dressing close to a coal-fired pot-bellied stove in the living room on a cold winter morning. The importance of family entertainment is apparent—playing card games, singing around the piano, enjoying the arch-shaped Philco radio or the Mid-West radio-phonograph in the living room.

We get a good idea of how the youth of small-town America amused themselves both indoors and outdoors in the days before television and Nintendo. As elsewhere, swimming and bicycles were an integral part of every young lad's life, as were a host of games, from marbles to tennis and the many variations of sand-lot baseball for younger boys and organized leagues for the older ones. Everybody liked playing run-sheep-run, and more than one kid lost a tooth playing kick-the-can. They threw themselves wholeheartedly into games of cops-and-robbers or cowboys-and-Indians; and on Saturday afternoons they flocked to the McGill movie theater—sometimes sneaking in—to cheer on Tom

Mix, Hoot Gibson, or other favorites. In the fall there were excursions into the nearby mountains to gather pinon pine cones, with their tasty nuts. The winters brought ice skating (at first using clamp-on skates), barrel-stave skiing, and sledding, with the inevitable Flexible Flier, especially before too many automobiles made the streets more dangerous.

There were tragic times as well as happy ones. A devastating fire burned the large mill in the summer of 1922. There was the trauma of the death of the thirteen-year-old sister, Carrie, from diphtheria in 1923 and the family's thirty-day quarantine. There was the passing of James Elliott, head of the family, two years later.

A separate chapter gives a good idea of what it was like to go to a small-town high school. McGill students went to Ely by a two-car school train, an unusual way to do it. Russell Elliott gives subtle detail on teen-age experiences, the serious study and hijinks in the classroom, and the excitement of playing on the 1930 Ely basketball team, which won the state championship and went on to the national tournament in Chicago.

We get a close look at summer jobs, especially with the company, and a glimpse of Russell's years as an undergraduate at the University of Nevada, his subsequent four years of high-school teaching at Ely, his completion of the doctorate in Berkeley, his marriage and experiences as an officer during World War II, after which he began his career at the University of Nevada. Final chapters show the weakening of family ties with the town, the cutback on company paternalism in the 1950s, and the gradual disintegration of McGill as the copper industry declined in the late 1970s and the 1980s.

This is an enjoyable book, at once personal and yet with broader implications. It does a fine job of setting one person and one family into the context of the small corporate town in the exciting age of prohibition, Jack Benny, and the Model T and Model A Fords.

Clark C. Spence
University of Illinois-Urbana

NEW RESOURCE MATERIALS

*Nevada Historical Society
Manuscript Collection*

Southern Pacific Railroad Records

The Nevada Historical Society has acquired a collection of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century records that will be of great interest to researchers in the field of western railroad history. As the result of donations by the Southern Pacific Transportation Company, we now hold a substantial amount of original material relating to the activities and properties of the Southern Pacific Railroad in Nevada and adjoining states. Included are volumes of track profiles from Reno to Ogden, Utah; Central Pacific Railroad station plans for the company's line between Mill City, Nevada, and Ogden; a 1912 track profile for the Nevada-California-Oregon Railway; an account book from the Carson and Colorado Railroad detailing purchases of rails, ties, and some rolling stock in the 1880s; Interstate Commerce Commission field inventory notes, c. 1916–30, for the Nevada-California-Oregon and other railroads; grading and track notes, cross sections, etcetera, made by Southern Pacific and Interstate Commerce Commission engineers; and a large number of Southern Pacific and Central Pacific maps of route sections, stations, and other railroad properties in Nevada, northern California, and western Utah.

We wish to express our appreciation to the Southern Pacific Transportation Company, and in particular to L. D. Farrar, for making these valuable documents of railroad history available to us.

Cramp Family Papers

The Nevada mining booms at Tonopah and Goldfield early in this century attracted capital from many out-of-state investors, among them individuals and families who were already prominent because of their business accomplishments in the eastern states—the names Brock, Schwab, Baruch, and Wrigley come to mind.

Among these eastern investors were the Cramps of Philadelphia, a family that owned one of the largest ship-building concerns in the nation. The Cramps' involvement with mining at Tonopah, and to a lesser extent in northern California, is chronicled in a group of several hundred letters, legal documents, and other items from the years 1902–1909 which the Nevada Historical Society has

recently obtained. The family's investments, which appear to have been centered in the Liberty Mining District just north of Tonopah, are discussed at length in letters between Benjamin H. Cramp, who was sent out West to inspect the mining properties, and Edwin S. Cramp (his older brother), mining engineer William C. Wyncoop, lawyer Ivan Prowattain, and others.

As a whole, the Cramp family papers provide significant new information on the development of mining at Tonopah during that town's first boom.

Eric N. Moody
Manuscript Curator

*Nevada Historical Society
Photographic Archives*

American Flats Construction Photographs

Construction of a \$4,000,000 cyanide-process mill, known as American Flats, began near Virginia City in 1921. Located southwest of the town, this was to be the largest gold and silver mill in the country, capable of processing 3,000 tons of ore each day. More than a thousand men worked on the project, in which 14,000 tons of concrete were poured. To provide for this small town of a work force, a company town was also erected, complete with hotels, post office, stores, saloons, and even a movie theater.

Completed by September of 1922, the mill was closed after seven years of troubled operation. It never reopened.

A recent donation of sixty black-and-white photographic prints has been made by Connie Richards in memory of her father, Andrew J. Swalley, who was a carpenter at American Flats during its construction and acquired the photographs during that time.

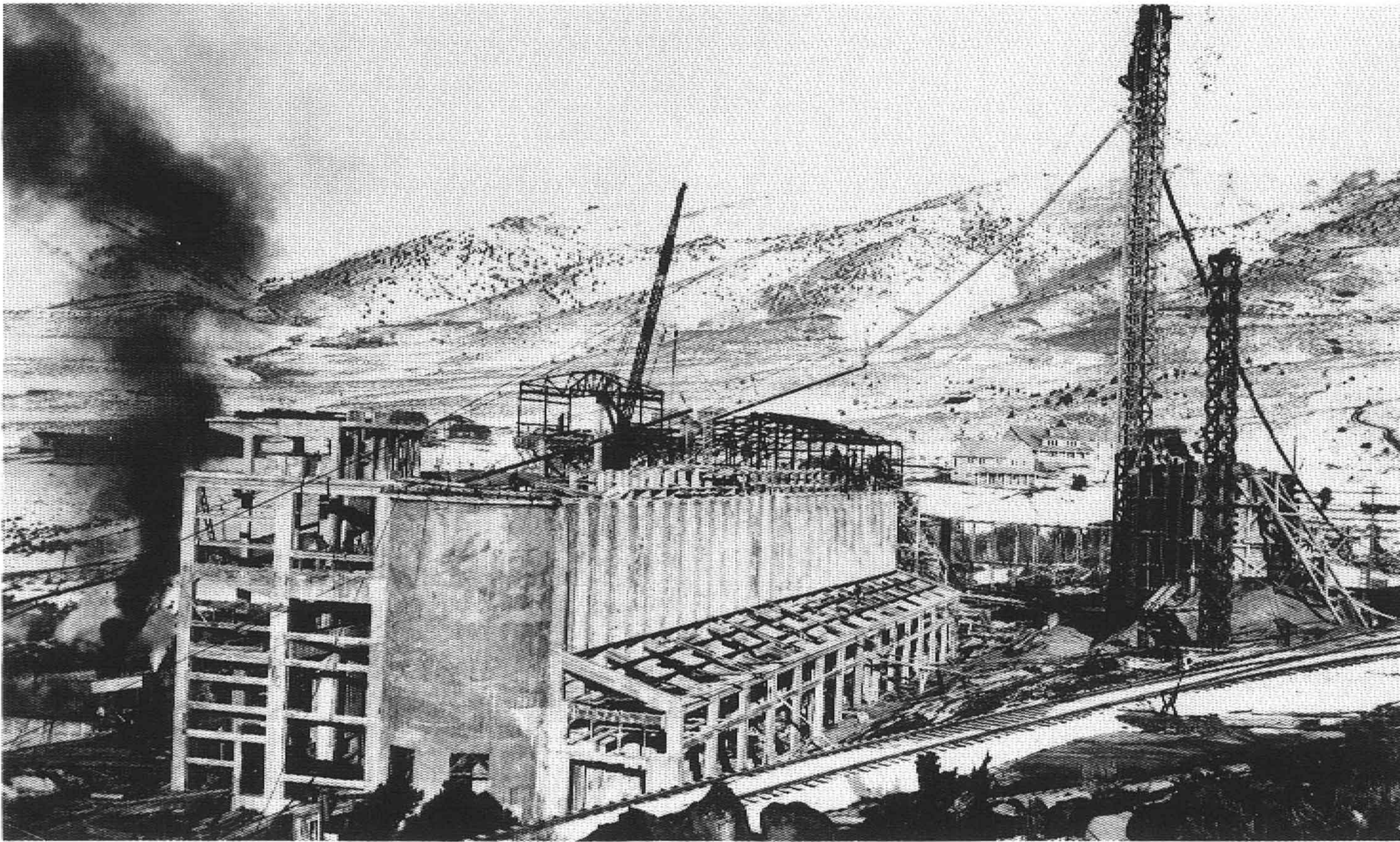
The photographs document the entire mill-construction project; included are views of the preconstruction landscape, the company town, and the exterior and interior construction of the mill.

Erik Lauritzen
Curator of Photography

*University of Nevada, Reno
Oral History Program*

The Oral History Program recently completed the following works, all of which are available for purchase from the department.

Woodrow Wilson: Race, Community and Politics in Las Vegas, 1940s–1980s (interview



Construction of the American Flats cyanide mill, c. 1927. (Nevada Historical Society)

by Jamie Coughtry, Jamie Coughtry and R. T. King, editors. 150 pages, illustrated). The son of a sawmill worker and a boardinghouse operator, Woodrow Wilson left Mississippi in 1940 and headed west with a growing migration of southern blacks who were seeking work in the timber industry, public works projects, and nascent defense plants. Mr. Wilson eventually ended up in Las Vegas, where for thirty years he worked for Basic Magnesium Incorporated, (BMI) and the plants that subsequently occupied its site. He later founded the Westside Federal Credit Union, was elected president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and became more and more politically active. In 1966 he was the first black elected to the Nevada State Assembly, and after three terms in office, he served on the Clark County Commission from 1980 to 1984. Mr. Wilson's oral history centers on the struggle for political and social equality by black citizens of Las Vegas. This oral history is part of a series on blacks and civil rights in Nevada.

Albina Redner: A Shoshone Life (interview by Helen M. Blue, Helen M. Blue and R. T. King, editors. 160 pages, illustrated). Albina Redner was born in 1924 in Austin, Nevada, into a family of Shoshone Indian doctors. She attended Stewart Indian School in the late 1930s and finished high school at Carson City High School, from which she was graduated in 1944. While attending Carson High, Redner lived and worked at Governor E. P. Carville's mansion as a maid. A fluent speaker of Shoshone and sympathetic father figure, the governor was a special influence in her life. After a brief stint as a nurse in the Women's Army

Corps, Redner married and had ten children. She later returned to Nevada, where she has lived ever since. Mrs. Redner describes in some detail several Shoshone ceremonies and healing practices, and she candidly discusses the important roles her mother and grandfather played in her decision to be a modern-day "Indian doctor"—a nurse.

Noah Smernoff: A Life in Medicine (R. T. King, interviewer and editor. 146 pages, illustrated). Noah Smernoff was graduated from the University of Colorado Medical School in 1928. After completing an internship at Salt Lake County General Hospital, he accepted a position with the medical staff of Nevada Consolidated Copper in McGill, Nevada, in 1929. In 1943, Dr. Smernoff was made assistant chief surgeon at the company's Steptoe Valley Hospital in Ely, where he remained until he moved his family to Reno in 1953. In Reno, he founded the Ralston Street Medical Clinic, and continued his practice for another twenty-five years. *A Life in Medicine* is an account of a medical career that encompassed fifty years and a wide variety of experiences. Dr. Smernoff provides first-hand information about industrial medicine and family practice in the mining-dominated towns of eastern Nevada; he discusses the Reno medical community's response to the great polio epidemic; and he reflects on significant developments that occurred in general-practice medicine during his career. Perhaps equally important, Dr. Smernoff's oral history is an illuminating record of social conditions and societal change over time, as seen from the perspective of a family doctor whose patients were drawn from all classes and ethnic groups in the communities he served. Of particular interest in that regard is his account of life in the 1930s in the rigidly structured company town of McGill.

Dr. Smernoff's oral history is the first in a series on medicine in Nevada, and it was made possible by a grant from the Great Basin Medical History Division of the University of Nevada School of Medicine. For more information on this series, call the Oral History Program.

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The following are works in progress; and they will be available for purchase in the coming months:

Clarence Ray, as yet untitled (interview by Jamie Coughtry, Helen M. Blue, editor). Clarence Ray was born in 1900 in Fresno, California. After a brief stint in the Negro baseball minor leagues, Mr. Ray moved to Las Vegas in 1925 to become a professional gambler. (An earnest student, Mr. Ray had learned the art of gambling from his uncle, who ran an illegal gambling operation in Fresno, and also by working in Chinese gambling houses in Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Francisco.) In his oral history, Mr. Ray recalls the early black residents of Las Vegas, as well as his involvement in civil-rights efforts from the 1920s

through the 1970s. He describes the founding of the Nevada Voters League; the NAACP's successful intervention that opened Hoover Dam construction jobs to blacks; and black gaming in Westside in Las Vegas. This oral history is part of a series on twentieth-century experiences of Nevada's black citizens.

Civil Rights Project, as yet untitled (interviews by Elmer Rusco, Linda J. Sommer and Helen M. Blue, editors). This is a collection of short interviews conducted by Elmer Rusco, professor emeritus of political science at the University of Nevada, Reno. Interviewed were former Governor Grant Sawyer, J. David Hoggard, James McMillan, George Hawes, Bertha Woodard, and Jerry Holloway. Each chronicler describes his activities in civil-rights efforts in Nevada from the 1930s to the present. This collection is part of a series on civil rights in Nevada.

Archie Murchie, as yet untitled (R. T. King, interviewer and editor). With a grant from the United States Forest Service, the Oral History Program is producing an oral history with Archie Murchie, a retired ranger and staff officer who was with the Forest Service from 1931 through 1965. A 560-page manuscript, derived from forty-one hours of taped interviews, has been prepared and should be published in the summer of 1991. Of particular interest to Nevada readers are Mr. Murchie's reports on topics relating to the Toiyabe and the old Nevada National Forests, 1947-65, including grazing rights and their enforcement, causes and consequences of erosion, responses to the severe stock-killing winter of 1949-50, mustang populations, watershed reclamation following the Dog Valley fire, relations with permittees and other citizens, among others.

Helen M. Blue
Publications Editor

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Founded in 1904, the Nevada Historical Society seeks to advance the study of the heritage of Nevada. The Society publishes scholarly studies, indexes, guidebooks, bibliographies, and the *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*; it collects manuscripts, rare books, artifacts, 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.