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NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

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Front Cover: Migrant worker harvesting onions, Overton, Nevada, c. 1955. *(Corinne Escobar)*

Book Reviews

HERE TO STAY
The Mexican Identity of Moapa Valley, Nevada

Corinne Escobar

Sixty-five miles northeast of Las Vegas lies the verdant Moapa Valley, an oasis with dramatic mesas and rolling hills of red sand. Its earliest known inhabitants were the prehistoric Anasazi and the Southern Paiute. During the 1800s Euro-Americans established themselves as the predominant ethnic group in Moapa and throughout southern Nevada. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, however, Mexicans[1] have contributed to the social and economic development of this area by providing labor for the railroad, mining, and agricultural industries. In spite of their participation in one of southern Nevada's most significant historical events, the construction in 1904 of the San Pedro, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake Railroad (now Union Pacific), there is little documentation on the Mexican experience. Early Las Vegas newspaper articles offer a glimpse of the community's perceptions of its Mexican population, but these scanty reports contain negative stereotypes.[2] The resistance to acknowledging Mexican contributions in the United States can be traced to animosities stemming from the 1847–48 Mexican War and before.[3] Because of the bitter and often contentious relationship between the United States and Mexico, Mexican contributions to the southwestern economy were neither appreciated nor well documented.[4] In Nevada, local and state histories give little information or completely ignore the presence, let alone the contributions, of Mexican workers and their families. Arabell Hafner's history of Moapa Valley, *One Hundred Years on the Muddy*,[5] is a compilation of family histories that contains no reference to the economic and social participation of Mexican workers and residents, yet these people were an essential source of labor that enabled local farmers to make a living growing crops. This was perhaps not an overt act of discrimination but simply an expression of cultural perception—the history was written by Euro-Americans for

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Euro-Americans—and thus their dependency on seasonal migratory Mexican labor was not acknowledged.

Community Profile

The Euro-American presence in Moapa Valley was based on an agricultural economy with a religious motivation. Because the Muddy River made agriculture in the desert possible, Mormon colonists from Utah established farming communities there, beginning in 1865. Theirs was a simple lifestyle, predicated on hard work and group solidarity. By 1870 eight communities had been built in the valley but were abandoned because of economic and political hardship. The Mormons went home to Utah only to return again in the 1880s, permanently re-establishing themselves in the valley. Although late-twentieth-century Moapa is fairly diverse in its ethnic and religious representation, Mormons were the dominant ethnic group for more than a century.

Today, the towns of Moapa, Glendale, Logandale, Overton, and Hidden Valley remain in the valley, and Overton continues in its historical role as the focal area of business, social, and educational activity for all five communities. Their combined population has remained relatively small. By the late 1940s the Euro-American count was just under 4,000.[6] Both farmers and workers reported that during the 1950s sometimes as many as 1,500 Mexican workers would arrive, in search of seasonal work,[7] establishing a significant presence in the valley. Five decades later, the total population showed little change; indeed, the 1990 census listed 3,444 residents. Of this figure, 298 were designated as Hispanic,[8] almost 9 percent of the valley's population. This, however, is a decline from the figure of ten years earlier: The 1980 census indicated that Hispanics made up 22.1 percent of the valley's population.[9] Since the census occurs in the spring, when migrant workers would be harvesting, these Hispanic numbers may include those who do not stay in the valley. But the decrease probably reflects the over-all decline in the valley's farming activities.

Historically, the valley produced thousands of tomato and celery plants for transplanting, in addition to various types of row crops such as onions, radishes, carrots, and spinach. Cantaloupes and other fruit were also raised. Agricultural activities in the valley peaked in the late 1940s and 1950s, beginning a steady decline in 1962 with the federal government's mandate that growers everywhere must provide adequate housing for migrant laborers. Those who ran small family-operated farms could not absorb the cost of improved housing and still have a profitable livelihood. This, and an inability to compete with corporate farms using mechanized harvesting in California, assured the gradual demise of farming in Moapa Valley. By the 1970s, productivity had decreased significantly. Today only onions and alfalfa are planted. As the crops dwindled, other industries increased. A dairy in Hidden Valley that has provided employment for about a dozen nonmigratory Mexican households since the 1950s is still

in full operation, employing primarily Mexicans. Other industries such as Simplot (a sand quarry), Nevada Power, Union Pacific, and small businesses provide employment in the valley—the kind that does not require migrant labor. Because of the decline in agriculture, packing sheds and migrant labor dwellings sit in a state of decay—disintegrating vestiges of a bygone era.

Mexican Identity in Moapa Valley

On the Railroad

Although Mexicans were primarily farm workers, it was railroad employment that initially brought them to southern Nevada and to Moapa specifically. Union Pacific's records indicate that Mexicans were working on the railroad when its predecessor, the San Pedro, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake Railroad, entered Moapa Valley in 1904.[10] The *Las Vegas Age* first noted Mexican workers in Moapa in 1911.[11] The majority of these railroad employees were young, single males who spoke little English. Already distanced from their Euro-American neighbors by culture and language barriers, they lived in remote railroad communities (called sections) located along lonely stretches of track. Under these circumstances, assimilation or integration with the Euro-American communities was difficult. Since they were not readily accepted by the dominant community during the early railroad years, little is known of their lives. Aside from newspaper reports on criminal activities, these Mexican laborers literally lived and died in anonymity. Testimony to their nameless presence lies approximately ten miles north of Moapa, just beyond Farrier, where the graves of three unknown Mexican railroad laborers (*c.* 1910) are located just yards from the track.[12] Burying Mexican railroad workers anonymously alongside the track in remote areas was a common practice, but Euro-American graves were identified.

The long association between Mexicans and the railroad began in Mexico and in the Southwest. Throughout this region the rail routes were largely laid by Mexican labor, beginning as early as 1880,[13] and it was the legacy of railroad building that made Mexicans important, albeit low-paid, laborers in southern Nevada. They laid the track and later maintained it. In part because of the labor union's insistence that "none but white men be promoted,"[14] it was not until the late 1920s that Mexicans began to acquire the better positions such as foreman. Like migrant work, railroad employment was transient; workers frequently travelled for railroad jobs throughout the country.

Because the nature of this work required only small crews, housed in fifteen-mile sections along the track, the Mexican population of Moapa remained relatively small until the agriculture industry began to blossom after World War II.

In the Fields

During the 1930s and early 1940s, field labor was supplied by local Paiutes, high school students, and undocumented Mexican nationals (illegal aliens).

Eventually Paiute labor became unavailable and high school labor insufficient for the needs of the expanding farming industry.[15] As a result, the valley increasingly became dependent upon temporary or migrant workers. But sufficient help was hard to find, particularly during and shortly after World War II. Although the Depression of the 1930s had prompted many Americans to resort to migratory farm work excluding Mexican migrants, after 1940 the demands of industry and the military caused Americans to abandon the fields for better-paying, war-related jobs. A 1940 nationwide pool of more than one million domestic migrant workers dwindled to sixty thousand by 1942.[16] Every farmer in the country who relied on migrant help competed for these workers, as growers looked for alternative sources of labor such as the bracero program initiated during World War II.

Moapa Valley farmers briefly tried using American workers of Japanese descent brought in from the World War II detention camps, but several in the community opposed it. Although there were three Japanese families who were well-accepted and had owned relatively prosperous farms in Moapa Valley since the 1920s and 1930s,[17] the new arrivals in 1942 met strong resentment and suspicion that ultimately discouraged the growers from using these workers.[18] Later, in 1955, ethnic tensions erupted between Euro-American residents and African-American migrant workers.[19] O. B. Henderson, a labor contractor, provided African-American laborers and, according to the *Las Vegas Sun*, was accused of recruiting "undesirables," men who were "drunkards," and "skid row types."[20] Aside from an isolated incident in which one African-American worker was accused of attacking a Paiute, however, there is no information indicating why the African-Americans were undesirables. Contention between Euro-American farmers and African-Americans climaxed when approximately a hundred black workers fled the valley after two anonymous cross burnings occurred just outside their dwellings.[21] The disturbances over the Japanese and African-American workers contributed to a greater acceptance of Mexican labor.

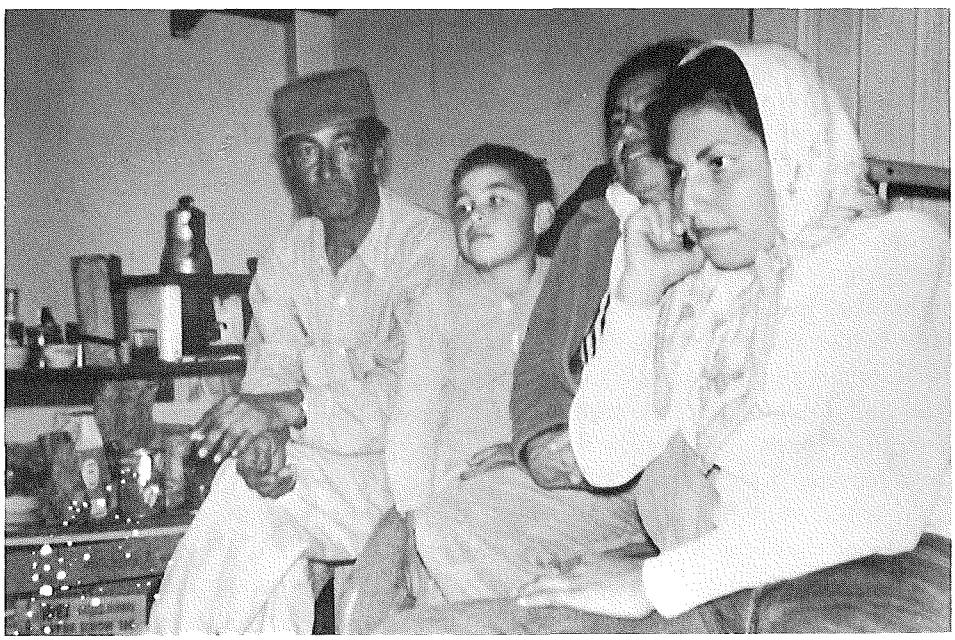
During the war (and after) Mexicans were recruited out of Mexico and hired under a federal contract known as the aforementioned bracero program.[22] When Moapa Valley was bustling with agricultural activity in the late 1940s and 1950s, hundreds of Mexicans—braceros, United States citizens, and undocumented Mexican nationals—arrived seasonally to harvest the crops. Some of these migrant workers made the valley their permanent home, with many still living there today.

In Moapa and elsewhere, the migrant population was ethnically mixed. But as time passed Mexicans became the primary group in Moapa's migrant pool. They became part of the migratory labor system that included Nevada in much the same way as did other groups. Those most likely to be migrant workers belonged to the poorest economic class in a given area. For example, through 1970, displaced southern African-American tenant farmers and impoverished Puerto

Ricans worked the East Coast route, moving north from Florida to New York. Poor Euro-Americans and a variety of others worked from south Texas to the Great Lakes area, the Great Plains, the Rocky Mountains, and finally to the West Coast. Mexican-Americans and undocumented Mexican nationals, but also some Euro-Americans, African-Americans, and native Americans, travelled toward and up the West Coast from Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico.[23] It was this group that fed into Moapa Valley.

By the 1950s, Moapa's Mexican labor was an established seasonal tradition. Because this type of labor was needed only temporarily, migrant workers travelled throughout the year, typically as family units, to meet the growing seasons within the states that were on their circuits. Thus, many that worked in Moapa Valley for the spring harvest left in May and travelled through California, Utah, Idaho, or even as far north as Oregon or Washington to harvest or weed crops.

The migrant wage scale could hardly compensate for the constant movement. A national minimum wage was established in 1938, but the law did not apply to farm workers until 1966, and then the agricultural minimum was still lower than that set for other kinds of labor.[24] Migrant workers were further exploited by labor contractors who recruited men or whole families and contracted them out to farmers. Moapa Valley ranchers also used labor contractors but ceased this



Migrant workers in Overton, Nevada, c. 1955. Dwellings for migrant workers usually included electricity, but rarely kitchens or indoor plumbing. Families used butane burners and constructed make-shift food preparation areas. *(Corinne Escobar)*

practice in 1955 after the trouble with O. B. Henderson. Contractors took a percentage of the migrants' wages as a fee for providing jobs and routinely retained yet another portion to pay for the laborers' meals and transportation. More often than not laborers working for a contractor had little money at the end of season to show for their work. To make matters worse, it was common for contractors, and also farmers who did their own hiring, to withhold part of a migrant's paycheck, and offer it as a "bonus" if the worker completed the duration of the contract. This was an ineffective attempt to discourage workers from leaving before the harvest was complete. In spite of the so-called bonus, and to the bewilderment of Euro-American and Japanese growers alike, the workers would leave toward the end of the harvest as soon as they saw others departing. One compared the Mexican exodus to birds flying south for the winter: "As soon as one or two left, the whole flock followed. It was the funniest thing." Mexican residents in Moapa Valley explained that they had to compete for the better dwellings at their next destinations by arriving early; with housing being what it was, many families opted to give up their rightfully earned money rather than being consigned to the worst of shacks, or to no housing at all, at their next stop. The value of the end-of-season bonus was thus a matter of perspective.

There was little hope for an improvement in wages as long as there were no jobs other than those of field hand or packing-shed worker. Foreman was the most prestigious job among the farm laborers because it was nonmigratory and wages and housing were better, but only a handful could hope to have this position. Generally, the same families, almost as though by right of tradition, returned annually to the packing sheds, as did those to the fields, with little chance of upward mobility.

Jobs in the packing shed, preparing produce for shipment, paid better and were largely indoors, where workers could stay cool, take occasional breaks, and still make their money for the day. Field workers, on the other hand, were paid only if they were picking, making it unprofitable to take breaks. The system encouraged migrant parents to allow their children to work the fields at an early age, and nowhere in the country were migrant-child-labor laws enforced. Children sometimes as young as five years of age often worked side by side with their parents, a practice resulting less from need for the little extra money the child could earn than from the fact that there was no other way to care for preschool children. By the mid-1960s federal government programs alleviated this problem; until then, the public school was the only safe, socially interactive facility available to migrant children, and then only to those who were old enough to attend. To his credit, Grant Bowler, Moapa Valley's school principal from 1935 to 1976, insisted that the migrant workers' children attend school while they were living in his district. Not all children of Moapa migrant families worked in the fields, but those who did not joined their parents after school.

Mexican migrant labor was, and is still, primarily a family-structured system, and although the children received a rudimentary education in the public schools, it was often so fragmented that adolescents were unprepared to do anything other than the traditional family occupation—migrant work. Low wages, long hours, and lack of upward mobility were the daily existence and perpetual cycle for the migrant worker in Moapa Valley. Pooling resources among family members and their extended relatives was an economic necessity.

While a migrant family in Moapa Valley frequently earned enough combined income to buy a vehicle, adequate housing was not available at any price. Indeed, the very nature of farm work condemned migrant workers to inferior housing. Apartments or rental houses simply did not exist in the valley. Instead, growers provided small, cheaply built dwellings having one or two rooms per family and lacking all basic amenities except electricity. These units were clearly intended for temporary occupation and were "not the best,"[25] and they were offered rent free as though to compensate for flimsy construction, no indoor plumbing or kitchen facilities, and low wages. Historically, this pattern in which growers supplied semifurnished, substandard dwellings on or near the farm property is typical of the agricultural industry throughout the country. Several units clustered together constituted a labor camp. For each farm, tenants shared a nearby outdoor tap as well as the rest room and shower house, the cleanliness of which depended on the conscientiousness of the tenants. Some growers insisted on allocating clean-up duties on a rotational basis, a system that produced varying degrees of sanitation. The run-down conditions in Moapa can be attributed to the migrants and the farmers, both of whom lacked the incentive to care for the facilities. Growers complained the workers did not take good care of their dwellings. For example, windows were constantly replaced because migrant juveniles would shatter them. Vandalism and the farmer's reluctance or inability to provide better housing guaranteed inadequate living conditions. Interestingly enough, the farmer's home and the labor camps, no matter their condition, were frequently located near each other.

From the grower's perspective, it was necessary to provide just enough wages and housing to keep the migrants working and still make a profit on the harvest. The farmers in Moapa Valley did not become fabulously wealthy off the cheap labor of Mexican migrant workers. The more successful growers maintained a middle-class standard of living, but fewer than a handful could be considered actually affluent.

Housing conditions for the dairy workers in Hidden Valley were similar to those of the farm workers in that they also had small rent-free units, but since the nature of the industry did not require migrant labor, the dwellings were occupied year-round and were better maintained. The jobs available to dairy workers ranged from ranching, animal care, and milk extraction to general maintenance, but the low wages and limited upward mobility were comparable to farm work.

Interior of a dwelling for migrant workers, Overton, c. 1955. These structures typically had one or two rooms to house an entire family. This boy slept in the main room. *(Corinne Escobar)*

In the Community

Regardless of the community in which valley residents lived or what their occupations were, Mexicans, Euro-Americans, and a small group of Japanese-American families came together in the Overton/Logandale area, where the schools, churches, and shopping areas were located. Contact between these groups occurred at work and school, and residence patterns indicate that they lived in close proximity to each other, yet social integration of the Mexican

population was a slow process because of three primary reasons: ethnic differences (which include language and religion), the transient nature of their employment, and inadequate education. Dairy families and those few Mexicans who had jobs that allowed them to remain in the valley all year integrated more easily despite the ethnic difference.

Even though the more permanent Mexican families integrated better than their migrant counterparts, religious identity was an area where they both met barriers. Most Mexicans were Catholic, whereas most Euro-Americans and some Japanese-Americans were Mormon. Mormon proselytizing efforts met little success among the Mexicans who made the valley their home. Instead, the Mexicans sought to hold Mass in the valley. Don José Perez, a former dairy worker for thirty years, recalls that the Catholic church was established when Father Sidney Raymer of the Nellis Air Force Base promised to say Mass in the valley if Perez could find eight Catholics to attend. He found more than eight, and Father Raymer responded by conducting services in private homes or the local Spanish theater, the Notrevo (Overton spelled backwards), every Saturday night. Finally, in 1959, Father Raymer secured an old dairy building in Overton, and church members converted it into a Catholic chapel. While the Mormons did not oppose the establishment of the Catholic church, social integration of the two groups was hindered by the determination of both to discourage interfaith marriage. And because religion had an ethnic polarity, interethnic marriage among valley residents did not become common or apparent until after 1970, and those Mexicans who did marry Euro-Americans often did so after leaving the valley.

The lack of intermarriage in the valley can also be attributed to limited social intermixing. When Catholic Mexicans arrived in the valley, they were confronted with a pre-existing social structure centered around the Mormon church. As reflected in the "Moapa Happenings," a weekly column in early Las Vegas newspapers, the valley's work, community, and religious activities were so intertwined that they were often reported as being one and the same. Because of the centrality of the Mormon culture, Mexicans did not readily fit into the valley's social and civic activities. Indeed as a former migrant worker noted, "If you think it was tough growing up Mexican in this community, it was tougher growing up Catholic."

Recognizing that they needed more social support in the community, the Mexicans established both church and civic organizations that could provide a social outlet for both Mexicans and Euro-Americans. At the urging of some Moapa Valley Chamber of Commerce members, Mexican leaders were encouraged in 1966 to form a club of their own. Yet, conformity to a Euro-American perception of Mexicans was necessary in order for this Hispanic organization to receive approval from the local chamber. When the founders of what became the Spanish American Club were considering a name for their organization, non-

Mexican associates strongly discouraged them from calling it the Mexican American Club. One of the founders and a leader in the Mexican community, D. C. Garcia, recalled,

> I made a mistake using [the name] Spanish American Club because Spain, that's another country. I told Bill [Perkins], "I don't like it." But there was another lady, I forgot her name, she said, "Why don't you put Wetback American?" I said, "What [do] you mean? That's not right, we're not wetbacks." So then I tried to use Mexican Americans, but they said, "No, that doesn't look right." I said, "Well, you know we are Mexicans." They said, "No, that word is not good for the club." I said, "Well, okay, whatever you want to do, I'll go with it." [Perkins] said, "Why don't you say Spanish American Club?" So we put Spanish American Club. Spanish was the common language, so that's why we used that [term].[26]

Although Mexicans in Moapa Valley identified themselves as Mexican, Latino, and Mexican-American, the term *Spanish* was also frequently used interchangeably by both Mexicans and non-Mexicans during interviews conducted for this article. Its usage resulted from the general belief of Moapa Valley residents that the term *Mexican* is and was derogatory. The school principal, Grant Bowler, who was originally from Utah, indicated that he had learned that to call someone a Mexican was an insult, and so, "out of respect, [he] referred to them as Spanish."[27]

Regardless of nomenclature, the Spanish American Club provided both social and political support to the Mexican community by sponsoring fiestas and regularly scheduled dances and dinners as fundraising events. Fiestas, of course, were hardly new to the valley. Moapa Valley residents were already familiar with Mexican music and food. In fact, of all the cultural contributions that Mexicans have made in the valley, their food was perhaps the most enthusiastically accepted. Proceeds from events sponsored by the Spanish American Club were used as a relief fund to help migrant workers. The organization also provided a legitimate vehicle for more Mexican involvement in civic affairs and events. As a political voice, the club's leaders acted as spokesmen for Mexicans with job grievances or legal problems.

In School

Although the Mexicans managed, albeit in a limited way, to integrate their religion and social organization into the valley's social structure, their participation and acceptance in the school environment was perhaps the most challenging process of all. According to former principal Bowler, Euro-American authorities seldom forced or encouraged migrant parents to send their children to school. Studies on migrant education show that this was a frequent problem, but, in addition, schools structured for sedentary middle-class families were ill equipped to deal with extremely mobile students and were not always receptive

to their needs.[28] Although most Moapa Mexicans who were interviewed remembered going to school while on the migratory route, they noted that the quality of their educations suffered tremendously. Moapa Valley's principal was the one individual in their life who insisted that they attend school during their annual stay in the valley. At the beginning of every harvesting season Bowler visited the camps to, in his words, warn parents: "Your kids are going to school, and if not, I'll be here with the sheriff." This was usually the initial contact Mexican parents had with the principal, and it served to establish his position as an authority figure within the Mexican community. As Bowler observed,

> No one questioned me. I was the top dog. I was a bishop, stake president [unit of Mormon Church governance] and on the water board. I was in all these kinds of things, and so I just kind of had a free rein of what I thought would be the [right] thing to do.

In fact, Bowler's administrative policies had a direct effect on the assimilation process the non-English speaking children experienced. Spanish was the first and sometimes only language that most Mexican children knew. Consequently, it was a challenge for Bowler, who did not speak Spanish and used a school nurse to interpret for him, to make sure that these children received adequate instruction while in the school he so strongly insisted they attend.

In some ways, however, Bowler's approach only encouraged a sense of isolation on the part of Mexican students. In the 1930s, when the first trickle of Spanish-speaking children began attending his school, Bowler kept them together, wherever he could find space. But when the number grew to twenty or more, he began integrating them among the English-speaking children to promote faster assimilation. He expected the children to begin learning English within a week, even though none of the instructors of Euro-American children spoke Spanish. Many did learn English this way, although a feeling of alienation was unavoidable. Asked about friendships with Euro-American children, one former migrant student recalled that in the 1960s,

> The relationships were okay. I didn't feel we were being looked down upon or anything. But I think what we tried to do as Mexican boys and girls was to try not to get too involved. We were a little bit too nervous to get too close or too involved with the white people. In my personal experience I was afraid something about myself was going to have to be revealed sooner or later if I started to be a pal [to a white child]. He was going to want to come over, or I was going to be invited to go do something with them and I wasn't going to know what was to be expected at that party or event or something, and I was going to be embarrassed to bring him to my house, because we lived in only two rooms.

The principal targeted only the young children to attend school. His personal feeling was that older children, fourteen or fifteen years of age, would not fit into a school situation. He believed that because of the parents' migratory work, these older children had not attended much school and would therefore be

A young migrant worker in a labor camp in Overton, c. 1965. *(Corinne Escobar)*

difficult to handle in the classroom. "I couldn't get them to go to school even if I wanted to," he explained. "They're not interested in school; why, they're working by then like an adult." Research on the education of migrant children during the late 1960s and early 1970s supported his opinion; however, the stud-

ies also indicated that although migrant work prohibited children from attending school regularly, it did not necessarily prevent them from desiring to be part of the school environment.[29]

Recognizing the influence that Bowler had had on migrant parents with school-age children, one former migrant youth of the 1960s bitterly regretted that the principal did not pursue the issue of her absences from high school. Concerned, he did visit her home to find out why she was not attending:

> When I answered the knock at the door, he asked to see my parents. They weren't home. He said, "Oh, that's all right. I noticed you had not been coming to school and I came to find out why." I told him it was because I didn't have any clothes. He just says, "Oh, right," and walked away. I was stunned. I watched him go away. That's when I realized I hated white people. Why, why didn't he talk to my parents, do *something* to get me in school? [She broke into tears.] If he had told my parents to buy me clothes, they would have listened to him. You know, I never went back after that.

Both principal and student were perhaps unaware of the cultural misunderstanding that existed between them. But it is just this kind of situation that demonstrates the different perceptions and expectations that Euro-Americans and Hispanics had as to their respective roles in the community. The migrant labor system taught Mexicans to expect a paternalistic relationship with Euro-Americans, who, in turn perceived the Mexicans as people who did not share their goals and values, as here, for example, in education.

While Bowler fought hard for the education of migrant children, and even convinced the school and community to provide hot lunches for these children, he never understood migrant working parents. Studies showed that farm workers were willing to be migratory because they wanted to work.[30] But he expressed bewilderment as to why they maintained migratory employment to the detriment of their children's education and complained that "it gets to be a gypsy kind of thing."

Although Bowler had a concern for the migrant children's academic well-being, he had little hope for their success. In a recent interview, he explained that "they need to learn how to read and write and go on to high school and maybe on to a trade school, . . . or university, if they're a bright one. *They* can even do that," he added. Bowler attributed the fact that Mexicans did not excel in school prior to 1964 to parents who came to the valley for "its jobs, not its schools." In contrast, he observed that Euro-American families stressed education and nurtured the concept in their homes.

According to many children of Mexican migrants, they wanted to attend school in Moapa and elsewhere, but found it an academically and socially discouraging experience. Lack of continued presence in a particular area made learning difficult. Teachers expressed concern, but concern alone could not alleviate the inner struggles the children experienced. As one former migrant youth explained,

I remember in class, projects and things, I wasn't sure [of myself]. I remember joining the scouts and being embarrassed over several things that we were instructed to do on an outing, like showing up at the wrong things because I didn't even know what they were talking about. But [two instructors] were probably two of the very few people that ever put their hand on your shoulder and gave it a squeeze and encouraged you. I think everybody else was, "let's move on, let's move on." I know I can speak for all my friends, all migrant kids around my age, a year or two older or a year or two younger. There was no sense in trying, absolutely not. There was no catching up once you fell behind the first time. There was just no catching up once you were drowned in a bunch of instructions. My goodness! Especially in subjects like mathematics; they were nightmare for us! I speak for everybody confidently because I remember, I remember it clearly.

Although primary education was discouraging for many, by the time some Mexican children were in high school, they had become sufficiently acculturated to enjoy the social and academic activities. This gradual integration into the school environment, where Mexicans received honors for academics or sports, occurred only after 1964. The problem for the children was two-fold: Migrant children were often not in the valley long enough to be accepted socially by the non-Hispanic teachers and students, and Mexican parents often discouraged their children from getting too involved with the school system. One individual described some parents as feeling that it was not "their place" to be involved with white people or Mormon activities. When the highest concentration of Hispanics was in the valley during the peak harvest season, there was a two-class society, and Mexicans understood that their social and economic status consigned them to the lower stratum. Experiences with rejection and feelings of inferiority kept many from becoming involved in the community prior to the founding of the Spanish American Club.

Some children of migrant workers, having followed their parents into the fields, did manage to break out of the cycle eventually. One, for example, was Fred Preciado; he described his situation in 1970, when he was fifteen:

My parents were in Utah and experiencing terrible financial stress. Things were really ugly and I had enough at that age. On one of the trips my uncle was going to make [back to Nevada] I just told my Mom good-bye and left. I stayed down here [Overton] with my grandparents for a couple of years. I was able to stay in one place consistently, and it was really enjoyable. I think I found out who I was. I was one of the taller guys in the class and was able to spend all the time I wanted practicing and playing. I was in two school plays, and just a lot of things that I had never even thought I could do. Somebody recognized one or two things that were good and complimented me on it and made me feel swell. I pursued and pursued and excelled.[31]

Preciado finished high school and completed computer course work, thanks to which he has moved onto a higher economic level. He currently holds a computer-related job, and continues to reside in Overton.

Being part of a nonmigratory family was a factor crucial to the success of some Mexicans. Frank Perez became president of the Moapa Valley High School student body in 1964, but he was not from a migrant family. His family had settled

in Hidden Valley, and he excelled academically, which was an exception in the Mexican community. Children from Hidden Valley were bused in to the Logandale and Overton schools. During the 1950s these pupils were from the few Mexican families that were residing in Moapa Valley year-round; consequently, Perez and the others did not suffer the educational disruptions that migrant children did. But coming from a different cultural and linguistic background, they nevertheless experienced conflicts. Perez, a former dairy worker, recalls his experience in 1953:

When we first came to Hidden Valley I was put into the second grade as a nine-year-old. I couldn't speak English. I went through some rough times. The kids made fun of me, but eventually I developed English well. By the seventh grade I was doing so well I was advanced to the ninth grade. My parents encouraged me a lot. They couldn't help me with my homework and they weren't involved with my school, but they gave me a lot of general support. I was self-motivated to do my best. I became junior high and high school student body president, so I felt I was somebody.[32]

Clearly, Mexicans have experienced both success and disappointment in Moapa Valley. The success has largely been the result of their ability to integrate with the non-Hispanic community at some level. Being nonmigratory was an essential factor, as was mastering English and obtaining an education. But integration in this valley is the product of two forces: the desire of the Mexicans to integrate, and the willingness of the residents to allow it. Rather than fully assimilate, Mexicans collectively have expressed only "nativist acculturation." For example, they resisted, even after two or three generations, giving up the cultural traits that made them Mexican. Nor could they ever lose the physical traits that made them appear non-Euro-American. These undoubtedly were important factors that helped the two groups maintain distinct ethnic identities despite living in close proximity. Whether the Mormons in Moapa encouraged or allowed integration is not clear. For some time Mexicans were not perceived as part of the Euro-American community; as of 1965 valley residents had no affinity with them, as reflected in the lack of a single reference to their Mexican neighbors in *One Hundred Years on the Muddy*. Further, the Euro-American community found it much easier to accept these farm workers as Spanish, which has a European connotation, than as Mexican. But there have been concessions; after 1966, for instance, Moapa Valley High School officials required that all secondary school students pass at least one year of Spanish to help narrow the linguistic gap between the two groups—a move whose effectiveness has yet to be determined. Moreover, while residents concede the presence of some ethnic tension, incidents of conflict have been downplayed by members of both groups. As Don José Perez, father of Frank, recently observed,

I just want to say that I have a lot of Mormon friends. Some Mexicans say Mormons don't like them but I cannot see this . . . I have many, many, Mormon friends. They always greet me when I see them in town. If you are good, nobody bothers you.

Former migrant worker dwellings on Liston Street in Overton in 1989. Some structures still remain as decaying reminders of the once booming farming industry in Moapa Valley. *(Corinne Escobar)*

Even when tension between the two groups existed, confrontational behavior did not result in violence. As D. C. Garcia recalled,

> In 1957, [Mexicans] screamed discrimination and said the Mormons weren't treating them right. And then we had the first priest in the valley. They had a hearing. I told the father don't go, the people won't back you up. Nobody showed up. Just me, the priest, and the nurse, with school officials. The hearing was about the kids not being treated right in school.

In spite of occasional complaints, Mexicans have not displayed overt or aggressive behavior in protest against discrimination. Perhaps it resulted from their geographic isolation, but there is no indication whatever that the Moapa workers participated in the historic unionization of farm laborers throughout the Southwest that occurred during the 1960s and early 1970s. Yet, Mexicans in Moapa Valley have had a politically inequitable relationship with the Euro-Americans, due in part to the language barrier that made it difficult for Spanish-speaking workers to voice complaints.

Language and education, however, were not the key aspects of the relationship between these two groups. Until about the early 1960s farm labor was the only work available for most Mexicans in Moapa Valley and its existence is

perhaps the only reason (save for the railroad) that they resided there. This does not indicate an ethnic delineation of labor, but rather that agriculture was the main source of employment in an area that had created a system in which Euro-American land owners were dependent upon Mexican workers. It was the paternalistic dependency that had an ethnic delineation. Dairy employees and migrant workers who made Moapa Valley their home base continued to depend on their employers for rent-free housing. Lack of rental housing in the valley further prevented independence and inhibited any visible indication of upward mobility, since migrant housing had a tendency to be substandard. Although rent-free housing appeared to be beneficial, actually it reinforced the acceptability of low wages and created a relationship of indebtedness and dependence—a system not unlike feudal Europe and the hacienda days of old Mexico. Under these circumstances Mexicans could not compete for better jobs and housing (through 1960 other opportunities did not exist), and even if they earned enough combined income to support themselves (and many migrant families did), they continued to live in substandard conditions that negatively affected how they were perceived both by themselves and by others. It was a situation in which one group lived in conditions that always associated it with poverty; thus, limitations in language and education were not the primary factors hindering integration. Rather, it was the socioeconomic factor of the appearance of being poor coupled with its many accompanying stereotypes.[33] All this was associated with being Mexican—a designation that valley residents acknowledged was held to be derogatory at one time. These factors reinforced the political impotency of the Mexicans and kept them in the lower social stratum no matter how well they claimed the Euro-Americans treated them or how fondly Euro-Americans regarded their Mexican workers and neighbors. Fortunately, many Mexican families have dramatically improved their standards of living since first arriving in the 1950s. Today, the Mexicans who remain in Moapa Valley, as well as those who have left, have diversified their employment strategies; they are earning higher incomes than their parents and can afford better housing.

Between 1930 and 1970, the experience of migrant workers in Moapa mirrored that of their counterparts across the United States—hard work, low pay and a transient existence that resulted in a life of poverty and discrimination. The major difference lies in the fact that, although ethnic tensions ebb and flow, the Mexicans in the Moapa Valley communities collectively did not express united confrontational behavior and, for the most part, they regard the valley with as much familial loyalty as any of their Euro-American neighbors.

Notes

[1]The term *Mexican* is used to include all persons of Mexican descent regardless of citizenship or place of birth. The little historical information that exists on Mexicans in southern Nevada rarely differentiates between Americans of Mexican descent and the Mexican nationals who migrated to the United States, making it impossible to describe the experiences and contributions of these people

as two separate groups. Most individuals interviewed for this study who were United States citizens referred to themselves as Mexican, not as a statement of national loyalty, but as a culturally and physically descriptive term. Some were indeed still citizens of Mexico, but their experiences and the importance of their contributions are little different from those of their American counterparts. And finally, to avoid the designation *Mexican* for other, politically more popular labels only serves to perpetuate the myth that the term *Mexican* has a derogatory meaning.

[2]Corinne Escobar, "Mexican Identity in Clark County, Nevada: A Visual Ethnohistory 1829–1960" (M.A. thesis, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 1990). See ch. 5 for a more detailed description of the Mexican identity represented in Las Vegas newspapers.

[3]During the Mexican War the United States Army occupied Mexico south to Mexico City and northwest to Monterey, California. During this period terrible atrocities were committed by both parties. United States history books, however, present Mexico's defensive actions as though they were criminal, while ignoring the many violations committed against Mexican citizens by Anglo Texans and the United States Army. Mexico surrendered in 1848 and, through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, ceded vast amounts of territory. Resentment resurfaced when the United States acquired from Mexico the southern area of Arizona and New Mexico through the Gadsden Purchase of 1854. And the Mexican revolution of 1910 spurred conflicts again at the American-Mexican border. This history has created mutually biased cultural perceptions that continue to this day.

[4]Carey McWilliams, *North from Mexico: The Spanish Speaking People of the United States* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), 168. McWilliams is perhaps the first to document in detail the presence and participation of Mexicans in the United States and to acknowledge their work as a contribution to American society. In the Southwest specifically, it was the Mexicans who, beginning in the 1880s, constructed the rail system, that played a significant role in the development of the area.

[5]Arabell Hafner, *One Hundred Years on the Muddy* (Springville, Utah, 1967).

[6]Nevada Department of Highways, "Seventy Million—That's A Lot of Tomato Plants," *Nevada Highways and Parks*, 8:2 (July-August 1948) 19–31. This article describes in detail the valley's agricultural activity, but makes no mention of Mexican migrant laborers even though they are shown in one photograph. It gives all credit for the valley's productivity to hardworking Euro-American Mormon growers.

[7]Escobar, "Mexican Identity," 125.

[8]The term *Hispanic* was popularized by the Nixon administration in the 1970s. It is used as a catch-all government classification for those whose origins are in the Western Hemisphere countries that were hispanicized by the Spanish. Many Americans of Mexican descent have adopted *Hispanic* in describing themselves, although many still cling to other more traditional labels, such as *Latino, Mexicano, Mexican American,* or *Chicano.* Mexicans in the United States census are currently classified as white Hispanics.

[9]Elmer R. Rusco, "A Demographic Description of Nevada," in "Ethnicity and Race in Nevada," Elmer R. Rusco and Sue Fawn Chung, eds., *Nevada Public Affairs Review*, no. 2 (1987), 7–12.

[10]John Signor, *San Pedro, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake Railroad* (San Marino, California: Golden West Books, 1988), 33.

[11]"Moapa Happenings," *Las Vegas Age* (29 July 1911), 8:1.

[12]John Signor, personal communication, 1990. He stated that Union Pacific records indicate only that the graves were those of three Mexican laborers, names unknown. The gravesite is accessible by four-wheel drive vehicle or by foot. I located it in April 1990.

[13]Carey McWilliams, *North from Mexico*, 168. McWilliams documents that Mexican labor built the rail system throughout the Southwest.

[14]"Union Pacific Shop," *Las Vegas Age* (17 May 1919), 4:1. Although Mexicans were frequently counted as white in the United States Census, they were socially perceived as nonwhite, particularly in the newspapers.

[15]"Where I Stand: Two Crosses," *Las Vegas Sun* (7 July 1955), 8:2.

[16]Juan Ramon Garcia, *Operation Wetback: The Mass Deportation of Mexican Undocumented Workers in 1954*, Contributions in Ethnic Studies, no. 2 (Westport, Conn. and London: Greenwood Press, 1980), 3.

[17]Andrew Russell, "A Fortunate Few: Japanese Americans in Southern Nevada, 1905–1945," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 31:1 (Spring 1988).

[18]"Importation of Japs Protested," *Las Vegas Review Journal* (12 November 1942), 1:5.

[19]"Negroes Target of Outbreak," *Las Vegas Sun* (6 May 1955), 1:1.

[20]"120 Farmhands Evicted; Moapa Crops in Danger," *Las Vegas Sun* (8 May 1955), 1:2–3.

[21]"Where I Stand: Two Crosses."

[22]The bracero program was intended to be a temporary emergency measure to augment the dwindling supply of unskilled laborers in the United States during World War II. (A similar program was implemented during World War I and had been terminated.) Mexican nationals were recruited out of Mexico and contracted to work in the United States for a specified amount of time doing low-wage jobs that ranged from agriculture to railroad labor. It was an exploitive system that denied braceros the legal protection afforded to Americans who had job grievances. If working or housing conditions were unacceptable, the bracero had little recourse but to honor the contract or run away. The bracero program was not withdrawn until 1964 and only after aggressive protests from Mexican-American farm workers who claimed that the program undermined their efforts to unionize.

[23]Cassandra Stockburger, "Children on the Move," in *Migrant Children: Their Education* (Washington, D.C.: Association for Childhood Education International, 1971), 4.

[24]"Migrant Workers," *Encyclopedia Americana*, international edition, 1990.

[25]Paul Ozaki, personal communication, 1989.

[26]D. C. Garcia, personal communication, 1989.

[27]Grant Bowler, personal communication, 1989.

[28]Stockburger, "Children on the Move," 6. Federal funds allocated specifically to meet the needs of the migrant student (Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act) were not available until 1966. See also Clarissa Scott, "A Fish Out of Water: The Migrant Child in a Middle-class Schoolroom," in *Migrant Children*, 35, for a more detailed description of the differing world views of middle-class permanent students and poor migratory children.

[29]Marilyn Lewis, "Sara," in *Migrant Children*, 11. Former migrant children living in Moapa Valley also expressed regret and disappointment at not being able to attend school regularly.

[30]Stockburger, "Children on the Move," 5.

[31]Fred Preciado, personal communication, 1989.

[32]Frank Perez, personal communication, 1990.

[33]Jagna Wojcicka Sharff, "Free Enterprise in the Ghetto Family," in *Annual Editions: Anthropology* (Gilford, Conn.: Dushkin Publishing Group, 1990). This study on Hispanic families living in a New York ghetto finds that commonly held perceptions of poor Hispanics (lazy, dirty, unambitious) are generally myths. Behaviors considered to be deviant (drug dealing, thievery, teen-age pregnancy), were identified as alternative economic strategies made available to poor Hispanics by the dominant culture.

ITALIAN-AMERICAN ORGANIZATIONS IN LAS VEGAS
Preserving Heritage in a Time of Assimilation

Alan Balboni

Italian-Americans are now fading into the twilight of ethnicity. Among the more than twelve million who identified themselves as fully or partly of Italian descent in the 1980 United States Census, there are few who have not acquired the language, dress, manners, and values of American society, and the great majority no longer give first preference to their co-ethnics as neighbors, friends, or even spouses. Indeed, it is rare to meet an Italian-American under age thirty who is not partly of some other ancestry. In spite of the nearly complete assimilation of Italian-Americans, however, some Las Vegas organizations dedicated at least in part to preserving the ethnic heritage are thriving. They include organizations formed more than thirty years ago that adapted to the rapid assimilation of Las Vegas Italian-Americans, as well as those formed within the past ten years by successful professionals and business persons.

The Italian American Club, located near the intersection of Eastern and Sahara Avenues about three and a half miles east of the Strip, is a good example of an organization that grew rapidly at a time when many of the city's Italian-Americans preferred to associate with their co-ethnics, declined during an extended period of factionalism and oligarchy, and then revived and adapted to the growing assimilation of its membership.

In the early 1950s several Italian-American men, recent arrivals as well as some who immigrated before World War II, began meeting in a couple of the many Las Vegas restaurants owned by Italian-Americans; their purpose was to develop an organization that would preserve their Italian heritage.[1] The leadership included men with ancestry in the major regions of Italy; representation of

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areas as diverse as Piedmont and Sicily, or Alto Adige and Calabria, was important even almost forty years after the last major wave of Italian immigrants. While regional and provincial rivalries diminished somewhat, particularly when the new arrivals realized that they were all just dagos and wops to many prospective employers, many local Italian-American social organizations in the East still restricted membership on the basis of local, provincial, or regional ancestry. The fact that the club's first president, Al Bossi, a traffic engineer, was of northern Italian background and his successor, Pete Bommarito, a casino executive, was of Sicilian ancestry helped to ensure that all Italian-Americans felt welcome. The club grew rapidly to almost three hundred members by 1962. Many were recruited by personal friends or co-workers, especially in the gaming industry; a few learned of the club through newspaper articles.

Reflecting the custom of the time, the club also formed a ladies' auxiliary. It, too, attracted a large membership, in part because spouses who were not of Italian backgrounds were not only made welcome, but were encouraged to seek leadership positions. In addition to the primary goal of raising funds for a permanent headquarters, the club contributed to charities, including providing food and clothing to the native Americans of Moapa Valley.[2] Al Bossi recalled that he and some other members also discussed working to increase the number of Italian-Americans elected to local and state office, but that nothing came of it.

The large number of Italian-American entertainers on the Strip greatly aided the club's fundraising efforts. Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Tony Bennett, and numerous other Strip performers became honorary or regular members of the club. In May 1961 more than twenty-five hundred people attended the club's Italian Carnival of Stars at the Riviera Hotel. A great financial success for the club, it starred Vic Damone, Jimmy Durante, Phil Harris, Frankie Laine, and Jerry Lewis, as well as such local favorites as Sonny King, the Happy Jesters, and the Characters.[3] Al Bossi recalled that the 1962 carnival, held at the Flamingo Hotel, was also well attended. "What an experience!—First Sinatra, then Dean Martin, then another star, then a group, and another—everyone wanted to assist," he recounted. These fundraisers financed the purchase of land for a clubhouse near the corner of Eastern Avenue and Sahara Avenue. Several Italian-American contractors, notably Dominic Bianchi and Tony Marnell, contributed building materials, time, and expertise for the construction of the 12,000-square-foot building completed in 1966.[4]

In cities having large Italian-American populations, numerous such organizations were formed. They ranged from the Dante Society and the Order of the Sons of Italy in America (henceforth referred to as Sons of Italy) to storefront social clubs that restricted membership to those from a particular province or region of Italy, and their goals were often dissimilar and sometimes conflicting.[5] The Italian American Club was the only such group in Las Vegas for just six years. In 1965 several Italian-Americans, led by Nevada Test Site employee Leonard Arcadipane, established the Las Vegas lodge of the Sons of Italy, a

Frank Sinatra accepts an award from Al Bossi, President of the Italian American Club, at the Sands Hotel in 1961. Club members Paul Rinaldi and Mike Pisanello are on the right. *(Las Vegas News Bureau photo, Al Bossi Collection)*

well-established national organization with tens of thousands of members in lodges throughout the United States.

The Sons of Italy lodge provides an example of an Italian-American organization that grew rapidly, flourished, and then entered a long period of decline as the membership aged and the leadership lacked the ability to revitalize it.

While the Sons of Italy stressed preservation of Italian culture, it also, like the Italian American Club, provided an environment for both men and women to interact, raise funds for local and national charities, and enhance the image of Italian-Americans. While most members were male, women were permitted to join as equals. Also like the club, the Sons of Italy included newcomers and old-timers as officers and members, as well as welcoming members from all regions of Italy. In 1965 and 1966 a significant number of Italian-Americans joined both organizations. During that time the Italian American Club and the Sons of Italy cooperated in several undertakings, notably the First Annual Columbus Day Dinner. The fact that Governor Grant Sawyer was speaker and United States Senators Alan Bible and Howard Cannon, Congressman Walter

Baring, Washoe County District Attorney William Raggio, Dean Martin, and Frank Sinatra were guests demonstrates the initial success of both organizations.[6]

Even now, few Italian-Americans feel comfortable discussing the causes of the 1967 conflict between the two organizations. The best evidence points to a clash of personalities involving Leonard Arcadipane, venerable (the Sons of Italy's title for a lodge chief executive) of the Las Vegas lodge for eight years (1969–73 and 1975–79), and Nick Kelly (né Fiore), president of the Italian American Club in the late 1960s and its guiding force for many years thereafter. One current member of both groups, long active in civic affairs, recalled that when Arcadipane and others suggested that the Italian American Club become part of their organization and give its building and property to the national headquarters of the Sons of Italy, Nick Kelly and his supporters became incensed that an out-of-state organization might gain control, especially since the building had been their major achievement. Ill will precluded any cooperation for the next twenty-two years.[7]

Despite lack of cooperation, the two organizations followed broadly parallel paths during this period. Their objectives remained similar, and each appealed to Las Vegas newcomers seeking both social and employment opportunities. Finally, each assisted a variety of local and national charities, thereby giving their increasingly assimilated members a sense of contribution to the community. Both continued to attract new members in the late 1960s and through the mid-1970s as large numbers of Italian-Americans continued to migrate to Las Vegas. The Italian American Club's membership peaked at just under four hundred, while the Sons of Italy's top enrollment was a little over three hundred.[8] It is worth noting that no more than 5 percent of Italian-American adults in southern Nevada have ever belonged to any of these organizations.

Yearly activities for both groups were virtually the same. They included celebration of such traditional Italian holidays as St. Joseph's Day, dinners or balls on Columbus Day, two or three quite successful fundraisers for local or national charities, scholarships for deserving Italian-Americans, and a banquet featuring Man-of-the-Year awards.[9]

The Italian-American Club was somewhat more successful than the Sons of Italy in gaining and retaining members because it provided a pleasant social environment. Its large clubhouse had not only a restaurant and bar, but also a variety of rooms for activities ranging from card playing to banquets and wedding receptions. Behind the building was a Mediterranean courtyard leading to a bocce court. The clubhouse was open most evenings, whereas members of the Sons of Italy were able to socialize only at organized meetings.

During the 1970s the club's leadership base narrowed. The strong personalities of two of its presidents, Nick Kelly and Mike Pisanello, a culinary union official, attracted members, but also caused many resignations. While most of those interviewed spoke highly of Kelly's leadership and commitment, asserting

it was a rare Italian-American who refused his invitation to join the club, several others, notably golf pro Frank Catania, sports-book manager George Ligouri, and casino host Joe Spinuzzi, were able to resist Kelly's entreaties. Indeed, Al Bossi and Charles Cocuzza, a small-business owner who served as president for only seven months of his two-year term because Nick Kelly constantly undermined his efforts at professional management of the club, asserted that by the late 1970s Kelly had become possessive about the club and dictatorial toward members who questioned his opinions or those of his good friend, Mike Pisanello. Kelly spoke so often of "my club" that Bossi had to confront him with legal documents showing that Kelly did not own the club building and property. Kelly, a bachelor, had retired from his maitre d' position by this time and spent almost every waking hour at the club. Since he served virtually as unpaid manager and Pisanello often as unpaid chef, the two effectively ran the club.

A typical example of Kelly's *modus operandi* occurred one evening when the San Gennaro Feast was held at the club. With patrons almost six deep at the bar, Kelly who always sat on a "throne" next to the bar, decided at about 10:30 P.M.

Phil Mirabelli receives the presidential gavel for the Italian American Club from outgoing president Pete Bommarito in the early 1960s. In the back from the left are Nick Kelly, William Raggio and Al Bossi. *(Photo/Rama photo, Al Bossi Collection)*

to go home. To the amazement of the crowd, he imperiously announced, "Last call," and a few minutes later ordered the bar closed. No member dared challenge Kelly's decision. As this style of management struck many younger, upwardly mobile Italian-Americans as old-fashioned, the club's recruitment, once Kelly's strong suit, had faltered by the early 1980s.[10]

Several of the middle-aged Italian-Americans interviewed for this article, as well as the author, recall visiting the Italian American Club soon after settling in Las Vegas between 1975 and 1982 and rather quickly getting the distinct impression that the leadership only sought new members who were friends of longtime members. Although in recent years any Italian-American inquiring about membership has been treated cordially by club leaders, the years of narrow recruitment have cost the club scores of new and younger members.

The Sons of Italy, too, experienced serious problems with recruitment. Tony DiIorio, a casino executive at the MGM Grand Hotel, served as president from 1973 through 1975 and almost equalled Kelly in recruiting members from the gaming industry. But he, too, tended to neglect recruitment of younger men and women. DiIorio, as well as Leonard Arcadipane, businessman Phil Carlino, and a handful of others made the Sons of Italy viable into the early 1980s. But because it recruited few new members, the organization lost its vitality as older leaders died, became incapacitated, or, as was the case with DiIorio, joined new, more dynamic Italian-American groups. By 1990 the Sons of Italy meetings were dominated by seniors often exchanging stories of aches and pains. It was not an atmosphere conducive to either retention of middle-aged members or recruitment of younger ones.

Since almost all the Italians who came to the United States were at least nominally affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church, it is not surprising that the Italian-American religious organizations in Las Vegas have been associated only with that faith. Until the substantial migration of Italian-Americans from the East and West coasts after World War II, however, the number of Italian-American Catholics in Las Vegas was too small to support a distinctly Italian-American Catholic organization. Several Italian-Americans, mostly parishioners from St. Viator's Church, worked with Father Zanoni of the San Francisco-based Italian Catholic Federation (ICF) to establish a Las Vegas chapter in 1973. This organization, with many chapters in California and a few in northern Nevada and Illinois, reaffirmed the traditional Catholicism of most Italian-Americans.

Like the Italian American Club and the Sons of Italy, the Las Vegas ICF chapter (and those that were formed later) engaged in philanthropy and provided opportunities for social relations with others of the same background. The ICF, too, held monthly meetings, commemorated traditional Italian saints' days, and offered scholarships for Italian-American youth. In addition, members aided needy Italian-American families and elderly and, of course, their own parishes.[11]

The issue of national control versus local autonomy, which had been a major

factor in the conflict between the Italian American Club and the Sons of Italy, soon led to a split within the St. Viator ICF. Izzy Marion, a controversial Italian-American who has owned beauty parlors, appeared as local television host, and served as a casino executive, was one of the chapter founders. He took the lead in protesting against making payments to the ICF Central Council in San Francisco for new members. Marion asserted in a 1991 interview that since the Central Council was adamant about the payments, he and most of the other members formed a separate group, the Association of Italian Catholics (AIC), with full support of St. Viator's clergy. Others who were active in the original St. Viator's ICF chapter disagreed with Marion. They emphasized that the majority of members moved with the chapter to Holy Family parish in 1977. The chapter remained at Holy Family parish for eleven years, then moved to St. Anne's parish because of irreconcilable differences with the Holy Family's Italian-American pastor, the Reverend Benjamin Franzinelli.

Marion, whose personality is as strong as was Nick Kelly's, has remained the unchallenged leader of the AIC. In May 1992 he asserted that the AIC had more than ninety members, including many non-Italians and even some non-Catholics. With great enthusiasm, Marion described such recent AIC activities as annual pasta and memorial dinners, a July picnic, and fundraising events for both St. Viator's parish and the Southern Nevada Children's Home. He probably substantially overstated the membership, but the AIC's continued existence for almost two decades is a tribute to Marion's strong personality. As no other AIC leaders have emerged, however, the organization will probably not outlive Izzy Marion.

The ICF has expanded its Las Vegas membership. The St. Anne's chapter, headed by Angelo Nicassio, a former Californian, remains vital, and two other chapters have been formed. One, at St. Francis de Sales parish, has experienced some disruption as a result of differences among past leaders, but it continues to provide philanthropic, social, and spiritual opportunities for more than thirty mostly older Italian-American Catholics and their spouses. Another chapter, at Our Lady of Las Vegas parish, started in the summer of 1991, with Angelo Nicassio and Dr. Emil Cava, a retired physician, assisting an ICF field director in the organizing efforts. Cava said that he enjoyed serving as the chapter's first president. The almost fifty members are mostly older, and Cava estimates that about one third are not of Italian background.

Southern Nevada's various Italian-American organizations in the early 1980s shared many positive characteristics. Their regular meetings provided opportunities to socialize and re-emphasize an Italian cultural heritage; fundraisers gave members a sense of philanthropy; and reports of some members' trips to Italy, as well as the very occasional visits of Italian officials or airmen (who participated in NATO exercises at nearby Nellis Air Force Base), affirmed the members' tenuous connection with the land of their ancestors.

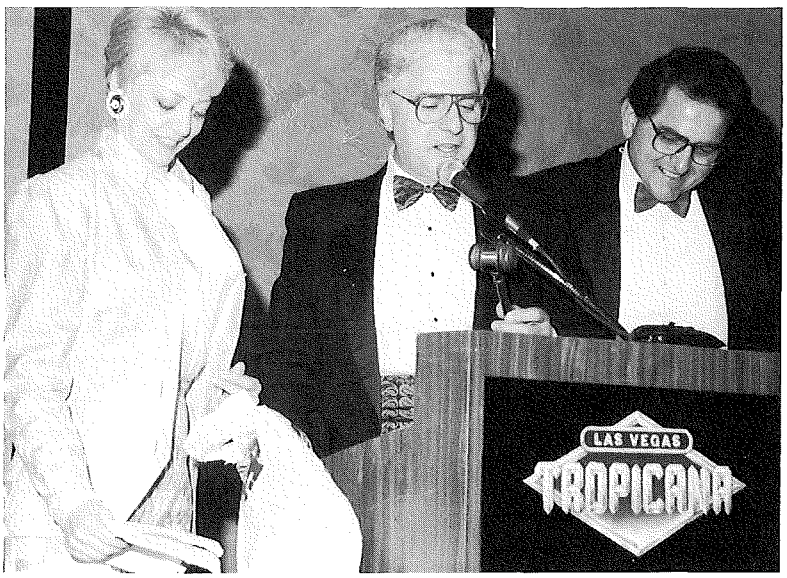
The organizations also had some negative similarities. Their numbers were

gradually declining and the average age of members was increasing. None of the organizations developed programs to appeal to Italian-Americans in the twenty-to-forty-year age group. In addition, no leader made an effort to enlist the support of the other organizations in causes that might have had broad support from the Italian-American community. Also negative was the continued ill will between the leadership of the Italian American Club and the Sons of Italy. An active member of the Sons of Italy, who wished to remain anonymous, vividly recalled that in the mid-1970s Nick Kelly not only refused to help organize a Columbus Day parade, but informed Las Vegas leaders that their cooperation with the Sons of Italy would result in an Italian-American boycott of their businesses. When Leonard Arcadipane, Las Vegas entertainer Peter Anthony, and three other Sons of Italy leaders traveled to Carson City in April 1973 to testify in favor of Senate Bill 339, a proposal to make Columbus Day a legal holiday in Nevada, they did not seek assistance from spokesmen of other Italian-American organizations.[12]

Cooperation was also lacking in antidiscrimination efforts. While longtime member Tony Allotta recalled that he and some other active members of the Italian American Club contributed cash to reputed Mafioso Joseph Colombo's Italian American Civil Rights League, whose representatives traveled to Las Vegas regularly, none of the southern Nevada Italian-American organizations worked with the national Italian-American antidiscrimination associations that were formed in the late 1960s.[13] This is not to say that there were no efforts to combat ethnic stereotyping, for occasionally club members countered offensive comments. Tony Neno, manager of the club from 1982 through 1987, and Tony Allotta recalled that the club aggressively protested defamatory comments made about Italian-Americans by a local sportscaster, a comedian, and a *Las Vegas Sun* columnist. Joe Minetti, editor of the club's monthly newsletter, wrote official protest letters, while other members contacted both the offenders and their employers.

The graying of the membership of the original Italian-American groups, the lack of an appropriate social milieu for a well-assimilated and successful middle-aged and younger membership, and the need to promote positive attitudes toward Italian-Americans set the stage both for the development of new organizations and for the revitalization of the Italian American Club. The last mentioned issue was particularly important because the Las Vegas newspapers were filled with stories about Tony Spilotro, alleged representative of the Chicago Mob, and Italian-American organized-crime families.

In 1983 the Augustus Society was formed by a small group of successful Italian-American men and women, including attorney Dominic Gentile, businesswoman Roseanne Gargano, attorney Al Massi, and banker Dan Rotunno. Though memories fade, evidence points to Dominic Gentile as the single most important participant. Soon thereafter they recruited Ruth Catalano and Dino Sorrentino, small-business owners, and Dr. Franco Erculei, a physician and



Former Augustus Society presidents Ruth Catalano and Mike Fauci with Jerry DePalma. *(Augustus Society)*

friend of Rotunno.[14] The Augustus Society's stated goals were improving the image of Italian-Americans, furthering the educational attainments of Italian-American high school graduates and assisting needy Italian-Americans, particularly the elderly.

After much discussion the annual membership fee was set at $1,000, primarily to ensure that only the most successful Italian-Americans would seek membership. Enrollment increased from the original six founders in 1983 to more than sixty in five years. Roseanne Gargano DePalma recalled that progress was slow but steady. The society recruited Palace Station owner Frank Fertitta, but Showboat chief executive Frank Modica explained that his extensive responsibilities in both New Jersey and Nevada prevented him from joining. Tony DiIorio, former Sons of Italy venerable, joined and was elected president. He was almost as effective a recruiter for the Augustus Society as he had been for the Sons of Italy. Everyone tried to recruit an Italian-American friend or business associate. Total membership rose each year, although some did not renew their memberships. Some left because the annual dues proved too expensive, others because job advancement made attendance at society meetings difficult. One resigned because he believed that the society had become too much like the Rotary Club; conversely, another quit because he thought the society was becoming too political. No effort was made to recruit the several Italian-born and Italian-American professors at the Community College of Southern Nevada (CCSN) and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), though the high annual dues would probably have shocked the academicians. Eventually, however, a CCSN

criminal justice professor, a UNLV architecture lecturer, and a UNLV professor of educational psychology, all business owners, joined the society.

An annual highlight of the Augustus Society's activities has been the scholarship dinner, attended by Dr. Robert Maxson, the then popular UNLV president. In 1992, Maxson's popularity plummeted among Las Vegas's many basketball fanatics as coach Jerry Tarkanian and his supporters charged that the UNLV president had led a conspiracy to oust the revered basketball mentor. Sports-conscious leaders of the Augustus Society were split as to whether to invite Maxson to the scholarship dinner. Finally, they voted to do so, but Maxson declined, explaining that he had a previous commitment. As Maxson chose Rollie Massimino, an Italian-American, to succeed Tarkanian, one may assume that the UNLV president will regain his position as the center of attention at future scholarship banquets. It is a source of pride to Augustus Society members that the society has awarded more than fifteen $1,000 scholarships to deserving Italian-American students in each of the past five years. Unlike most other ethnic organizations, the society has had no difficulty raising funds.

The Augustus Society's leadership remains committed also to assisting the elderly and enhancing the image of Italian-Americans. According to former presidents Mike Fauci, owner of a construction company, and Dino Sorrentino, needy Italian-American seniors in southern Nevada have been difficult to locate. One Christmas, Mike Fauci asked several laborers employed by his construction company to deliver Augustus Society food baskets to older Italian-Americans who had been identified as needy by society members. Many of the recipients, who were at their homes or apartments when the baskets arrived, expressed disdain for the effort. (The laborers told Fauci that most of the dwellings they visited were far from humble.) As Italian-Americans had the third highest income of all Clark County ethnic groups surveyed for the 1980 United States Census, the lack of success is not surprising. Undaunted, the society's leaders are searching for better ways to identify and serve Italian-American seniors. In 1990, the society's Board of Directors allocated $8,000 for an advertising campaign to inform Las Vegas of the achievements of Italians and Italian-Americans.[15] In December 1992, the society joined with the Italian American Club, the Sons of Italy, and the Nevada Society of Italian American Lawyers to underwrite the costs of three programs—two about Christopher Columbus and one featuring Luciano Pavarotti.

The positive-image campaign is being developed with the full cooperation of the Nevada Society of Italian American Lawyers (NSIAL), an organization formed in 1987. Dominic Gentile founded this group primarily to combat discrimination against Italian-Americans. Its presidents, following Dominic Gentile—Carl Piazza, Nikolas Mastrangelo, and, most recently, Vince Consul—have actively protested negative stereotyping of Italian-Americans by some gaming regulators and journalists. They and the membership—numbering more than forty, and including District Court Judges Joseph Bonaventure and Gerard Bon-

Dominic Gentile, founder and first President of the Nevada Society of Italian-American Lawyers and one of the founders of the Augustus Society. *(Mitrani photo, Augustus Society)*

giovanni—have taken a generally low-key but effective approach in assisting Italian-Americans who believe that their careers in gaming are being limited by prejudice from employers or gaming regulators. The NSIAL has also assisted Italian immigrants having difficulties with the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service.[16] As several of the most active members of NSIAL are

also active in the Augustus Society, the antidefamation and image-enhancement efforts have been coordinated. Dominic Gentile has served as chairman of the Augustus Society's cultural affairs committee, he and NSIAL member Jerry DePalma have served as chairmen of the society's Board of Directors, and Nikolas Mastrangelo took office as society president in October 1992.

Of course, NSIAL, composed of well-assimilated attorneys, also has an interest in promoting the image of all lawyers. They have done this primarily by sponsoring a Red Mass, the traditional Catholic ceremony to honor the role of lawyers in society. The Reverend Francis Vivona, trained in canon law at the Pontifical College in Rome and judicial vicar of the Catholic diocese of Reno-Las Vegas, approached NSIAL leaders in the winter of 1991 about supporting a Red Mass. The first Red Mass, held at Our Lady of Las Vegas Church in September 1991, was a success—many tickets were sold, attendance was good, and participants included leaders of other religious groups. Vivona attended the April 1992 NSIAL meeting and explained that the initial success led Nevada's bishop, Daniel Walsh, to make Guardian Angel Cathedral, located just off the Strip, available for the second Las Vegas Red Mass.

The NSIAL also provides its members with opportunities to socialize and to exchange information about the legal profession. Ages range from the mid-twenties to the sixties, and the group's meetings are characterized by convivial and frank exchanges of political and professional ideas.

Another recently formed organization is the Las Vegas chapter of the National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame (NIASHF). The Illinois-based parent organization, founded by a group of Italian-American businessmen in 1978, has the goals of providing proper recognition to Italian-American sports greats and awarding scholarships to deserving student athletes without regard to race, creed, or color. The local chapter was started in 1986 by Andy Jerry, an Italian-American from New York who had held leadership positions in the horse-racing business. Fewer than a dozen Italian-Americans joined the organization until John Tassone, a golf tournament organizer, was elected president in 1990. Under his leadership the membership reached sixty by late 1991, a local scholarship program was established, and a Man-of-the-Year award banquet was initiated. Tassone and other chapter officers selected William Peccole for the first award. This was a wise choice, and not only because Peccole's business associates, particularly contractors working on the huge Peccole Ranch development of hundreds of houses, apartments, and even a casino, bought almost three hundred tickets for the banquet.[17] It is still too early to determine if the chapter will continue attracting new members. A positive development occurred in November 1991, when the membership decisively rejected a proposal to separate from the parent organization.

Over-all, Italian-American organizations are faring well considering that third- and fourth-generation Italian-Americans are so thoroughly assimilated. Italian-Americans are indistinguishable by their behavior from the general population;

their speech, dress, and mannerisms no longer set them apart from the majority of Americans. They have served as cabinet secretaries, governors, United States senators, and chief executive officers of Fortune 500 companies. The most convincing example of assimilation is the contemporary rate of marriage with non-Italians, which is now over 80 percent for fourth-generation Italian Americans.[18] Few are the Italian-Americans who perceive an Italian-American organization to be the only relaxing setting for social relations. Many other social, philanthropic, and business organizations now beckon to them.

Some Italian-American organizations face a brighter future than others. The Augustus Society and the NSIAL appeal to fourth-generation Italian-Americans who are both proud of their heritage (which may include other ethnic backgrounds) and desirous of expanding their social and business contacts. However, the Italian American Club, the Sons of Italy, the ICF chapters, and the AIC must all address the serious problem of aging memberships, an issue that is most compelling for the Sons of Italy, with declining memberships in chapters throughout the United States. In recent years the Las Vegas lodge's monthly meetings have attracted mostly seniors, with very limited recruitment of younger members. Perhaps the best summary of the difficult future of this organization was an early 1991 exchange between Venerable Ann Little and a member of more than two decades standing. "Joe, you should come to meetings more often, we need young people like you." He responded, "Young, I'm fifty now, Ann!" The Sons of Italy lodge will remain viable as long as Phil Carlino remains active. His energy and enthusiasm ensure the group's immediate future, but no potential new leaders exist. Indeed, when Ann Little resigned at the end of 1991, Carlino's wife, Florence, a longtime active member, though not an Italian-American, was appointed venerable. The Sons of Italy, the ICF chapters, and the AIC will remain active organizations into the twenty-first century only if they attract younger men and women, including those with leadership abilities. They have not yet done so.

The Italian American Club has had some limited success in developing a mixture of both traditional gatherings for older members and innovative programs to attract new and younger members. Angelo Cassaro, the youngest president in more than twenty years, has led the club in expanding its array of events. Amateur boxing, opera performances, and a weekly Italian music hour on a local radio station were initiated in 1991. In addition, Cassaro and the chairwoman of CCSN's foreign languages department arranged for a three-semester series of courses in conversational Italian at the club in 1989–90. This undertaking was a success, bringing together members of diverse ages. Subsequent interest in the beginning course, particularly on the part of nonmembers, was so great that the meeting place had to be moved to a nearby high school.

Cassaro, Vice-president Tony Allotta, and other club officers, all of whom are older than Cassaro, have been careful not to neglect the older club members. They have continued the dances, traditional Italian celebrations, and bocce tour-

naments that appeal to those over fifty years of age—the great bulk of the membership. Most important for many long-standing members, the club provides a place to relax, drink, and play cards. Using the card room for the conversational Italian class, which ended before 9:00 P.M., was acceptable; however, several members complained when the card room was used for late-night restaurant overflow instead of for their leisure activities.

Cassaro and other officials are well aware that the Italian American Club is the only such organization in Nevada with a separate membership for women. Cassaro has repeatedly emphasized his commitment to merge the two organizations eventually. He recognized the need for caution because several leaders both of the club and of the ladies' auxiliary believe that the present system has worked well. Elsie Formica, president of the ladies' auxiliary during 1991–92, felt that most of the 120 members (only about 15 percent of whom are younger than age forty) liked the separation. Previous presidents Alice Allotta and Mary Baldassore agreed with her. Many members think that the separation afforded women a greater opportunity to relax, make their own decisions, and assume leadership positions. Past and present leaders of the auxiliary agreed however, that this separation probably discourages younger women from association with the largest and oldest Italian-American organization in southern Nevada.

A positive development for these organizations is the increase in overlapping memberships and the growing cooperation among the groups. Several Augustus Society members, including three past presidents of the NSIAL, have joined the Italian American Club, as has Phil Carlino of the Sons of Italy. The Augustus Society occasionally meets at the clubhouse and has held its annual Christmas party there.

For the great majority of Clark County's more than fifty-five thousand Italian-Americans, Columbus Day is one of the few connections with the land of some of their ancestors. It is therefore not surprising that the best example of cooperative spirit was the establishment of the Columbus Day Parade Association in 1989. The leaders of the Augustus Society, the Italian American Club, two ICF chapters, NIASHF, NSIAL, and the Sons of Italy attended a summit meeting on January 26, 1989, to plan the event,[19] all committing their organizations to achieving a first annual Columbus Day Parade. Dino Sorrentino and Charles Cocuzza, members of both the Augustus Society and the Italian American Club, were chosen as chairman and co-chairman of the Columbus Day Parade Association. The parade was a success, with politicians, entertainers, journalists, and business leaders of various ethnic backgrounds serving on an advisory board, two Downtown hotels becoming sponsors, and a Strip hotel sponsoring a Queen Isabella Pageant. The two ICF chapters and the NIASHF, with limited memberships and funds, were not able to contribute as much as the larger organizations and did not participate in subsequent years. Association members Phil Carlino, Angelo Cassaro, Charles Cocuzza, Doug Ferrari, Carl Piazza, Dino Sorrentino, and Charles Russo, all successful business owners except Ferrari,

who was the Tropicana's slots manager, have developed an excellent working relationship. Subsequent parades, including a quincentennial Columbus Day Parade, were successes.

The Columbus Day Ball is another example of cooperation among the organizations. The ball generates at least as much enthusiasm for the Augustus Society as the annual scholarship dinner. This black-tie affair, attended by nearly four hundred, is held in a Strip hotel ballroom, and features an award to the outstanding Italian-American of the year. Three hotel chief executives, John Chiero (Tropicana), John Giovenco (Hilton), and Frank Modica (Showboat), as well as Nevada's Secretary of State (and now Attorney General) Frankie Sue Del Papa and businesswoman Lorraine Perri Hunt have been the recipients. As is the case with the Columbus Day Parade, all profits go toward a scholarship fund. Thanks largely to Dominic Gentile, the NSIAL began co-sponsoring the Columbus Day Ball in 1991. Longtime Las Vegas attorney George Graziadei was chosen to receive the first Justinian Award (named in honor of the Byzantine emperor who codified Roman law and legal opinion in the sixth century), presented at the ball. Not surprisingly, in April 1992 the NSIAL membership selected Dominic Gentile as the second Justinian Award recipient.

During the last forty years the Italian-American organizations of southern Nevada have served the social and philanthropic needs of the relatively small minority of Italian-Americans who both value their ethnic heritage and enjoy socializing with other Italian-Americans. They have provided a sense of continuity with the past, particularly for those Italian-Americans who came to Las Vegas from ethnic enclaves in the East. If these organizations develop innovative programs of interest to younger, more assimilated Italian-Americans and can cooperate with each other, they will survive into the twenty-first century.

Notes

[1]Italian-born individuals and their children were so few in the four decades before the Strip became an internationally recognized gambling center, that organizing was not a possibility.

[2]*John DeLuca Italian American Club, 1959–1962*, a scrapbook containing newspaper accounts and photographs of club activities (President's Office, Italian American Club). John DeLuca's daughter, Linda Isola, informed the author that his children requested in the mid-1960s that his name no longer be used because they believed some club members were associated with organized crime.

[3]*John DeLuca Italian American Club, 1959–1962.*

[4]Interviews with Al Bossi, Dominic Bianchi, Reno Fruzza (first treasurer of the club), and Tony Marnell.

[5]See Humbert Nelli, *Italians In Chicago, 1880–1930: A Study in Ethnic Mobility* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 176–78.

[6]Scrapbook of Sons of Italy, containing newspaper accounts, photographs, and mementos of 1965–72 (Moose Lodge, Las Vegas No. 1763).

[7]Interviews with Tony Allotta, Al Bossi, Phil Carlino, and an Italian-American who wishes to remain anonymous.

[8]Scrapbooks and boxed materials of Sons of Italy, containing newspaper accounts, photographs, and mementos of 1965–83 (Moose Lodge, Las Vegas No. 1763); interviews with numerous members of both groups.

[9]*Ibid.*

[10]Those interviewed included present and former club officers Tony Allotta, Al Bossi, Phil DioGuardi, Phil Mirabelli, and Tony Ricci.

[11]"Italian Catholic Federation," a pamphlet of the ICF's Central Council, n.d.; interviews with past and present chapter leaders Catherine Barcal, Angelo Nicassio, Vito Stolfa and Izzy Marion.

[12]Interview with Peter Anthony; scrapbook of the Sons of Italy, containing newspaper accounts, photographs and mementos of 1973–83 (Moose Lodge, Las Vegas No. 1763).

[13]See Nicholas Gage, *The Mafia Is Not an Equal Opportunity Employer* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1971), 68–89, for information on this organization, which was run by reputed Mafia leader Joseph Colombo until his assassination at a 1971 Columbus Day rally in New York City.

[14]Interviews with Ruth Catalano, Roseanne Gargano DePalma, and Dan Rotunno.

[15]Interview with Jerry DePalma; *Augustus Society Centurion,* 1987–91.

[16]Interviews with Jerry DePalma, Dominic Gentile, and Vince Consul.

[17]Brochure of National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame; 1991 newsletters of the Las Vegas chapter; interviews with chapter officers Tony Allotta and Phil DioGuardi.

[18]Richard Alba, *Italian Americans: Into the Twilight of Ethnicity* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1985), 89–90.

[19]Izzy Marion explained in a 1991 interview that his lack of cooperation in the planning of the Columbus Day Parade was based on the other participants' rejection of his plan to establish a permanent coordinating council of Italian-American organizations.

PARTNERS IN THE PARK
Navajo People and Navajo National Monument

Hal K. Rothman

In May 1962, after more than four years of negotiation, the National Park Service and the Navajo Tribe reached an unusual accord at Navajo National Monument in northeastern Arizona. This memorandum of agreement allowed the Park Service to use 240 acres of Navajo land at the top of Betatakin Canyon to facilitate the development of the monument in exchange for Park Service assistance and support for legislation to transfer an area at Antelope Creek in Coconino County, Arizona, to the Navajo Tribe for recreational purposes. In addition, the Navajo retained the right to operate an arts-and-crafts retail outlet at the monument. This allowed the Park Service to implement longstanding development plans as well as prepare the monument for the onslaught of visitation that followed the paving of all-weather highways across the formerly remote western part of the reservation.[1]

The memorandum of agreement formalized a longstanding pattern of interaction between Navajo National Monument—which includes three Anasazi cliff-dwelling ruins, Keet Seel, Betatakin, and Inscription House—and the Navajo people in the Shonto region that surrounded it. What had been a marginal relationship until World War II took on great importance after the changes in the Navajo economy that resulted from the animal stock reduction programs of the 1930s. The initial glimmer of development that followed 1945 offered advantages to both the Park Service and local Navajo people. As early as 1955, the Park Service designed plans that depended on the acquisition of new land for interpretation. As Navajo people recognized the advantages of amenities for tourists to the region, the ties between them and the Park Service became stronger. A symbiotic relationship developed, in which Navajos gained economically from the park, which in turn received the benefits of Navajo labor as well as the ability

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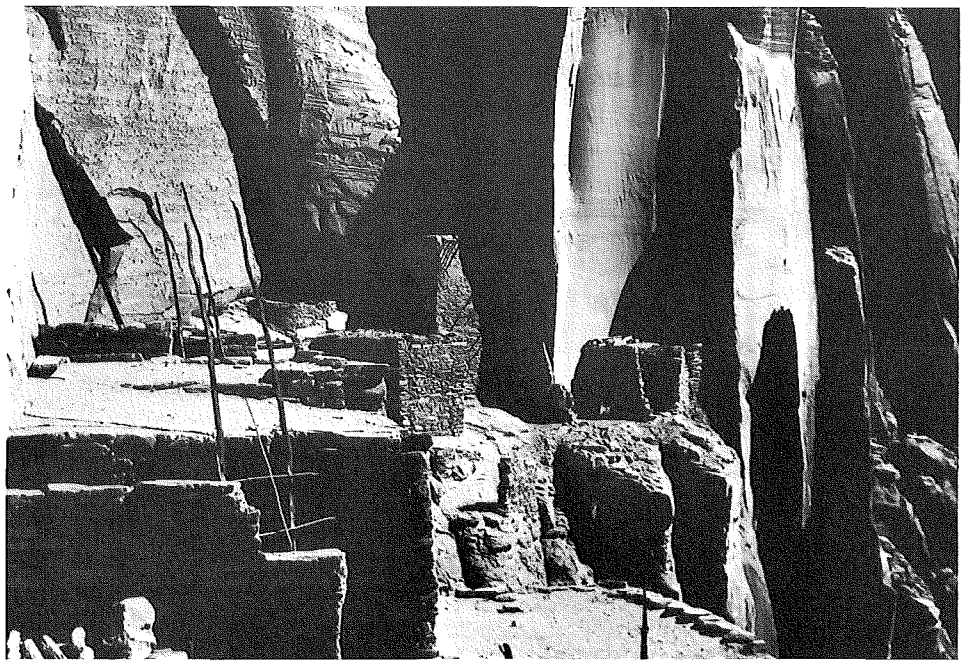


The ruins at Betatakin, Navajo National Monument, Tonalea, Arizona. *(Navajo National Monument)*

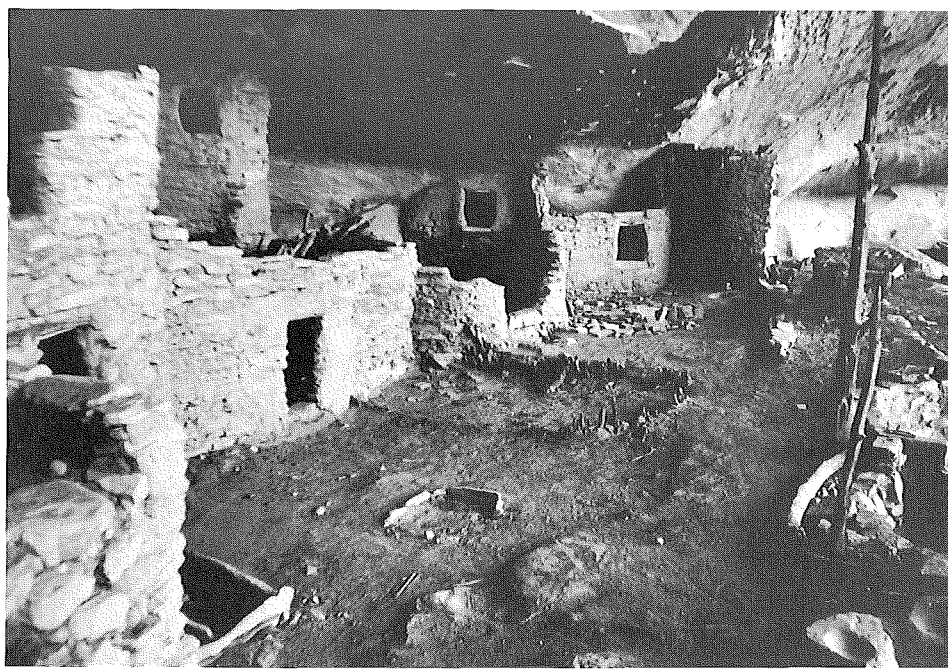
to offer visitors a picture of Navajo life. Local Navajos developed a proprietary interest, truly becoming partners in the park.

As a result of cultural and social changes in the United States and new obligations to the Navajo, the Park Service had to address the needs of the Navajo Nation in a more comprehensive fashion after the signing of the agreement. At the establishment of the monument in 1909, individual Navajos had little say about the disposition of the area. After the development of the tribal-council governing structure in the 1920s and the events of the New Deal and World War II, Navajos gained active and outspoken leadership that defended their interests. In the aftermath of America's cultural revolution of the 1960s, Navajo people became willing to assert their rights in a manner never previously associated with them. In the late 1960s, the Navajo Tribe changed their official designation to Navajo Nation to reflect the unique status of American Indians in the United States. This nationalism emerged as an effort by the Navajo people to gain greater control over their social, economic, and political lives and culminated in the initial election of Peter McDonald as Tribal Council chairman in 1970.[2] This empowerment challenged the Park Service in complicated ways.

The area around Navajo National Monument, once remote and insular, increasingly reflected the changing cultural climate outside its boundaries. The first paved roads reached the region in the late 1950s, bringing increased access

to the goods, services, and people of the outside world. By the early 1970s, the western Navajo reservation had begun to undergo comprehensive transformation. The people of the region had a long and proud history. Navajos first settled the area in the 1860s in an effort to avoid forced confinement by the American military at the Bosque Redondo near Fort Sumner in eastern New Mexico. Fleeing what is now western New Mexico, they found the area around Navajo Mountain sufficiently far from the reach of the cavalry. The result was a regional culture intentionally isolated from the encroaching industrial world and its material by-products, less receptive to Anglo-Americans than that in other parts of the reservation. Trading posts on the western reservation came later, and were fewer and farther between. Nor, until stock reductions of the 1930s, was their influence as pervasive as elsewhere.[3]

As late as the 1960s, the western reservation seemed lost in time. Nearly a decade after the first paved roads crossed the region, the most common form of transportation for Navajo families in the area was the classic orange and green Studebaker horse-drawn wagon. William G. Binnewies recalled that the pick-up truck era in the Shonto vicinity began in the late 1960s during his tenure as superintendent of Navajo. About the same time, Navajo families began to travel to other places, a practice uncommon previously. These symbols of greater exposure to the outside world were harbingers of a revolution in lifestyle for the people of the western reservation.[4]



Anazazi ruins, Navajo National Monument. *(Dale L. Housley photo, Navajo National Monument)*

Even before implementation of Park Service plans such as the construction of the visitor center and the paved approach road from the main highway to the monument in the mid-1960s, the park staff and their neighbors had an interdependent relationship. The park was the long arm of an industrial society. Its needs were supplied from elsewhere, but in the remote backcountry of Arizona, the people who ran the park had to rely on their neighbors. Area Navajos could also benefit materially from their relationship with the park. Besides employment, the park could offer communications, transportation, support, and medical facilities unavailable to most of the people in the region. In addition, both the Park Service and the Navajo had to battle the often inclement climate of the area.

The interdependence produced a number of close personal relationships between park personnel and their neighbors. John and Louisa Wade Wetherill, who served as custodians of the monument from its inception in 1909 until 1938, initiated this pattern. As traders in Navajoland, with deep respect for the people whose world they entered, they earned the trust of the Navajo people. Louisa Wade Wetherill became particularly interested in the Navajo and their culture. Fluent in their language, she became a self-proclaimed expert on Navajo culture. In the living room of the Wetherill trading post in Kayenta, John Wetherill discussed the prehistory of the Southwest, while Louisa Wade Wetherill held forth on the Navajo. Even her children knew not to contradict her on this subject.[5]

Neighbors and often friends, the staff and area Navajos looked out for each other. This solidified existing relationships in instances such as a major snowstorm in the late 1960s, when Binnewies left his home on horseback in thigh-deep snow, loaded with canned goods for the nearby Austin family. On the way, he met E. K. "Edd" Austin, Sr., patriarch of the family, coming toward him with a side of beef in case the park was out of food. These concomitant gestures of personal concern reflected a feeling of community that transcended cultural and institutional lines at the monument.[6]

The empowerment of the Navajo began before the 1960s. By the late 1940s, Navajos in the vicinity of the monument had become avid workers in a range of programs. Federal wage scales had been standardized, and Navajo laborers were paid a sum equal to that of laborers in other parts of the country. In 1947, this rate of $1.15 per hour put laborers dangerously close to the hourly wage that could be factored out of the custodian's annual salary. Park Service standards for wages were set in Washington, D.C., and exceeded even the rates paid by the United States Indian Service. As park budgets were limited, the high cost of wages restricted the number of workers and length of time for which they could be employed.[7]

Federal regulations and policy bound the Park Service. Even in 1947, when discrimination in wages was the rule, National Park Service officials insisted on paying their Navajo laborers at the same rate as non-Indian workers. This prac-

tice, which frustrated some who perceived that the standard wage on the reservation should be lower than elsewhere because of the large pool of available labor and the significantly lower cost of living, was in part testimony to the commitment of the Park Service to support local constituencies. It was also part of the process of empowering the Navajo people.[8]

By the middle of the 1950s, the Navajo had taken a more aggressive approach toward activities on the reservation that did not use Navajo labor. Preferential hiring clauses were instituted, requiring that off-reservation construction companies who received contracts for on-reservation work employ Navajos. These new demands affected the Park Service as well. When looking for labor, the service was required to select a fixed percentage of Navajo workers. When this was not done, even in activities exempted by law, there could be uncomfortable consequences. In 1958, despite the fact that many Navajos did not like to work in archaeological areas because of cultural taboos regarding spirits of the dead, Tribal Council member Paul Begay threatened to close down a stabilization project at Inscription House because it employed no Navajos.[9] The incident reflected a growing militancy among Navajos that came to the fore in the 1960s.

That decade saw the culmination of major changes in the cultural history of the United States. The civil rights movement served as the starting point: The effort to achieve the attributes of citizenship for American blacks inspired a panoply of other reform-oriented activities. Protests by college students against the war in Vietnam were one major ramification. The emergence of Hispano, Indian, and other movements that sought to extend the advantages of the modern world to groups previously left out was another. There was a growing sense of empowerment among these groups, most of whom had earlier been relegated to peripheral positions in American life.[10]

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Navajo people began to exert influence on state and local governmental, educational, and other institutions and processes that affected their lives. In Chinle and Window Rock, Navajos gained the majority on the school boards; in other places Navajos swarmed the polls, voting in unprecedented numbers. In southern Apache County, Anglos feared a Navajo majority and unsuccessfully sought a separate Navajo County.[11] Despite these and other efforts to curb their growing power, Navajos showed that they were on the verge of becoming a force in regional politics.

Navajo politics were generally pragmatic and issue oriented. Concerned with basic civil rights and economic and social issues, the Navajo people were generally far removed from the political radicalism most evident on college campuses and in the antiwar movement. Although the cultural revolution that swept the nation helped fuel a Navajo awakening, the Navajo looked to themselves to solve the problems of their world. Despite the emergence of Red Power as a philosophy and the militance of Indian organizations such as the American Indian Movement, the Navajos of the Shonto region remained largely apart from efforts to destroy the modern world and rebuild it anew.

Organizations such as the American Indian Movement (AIM) had a complicated impact on the Navajo. Some people embraced these empowerment movements wholeheartedly, defining themselves in opposition to mainstream American society. Many of the people who became enthusiastic about these changes were urban Navajos, who felt caught between two worlds, neither wholly Indian nor white. Others, predominantly more traditional Navajos such as many of the "longhairs" in the vicinity of the monument, were much more ambivalent toward radical Indians. Closer to traditional culture and the way of life expressed through it, they did not value recognition from the white world as much as the spirituality and sentience of the Navajo way. The more traditional Navajos were less tied to the Anglo world. As a result they felt less oppressed by it and had little need to express their anger toward it.

Within the Navajo Nation, empowerment led to the formation of numerous support organizations. Among these was a legal aid society called Dinebeiina Nahiilna Be Agaditahe (DNA), which was supposed to help poorer Navajos who had problems with the legal system. During Peter McDonald's first administration in the early 1970s, DNA made impressive gains for Navajos. It filed a class-action suit against trading post operators seeking fairer trade practices, and won affirmation of the right of individual Navajos to be exempt from state income tax on wages earned within the boundaries of the Navajo Nation. The DNA had two tiers, one made up of lawyers—most of whom were not Navajos—and another of advocates, Navajos who could explain the legal system to other Navajos. In the climate of the 1960s and early 1970s, there was a powerful political dimension to the activities of DNA, and the organization was often embroiled in controversy.[12]

One DNA advocate, Golden Eagle, who had previously been known as Leroy Austin, brought the influence of the outside to the remote world of Navajo National Monument. A son of E. K. Austin, Sr., who ran the guided horse tours to Keet Seel, Leroy Austin had been away from the area for a long time. In an unusual series of events one summer weekend in 1973, he terrorized visitors and a ranger at Keet Seel, threatening them and brandishing weapons while intoxicated. In the fashion of the time, he regarded the Park Service as an occupying power on Navajo land. In search of assistance, the park ranger left Keet Seel for headquarters. In the interim, the incident came to an unfortunate end when one of Golden Eagle's brothers shot and severely wounded him. The incident revealed that along with access came every attribute, good and bad, of modern society.[13]

This episode was more typical of the era than of relations between the park and its neighbors at Navajo National Monument. There was an extreme tone to the late 1960s and early 1970s, an all-or-nothing, for-or-against feeling that, at its most outlandish, suggested that the monument was a symbol of oppression. Here, the instigator himself had become an outsider. He had been away from home for a long period prior to the incident, and the prisms through which he

viewed the relationships of Tsegi Wash were more those of urban America than the Colorado Plateau. Yet, influenced by the furor of the time, he expropriated the ideals of a social movement for individual purposes and seized on the National Park Service as a symbol of perceived oppression. Ironically, many of the Navajos of the Shonto area were appalled by his behavior.

The incident served to enunciate further that the remote character of the monument, which had insulated it for so long, had ceased to exist. It also offered insight into the complicated web of relationships that pre-dated the memorandum of agreement and that the agreement did not erase. Ultimately these unresolved issues threatened to erupt in violent expression in an era that emphasized identity and fidelity to cultural ideals of mythic proportions.

There were other smaller incidents that reflected changes in the Navajo cultural attitude and caused the Park Service to be more aware. In 1974, a medicine-man display in the visitor center attracted negative attention. The collection, which comprised parts of a Navajo medicine man's kit, had been purchased by the park from a Shonto man named Bert Barlow in 1971. This was a relatively frequent occurrence, as a similar purchase was made from some unnamed Navajos the following May. An exhibit featuring these articles was displayed beginning in May 1971. In December 1973, a number of Navajos who claimed to be from the family to which the kit belonged came to the park and sought to buy it back. They returned on at least one other occasion, but never made contact with the superintendent. Yet the possession loomed as an issue. "It makes my heart sad to think of [the collection] imprisoned," one of the Navajo told a park technician.[14]

The response of the park was complicated. In the early 1970s, repatriation of Indian artifacts and remains had not yet become an issue. Recognizing the interdependence that characterized their existence, park officials knew that they had to proceed carefully. The artifacts had been purchased legitimately, the park staff reasoned, and some had doubts about the people who wanted to repurchase them. Superintendent Frank Hastings had "no inclination or authority to sell or give . . . back to these people because [he believed] they only wish to resell . . . for a better price." The specter of DNA advocacy appeared, and Hastings feared pressure. Although there were no further developments, again the impact of the 1960s reached the park.[15]

But situations like the Golden Eagle incident and the discussion over the medicine bag were extraordinary exceptions to the general pattern of relations between local Navajos and the park. The web of relationships created genuine economic, cultural, and personal interdependence, spawning close friendships among people of different cultural backgrounds. Park officials tried to be good neighbors, offering area Navajos as many of the benefits of the modern facilities as they could. These were both institutional and cultural. According to William Binnewies, individuals made these relationships work. Park personnel who

sought camaraderie and mutual respect made the green uniforms of the National Park Service a friendly sight for area Navajos.[16]

This closeness dated back to the days of *Hosteen* [Navajo for "Mr." or "Sir"; term of respect or endearment] John Wetherill and was a characteristic feature of the people who worked at the monument. There had been what one former superintendent characterized as the "informal Navajo assistance program," a comprehensive effort by the Park Service to be good neighbors. Superintendent Arthur White, who had close ties to area Navajos, made it a point to grade the road all the way to Shonto, clearing what had become a lifeline for the people of the vicinity. In the winter, the park's snowplow could be found plowing the way to various hogans in the region. White also allowed Navajos to fill their fifty-five-gallon water barrels at the park, loaned them tools, and generally worked to promote harmonious relations. Binnewies encouraged a young Navajo woman who worked as a seasonal ranger at the park to go back to school to get a teaching certificate. She became the first Navajo with credentials to teach in the Shonto district. Frank Hastings recalled pulling pick-ups out of sand and snow, feeding people in times of heavy snow, taking in local Navajos in need of temporary care, and serving as a communications center for the people of the region. In reality, Navajo National Monument was three small islands among the Navajo people. Because of the miles between the ruins, the park could not survive alone. In a harsh land, cooperation and adaptation to circumstance assured the survival of all.[17]

Other kinds of ties bound the people of the park and their neighbors together. Bud Martin, P. J. Ryan, and other rangers from this era had an affinity with the Navajos based on similarities in their personalities. Private people who enjoyed the solitude of the monument and did not particularly care for intrusions, the staff found that they had common ground with the Navajo. Ryan found the constant questioning of Navajos by anthropologists to be an annoyance. On one occasion, he told a number of Navajo workers about an Irish folktale that equated the appearance of a raven overhead with impending death. When asked by anthropologists to recount their folklore, the Navajos who had heard Ryan's story responded by repeating it as if it were a Navajo folktale. The anthropologists later asked Ryan if he had any more Irish stories for them. This comic incident underscored how close people of different backgrounds could become. Ryan's ability to communicate with Navajos and his respect for their privacy helped build a close relationship.[18]

The increase in the number of Navajos who worked at the park also contributed to the establishment of close ties. Because the monument had so little funding, there were few opportunities for seasonal labor in the 1910s and 1920s. Most of the Navajos who worked at the monument before the 1930s were associated with archaeological expeditions. The New Deal provided money for the first seasonal laborers, among them Bob Black, who began in 1935 and remained

at the park for thirty-one years. In 1948, Seth Bigman, one of the many Navajo who fought in World War II, became the first Navajo seasonal ranger at the monument. He served two years. Bigman was followed by Hubert Laughter, another Navajo war veteran whom Bob Black recruited. Laughter also served as an interpretive ranger at the monument during his three-year stay.[19]

As the facilities at Navajo National Monument were built, the need for labor grew. Other activities that improved visitor service, such as construction of a trail across the canyon in the 1960s, brought more Navajos to the park. Some, such as Delbert Smallcanyon, began as temporary laborers and made careers out of working at the park. Park officials were pleased with such developments. At chapter meetings, the Park Service Navajos provided supporting and explanatory voices, advocates with an investment in the park and its policies.[20]

The Navajos who worked at the monument all had close ties to the Shonto area and strong cultural reasons for staying close to home. Generations apart, their life stories had many parallels. A veteran of World War II, Hubert Laughter returned to the western reservation with a Purple Heart and the desire to make a life there. He found a job in Winslow, Arizona, as an airplane mechanic, but because his wife was from a very traditional Navajo family that did not want the couple to leave the reservation, he stayed in the Shonto area. The job at the park seemed a solution to the problem of being caught between two worlds. It offered him economic opportunity at home—although his wife's family long debated whether he should take the job at the park.[21]

A generation later, Delbert Smallcanyon followed a similar pattern. Born around 1920 in the Navajo Mountain area, he tended sheep for his family well into adulthood. He first left the reservation to work for the railroad during World War II, and later followed it from place to place, working in Montana, Salt Lake City, Chicago, and elsewhere in the West. This kind of seasonal movement typified the experience of many Navajos of his generation. Smallcanyon left home only because his family needed the income from his labor. He did not enjoy the work, its pressures, or the places he went. It was his duty. His paychecks became a means to sustain his family after the local subsistence economy ceased to provide a living.

For Smallcanyon, a permanent job close to home seemed a wonderful opportunity that allowed him to maintain a traditional lifestyle. He first came to the monument in 1968 as a stonemason on the project to build a trail across the canyon. Each day he drove the fifty miles from Navajo Mountain to the park, returning after a full day's work. He was able to remain in his homeland, live a traditional lifestyle, and support his family—all as a result of his job at the park.[22]

With the signing of the memorandum of agreement and the expansion of the staff at the monument, opportunity for Navajos who sought work at the park increased. They soon recognized that permanent ranger positions were gener-

ally filled by career Park Service employees. This prompted a number of younger Navajos from across the reservation to enter the Park Service, among them Clarence N. Gorman, a native of Chinle, Arizona, who served in the Korean conflict and attended Arizona State College in Flagstaff. Maintenance positions were available for local people, as were a range of seasonal positions. By the middle of the 1960s, the maintenance staff was exclusively Navajo except for the supervisor. In the middle of the 1980s, John Laughter took over this position, the first Navajo in a permanent supervisory capacity at the monument. His appointment helped cement the Navajo character of the maintenance staff.

John Laughter's supervisory position was an important transition for the monument. Prior to coming to the park in the 1970s, he worked for a general contractor as a heavy equipment operator. In 1974, Superintendent Frank Hastings hired him to work on the maintenance crew. After a decade in maintenance, during which he took all the Park Service training courses he could, Laughter was appointed foreman. As the first Navajo in a position of leadership at the monument, Laughter expressed a sense of pride that was reflected in the work of his staff.[23]

Navajos of different generations appeared to have differing views of the park and its workings. In the 1980s and 1990s, older Navajos expressed gratitude for having jobs at the park. The combination of proximity to their homes and relatively good pay made the positions very desirable. They did their work well, seemingly unaware of the context in which they labored. Younger Navajos understood the mission of the park more clearly than did their elders, and they recognized how important the monument was to the economy of the entire western reservation. They could see the many ramifications of its economy on their lives and those of their families.[24]

Yet, until the middle of the 1980s, structural problems with the distribution of employment at Navajo National Monument remained. In 1982, five of the nine permanent employees at the monument were Navajo. Three Anglos worked at the park, along with one Hispano. Yet all of the Anglos and the Hispano had higher General Schedule ranks than did the five Navajos, leaving a skewed structure that reflected the slow process of changing the patterns of leadership in the American and federal work forces. After John Laughter's promotion to maintenance supervisor and the subsequent appointment in 1986 of Clarence N. Gorman as superintendent, the historic limitations ended. By 1990, the monument had eleven full- and part-time employees. Eight, including the superintendent, the head of maintenance, and the entire maintenance department, were Navajo. The park more accurately reflected the demography of the area.[25]

A number of families were well represented at the monument. Bob Black was the patriarch of Navajo employees; his granddaughter Rose James worked at the monument in the 1980s and 1990s. Hubert, Floyd, Robert, and John Laughter all worked at the park, as did Seth and Akee Bigman. The Begishies were well

represented among park employees. Many other relatives of these and other families also worked at the monument, adding a familial dimension to the workplace.

The park also broadened its base of visitors in the 1980s. For the first time, Navajos became frequent visitors to the park. Many had long shied away as a result of cultural taboos concerning Anasazi places, but as they became more exposed to Anglo ways of living, Navajos, too, came to visit. Clearly, children were a major influence. Visitation by Navajos increased after the beginning of a Navajo Nation program to place teenagers in summer positions at the monument. The young people returned home and brought their parents back to visit with them. Even the most traditional Navajos who came to the park—those who refused to go to the ruins themselves—still walked the Sandal Trail to the Betatakin overlook, from which they could easily see the prehistoric structures below.[26]

In visitor services, Navajos played an important role that resulted from the noncontiguous nature of the park. The trip from the visitor center to either Betatakin or Keet Seel ruin crosses Navajo land. Eight miles distant, Keet Seel is easier to reach by horse than foot. In 1952, area Navajos began to make horses available for guided tours to Keet Seel. Pipeline Begishie, patriarch of a local family, organized the trips. Many of the people in the area allowed their horses to be used—for a fee—and Begishie or one of the others guided the trips. The fee was $10 per day per guide and $5 for each horse. The animals they used were big and strong, one observer recalled, and the trips had real appeal for visitors.[27]

The memorandum of agreement between Begishie and the Park Service for horse service formalized the outfitting process at the monument. It was more than a verbal agreement and possibly foreshadowed a change in the vendor. One summer in the early 1960s, Pipeline Begishie decided that the horse trips were more trouble than they were worth. Into this vacuum stepped one of Begishie's neighbors, E. K. Austin, Sr., who claimed as his own the land through which the trips had to pass on the way to Tsegi Point and Keet Seel. Some accounts suggest that Austin bullied Begishie into cessation of his activity. Much of the exchange between Begishie and Austin occurred without the knowledge of park officials. Yet Austin asserted an exclusive right to offer services to Keet Seel. In exchange for the right of passage across Navajo lands, the Park Service agreed to let the Austin family offer guided horse trips to the outlying section.

Austin related a different version of the transfer. He claimed to have taken pack trips to the ruins since the days of John Wetherill. In his view, Begishie was an interloper, crossing on Austin's land. The monument was located in the district of the Shonto Chapter, but Austin was enrolled in the Kayenta Chapter. Austin believed that the Kayenta Chapter gave Begishie the concession for land Austin owned. The disagreement became serious in the early 1960s, and both Superintendent Arthur White and his successor, Jack Williams, tried to mediate.

A group of visitors heading toward Keet Seel. *(Navajo National Monument)*

They were unsuccessful, and both Austin and Begishie were called to Window Rock, the capital of the Navajo nation. There, Austin claimed, he was vindicated and offered the service that was rightly his.

Austin's privilege to offer horse trips was not exclusive, although he worked to make it a monopoly. As late as 1966, Jack Williams noted that Begishie's permit to carry people to Keet Seel was valid, but he would not do so as long as the Austins did. The change in tour vendors may have been accomplished by force or by intimidation, but the result was the same. E. K. Austin had control of the horse trips to Keet Seel.[28]

This was a less than optimal arrangement for the Park Service. Since the time of Stephen T. Mather, the first director of the National Park Service, the agency had prided itself on the sophisticated and comprehensive level of service that it could offer visitors. The Park Service built its national constituency by making affluent Americans comfortable in the national parks. Programs such as MISSION 66, a ten-year capital development program that began in 1956, sought to broaden the appeal of the park system to the postwar traveling middle class. It created facilities for auto travelers and their families, including accommodations, interpretive displays, and a range of other necessary accouterments. Generally, the right to offer concessions in a park area was the subject of a bid process. Competition was fierce, and sometimes the profits were limited by National Park Service regulation. But under the strict control of the Park Service, service in the park system at that time was generally first-rate.[29]

But the Park Service had little control over landholders who controlled access to the detached segments of Navajo National Monument. The superintendent and staff could only hope for the best. Service to visitors was spotty. In some cases the tours went well, but generally they did not. One staff member remembered the Austins as "good capitalists." They delivered people to and from Keet Seel in relative safety, but it was not the "trip of a lifetime." The Park Service had little more than spectator status.[30]

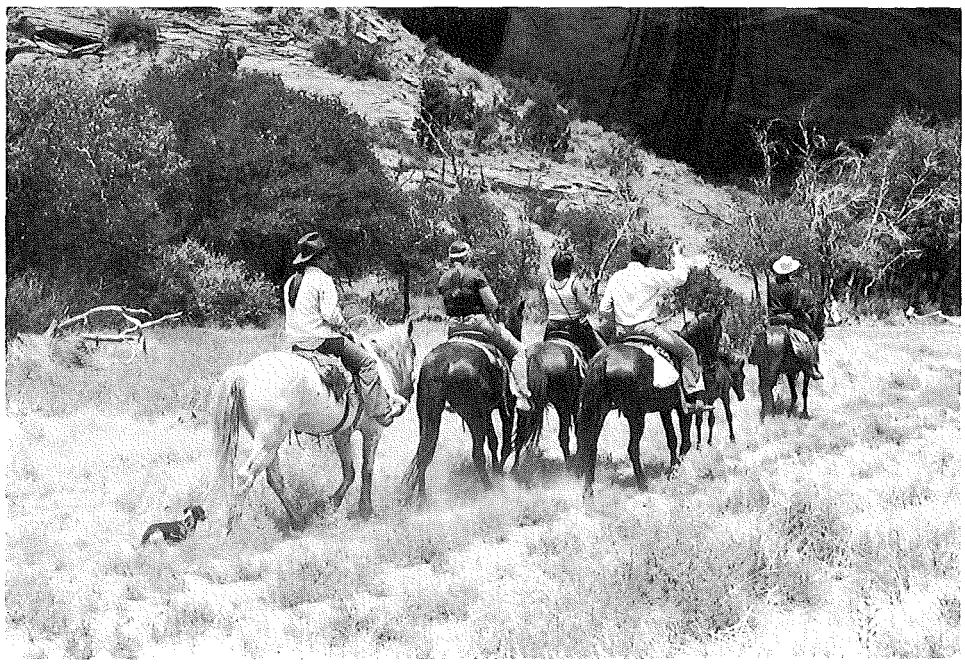
The memorandum of agreement gave the Park Service greater influence over the guided tour operation. The cooperative nature of the agreement enabled the service to extend a helping hand to the Austins. The agency "loaned" horses to assure higher quality animals for visitors, took reservations, and in general sought to improve the quality of service whenever possible. But much of the change was cosmetic in nature, and the improvement was minimal.

This new level of Park Service involvement was a mixed blessing. By taking reservations and supplying horses, the staff at the monument exerted at least a little influence over the operation. Conversely, because the Park Service took reservations, visitors assumed that the agency had control over the tours. Used to the high quality of visitor services characteristic of National Park Service endeavors, they often found the Keet Seel horse trip disappointing. Many were angry about what they considered a lapse in responsibility by the Park Service.

Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, complaints about the horse operation increased. E. K. Austin was a "rough customer," unpopular with his neighbors, one who knew him recalled, and others remembered him in similar fashion. One former employee called him the "bully of the canyon," another acquired the habit of calling him "Edd the Pirate" and said that he had had to separate Austin and visitors on more than one occasion. One former superintendent recalled members of the Austin family getting into a fistfight with each other during a meeting with park rangers.[31]

Visitors were often dissatisfied with their trips with the Austins. Half-starved horses, poor service, sullen guides, and drunkenness headed the list of complaints. Many people came to the Park Service to express their dismay, in the hope that an agency that had built its reputation on service could stop what they regarded as a blemish on its record. The standard reply frustrated both the Park Service people and the visitors: because the Park Service did not control the Austins' land, it had little control over the horse operation. "Things here on the Navajo Reservation are not like other places," Jack Williams wrote in response to one complaint. "We are faced with jurisdictional and political problems that only the Navajo Tribal Council can alleviate."[32] Faced with the growing number of visitors who wished to go to Keet Seel, the Park Service recognized that it had a potentially major problem.

By the early 1970s, a consistent pattern was evident. The National Park Service had few options. Because Navajo National Monument was essentially an inholding on the Navajo reservation, the kind of control to which the agency's



Horseback visitors guided by Virginia Austin arrive at Keet Seel. *(Navajo National Monument)*

officials were accustomed eluded them. Without any direct authority over private land and unable to reach one portion of the monument without the use of land Austin controlled, the agency had to deal with a difficult situation. The best management alternative was to co-opt the Austins: show them the potential economic and cultural advantages of the Park Service's approach to visitor service.

The cultural difference between the Austins and the Park Service was vast. The Austins spoke only Navajo, and, while some communication in English certainly occurred, for a topic as important as this, it was imperative to find someone who could communicate in the Navajo language. In April 1973, Clarence N. Gorman, then superintendent at Wupatki National Monument, was called to Navajo to help bridge the gap. Chief Ranger Harold Timmons presented Gorman with a four-page list of topics he wanted covered with the Austins. Issues such as the treatment of visitors, courtesy, safety, promptness, and communication with the Park Service were paramount. At a meeting, really a visitor-service seminar conducted in the Navajo language, Gorman tried to convey techniques that would result in better service and fewer complaints. In the aftermath of Gorman's visit, conditions improved and the number of unhappy visitors declined.[33]

But a gulf remained. Navajo guides and Anglo visitors had different percep-

tions of the trip. Navajos saw themselves as guides rather than interpreters. They perceived their responsibility as limited to the safe delivery of visitors to the ruin and back. With a more instrumental than romantic approach to their animals, the guides often appeared to their customers to be uninterested and cruel. Complaints continued, reflecting the difference between expectation and actuality that characterized cross-cultural relations. The Park Service still had little ability to exercise substantive oversight. Ironically, for many visitors, riding horses with Indians on their trips to the ruins had significant cultural meaning. Despite any shortcomings, the Austins were part of the monument, their horse business an important component for visitors who sought a sense of being in the wild.[34]

The gift and craft shop the Southwestern Parks and Monument Association authorized under the memorandum of agreement involved a different kind of relationship. Again, this was an operation independent of the park, although the shop was physically adjacent to the visitor center. Designed to expose visitors to Navajo crafts, the gift and craft shop was initially operated by the Navajo Guild and opened for business in April 1966 under its first manager, Ben Gilmore. When the travel season ended in October, the shop had grossed more than $13,000. Generally the shop was opened for visitors, although closures usually happened on the weekends, when traffic was at a peak. The Navajo Guild had a brief tenure at the monument. As a result of an administrative problem with the Tribal Council in Window Rock, the guild folded, and the shop became a private enterprise. Throughout the 1970s, Fannie Etcitty managed the shop, which by all accounts functioned well. In 1978, Superintendent Hastings complimented Etcitty on her operation, remarking that the "shop is always clean, your sales people do an excellent job, and the merchandise is of the best quality." Under Etcitty's management, the shop had become an asset for Navajos, park visitors, and the Park Service. It seemed a model of successful cooperation.[35]

A locally inspired power play forced a change in management. In 1980, Elsie Salt, a woman from the Shonto vicinity, acquired a lease from the Navajo Arts and Crafts Association to run the shop. Fannie Etcitty also had an agreement. Arthur White, by then general superintendent of the Navajo Lands Group, needed to know who was authorized to operate the store. On May 14, 1980, the Advisory Council of the Navajo Tribal Council granted Elsie Salt permission to run the store. She had been selected over Etcitty because she was from the Shonto area. Feeling wronged, Etcitty had to be threatened with eviction by the Tribal Council before she would leave the store.[36]

Under Salt, relations between the park and the craft shop were sometimes strained. Agency officials were less than impressed with her operation. One management team that reviewed the park regarded the entire craft shop operation as "highly unusual." Intermittent tension ensued, sometimes involving personality conflicts.[37]

More troublesome was a pattern of irresponsibility of which park personnel took notice. The store functioned on its own schedule, opening erratically and frequently closing after an hour or two. In 1988, Salt lacked a valid lease, the necessary insurance, and an adequate plan of operation to secure a permit from the Kayenta Regional Business Office for Accelerated Navajo Development. In the summer of 1988, the Tribal Council was not anxious to renew her lease. Salt was enrolled in the Kayenta Chapter, but technically the shop was in the domain of the Shonto Chapter. She needed approval of the Shonto Chapter to run the shop, and a number of its members wanted a chance at the operation. The Park Service also felt the need for greater control over the shop, and Clarence Gorman believed that the circumstances were far too favorable toward Salt. "With Elsie having no lease, not paying rent, and operating out of a space in the Visitor Center," he told Regional Director John Cook on September 9, 1988, "I would say she has it made."[38]

While the Park Service sought to determine a strategy to resolve the problems with the gift shop, tragedy struck. In a one-car accident on May 31, 1990, Elsie Salt died. For the 1991 season, her sister, Sally Martinez, was selected to manage the store. After naming the shop Ledge House Ruin Crafts, Martinez prepared to open for the 1991 season.

Like the horse trips, the gift shop had a cultural meaning that far exceeded the obvious. The direct interaction with Indians appealed to the traveling public in a substantive manner. The gift shop allowed visitors to participate in the past in a way that purchasing books and other educational materials from the SPMA display in the visitor center did not.

The activities of the Austin family highlighted the differences between the two kinds of economic relationships that Navajos had with the park. The Austins had strictly economic motives, but nearly complete control over their interaction with the Park Service. The Navajos who worked for the Park Service were mostly bound to its rules, regulations, and expectations. One group had greater autonomy; the other, greater security. Despite the potential for envy and conflict between the two groups, little evidence of rivalry appeared.

Relations with the pack-trip operation and the gift shop reveal the give-and-take between the park and the Navajo Nation that followed the memorandum of agreement. The agreement gave the Navajo a new hold on the park. The lease of land through a semipermanent interim agreement afforded Navajos a greater measure of control over their activities within park boundaries than was previously available. The resulting compromises eroded the measure of control that the Park Service had previously enjoyed but were absolutely necessary to conduct the affairs of the monument. The greater the Navajos' participation and sense of entitlement and belonging, the harder it became to run Navajo National Monument like the rest of the system. The monument had always been unique, and the memorandum of agreement reinforced that condition, according the Navajo certain rights and privileges that were not always within the bounds of

the ordinary policies of the National Park Service. The interdependence of the area further affirmed the need for a compromise-oriented agency posture.

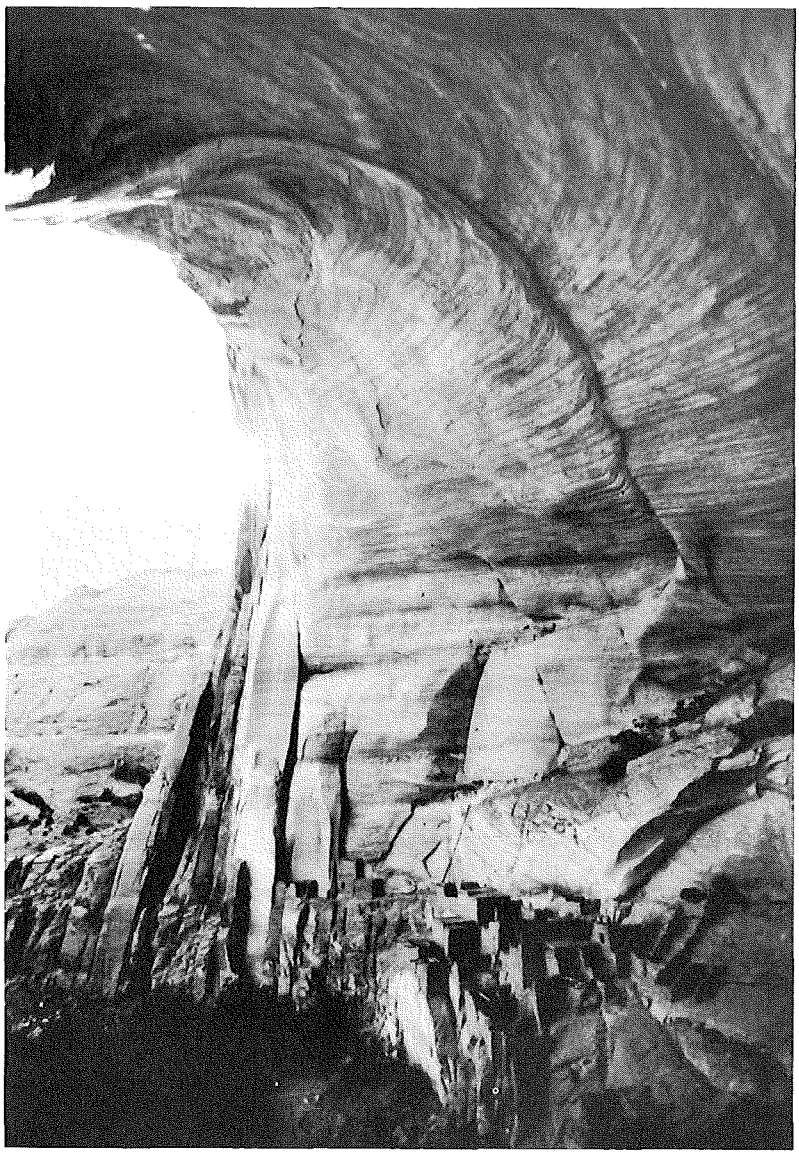
By the mid-1980s, the pattern of attending to the needs of the area as well as of the park was firmly ingrained at Navajo National Monument. There were efforts by the Navajo to tie into the electric and sewer systems of the monument. Because of the limited capacity of these systems, at the end of the 1980s such requests had not been filled. But the trend had been established, at least to a certain degree. The amenities and advantages of the park were available to some of the Navajo some of the time.

The 1986 appointment of Clarence N. Gorman as superintendent inaugurated a new era. A Navajo, Gorman had once worked as a seasonal ranger at the monument. More than twenty years later, he returned as the head person at the park. Gorman's appointment reflected the importance of close relationships with local people. Many of the Navajo employees experienced a stronger feeling of belonging after Gorman's appointment, knowing that they would return to work each day with other Navajos, speak the language, and enjoy a certain feeling of accomplishment. For Navajos the sense of pride in working for the park was enhanced working for a Navajo superintendent. "It's good to see your own people working here," Delbert Smallcanyon said in the Navajo language. There was a measure of freedom that Navajos did not experience working for industries such as the railroad.[39]

To the people of the region, the presence of Navajo leadership also implied a gradual transfer of the monument to the de facto custodianship of the Navajo people. In the fall of 1990, Gorman arranged for the return to the Barlow family of the very medicine bundle that had been the subject of controversy in the early 1970s. Even though the bundle—called a jish—had been purchased from the family, the Park Service did not request reimbursement. Another jish was given to Navajo Community College near Chinle for its lending library, designed to help teach the practices of Navajo medicine men to new generations of the Dine, the term referring to all the Navajo people. These gestures, of a piece with an emerging enlightenment in the scientific community regarding prehistoric and historic artifacts, typified the heightened level of concern for Navajo sensitivities.

Gorman's appointment had symbolic overtones. It reflected two decades of growing empowerment of the Navajo and of American Indians in general and the overwhelming desire of the Park Service and federal agencies to operate in a more inclusive fashion. He was a career Park Service professional who worked his way up the ladder, and his rise to the highest General Schedule rank at the park spoke volumes about inclusiveness to the people of the region. Some of the subsurface tension about the National Park Service presence was eased by having a Navajo in a position of leadership.

Gorman's presence also widened the role of Navajos at the park. Because of the uniqueness of geographic position in relationship to the location of labor, the



Some of the spectacular ruins at Betatakin, Navajo National Monument. *(Navajo National Monument)*

park could hire area Navajos without going through standard federal employment procedures. Support programs that included Navajos also grew, and Navajo history and culture played a growing role in the interpretations. Efforts to include high school students from the area in summer activities at the park followed. In the summer of 1988, five young Navajos from the Shonto Chapter worked at the monument.

The Navajo Nation also became increasingly aware of cultural resources in and around the reservation. This resulted in legislation from the tribe designed to protect the interests of the Navajo people. One such law, the Navajo Nation Cultural Resources Protection Act, seemed inapplicable to National Park Service activities. The Park Service chose to respond to it on a case-by-case basis, preferring such a tactic to an open challenge. But passage of the act reflected the fundamental changes in Navajo-park relations that followed the memorandum of agreement in 1962. In 1909, the Navajo people had yet to adapt their leadership structure to the realities of outside encroachment on reservation life. The Navajos exerted little if any influence on the park or the Park Service. By 1988, with a governmental and legal structure in place and a clear sense of their identity and rights, the Navajo Nation was a force with which the Park Service had to contend. The Park Service moved carefully in Navajoland, not wishing to alter the pattern of good relations that had been developed over more than three generations.[40]

But the Navajo Nation was powerless to slow the pace of change for many of the Navajo people. By the 1980s, Navajos on the western reservation were a people in transition. The roads that crossed this previously isolated area had brought the cultural impact of the modern world, and the traditional ways of living that had lasted in remote parts of the reservation began to change. Younger people began to lose their ties to traditional culture, although not at the rate that occurred among more urbanized Navajos. Yet, many of the younger people moved away in order to find work, settled in Flagstaff, Phoenix, Los Angeles, or some similar place, and began the transition to urban status. Even the most traditional people were involved in the modern economy. Hubert Laughter, who worked at the park, became an officer of the Navajo Tribal Police, served on the Tribal Council, later drove heavy equipment for Peabody Coal Company, and was also a medicine man. Bill Binnewies recounted meeting a man packing squash and gourds to the Inscription House Trading Post in the early 1970s who typified the duality. When not engaged in such subsistence economic activities, he was a technician for a guided-missile system. Clearly this was a harbinger of a complicated future.[41]

These contradictions characterize the future predicament of the Navajo people. Caught with a foot in two distinctly different worlds, they will have to fight to retain cultural individuality. A late 1980s trip to the Farmington Mall revealed scores of young Navajos in the classic garb of the generic teenager: unlaced tennis shoes with the tongues hanging out and T-shirts of popular heavy-metal groups. The demands of the modern world have an overwhelming character. They hegemonize indiscriminately.

When young urban Navajos seek to rediscover their own culture, however, idiosyncratic places like Navajo National Monument have the potential to play an important role. As the monument fused more and more with its surroundings, it became a haven for Navajos who sought to remain Navajo but have

many of the material advantages of the modern world. In the early 1990s, the character of the work force of the monument was Navajo—very traditional Navajo. Even younger Navajos were attuned to their unique and protected position as employees of the park. By providing the benefits of mainstream American life without many of its drawbacks, the monument has insulated the people of the region from the worst effects of change. In addition, interpreting Navajo culture at the monument was on the upswing, and the growing number of Navajos in the work force there assured greater future presence. In the ultimate of ironies, the federal presence in the Shonto region may help to create a cocoon in which traditional Navajo practices can thrive.

NOTES

[1]Memorandum of Agreement of 8 May 1962 between the Navajo Tribe, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and National Park Service Relating to the Recreational Development of the Navajo National Monument, Navajo National Monument, Statement for Interpretation, Navajo National Monument, Arizona.

[2]Bill P. Acrey, *Navajo History: The Land and the People* (Shiprock, New Mexico: Department of Curriculum Materials Development, 1988), 201–4; Mary Shepardson, "Development of Navajo Tribal Government," in Alfonso Ortiz, ed., *The Handbook of North American Indians: 10 Southwest* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1983), 624–35; Peter Iverson, "The Emerging Navajo Nation," in Ortiz, *Handbook*, 636–41.

[3]Acrey, *Navajo History*, 35–44, 73–81; Raymond Friday Locke, *The Book of the Navajo*, 4th ed. (Los Angeles: Mankind Publishing Company, 1989), 35–61; Frank McNitt, *The Indian Traders* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), 270–76; Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 236–49.

[4]William G. Binnewies, telephone interview, 30 May 1990.

[5]Elizabeth Compton Hegemann, *Navajo Trading Days* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1963), 236.

[6]*Ibid.*

[7]James L. Brewer, "Memorandum for the Regional Director," 25 December 1947, Navajo National Monument files, P90: Wage Board Matters, Denver Federal Records Center.

[8]James L. Brewer to Luis Gastellum, 15 January 1948, Navajo National Monument files, P90: Wage Board Matters, Denver Federal Records Center.

[9]Peter Iverson, *The Navajo Nation* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980), 47–82; Acrey, *Navajo History*, 296; Roland Richert to Regional Administrative Officer, 28 August 1958, Navajo National Monument files, P90: Wage Board Matters, Denver Federal Records Center; Meredith Guillet to Regional Director, 4 March 1964, Navajo National Monument L3035.

[10]Although no comprehensive history of America in the 1960s yet exists, a number of major works have headed in that direction. Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam Books, 1987); William O'Neill, *Coming Apart: An Informal History of the 1960s* (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1971); and James Miller, *Democracy Is in the Streets: From Port Huron to the Streets of Chicago* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), offer three of the best contemporaneous looks. For specific ethnic groups, see Ignácio García, *United We Win* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1991), and James S. Olson and Raymond Wilson, *Native Americans in the Twentieth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984).

[11]Iverson, *Navajo Nation*, 202, 206–7, 224–25.

[12]Acrey, *Navajo History*, 284; Iverson, "Emerging Navajo Nation," 636.

[13]Reports of the Golden Eagle incident, Golden Eagle file, Navajo National Monument A7623: Accidents, Injuries, and Death.

[14]Harold Timmons to Frank Hastings, 8 February 1974, Navajo National Monument A3817.

[15]Frank Hastings to Regional Director, 11 February 1974, Navajo National Monument A3817.

[16]Binniweis, telephone interview.

[17]Bob Black, interview, 5 January 1991, translated by Mary Lou Smith and Clarence N. Gorman; Superintendent's Monthly Narrative, 1956–1962, Navajo National Monument A2823; Frank Hastings, letter to Hal Rothman, 25 February 1991; Binnewies, telephone interview; Arthur White, interview with Richard B. McCaslin, 11 June 1990.

[18]P. J. Ryan, telephone interview, 25 February 1991.

[19]Hubert Laughter, interview, 5 January 1991; Robert J. Holden, "A History of Navajo National Monument" (typescript, Navajo National Monument), 24; Bob Black, interview; "Seth Bigman Completes First Season as Interpretive Ranger," *Inside Interior* (November 1948), 6.

[20]Delbert Smallcanyon, interview, 5 January 1991, translated by Clarence N. Gorman; John Cook, interview, 24 April 1990.

[21]Hubert Laughter, interview.

[22]Smallcanyon, interview.

[23]John Laughter, interview, 5 January 1991.

[24]John Laughter, interview; Hubert Laughter, interview; Black, interview; Smallcanyon, interview.

[25]Ronald R. Switzer and Edward D. Carlin, "Management Evaluation, Navajo National Monument, August 24–26, 1982," Navajo National Monument, 8, A5427; Clarence N. Gorman, interview 5 January 1991; John Laughter, interview.

[26]John Laughter, interview.

[27]Mary Lou Smith's comments as she translated Bob Black's interview, 5 January 1991; Concessioners, Horse, NPS History file, Navajo National Monument Archive.

[28]Mary Whitle to Arthur H. White, 13 November 1962, Navajo National Monument A36; Edd and Bertha Austin, "Early History of Navajo National Monument," oral history interviews with Larry Isaacs, undated, Navajo National Monument H18.

[29]Robert Shankland, *Steve Mather of the National Parks* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953), 7, 92–99, 120–27; Ronald A. Foresta, *America's National Parks and Their Keepers* (Washington, D.C.: Resources for the Future, 1984), 52–55.

[30]Ryan, telephone interview.

[31]Ryan, telephone interview; Binnewies telephone interview.

[32]Ryan, telephone interview; Binnewies telephone interview; Carl M. Hinckley to Stewart L. Udall, 17 June 1966. Also, Jack R. Williams to Regional Director, 2, September 1966; Mildred Heflin to Jack Williams, 28 August 1966; Thomas M. Newell to Kevin McKibben, 26 July 1967; Barbara Horton to Frank F. Kowski, 15 April 1968, all Navajo National Monument H36.

[33]Harold Timmons to Clarence Gorman, 13 April 1973, Navajo National Monument A36.

[34]Ryan, telephone interview.

[35]Frank Hastings to Fannie Etcitty, 6 September 1979, Navajo National Monument A44: Arts and Crafts Shop of the Southwestern Parks and Monument Association.

[36]Art White to Peter McDonald, 18 March 1980; Frank E. Paul to Art White, 6 June 1980; Robert Wilson to Fannie Etcitty, 16 June 1980, Navajo National Monument A44: Arts and Craft Shop of the Southwestern Parks and Monument Association.

[37]Switzer and Carlin, "Management Evaluation" 6.

[38]Cloyd Kumig to Associate Regional Director for Park Operations, Southwest Regional Office, 11 August 1988; Clarence Gorman to John Cook, 9 September 1988, Navajo National Monument A44: Arts and Craft Shop.

[39]Smallcanyon, interview; Black, interview.

[40]Hubert Laughter, interview; Binnewies, telephone interview.

[41]Binnewies, telephone interview; Hubert Laughter, interview.

BOOK REVIEWS

Goldfield: The Last Gold Rush on the Western Frontier. By Sally Zanjani. (Athens: Swallow Press/Ohio University Press, 1992. xi + 287 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index.)

A few years ago, I sat on a committee awarding mostly modest grants to aspiring historians. I was snapped to consciousness rather abruptly on the Saturday morning following a convivial Friday evening when a colleague (now president of one of the nation's most respected historical associations) said, "this guy's no historian, he's just a writer." And an applicant was beheaded at 9:04 because he wrote too well. For the rest of the day, this now distinguished and even then influential gentleman saw to it that virtually all the awards went to affirmative action applicants, regardless of merit. He was very concerned about such things, if a bit cavalier about his own abuse of the English language.

Oh, what anxiety would he suffer today to be confronted by the person of Sally Zanjani, a woman who writes better than any academic historian extant from Berkeley to Columbia? I take that back. Professor Zanjani is not officially an academic historian, and that may well be because she handles our *bella bella lingua* so very very well. Following on her superb *Ignoble Conspiracy: Radicalism on Trial in Nevada,* an intensive study of a turn-of-the-century Nevada murder trial ensnarled with questions of radicalism and labor conflict, which she wrote with co-author Nevada state archivist Guy Louis Rocha, Professor Zanjani now gives us *Goldfield.* I think it is the best single history ever written about the metal-mining West.

Not that this portrait of Goldfield, Nevada, site of *The Last Gold Rush on the Western Frontier,* tells us a great deal about the western mining frontier as a whole. If ever a typical western mining camp existed, which I doubt, Goldfield was not it. Its very lateness—it was 1906 before more than a few men really believed—set it apart in profound ways from Virginia City, Cripple Creek, Telluride, and the others in the nature of its bosses, its workers, its labor relations, the composition of its population, and the quality of the lives the Goldfielders led. Things happened in Goldfield that happened nowhere else. What Zanjani's *Goldfield* does is artistically, and true to the sources, *re*create a unique world.

The book is divided into two parts. The first narrates the story of the great southern Nevada camp. It is the best job ever at telling Goldfield's story, but we are still in the realm of the ordinary here.

In the second part, the author takes up—and takes us into—the lineaments of life in Goldfield, eloquently guiding us about the godforsaken setting of the place, from Mount Columbia to shambling mansion to opium den. She introduces us to an extraordinary menagerie of people, tells us what they did for a living, for fun, out of calculation, and in passion. The prose is the prose of a good novelist, but Sally Zanjani's stuff is soundly based on careful, extensive, thoroughgoing research.

The nuggets are many. I thought I knew more about what and how people ate in Goldfield than anyone else in the United States did. Sally Zanjani knows ten times more. She shows us—moving us, if in this rare case not satisfactorily explaining why—that the women of Goldfield died, on average, fully twenty years younger than other American women. She throws romanticizers of western prostitution a tough bone on which to chew when she reveals that a third of Goldfield whores died by their own hands.

And on and on. This book is a masterpiece of the historian's craft. It will be paid little attention.

Joseph R. Conlin
California State University, Chico

When the Gold Was Gone: Memories of Goldfield, Nevada, 1920–1930. By Wanda Stovall Cox. (Reno: Great Basin Press, 1992. 206 pp., illustrations.)

By the time Wanda Stovall's family arrived in Goldfield, the town had peaked and started its economic decline. The fabulously rich ore was gone, and the community had begun to settle into a quiet life of low-grade mining, county government, and transportation. Wanda Stovall's father was a storekeeper for the Tonopah and Goldfield Railroad. In 1920 he brought his young family to Nevada. They remained for eleven years.

In *When the Gold Was Gone: Memories of Goldfield, Nevada, 1920–1930,* Wanda Stovall Cox describes her family's experiences. For the Stovall children, life in the Nevada desert offered boundless opportunity for exploration and adventure. Wanda's early visits to a neighbor were followed by bolder exploits. Under the protection of an older brother she coasted down hills, played childish pranks, and explored abandoned buildings.

By the time Wanda started school, she had been initiated into many of the community's organizations. She describes the school, the remaining Protestant church, her mother's lodge, and a web of other feminine social connections.

While these activities and organizations were the center of her world, the author also describes events such as the devastating fire in 1923 and the declining fortunes of the remaining mines and railroads. She weaves much of the conventional history of Goldfield into her story as a background for family and

social activities. School plays, interpretive dance programs, burro-riding boys, picnics, and salty characters filled Wanda Stovall's world. Her youthful buoyancy and optimism contrasted sharply with the town's declining economic fortunes. Eventually her family, too, was caught in the national and local tragedy of the Depression.

Both parents lost their jobs, and the Stovalls were forced to separate and eventually return to Oregon. The story ends abruptly there, and one does not learn the fate of the family. This omission may heighten the drama of the conclusion, but it also leaves the reader unsatisfied.

Writing about one's childhood memories can have many pitfalls. The author has carefully researched her subject and avoided factual errors. Occasionally it appears that she struggled in reconciling childhood memories with a more mature understanding.

Her ambivalent attitude toward native Americans and members of other ethnic groups is a good example of this. Prejudice was common in frontier mining towns such as Goldfield. One might expect the Stovall family to have felt strongly about this. Instead, the author describes ambivalence toward native Americans, friendliness to Southern Europeans, and sympathy to some unfortunate Chinese who were forced out of town. Because few of these people appeared in the family's social circles, the reader is left without a clear understanding of the Stovalls' real feelings.

Many Americans of the 1920s showed little tolerance for immigrants, minorities, or labor unions. Goldfield had experienced violence during its heyday. Unfortunately the author does not discuss the Wobblies, the murder of John Silva, or the trials and extensive appeals of Morrie Preston and Joseph Smith. While these events occurred before Wanda arrived, bitter memories must have lasted for many years and influenced local attitudes.

Despite these flaws, Wanda Stovall Cox has written an engaging story of people who were ordinary, but special in a little girl's eyes. She has carefully developed the characters of family members and friends. They are neither saints nor sinners, but examples of human frailty and endurance. Wanda's older brother, George, has heroic dimensions in his little sister's eyes, but he also has moments of weakness. When Wanda describes her mother's tears, or her anger as she threw a lid at her husband, the reader is reminded that these people are both ordinary and unique.

The story of the Stovalls adds to our knowledge of Goldfield and other rural Nevada communities that experienced mining upheavals. The author's perspective allows the reader to see more than declining economic and population statistics. It gives insight into how individuals and organizations cope with these changes and survive.

Teri Weaver Conrad
San Juan Community College
Farmington, New Mexico

On Rims and Ridges: The Los Alamos Area since 1880. By Hal K. Rothman. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992. 317 pp.)

In *On Rims and Ridges* Hal Rothman presents a stimulating account of the effects of American culture on the western environment. He proposes that the history of Los Alamos's Pajarito Plateau in northern New Mexico is a "microcosm of the social, cultural, and economic experience of the American West in the twentieth century" (p. 3). Rothman is critical of that experience because of its "depredation" of indigenous cultures and the natural environment. He concludes his book with the warning that the "brutal" evolution of the Los Alamos area is a "harbinger of an ominous (even chilling) future" (p. 313).

Rothman's primary focus is on the Pajarito's history after the Anglos wrested control of the area from its first settlers, the Hispanos and Amerindians. His thorough narrative illuminates how the Anglo ascension one hundred years ago brought to the plateau a political environment more inhospitable than its desert surroundings. Accommodation and harmony with nature and themselves seemed impossible for the Anglos. From the white influx in the 1880s, through the establishment of the Bandelier National Monument in 1916, to the area's strategic importance in the development of nuclear energy and Star Wars, the plateau has been contested terrain, where "competing interests embodying different value systems fought bitterly to dominate" (p. 84). Whether it was environmentalists fighting government agencies in the 1980s, ranchers facing off against archaeologists at the turn of the century, or the internecine bureaucratic warfare between the Forest Service and the Park Service in the 1920s, the plateau's history has been one of confrontation and political bloodletting. As Rothman repeatedly admonishes, the area's finite space exacerbated the friction; "each group had its idea of the value of the plateau, but all the plans applied to the same space" (p. 74).

In chronicling Los Alamos's development Rothman offers a primer on political and institutional interplay. He describes the persistent, and even petty, turf wars over roads, dams, and parks. No heroes are met in these encounters; all the Anglo participants in the relentless discord are portrayed as self-serving if not rapacious. The groups and individuals who came to the area endeavored to alter the plateau to fit their own visions of the future. Rothman believes that those visions were implemented at a great price.

The book's most compelling thesis concerns the expense of a societal obsession with progress. In Rothman's opinion, that preoccupation fostered the exploitation of a fragile ecosystem. Local cultural systems and societal structures were also subverted in the race to develop the area. Rothman passionately maintains that the plateau's environment and indigenous people were in balance prior to the Anglo arrival, but that widespread depredations have since occurred.

While Rothman succeeds in describing the environmental debasement, his efforts are less successful in illuminating the human costs of progress. For all his desire to explain the area's social and cultural composition, only the bureaucratic institutional culture is fully described. When the values animating the participants are addressed they often appear as simple interruptions of the central political dialogue. Rothman's tireless emphasis on the political maneuvering overwhelms his consideration of local values and how they were affected by various machinations. A stronger social/cultural emphasis would break up the lengthy, seemingly repetitive political coverage, and enhance the book's important central message that, like other western areas, Los Alamos has been degraded by modern society.

Ultimately this book is a fervent and not unsuccessful case study of the chilling future pointed to more generally by environmental writers such as Roderick Nash, Alfred Crosby, Garrett Hardin, and even Edward Abbey. Perhaps its finest accomplishment is to make clear that whether the degradation resulted from a portmanteau—carpetbagging—mentality at worst, or myopia at best, there has been a continuing exploitation of the biota in the name of so-called cultural progress.

Doug A. Mishler
University of Nevada, Reno

Playing the Cards that are Dealt: Mead Dixon, the Law, and Casino Gaming. By Ken Adams and R. T. King. (Reno: University of Nevada Oral History Project, 1992.)

For anyone interested in how the casino gaming industry has changed over the past forty years, or in a peek into business attitudes in Reno a generation or two ago, *Playing the Cards that are Dealt*—a surprisingly polished oral history—is a small gem. It chronicles the reminiscences of Mead Dixon, an attorney who became chairman of the Board of Harrah's Corporation following the death of Bill Harrah in 1978, and who subsequently shepherded the sale of Harrah's to Holiday Inns—now the Promus Companies. It is also filled with rich anecdotes from Dixon's work with casinos, observations on the eccentric management style of Bill Harrah, and opinions regarding various influential Nevadans, occasionally offered with brutal candor.

As with many oral histories, this one sets the stage with the youthful experiences that conditioned Dixon for later life. He was a child of the Depression, reared in the town in Illinois that was named after his great-great-grandfather but famous for being Ronald Reagan's home town. With his education inter-

rupted by family bankruptcy, parental deaths, and World War II, Mead Dixon found his way to Nevada shortly after the war. After settling in Reno, he managed to get his law degree from the University of San Francisco, pass his Nevada bar exams, and begin the practice of law.

There are various tidbits here that one can extract about business and community values in Reno in the 1950s that still ring familiar today, such as Norman Blitz's view to "keep the town small; discourage growth" (p. 45). But the real value of this discourse is in Dixon's experiences with a variety of casino properties from the early 1950s onward. The Hacienda, the Showboat and the Tropicana in Las Vegas, along with the Cal Neva in Reno, provide the warm-up, but it is Dixon's relationship with Harrah's that is the book's main event.

Harrah's had acquired the reputation of being the "General Motors of the gaming industry" by the 1970s, but its management style under Bill Harrah could only be called dictatorial. As his executives would say, "This is not Harrah's Club; this is Bill Harrah's Club" (p. 137). Harrah believed in hiring outside experts to consult in their areas of expertise, but he made all the business decisions. As a result, the dominant question of his executives was "What does Bill want?" No one else was allowed to think critically; he wouldn't tolerate challenges to his ideas. This was in spite of the fact that, like other gaming industry giants of his era, such as Howard Hughes or Kirk Kerkorian, Harrah was shy and reclusive.

Harrah was also a perfectionist who could not tolerate such minor items as burned-out light bulbs or dirty ashtrays in the casino. He believed that his customers appreciated a much higher standard of quality in the casino and adjoining hotels and restaurants than was commonly believed in Nevada at that time. Thus, to build his facilities in Reno and at Lake Tahoe to the standard and at the cost he demanded—as well as to finance his personal lifestyle—he was persuaded by Dixon and others to take Harrah's public in 1971.

Bill Harrah's interest in the performance and future of Harrah's diminished toward the end of his life. He spent his company's money extravagantly on his real loves: the Harrah's Auto Collection and the Middle Fork Lodge, near Stanley, Idaho. He probably sensed that the end of his life was near, and perhaps he was choosing to take what enjoyment he could get in his remaining time. However, his hobbies were costing the company millions a year with no clear benefit coming back, and, at his death, Harrah's was financially strapped.

When Bill Harrah died, there was no plan in place for succession, and the management had certainly not been trained to answer any question beyond "What does Bill want?" Mead Dixon, as a member of Harrah's Board and executor of the estate, took charge and developed a strategy to protect the heirs and to pay estate taxes. The hobbies went first. He closed down the Middle Fork Lodge and killed the Harrah's World project, a money-losing showplace to be built for the best cars in the auto collection. But his long-term strategy to avoid liquidation was to merge Harrah's with another public company.

The ultimate suitor was Holiday Inns, a morally conservative motel-chain company based in Memphis which was itself heretically courting the idea of developing casinos. In 1980, Harrah's was absorbed into Holiday Inns. The combination of Holiday's lack of understanding of the casino business and Harrah's not having a culture of decision making created a rough marriage at the start. But Harrah's strong reputation, Holiday's established corporate structure, and the emergence of Dixon's protégé, Phil Satre, as president of Holiday led to the development of Holiday—now Promus—as a dominant corporate player. Satre brought together the best attributes of Harrah's and Holiday, and the philosophy of Harrah's shifted from bureaucratic centralization to development of management responsibility and accountability in each property. "That pretty much marked the end of old Harrah's" (p. 204). Ironically, the Promus Companies today are far more an extension of Harrah's original casino empire than of the original Holiday Inns Corporation, and are generally regarded to be the strongest publicly traded casino company in America.

Mead Dixon died in early 1993, shortly after this oral history became available. The discourse does not say much about Dixon's private life after his youth, and a reader can only wonder about its absence. But the book offers fascinating insights into the casino industry transition that Nevada and America have experienced, and the important role that Mead Dixon played in the transformation for one key property.

William R. Eadington
University of Nevada, Reno

Riding the White Horse Home. By Teresa Jordan. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993. xiii + 223 pp., photographs, notes.)

A Wyoming book written by a Nevada resident, *Riding the White Horse Home* traces the four generations of Jordan ranchers who made their home along an eight-mile stretch of Chugwater Creek, northwest of Cheyenne, northeast of Laramie. "A Western Family Album," reads the subtitle—verbal vignettes of Teresa Jordan's great-grandfather who arrived from Maryland in 1887, of her grandfather Sunny "crippled up from too many bad horses and too much bad weather," of her dad "racing in all his fineness and his fury across an endless plain," of her mother, who loved to cook and who died too young, of her brother who "left the ranch as soon as he was able," of her great-aunt Marie "so entirely at ease with her life."

Riding the White Horse Home is also the story of a way of life that is too quickly disappearing in the contemporary West. In its pages we find cows and calves,

blizzards and buckskins, old bones and boarding school, haying and hired hands. The book offers a panorama of western types, each individualized and made special by the author's fond memories. Despite its sympathetic point of view, however, *Riding the White Horse Home* is not sentimental. To the contrary, with its author's eyes wide open, the book looks honestly at the rural West of the twentieth century. "I think about the generations of landscape and lore that have shaped me," writes the author, "and I'm struck by a curious thought. I'm the fourth generation that tried to leave the land and kept some tie to it only through tragedy, failure, or default." So this is a family album where some of the photographs are tarnished, others torn; but it is also a family album paged with love.

The final chapter of *Riding the White Horse Home* summarizes that love. Back in Iron Mountain—a town "mostly vacant now," yet "still a community"—Teresa Jordan married Hal Cannon in the summer of 1991. The wedding took place among friends and family, and the epiphany of the moment reminds the author of something special. "The community gave me its stories," she realizes. Just as her marriage delimits her personal past and a future, so the community defines the West of her imagination. "It will always be home," she concludes, "a place I will draw on for strength and which I will fight for, not only in that corner of Wyoming where it actually exists but in the hundreds of other places like it throughout the rural West." For readers who also care about that rural landscape, Teresa Jordan has pictured in words a very special western space.

Ann Ronald
University of Nevada, Reno

Many Californias: Literature from the Golden State. Edited by Gerald W. Haslam. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1992. 372 pp., recommended readings.)

In his introduction to *Many Californias,* editor Gerald Haslam explains his title for this collection of poems, fiction, and essays about the Golden State:

> Where is California? What is it? It is out there where Californians—including authors—really live, a collection of distinct regions, of unique histories, and varied people gathered under one name: we call all of it California, but it has no homogeneous geographic or cultural core.

Reflecting this diversity, the subsequent anthology is divided into sections that

are at once chronological and spatial. This attempt to mirror California's complexity is at once ambitious and—inevitably—unevenly realized.

After a brief introduction, the first segment is devoted to Early California, including two narrative sections that incorporate some myths and songs of native Californian tribal peoples and fragmentary quotations from historical accounts of Hispanic California. Haslam then moves forward briskly to cover what may be the most familiar ground in the anthology, including such well-known California writers as Richard Henry Dana, Bret Harte, and Samuel Clemens. Such canonical writers are, of course, central to any sketch of California literature; but including them here leaves less room for others who are not so famous.

The initial historical section is followed by several regionally focused divisions, including the Greater Bay Area (Jack London *et al.*), Southland (Raymond Chandler and Helen Hunt Jackson), Heartland (John Steinbeck and the Central Valley), Wilderness California (John Muir), and Fantasy California (which inexplicably includes a poem by Walt Whitman). These are the many Californias of the title, and the work from each is presumably selected because it represents a sensibility unique to the particular place. Since the editor does not intrude to direct the reader's attention to themes, however, these regional characteristics are not always evident.

The regional survey is followed by two more historical sections, one focused on the San Francisco Beat Generation, and the other a long catalogue entitled "Contemporary Sampler." Each of these last two divisions presents work by both predictable and lesser-known writers, and includes a considerable amount of poetry. Within the final, contemporary collection there is a special category for the Fresno Poets.

Each writer's work is left to stand on its own, with only a brief introductory paragraph to provide biographical data. This allows the reader to encounter the text without being unduly burdened by critical apparatus, but is occasionally a disservice. In the case of fascinating characters such as Ina Coolbrith, for instance—who lived into her nineties and apparently influenced several young writers in the Bay Area—some readers might wish for more guidance in order to understand why her perfectly mundane poetry achieved recognition in its time. In other cases, such as Frank Norris, the necessity to excerpt portions of longer works makes the truncated selections absolutely incomprehensible without more of an introduction to set the stage.

Over-all, this anthology is more useful as a sampler than as a coherent overview of California literature. The criterion for inclusion seems to have been either residence in or writing about California, which produces a predictable melange of themes, styles, and subjects. The many Californias of the title are well represented in the anthology, but the reader is given little guidance to understand the ways in which these various works have collectively or individually created either images of the Golden State or a particular California sensibility.

The contemporary section is especially valuable, filling more than half the volume and incorporating a number of different voices and perspectives. Here (except for the Fresno Poets) no organizational scheme other than time unites the authors. Subject matter, technique, form, ethnic background, and region vary widely, and the result is a series of refreshing juxtapositions. This sampling of modern California writers demonstrates more vividly than the regional or historical divisions the existence of the many Californias suggested by the title.

C. Elizabeth Raymond
University of Nevada, Reno

Homesteading Women: An Oral History of Colorado, 1890–1950. By Julie Jones-Eddy. (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992. xiv + 252 pp., illustrations, notes, map, biographies, index.)

As a child, Julie Jones-Eddy admired the women who homesteaded in her native northwestern Colorado, believing that they were dignified, strong, and resourceful. Using the information and insight gained from interviews with forty-seven women who had lived on this spare landscape, Jones-Eddy focuses in *Homesteading Women* on providing insight into the women and the land of the early twentieth century. This oral history does illuminate the variety of the homestead experience in the early twentieth century but tends to neglect the significance of the individual experience to the whole.

Jones-Eddy cites Frederick Athearn when describing northwestern Colorado as an "isolated empire." It has large areas of relatively flat land punctuated by hills and occasional mountains. The winters can be harsh and the summers dry. The presence of Indians delayed most homesteading in this region until the turn of the twentieth century and homestead land was available until the 1930s. It was a remote and sparsely populated region, and Jones-Eddy characterizes the people who settled there as "hardy and persistent."

The women are frequently articulate and insightful, their stories a fascinating mixture of the familiar and the alien as they share with the reader the often difficult lifestyles that they lived on isolated homesteads. Jones-Eddy worked from a basic list of thirty-eight questions, but the responses differed significantly, reflecting the variety of the women's experiences. Conversation with the women who settled in the area as children, married local men, and traveled little beyond the region contrasts with the interviews with women who went away to college and returned to their hometowns and family ranches.

The conversations are organized around a variety of topics that had significant influence or impact on women's lives: home and the family, marriage, work

outside the home, community, children, and more. Although many experiences were common to these women, some variety was obvious. The family lifestyle differed for town dwellers and ranch dwellers, and often changed by season as some women moved with their children into town during the school term, living apart from their spouses for months each year.

It is the quality of having a conversation with the past that is one of the important benefits of oral history, and the interviews in this book provide a voice for the past. The women's stories tend to be strongest and most interesting when they relate their own experiences rather than recalling those of their mothers and grandmothers. The influence of family and tradition, however, is obvious in the women's own recollections as they frequently note that they were completing household and farm tasks in the manner taught by their mothers and fathers. Responsibility for tasks seems to have been somewhat fluid; several of the women noted the mixing of roles across gender lines as they rode fence and herded cattle with their husbands, fathers, and crew, bundling up babies and children who rode along.

Homesteading Women is focused on a specific region of the country, and, while Jones-Eddy sheds light on an apparently neglected aspect of Colorado history, she misses an opportunity to expand the scope of her work. Undoubtedly, the lives of the homesteading women had much in common with other western women in similar circumstances, but there are hints of differences in the conversations. A number of the women interviewed were teachers, both before and after marriage; one, in fact, returned to work when her baby was two weeks old, taking the infant into the classroom while she worked. Although this woman noted that the school district was desperate for a teacher, the author does not comment about the regularity or uniqueness of a married woman teaching, failing to put the situation into the context of time and place. The work, in fact, is weakest in this area. The information that Jones-Eddy provides that would put the lives of the women into perspective is vague, and the references to social trends tend to be so general as to be meaningless. An afterword by historian Elizabeth Jameson provides some historical and statistical perspective, but such information might have been more effective incorporated into each chapter, providing more continuity and clarification for the reader.

In general, however, Jones-Eddy has created a worthwhile and extremely readable volume. For those familiar with the history of the West, the women's voices provide more detail to an increasingly complex picture of western history. For the general reader, it is an interesting and generally revealing glimpse at homesteading life.

Anita J. Watson
University of Nevada, Reno

NEW RESOURCE MATERIALS

Nevada Historical Society

Nevada Art Research Project

The Nevada Art Research Project is a visual arts research program housed in the Nevada Historical Society. It was founded in early 1990 by University of Nevada Reno art professor Jim McCormick as a central repository for information about artists who have been active in Nevada from the 1850s on.

A variety of visual arts disciplines are included in the scope of the project: NARP is searching for persons who have practiced in the fields of architecture, craft and folk arts, graphic design, landscape architecture, photography/film and the traditional fine arts such as drawing, ceramics, painting, printmaking and sculpture. NARP also welcomes information on artists who have worked in visual media that are not easily classified such as performance art and unusual expressions in the folk arts.

The project is not so much concerned with the institutions that exhibit works of art as with developing files on individual arts. As such NARP is looking for information from artists, either amateur or professional, and from others who can provide the following materials:

Resumes and life sketches

Selected color slides and reproductions of the artist's work

Catalogs and mailers from exhibitions

Articles and reviews from newspapers and periodicals

Other items that might be of interest to researchers in the future

The Nevada Art Research Project hopes to accomplish a number of things in the years ahead. It is believed that such a repository will serve scholars, writers, relatives of artists and others interested in the visual arts of Nevada in a thorough and accurate manner. The project director also anticipates the publication of a registry of Nevada artists in the future.

Please address all correspondence regarding NARP to project director Jim McCormick, 3425 San Mateo Avenue, Reno, Nevada 89509. He can also be reached at (702) 323-5646.

Jim McCormick
Project Director

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COMPILED BY CAROLINE MOREL

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NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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