

Nevada

Historical Society Quarterly



SPRING 1995

NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

EDITORIAL BOARD

Eugene Moehring, *Chairman, University of Nevada, Las Vegas*

Marie Boutté, *University of Nevada, Reno*

Robert Davenport, *University of Nevada, Las Vegas*

Doris Dwyer, *Western Nevada Community College*

Jerome E. Edwards, *University of Nevada, Reno*

Candace C. Kant, *Community College of Southern Nevada*

Guy Louis Rocha, *Nevada State Library and Archives*

Willard H. Rollings, *University of Nevada, Las Vegas*

Hal K. Rothman, *University of Nevada, Las Vegas*

The *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* solicits contributions of scholarly or popular interest dealing with the following subjects: the general (e.g., the political, social, economic, constitutional) or the natural history of Nevada and the Great Basin; the literature, languages, anthropology, and archaeology of these areas; reprints of historic documents; reviews and essays concerning the historical literature of Nevada, the Great Basin, and the West.

Prospective authors should send their work to The Editor, *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 1650 N. Virginia St., Reno, Nevada 89503. Papers should be typed double-spaced and sent in duplicate. All manuscripts, whether articles, edited documents, or essays, should conform to the most recent edition of the University of Chicago Press *Manual of Style*. Footnotes should be typed double-spaced on separate pages and numbered consecutively.

Correspondence concerning articles and essays is welcomed, and should be addressed to The Editor. © Copyright Nevada Historical Society, 1995.

The *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* (ISSN 0047-9462) is published quarterly by the Nevada Historical Society. The *Quarterly* is sent to all members of the Society. Membership dues are: Student, \$15; Senior Citizen without *Quarterly*, \$15; Regular, \$25; Family, \$35; Sustaining, \$50; Contributing, \$100; Departmental Fellow, \$250; Patron, \$500; Benefactor, \$1,000. Membership applications and dues should be sent to the Director, Nevada Historical Society, 1650 N. Virginia St., Reno, NV 89503. Second-class postage paid at Reno, Nevada and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 1650 N. Virginia St., Reno, Nevada 89503.

Nevada

Historical Society Quarterly

William D. Rowley
Editor-in-Chief

Jerome E. Edwards
Book Review Editor

Juliet S. Pierson
Manuscript Editor

Volume 38

Spring 1995

Number 1

Contents

- 1 Cubans in Las Vegas: Ethnic Identity, Success, and Urban Life in the Late Twentieth Century
WILLIAM CLAYSON

- 19 Iron Horses along the Truckee: The Central Pacific Reaches Nevada
WENDELL W. HUFFMAN

- 37 **Notes and Documents**
The Josephine and George Scott Diaries: A 1914 Desert Journey
SALLY S. ZANJANI

- 45 **Book Reviews**

- 58 **New Resource Materials**

- 61 **The New Jeanne Elizabeth Wier Scholarship Fund**

Front Cover: Central Pacific engine, the *San Mateo*, running on the line along the Truckee River. (A. A. Hart photo, Kyle Wyatt Collection)

Book Reviews

- 45 Gary E. Elliott, *Senator Alan Bible and the Politics of the New West*.
reviewed by Richard O. Davies
- 48 Frank Bergon, *Shoshone Mike*.
reviewed by Cheryll Glotfelty
- 49 Kenneth N. Owens, ed., *John Sutter and a Wider West*.
reviewed by Newell G. Bringham
- 52 David M. Wrobel, *The End of American Exceptionalism: Frontier Anxiety from the Old West to the New Deal*.
reviewed by Scott E. Casper
- 54 Ronald M. James, *Temples of Justice*.
reviewed by Candace C. Kant
- 56 Robert Laxalt, *The Governor's Mansion*.
reviewed by Jerome E. Edwards

CUBANS IN LAS VEGAS

Ethnic Identity, Success, and Urban Life in the Late Twentieth Century

William Clayson

The word *success*, among other misleading terms is often associated with the Cuban population in the United States. This association, which is a component of both the popular image of Cubans and the self-image of the Cuban community, is misleading because success is ultimately relative to the diverse past experiences, opportunities, and influences of individuals. The relativity of success has contributed to the emergence of changing and contrasting versions of Cuban ethnic identity in the United States. The history of Cuban immigrants living in Las Vegas, spanning the three decades following the Cuban revolution of 1959, illustrates these changes as they developed from the continual transformation of Cuba and the reduction of economic opportunity that accompanied the rapid urban expansion of Las Vegas.

Ethnic identity, for purposes here, does not necessarily involve the label with which an individual or group identifies but, more important, what experiences lie behind the label and how Cuban identity differs according to varying definitions of success in the United States. Being Cuban goes beyond personal or familial geographic origin, and what individual Cuban identity *means* depends upon experience. In other words, Cuban identity has changed along with changes in Cuba, and continues to change in the United States as Cuban immigrants become Americanized. Furthermore, there seems to be little agreement among Cubans concerning the appropriate use of labels.

Many Cubans in Miami, those who still hope to return to the island after three decades of exile, believe that living anywhere outside of South Florida threatens the loss of precious Cubanity, and the term *Cuban-American* signifies the frightening prospect of assimilation.¹ However, Captain Mario Cuellar, United States Army, who left Cuba at age eleven and grew up in Las Vegas said,

I'm an American by choice because I decided to become a citizen in the United States and I think it's the greatest country in the world, but, if they ask me what I am—I say I'm Cuban. I understand the mentality of the Cuban-American, but when someone asks—I say, "I'm Cuban."²

William Clayson researched and wrote this article while he was a master's level student in the History Department of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, under the direction of Professor Jay Coughtry.

Forty-two year old Liliam Shell, who left Cuba in 1960, stated that she sometimes feels "as much a North Carolinian as a Cuban" because of the time she has spent in that state, but she is also among those who wish to "bring Castro to his knees" through the continuation of the United States trade embargo.³ Like many other young Cuban-Americans, Darío Herrera, a student at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, placed proud emphasis on the first part of the Cuban-American hyphenation when asked which label he prefers. He insists, "Cuban [comes] first . . . always."⁴ The value of recognizing Cuban identity, however, is not necessarily shared by all Cuban people in the United States. Bernardo Ricardo, who came to Las Vegas from Cuba in 1986, rather bluntly stated, "according to geography it would be erroneous to say that I'm Cuban-American, I am an American."⁵

For the sake of brevity and to limit confusion, *Cuban* will be used to refer to persons born in Cuba regardless of present geographic residence, and *Cuban-American* will be used for persons of Cuban descent born in the United States. According to the 1990 United States census, only about a quarter of the Cuban population in America was born there; therefore, most of those who experienced the history of Cuban life in Las Vegas were native to the island.

Las Vegas has also witnessed its own unique identity crisis. It is often difficult to separate Las Vegas the tourist destination from Las Vegas the city. Tourists' questions such as "Where do the people who work in casinos live?" are still not uncommon.⁶ While the tourist industry is attempting to abate the Sin City image by building family-oriented resorts, the city is itself outgrowing that image. Though the economy is still tied to the tourist industry, the population of the metropolitan statistical area grew nearly ten times from 1960 to approach 800,000 by 1990.⁷

The Las Vegas Cuban population, though never exceeding 1 percent of the total, has grown apace with the city.⁸ Like the rest of the United States, Las Vegas had a very small Cuban element prior to Fidel Castro's assumption of power in 1959. There were 245 Cubans known to be living in Las Vegas prior to 1960, while more than 1,700 were reported to have immigrated to the city in the decade that followed.⁹ Although this number may seem small in comparison to the growth of other Cuban populations and is a minor fraction of the total number of Cuban immigrants (around a half million for the 1960s), it is still surprising considering the size of Las Vegas and its distance from the Cuban exile community in Miami, which assumed the role of the Cuban Capital of the United States.¹⁰ The 1970 census estimates that, of the more than 1,700 Cubans who immigrated to Las Vegas during the sixties, 1,241 remained.¹¹ To draw a comparison, 1,080 Cubans were reported to be living in San Diego, which in 1970 had a population approximately five times larger than Las Vegas.¹²

The primary motivation for Cuban immigration to Las Vegas was work in the casino industry. During the 1950s, the tourist market in Havana was growing apace with that of Las Vegas. A casino building boom had been under way in

Havana since 1955, when Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista legalized gambling to bring in badly needed dollars.¹³ These casinos were funded both by the state and by known American organized-crime figures such as Meyer Lansky. Havana was thought to have potential for becoming "another Las Vegas, only like Las Vegas never imagined."¹⁴

Las Vegas was a natural destination for Cuban casino workers and managers exiled from Cuba by the new regime. They were welcomed by Las Vegas casino operators and, in fact, the Sands and Stardust casinos had imported Cuban baccarat and roulette dealers before Castro took power.¹⁵ Cubans with experience in the casino industry had an advantage over other immigrants because the casino jobs they moved into paid relatively well and served as a vehicle for rapid advancement into the middle class.¹⁶ To many Cubans, however, the move to Las Vegas was a step down socially and economically because casino employees were paid well in Havana.¹⁷ They were also citizens of a city that was in profound contrast to the rest of the island.

Havana's 1953 population of 1.2 million represented a fifth of Cuba's total population. Since only two other cities exceeded 100,000 persons, the capital was socially, economically, and culturally distinct from the rest of the island.¹⁸ The success of Havana during this period in many ways distorts an over-all portrait of Cuban life. While indices like per-capita income, number of television



The Stardust Hotel in Las Vegas imported Cuban baccarat and roulette dealers even before Castro took power. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

and radio sets, literacy rates, newspaper circulation, and infant mortality rates reveal a Cuba of 1958 that was further advanced socially and economically than most other Latin American countries, internal statistics reveal substantial geographic variations of these indices. For example, of persons aged ten years and older, 88 percent of the urban dwellers were literate, while 58 percent of the rural population remained illiterate.¹⁹ Outside the capital province, 39 percent of all employed persons worked in agriculture, and 75 percent of these worked fewer than six months out of the year.²⁰ Even urban dwellings outside of Havana were decades behind—nearly a fifth had no electricity, more than half had no bath or shower, and almost half had no indoor sanitary service.²¹

These illustrations are important when considering identity because it can be assumed that most early Cuban exiles came to Las Vegas from Havana²²; their Cuban identity was therefore based on memories of a cosmopolitan urban atmosphere rather than the abject rural poverty that most other Hispanic immigrants and later Cuban refugees sought to escape by coming to the United States. Most did not come to America because they led unpleasant lives in Cuba, but because their prospects for the future were destroyed by the revolution. For instance, Liliam Lujan-Hickey, who left Cuba in January of 1960 and settled with her family in Las Vegas in 1962, stated that though her late husband was offered a position in the Castro regime's sports program as a weight-lifting coach, which would become a privileged position in later revolutionary Cuba, they chose to bring their "children to the freedom of the United States."²³

The Cuban people who settled in Las Vegas during the 1960s came to "the freedom of the United States," because the Castro regime abolished the system that had supported their way of life. If that system had survived, most would have remained in Cuba. It is important to understand, however, that this system, and especially the casino industry it supported, was developed to generate American dollars and to achieve American standards of living.²⁴ The ethnic identity of the first generation of Cuban people who came to Las Vegas had its foundations in what was an essentially American system in a Cuban setting. Most were educated, and many already spoke English.²⁵ As they established themselves in Las Vegas, they sought to preserve that particular brand of Cuban identity in an American setting.

What developed from the desire to preserve Cuban identity was El Circulo Cubano de Las Vegas (The Cuban Circle), which was created in 1970 by Agustín Menendez, without "religious basis or political affiliation," to provide assistance to Cuban exile families and to preserve the ideals of *Cuba de ayer* (the Cuba of yesterday).²⁶ According to the organization's *Boletín Informativo*, part of its mission was to "provide an appropriate place for gatherings in a distinctly Cuban atmosphere . . . to further and maintain the culture and traditions of our Cuba of yesterday."²⁷ El Circulo Cubano organized youth dances, parties, domino tournaments, fashion shows, and other social events for the Cuban people of Las Vegas. More important, it provided a sense of community and a social



The Las Vegas Club also employed Cubans. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

setting where new people were welcomed and included in the group.²⁸ This became a crucial element in the success that Cuban exiles and refugees enjoyed up through 1980 because it helped newcomers make valuable connections with already established families.

While Las Vegas has never had a Cuban population large enough to constitute

a socioeconomic enclave, by 1970 small pockets of Cuban concentration had developed throughout the city. According to the 1970 census, more than 80 percent of Cuban people lived in census tracts in which at least fifty others were reported.²⁹ Since census tracts are such large areas, it cannot be determined whether predominantly Cuban neighborhoods existed in all these tracts, but some such neighborhoods did exist, and, since such a large majority of the relatively small Cuban population lived in areas having fifty or more Cubans, it is safe to assume that Cuban families tended to live in groups.³⁰ The census also shows, however, that Cubans did not, for the most part, live in areas either with large Hispanic populations or in which a large percentage of residents lived below the poverty level.³¹ Though there were Cuban representatives in high- and low-income areas, most lived in the suburbs east of the Strip and south of Charleston Boulevard, where median income levels reached or exceeded that for Las Vegas as a whole.³² Most had not yet been naturalized, black Cubans were virtually absent, and approximately three hundred new Cuban-Americans were born in the Las Vegas metropolitan area prior to 1970.³³

The 1970s were in many ways a period of transition for Las Vegas. The city's population more than doubled, and it became more stratified along racial lines. The black population of North Las Vegas, for example, expanded between 1970 and 1980 from 24 percent to 37 percent of the total.³⁴ In 1970 the urbanized areas of Las Vegas and North Las Vegas were 15 percent nonwhite; this number had grown to 24 percent by 1980, while the suburban areas remained more than 90 percent white.³⁵ The Las Vegas Hispanic population expanded as well, from an estimated 15,147 (5.5 percent) to 35,086 (7.5 percent).³⁶

The flow of Cuban immigrants slowed considerably after 1973 because the Cuban government called an end to the Freedom Flights, which since 1965 had been carrying an average of 43,000 Cuban immigrants who had families in the United States to Miami each year.³⁷ The number of immigrants who came to Las Vegas during the 1970s totaled 657, was only about a third of the figure for the 1960s.³⁸ While this population is relatively small, their experiences reveal much about the development of the Cuban community in general.

In terms of economics, Cubans who came to Las Vegas up to 1980 were more successful as a group than both other Hispanics and fellow Cubans who lived in other parts of the nation. The annual median income for Cuban households (defined by identity of head-of-household) that had immigrated between 1970 and 1980 was \$15,982; this was less than the Las Vegas median of \$18,210, but was much higher than the \$12,538 income of Mexican immigrants of the same category. Cubans in Las Vegas also had significantly higher incomes than their counterparts in Florida (where the largest concentration of Cubans resided) and in California (where the median income and cost of living were much higher in general).³⁹

The Las Vegas success should not be considered extraordinary, however, because these Cubans had many advantages, offered primarily by the casino

industry, that other Hispanics, and other Cubans, did not have. According to the census, 37 percent of Cubans who came to Las Vegas during the 1970s reported that they could not speak English at all, while only 18 percent of Mexicans reported the same. The fact that Cuban households had larger incomes with less ability in English reveals the advantages they had over their Mexican counterparts. First, more Cuban women were working; the Cuban men were actually making slightly less than Mexican men in 1979.⁴⁰ Second, Cubans, considered political refugees, received special attention from the United States government. The assistance effort mounted for the Cuban refugees was the largest in national history. They also received housing, food, and help in finding employment from voluntary agencies such as Catholic Community Services.⁴¹ Last, and perhaps most important, Cubans received valuable aid from already established relatives and friends. They were helped not only in finding initial employment but in promotion as well.⁴² Liliam Shell, who first came to Las Vegas in 1962, stated that "the only way [for a Cuban] to get a dealer job," was through having Cuban connections in casino management.⁴³

The ability to speak English was not necessarily a prerequisite, especially among Cubans, to living well in Las Vegas during the 1970s. Most jobs in the casino industry, such as dealing cards or kitchen work, did not require advanced knowledge of English. Mario Cuellar, Sr., for example, stated that language was not a barrier in the casinos where he worked and that his employers, coworkers, and customers were not bothered by his lack of English fluency. Mr. Cuellar and his family arrived in Las Vegas in August 1970, and his uncle helped him to get a job as a busboy (he was age forty-three at the time) at the Stardust. By February of the next year, he had started to work dealing cards at the Las Vegas Club.⁴⁴ This rapid move from a low-level kitchen job to a mid-level position as a dealer would not have been possible for a non-English speaker without help from the extensive Cuban social network; such advancements would begin to occur less often as the Las Vegas Cuban population grew. In contrast, Mr. Cuellar's wife Séraфина, who worked outside the casino industry as a nurse's aide, said she experienced considerable language discrimination.⁴⁵ Besides having trouble from intolerant coworkers, she was accused of cheating on a written test because, according to her son, her examiner could not accept the possibility that a non-English speaker could pass.⁴⁶

The most significant aspect of the transition in Cuban identity in Las Vegas during the late 1970s was the leadership role that Cubans assumed in the local Hispanic community. Though many Hispanic organizations already existed in the area at the time, prominent members of the Cuban community took the first step toward development of a strong organization of business and community leaders specifically designed to support and enhance the advancement of all Hispanic peoples in the area. Formed with the support of El Circulo Cubano in 1976, the Latin Chamber of Commerce of Nevada rapidly became an influential Hispanic organization in the state.⁴⁷ Since its inception, the Latin chamber ef-

fectively replaced a myriad of other less comprehensive organizations as the political voice of Hispanics in southern Nevada.⁴⁸

The success of the Latin chamber and the leadership role of Cubans in its development demonstrated their assimilation into the broader Hispanic-American community and was a further step toward their Americanization. Since the broad category labeled Hispanic includes members of diverse national and cultural backgrounds, the idea of Hispanic unity is in many ways an American innovation, and the development of a broader Hispanic identity, whether it be individual or collective, can be seen as part of the process of Americanization.

Las Vegas suffered from the strains of urbanization during the first part of the 1980s. A 1981 article in *U.S. News and World Report* implies that the Las Vegas crime rate, the highest per capita in the nation, was brought about by the depravity created by twenty-four-hour access to gambling. Those crime statistics, however, failed to factor in the number of tourists always present in the town. The excessive crime rate may also have been linked to a recession in the city's gaming industry, induced by growing competition from Atlantic City and hotel fires at the Hilton and MGM Grand.⁴⁹ The unemployment figure reached 10 percent in the early 1980s.⁵⁰

Considered both an American diplomatic blunder and an adept, though pernicious, political move and purge of undesirables on Castro's part, the Mariel boat-lift of 1980 irrevocably changed the Cuban population in the United States. Between April and November of 1980, approximately 125,000 people left Cuba for Key West when Castro opened Mariel Harbor for anyone interested in leaving. In May of that year alone, some 86,000 refugees left Mariel, surpassing in volume the total migration of any previous year. Beyond the diplomatic confusion it created, the boat-lift inflated the total Cuban population in the United States by 15 percent. It also forever altered the Cuban image because, unfortunately, an uncertain number of violent criminals, mental patients, and drug-dealing government agents were included in the lift.⁵¹ This tiny minority—only about twelve hundred were suspected of committing serious crimes and only six hundred had serious mental problems—sullied the image of the rest because they became the primary focus of sensationalized media accounts concerning the Marielitos.⁵² The American press believed that the number of hard-core criminals was as high as twenty-five thousand, but most of these were found merely to have committed political or minor crimes in Cuba.

The Las Vegas experience with the Marielito Banditos, as they were labeled in the local press, resembled a small-scale witch hunt as residents reacted to media accounts of the refugees. Epitomized in the film *Scarface*, the Marielito image riveted American public attention, generated fear and suspicion, and made every Mariel refugee a suspected criminal. These fears were portrayed in a five-part series published in the *Las Vegas Sun* entitled "The Story of the Cuban Flotilla." While the author admits that "most turned out to be honest, hard workers, looking to make a new life in a new country," his emphasis is plainly

on the "brutality of the criminal element."⁵³ If this series is any indication of public opinion, the Marielitos were clearly misunderstood.

Marielitos became a separate subculture of Cuban immigrants; they had "religious practices, attitudes and behavior [that seemed] as shocking to most Cuban-Americans as to the rest of the society."⁵⁴ One shocking part of Cuban culture that reveals popular misconceptions concerning the Marielito people was the religion of Santería. Santería, a synthesis of African religious tradition and Catholicism, proliferated in the United States after 1980 because it is practiced primarily by black or mulatto Cubans, who represented 40 percent of the boat-lift.⁵⁵ Translated literally, Santería means "the worship of saints," and involves the association of certain African deities with images of Catholic saints. These gods and saints usually do not have similar qualities, and the relationship is often a mystery.⁵⁶ While Santería practices would probably seem bizarre to most Americans, the short description in the *Las Vegas Sun* presents a sinister image that the thousands of Las Vegas browsing the morning headlines would immediately associate with recent, if not all, Cuban immigrants. Beneath a picture of a shrine of Saint Barbara reads the caption, "The warrior god," in bold print, followed by "for members of the Santería sect, Saint Barbara is worshipped as the warrior god."⁵⁷ In actuality, Saint Barbara was originally associated with the god of thunder and lightning of the Yoruba-speaking peoples of sub-Saharan Africa.⁵⁸ How that association developed is not understood, but it is certain that Saint Barbara is not the warrior god of the Marielitos.

Many established Cuban-Americans in Las Vegas feared that acts of criminal Marielitos threatened the "American public's perception of Cubans."⁵⁹ The real threat, however, came not from the Marielitos directly but from the blatant media exaggeration that the small criminal element aroused. While crime rates increased noticeably in urban areas throughout the nation after the Marielitos' arrival, the rise was mostly circumstantial. Resettling the Marielitos was a monumental effort, costing the United States government an estimated billion dollars. Those without families in America were housed in military camps; when released they were not welcomed anywhere because the American public believed that Mariel refugees were Cuba's refuse, released from jails and mental institutions. Because it was such a sudden and massive influx, they faced difficulties in finding employment and housing. In these circumstances, violence and crime occurred.⁶⁰

A May 16, 1983, headline in the *Las Vegas Sun* reads, "When a Marielito threatens death, death usually occurs."⁶¹ The story explains that 13 percent of Clark County murders since July of 1981 involved "Marielitos killing Marielitos."⁶² While this is a large number—at least twenty-one murders—this story, and others like it, are misleading because they imply that the racial or ethnic backgrounds of murderers should somehow reflect the social makeup of the population.⁶³ The story also reports that in 1982 one Marielito man committed at least three murders, equal to 3.4 percent of all murders that year. Paranoia grew

until in June of 1983 the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department initiated its Marielito Bandito task force with the help of the Department of Immigration and the FBI. Designed to uncover "who they are and what they are up to,"⁶⁴ the force compiled a list of 540 "hard core criminals," narrowed to 400 by December of 1984, who, "if picked up for any reason," would be "immediately incarcerated in federal detention centers."⁶⁵

Most crimes committed by Marielitos were drug related, and though these crimes cannot be excused, they can be explained. To a Cuban reared in a repressive environment, who had spent years, or perhaps decades, in prison, life in America, and the ideal of freedom it promised, did not entail washing dishes or cleaning toilets in a casino. Most had been arrested in Cuba for crimes that either would not have occurred in the United States, such as black marketeering, or, if they had occurred, would not have been considered illegal, such as engaging in political dissension.⁶⁶ Upon coming to America, they found that the American brand of freedom and success for which they had risked their lives could not be achieved without money, a great deal of patience, and the right connections.

While many did receive help in Las Vegas from agencies such as Catholic Community Services and El Circulo Cubano, and also from relatives, the stigma that attached to the Marielitos, as sensationalized by the media, distanced them from the established Cuban-American community in Las Vegas and has continued to restrict their social and economic mobility.⁶⁷ The negative image of the Mariel refugees created a rift between those who came before and those who came during and after; thus time of immigration became a necessary component of Cuban identity.

While it is uncertain how many of the Marielito "entrants," as they were officially labeled, wound up in Las Vegas, James Walsh of the Immigration and Naturalization Service estimated that there were about two thousand.⁶⁸ It is also known that around 70 percent of all Marielitos were young men, and most were unmarried. This had a negative impact on their chances for economic success because, as noted earlier, the financial contribution of the Cuban wives partly accounted for their families' high income statistics.⁶⁹

The Marielitos and later Cuban refugees came from a very different Cuba, and to a very different Las Vegas, than their predecessors did. While living conditions in Cuba have deteriorated rapidly in recent years, it is important to understand that, by 1980, the Castro government had provided significant improvements in the lives of previously ignored rural Cubans; however, these gains often came at the cost of political repression, forced relocation, and collectivization generated by the political ideals of Cuba's revolutionary leaders. In terms of education, for example, the rural population of Cuba was a staggering 42 percent illiterate before the revolution, compared to just 7 percent in 1979.⁷⁰ The revolutionary educational administration, however, concentrated on practical skills and stifled individual political and intellectual expression. While this

system was good for the ideals of Castro's revolution, it devalued the personal ambitions of individuals, and the resulting emigration and apathy drained Cuba of innovative intellectual pursuit.⁷¹ The same is true for employment statistics. Both urban and rural unemployment dropped to about 1 percent by 1970, but individual upward mobility was severely limited by the practical needs of the revolution.⁷²

While a free health-care system existed in Cuba before the revolution, many doctors left with the first wave of emigrants to the United States, and the flow of imported medical supplies was soon cut off. Considered in this context, the advances in health care produced by the Castro government are significant.⁷³ In 1958, there were 6,011 persons per physician, a figure reduced to just 645 by 1979.⁷⁴ Prominent causes of death such as diarrhea and tuberculosis were replaced in the statistics by diseases such as diabetes and respiratory ailments, illnesses more prevalent in the fatality figures of industrial societies.⁷⁵

But by the late 1970s, cracks in the Cuban government's success story began to appear. Expensive wars and military commitments in Angola and Ethiopia occupied many of Cuba's best workers and managers, and productivity ultimately suffered. High levels of debt and falling sugar revenues created a severe recession by mid-1979, which motivated Castro to orchestrate the mass emigration from Mariel. The huge number who left in 1980 demonstrates the widespread discontent within Cuba, and emigration to America was encouraged by the so-called blue jeans revolution, inspired by success stories and gifts from relatives, 100,000 of whom were allowed to visit in 1979 alone. Those who emigrated during and after the boat-lift wanted to leave, and among this group, the hope of returning triumphantly, which remains to this day among Cubans who left during the 1960s, was virtually absent.

Although passage of the Refugee Act of 1980 increased federal funding and support for resettlement programs, the initial help—which was provided in Las Vegas by Catholic Community Services and supplied food, clothing, medical care, English-language classes, and aid in finding employment—was not enough to secure the rapid move into the middle class that previous immigrants had enjoyed.⁷⁶ The mutual support networks that had helped the newcomers of the sixties and seventies find better-paying casino jobs could no longer accommodate the expanding population of Cubans. By 1990 the census estimated that there were 6,122 persons of Cuban descent in Clark County. While this figure is nearly double that for 1980, Otto Merida, executive director of the Latin Chamber of Commerce, speculated that the census estimate was probably 10,000 too low. As the established Cuban networks became increasingly inadequate to absorb the flood of newcomers, El Circulo Cubano was gradually fading out of existence because its leadership lost interest and its members, being primarily casino workers, had difficulty agreeing on times for functions.⁷⁷ The loss of this social environment made it even more difficult for newcomers to forge ties with the established Cuban community. The Latin Chamber of Commerce, though its

long-term benefit to the Hispanic community was immeasurable, did not have this social function, and no organization has yet replaced *El Circulo*. Without mutual support networks developed in a social environment, the over-all economic capacity of Cuban people dropped substantially during the 1980s.⁷⁸

Beyond the loss of mutual support from fellow Cubans, the immigrants of the 1980s were restricted by the population explosion of Las Vegas itself. The population of the city doubled again during the 1980s, reaching, according to the 1990 census estimate, approximately 740,000 persons. This expansion affected employment opportunities for new Cuban refugees to a greater extent than had the increases of the past, in several ways. First, the 1990 population included around 250,000 transplants.⁷⁹ The around-the-clock schedules, irregular shift changes, and sheer number of casino workers all contributed to an impersonal workplace environment, making it difficult for new Las Vegas to develop permanent social relationships with fellow employees. Second, fewer Cubans were now married. The stigma that attached to the *Marielitos*—who made up as much as a third of the Las Vegas Cuban population—impeded their search for spouses during the 1980s. More and more single Cuban women were living on their own: By 1990, nearly a third of all Cuban households below the poverty level had heads of household who were women.⁸⁰ Last, the Hispanic population of Las Vegas expanded by 85 percent during the eighties. While this represents only a 1 percent increase in the Hispanic segment of the total population (from 7.5 percent to 8.5 percent), the trend is significant because, if it continues, Hispanics will soon replace blacks as the largest recognized minority group in Las Vegas.⁸¹ The advantage of inclusion in such a large minority was that it provided Cubans a degree of political power, as best exemplified by the work of the Latin Chamber of Commerce. But the accompanying disadvantage arose as Cubans became victims of the negative stereotyping often associated with Hispanics. Being discriminated against because of language or ignorance shocked many Cuban people who had never experienced prejudice before.⁸²

The strains created by the urban growth of the seventies continued, but expansion during the eighties through the early nineties also accelerated the pace of suburban development throughout the valley, which widened the gap between wealthy established Cubans and incoming refugees. Non-Cuban newcomers, predominantly from California, were filling made-to-order housing sites in expeditiously developed neighborhoods, going to work in good jobs outside the casino industry, and paying taxes at lower rates as a bonus.⁸³ Wealthy Cuban families were moving into these rapidly expanding suburbs, which were populated by predominantly white, non-Hispanic people, while the Cubans who arrived after 1980 remained in the urban Las Vegas, which was developing real big-city problems and no longer offered the opportunities enjoyed by earlier Cuban refugees.

All of these elements coalesced at the close of the eighties to form a much less impressive profile of Cuban achievement in Las Vegas in the 1990 census. The

median annual income of Cuban households in the Las Vegas metropolitan area in 1989, at \$22,957, was, surprisingly, the lowest of any Hispanic group, and was more than \$7,000 less than the median for the city. The income of Mexicans, traditionally the lowest, exceeded that of Cubans by more than \$4,000. More than one fifth of all Cuban people in Clark County were living below the poverty level.⁸⁴ But Cuban households in California, which in 1980 had incomes significantly lower than those in Nevada, had the second highest annual median income level of any Hispanic group in the state.⁸⁵

The income statistics for Cubans, however, varied by urban or suburban residence, by sex, and by incidence of home ownership. In the city of Las Vegas, 27 percent of Cuban households reported incomes below the poverty level, and units occupied by Cuban renters had a median annual household income of just \$13,588; in contrast, owner-occupied units reported an income of \$33,942, which is higher than the county median. There were no units owned by Cuban married couples reported to be living below the poverty level, but most owner-occupied units in the below-poverty category were owned by unmarried women. Of Cuban renters living below the poverty level, eighty-six householders were women, and there were only forty-four married couples; most of the single women had children, more than half of all rented households had no vehicle available, more than 40 percent received some form of public assistance income, and five units lacked complete plumbing facilities.⁸⁶

The unincorporated town of Paradise lies south of the city of Las Vegas and includes most of the hotels on the Strip and McCarran Airport; it stretches from Decatur Boulevard east to Boulder Highway, and south from Desert Inn Road to Blue Diamond Road. It is the second largest division in Clark County in total population, Cuban population, and geographic size, and its blend of low-income apartment housing and middle-to-high income housing developments reveals the stark difference in income between urban and suburban dwellers.⁸⁷ Cuban households in Paradise had much higher incomes in general than those in the city of Las Vegas and in the balance of Clark County. The over-all annual median was \$25,268 per year, which, unlike the case in the rest of the county, was higher than that of the other Hispanic elements reported to be living in Paradise. While 24 percent of renter households were reported to be living below the poverty level, the median annual income for Cubans (\$23,016) was still higher than that of other Hispanics living in this category. Most Cubans who lived below the poverty level were single males (70 percent), primarily recent arrivals.⁸⁸

It is a mistake to assume that, since they did not achieve the same rapid economic success as their predecessors, the Cubans who came to Las Vegas after 1980 were either less educated or, as is often thought, inexcusably lazy. In truth, many came with advanced educations, technical training, and political awareness. Many of these people have had difficulty adjusting to the reality of re-starting their lives at the bottom of the social scale of the United States, which

has generated a degree of resentment from earlier immigrants who did just that.⁸⁹ The difference is that more recent Cuban refugees came from a society that is socially and economically repressive, and many of the expectations they had about American life never materialized. They also came from a society in which they were taught that fundamental needs should be provided by the government. For example, Sergio Fernandez, who came to Las Vegas in 1986, believed that it was ridiculous for a nation as wealthy and advanced as the United States not to have a socialized health-care system.⁹⁰ Their indoctrination in Cuba naturally created varying degrees of frustration when they learned that the freedoms of the United States could not be exercised until individual basic human needs are earned through what might be considered degrading work.

While the Cubans who came to Las Vegas after 1980 are not unaware of their inferior social and economic positions, not all consider themselves unsuccessful. Their conception of what it means to be Cuban is different from that of those who longed for *Cuba de ayer* during the sixties and seventies. This is mainly because they came from a Cuba, one forged by the ultimate failure of Castro's ideals, that is very different from the cosmopolitan atmosphere their predecessors knew and loved. They also have a different conception of themselves as Americans of Cuban descent, based for the most part on varying definitions of success. Just living in America equals success to many of these people because, regardless of social or economic position, the American quality of life surpasses that of the Cuba they knew. In Las Vegas, those who came during the early sixties were coming to an exciting, growing city with an atmosphere relatively similar to the one they left, while later immigrants were leaving a totalitarian socialist regime to come to a city that was not only the ultimate expression of American capitalism, but also the fastest-growing urban metropolitan area in the nation.

Like their predecessors, many who came after 1980 lost social status earned in Cuba. Such a loss, along with the dangers often involved with the refugee experience, was worthwhile to many. Fernandez was a veterinarian in Cuba, but he has been unable to move into his profession in Las Vegas because of language problems and his age, forty-five. Fernandez and his family came to the United States illegally; after spending several months in Central America and Mexico, they crossed the border into Texas, where they met his brother from Miami. He worked in a window factory in Miami until he heard about the opportunities in Las Vegas for non-English speakers. He received a great deal of assistance from his brother, private charity organizations, and the Las Vegas Housing Authority, and, after working in the kitchen at Caesars Palace and as a porter at the Golden Nugget, he was hired by the city of Las Vegas as a kennel attendant at the animal shelter. After control of the shelter was taken over by the county, Fernandez was transferred to the Reed Whipple Cultural Center, where he has worked since as a custodian. Though he is unable to practice his profession, he does not feel bitter and is grateful for the opportunities the United States has offered his family. He plans to become a citizen, and, though he has a daughter

in Cuba, he has no intention of returning if Castro falls because his son has been reared in the "new culture" and intends to remain in the United States.⁹¹

Similarly, Maria Garcia, age fifty-seven, who came to Las Vegas in 1991, was a music librarian at the Center for International Music in Havana. She now works as a maid at the Imperial Palace, but intends to improve her English and return to her profession as soon as she can. She considers the sacrifice of her profession worth the freedoms she has gained. Severe rationing and economic restriction made life in Cuba, even with her professional status, unbearable. She is more angry about Castro's "political varnish" than about any reduction in social status that her move to the United States has fostered.⁹²

Bernardo Ricardo, who was a soldier in Batista's army and spent thirteen years in prison following the revolution, has obvious reasons for preferring life in Las Vegas to life in Cuba. He was, however, a mechanic in Cuba and, because of his inability to speak English, has worked as kitchen help at the Bourbon Street and later at Caesars Palace since his arrival in Las Vegas in 1986. He, also, is not bitter about having to restart his life and seems satisfied with his life in the United States. He takes great pride in the ownership of things, such as his house and car, that he was denied in his native country. He is also planning on becoming a citizen but admits that he would like to return to Cuba to raise cattle if the country is stable after Castro's fall.⁹³

Though the Cubans who came to Las Vegas during and after the Mariel boat-lift did not inherit the same advantages as those who came before, they are grateful to the United States and to Las Vegas for the opportunities and assistance they have received. One Mariel refugee who was living in Las Vegas in 1985 showed his gratitude by sending a money order for \$1,000, which represented two thirds of all he had, to the United States Treasury as a voluntary donation.⁹⁴ Earlier refugees and exiles, on the other hand, are disappointed with the United States government for not taking more positive steps to oust Castro. Maggy Ruiz, owner and editor of the Latin American Press in Las Vegas, stated, "We're trying to make the United States understand that the same way they help other countries, we need the same help. Get Fidel Castro out of there, that's all we ask."⁹⁵ Hatred of Castro seems to be the one sentiment common to all Cubans in the United States, but even if he does fall and socialism is replaced, Cuba's troubles will not go away instantaneously and the flow of refugees will probably continue. Though the exiles of the sixties are aging and most of their children are fully Americanized, the Florida Straits may someday be crowded with pleasure cruisers heading south to rebuild Cuba jammed against a flow of rusted junks bearing Cubans heading north to rebuild their lives in the United States.

NOTES

¹David Rieff, *The Exile: Cuba in the Heart of Miami* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), 38.

²Mario Cuellar, personal interview, 10 September 1993.

³Liliam Shell, personal interview, 4 October 1993.

⁴Darío Herrera, personal interview, 20 September 1993.

⁵Bernardo Ricardo, personal interview, 29 September 1993.

⁶This comment came from a tourist I picked up from McCarran Airport while working for a car rental agency in 1990.

⁷U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1990 Census of Population and Housing: Census Tracts and Block Numbering Areas, Las Vegas, NV Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA)*, table 1; *idem*, *1960 Census of Population, Characteristics of the Population*, table 1. Population figures include the entire Las Vegas Metropolitan Statistical Area, which has comprised all of Clark County since 1960. The contiguous metropolitan area, which includes for my purposes all suburban areas surrounding Las Vegas city, Henderson, and North Las Vegas, comprises the vast majority of the population in general and virtually all of the Cuban population.

⁸The census estimates that the Las Vegas Cuban population totaled 245 in 1960, 1,241 in 1970, 3,484 in 1980, and 6,122 in 1990.

⁹U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1980 Census of Population and Housing: Census Tracts and Block Numbering Areas, Las Vegas, NV SMSA*, table 1.

¹⁰Thomas D. Boswell and James R. Curtis, *The Cuban American Experience: Culture, Images, and Perspectives* (Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman and Allanheld, 1983), 42.

¹¹U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1970 Census of Population and Housing: Census Tracts, Las Vegas, NV SMSA*, table P-2.

¹²*Ibid.*, San Diego, CA SMSA, table P-2.

¹³"Happy Days in Havana," *Newsweek* (20 January 1958), 22.

¹⁴Ernest Havemann, "Mobsters Move in on Troubled Havana and Split Rich Gambling Profits with Batista," *Life*, vol. 44 (10 March 1958), 32-37.

¹⁵Lilium Lujan-Hickey, personal interview, 4 October 1993. Also see John Scarne, *Scarne's Complete Guide to Gambling* (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1961), 414.

¹⁶The majority of Cuban refugees came from Havana, and since the casino industry was primarily based in Havana, it can be assumed that the vast majority of Cubans who ended up in Las Vegas before 1970 came from there as well. For a survey of wages and employment in Las Vegas, see Boswell and Curtis, *Cuban American Experience*, 47; Eugene P. Moehring, *Resort City in the Sunbelt* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1989), 111.

¹⁷Luis Amelburu, personal interview (with Darby Hailes), 17 September 1993.

¹⁸Patricia M. Rowe and Susan J. O'Connor, *Detailed Statistics on the Urban and Rural Population of Cuba: 1950 to 2010*. (Washington, D.C.: Center for International Research, U.S. Bureau of the Census, GPO 1984), table 46.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, tables 61, 62.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 433.

²¹*Ibid.*, 436.

²²Boswell and Curtis, *Cuban American Experience*, 47; Cuban Economic Research Project, *A Study on Cuba* (Coral Gables, Fla.: University of Miami Press, 1965), 569. Of the Cuban exiles who arrived prior to 1970, 62 percent came from Havana, and Cuba's casino industry was predominately based in La Habana province.

²³Lilium Lujan-Hickey, personal interview, 4 October 1993.

²⁴Jorge Domínguez, "Cuba since 1959," In *Cuba: A Short History*, Leslie Bethell, ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 89; "Happy Days in Havana," 22.

²⁵Lilium Shell, personal interview, 4 October 1993.

²⁶"¿Que Es El Circulo Cubano?" *Boletín Informativo: El Circulo Cubano de Las Vegas*, vol. 3, year 1 (December 1970), 3; Otto Merida, personal interview, 28 September 1993.

²⁷"¿Que Es," 3.

²⁸*Ibid.*

²⁹U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1970 Census of Population and Housing: Census Tracts, Las Vegas, NV SMSA*, table P-2.

³⁰Lilium Shell, personal interview, 4 October 1993.

³¹U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1970 Census: Census Tracts, Las Vegas, NV SMSA*, table P-7. Areas considered here are those where more than 10 percent of the population lived below the poverty

level (at this time, 7 percent of Las Vegans did so) and areas with 400 or more persons of "Spanish Origin."

³²U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1970 Census, Census Tracts, Las Vegas, NV SMSA*, table P-7.

³³*Ibid.*, *Detailed Characteristics of the Population* (1970), table 141. Data are not available concerning numbers of foreign born versus native persons of Cuban ancestry for the Las Vegas Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA). This is misleading because Las Vegas city comprised less than half of the total and only about a quarter of the Cuban population of the SMSA. Since fewer than 100 Cuban people were reported living in Nevada outside of the Las Vegas SMSA, it can be assumed that most of these natives were born in the Las Vegas SMSA.

³⁴U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1980 Census of Population and Housing: Census Tracts, Las Vegas, NV SMSA*, table P-7; see 1970 census for comparison.

³⁵U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1980 Census of Population and Housing: Census Tracts, Las Vegas, NV SMSA*, table P-7.

³⁶*Ibid.*

³⁷Boswell and Curtis, *Cuban American Experience*, 42, 48.

³⁸Bureau of the Census, *1980 Census of Population and Housing: Detailed Characteristics, Nevada*, table 195.

³⁹*Ibid.*, table 196. Also see the same publication for California and Florida.

⁴⁰U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1980 Census of Population and Housing: Detailed Characteristics, Nevada*, table 196.

⁴¹Boswell and Curtis, *Cuban American Experience*, 3.

⁴²Otto Merida, personal interview, 28 September 1993.

⁴³Liliam Shell, personal interview, 4 October 1993.

⁴⁴Mario Jesus Cuellar, Sr., personal interview (with interpreter Mauricio Cuellar), 17 September 1993.

⁴⁵Sérafina Cuellar-García, personal interview, 17 September 1993.

⁴⁶Mario Cuellar, telephone interview, 10 September 1993.

⁴⁷Thomas Rodríguez, *A History of the Latin Chamber of Commerce of Nevada: 1976-1989* (Las Vegas: Latin Chamber of Commerce, 1989), 18.

⁴⁸Fernando Romero, personal interview, 22 September 1993.

⁴⁹John S. Lang, "What Gambling Does for—and to—Las Vegas," *U.S. News and World Report* (9 March 1981), 66-67.

⁵⁰David T. Friendly, "Snake Eyes for Las Vegas," *Newsweek* (23 August 1982), 54.

⁵¹Boswell and Curtis, *Cuban American Experience*, 51-57.

⁵²"What Happened to the Marielitos?" *The New York Times* (25 November 1987), p. B6.

⁵³Alan Tobin, "Marielito—A Man without a Country," *Las Vegas Sun* (15 May 1983), p. 1.

⁵⁴*Idem*, "Law Abiding Cubans Worry about Tarnished Image," *Las Vegas Sun* (17 May 1983), p. 7.

⁵⁵José Llanes, *Cuban-Americans: Masters of Survival* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 169.

⁵⁶James R. Curtis, "Santería: Persistence and Change in an Afro Cuban Religion," in *Objects of Special Devotion*, Ray B. Browne, ed. (Bowling Green, Ohio, Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1982), 336-50.

⁵⁷Tobin, "Law Abiding Cubans," 7.

⁵⁸Curtis, "Santería," 340.

⁵⁹Tobin, "Law Abiding Cubans," 7.

⁶⁰Boswell and Curtis, *Cuban American Experience*, 54-55.

⁶¹"When a Marielito Threatens Death, Death Usually Occurs," *Las Vegas Sun* (16 May 1983), p. 11.

⁶²*Ibid.*

⁶³Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States* (GPO: Washington, D.C., 1982, 1983), table 5. Specific statistics for crimes committed after July 1981 were not included in this report.

⁶⁴Richard Cornett, "Metro to Crack Down on 'Marielito Banditos,'" *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (19 June 1983), p. 1.

⁶⁵Harold Hyman, "Marielitos Register in LV," *Las Vegas Sun* (5 December 1984), p. B5.

⁶⁶Alex Lazerle, *The 1980 Cuban Boatlift* (Washington, D.C., National Defense University Press, 1988), 226.

- ⁶⁷Tobin, "Law Abiding Cubans," 7.
- ⁶⁸Alan Tobin, "LV Marielitos Can Seek Resident Status," *Las Vegas Sun* (30 November 1984), p. B1.
- ⁶⁹Boswell and Curtis, *Cuban American Experience*, 56; U.S. Bureau of the Census *The Hispanic Population in the United States* (March 1982), table B-9.
- ⁷⁰Rowe and O'Connor, *Detailed Statistics*, table 62.
- ⁷¹Dominguez, *Cuba*, 120-22.
- ⁷²Rowe and O'Connor, *Detailed Statistics*, table 72.
- ⁷³Dominguez, *Cuba*, 122.
- ⁷⁴Rowe and O'Connor, *Detailed Statistics*, table 19.
- ⁷⁵Dominguez, *Cuba*, 123.
- ⁷⁶U.S. Government Accounting Office, *Refugee Program: Initial Reception and Placement of New Arrivals Should Be Improved*, Report to the Committee on the Judiciary (April 1986), 8.
- ⁷⁷Otto Merida, personal interview, 28 September 1993; Sérafina Cuellar-Garcia, personal interview, 17 September 1993.
- ⁷⁸U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1990 Census of Housing: Detailed Housing Characteristics, Nevada*, table 77.
- ⁷⁹*Idem*, 1990 Census: *Census Tracts, Las Vegas, NV MSA*, table 1.
- ⁸⁰*Idem*, 1990 Census of Housing: *Detailed Housing Characteristics, Nevada*, table 105.
- ⁸¹*Idem*, 1990 Census *Tape File 3A, Las Vegas, NV MSA*, Hispanic Origin.
- ⁸²Fernando Romero, personal interview, 22 September 1993.
- ⁸³Trip Gabriel, "From Vice to Nice," *The New York Times Magazine* (1 December 1991), pp. 68-71.
- ⁸⁴U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1990 Census of Housing: Detailed Housing Characteristics, Nevada*, table 77.
- ⁸⁵*Ibid.*, *California*, table 61.
- ⁸⁶*Ibid.*, *Nevada*, table 90. Complete plumbing facilities include, according to the census questionnaire, a flush toilet, a sink, and a bath or shower.
- ⁸⁷U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1990 Census Tracts, Las Vegas, NV MSA*, tables 1, 8.
- ⁸⁸*Idem*, 1990 Census of Housing: *Detailed Housing Characteristics, Nevada*, tables 89, 90.
- ⁸⁹Otto Merida, personal interview, 28 September 1993.
- ⁹⁰Sergio Fernandez, Sr., personal interview, 22 September 1993.
- ⁹¹*Ibid.*
- ⁹²Maria Garcia, personal interview (with interpreter Sergio Fernandez, Jr.), 2 September 1993.
- ⁹³Bernardo Ricardo, personal interview, 29 September 1993.
- ⁹⁴Rafael Tammariello, "Cuban Trying Hard to Repay Uncle Sam," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (26 April 1985), p. A1.
- ⁹⁵Marian Green, "Las Vegas Cubans Waiting for Fidel Castro to Go Away," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (19 September 1993), p. B1.

IRON HORSE ALONG THE TRUCKEE

The Central Pacific Reaches Nevada

Wendell W. Huffman

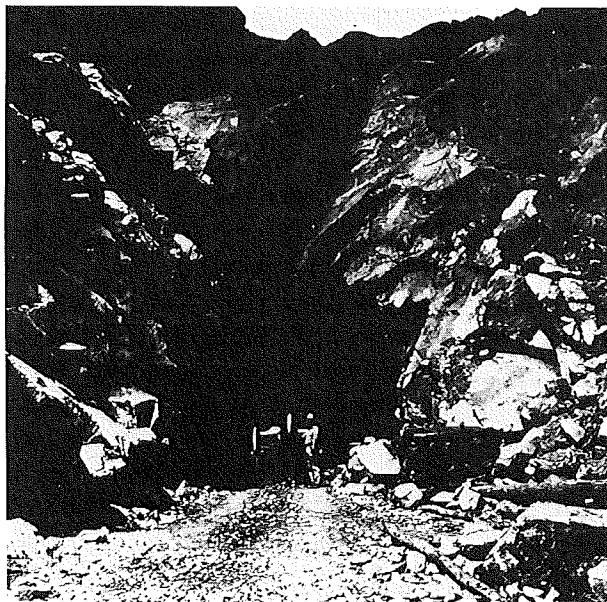
In his *History of Nevada*, published in 1881, Myron Angel recorded that “on the thirteenth of December, 1867, the first locomotive ran into Nevada, reaching Crystal Peak from the California side.”¹ The railroad that was being built into Nevada from California at that time and place was the Central Pacific Railroad, the western component of the nation’s first transcontinental railroad. Ever since the appearance of Angel’s work, his date for the railroad’s first entry into Nevada has been accepted—apparently without reservation.² However, at least one of the railroad bridges between the state line and the town of Crystal Peak was not completed until the end of March 1868.³ Obviously, no train could have reached Crystal Peak until after all of those bridges were finished—more than three months after the date given by Angel for the first train. (Crystal Peak itself presents a problem. The railroad eventually bypassed it in favor of the more favorably located Verdi and after the 1872 von Schmidt survey it fell within California, but was considered a part of Nevada in 1867–68). While this does not necessarily mean that the railroad was not somewhere inside Nevada on or by December 13, 1867, it raises questions about the dependability of Angel’s statement and invites a general inquiry into the circumstances of the passage of the railroad into Nevada.

In November 1866, three years after tracklaying began, the rails of the Central Pacific were laid as far as Cisco—ninety-two miles east of Sacramento. Construction to this point had often been challenging, but the twenty-eight miles between Cisco and the Truckee River included the most difficult sections of the entire transcontinental railroad, sections in which the builders faced the hard granite backbone of the Sierra Nevada and had to carve out eleven tunnels with an aggregate length of more than a mile. As rapidly as the Chinese crews finished work west of Cisco, they moved ahead to the locations of the various excavations to build camps for themselves and begin clearing the approaches to each of the tunnels. By the time the snow began to fall, all the headings were started, and, except for occasional interruptions when storms prevented the

Wendell W. Huffman is reference librarian at the Carson City Library and a volunteer at the Nevada State Railroad Museum in Carson City.



The depots at Cisco in 1867. (A. A. Hart photo, Kyle Wyatt Collection)



The east portal of Summit Tunnel during construction. (A. A. Hart photo, Kyle Wyatt Collection)

distribution of supplies and avalanches swept away shanties and workers alike, work continued around the clock through the winter.

The longest of the tunnels was Tunnel 6, which was to run 1,659 feet through the summit ridge at Donner Pass. To cut the expected working time on this tunnel in half, a 90-foot shaft was sunk to the center of the tunnel's alignment to allow workers to blast away in both directions from the center as well as from the two ends. To lift out the debris generated at the center faces, an old locomotive was hauled to the top by oxen from the end-of-track and set up as a hoisting engine.⁴ Four hundred men were kept busy twenty-four hours a day on this tunnel; yet, they were able to advance the headings only one foot per day on each of the four faces. To speed up progress on this tunnel even more, nitroglycerine—then a recently invented explosive—was introduced in March 1867. It was manufactured right at the tunnel site and increased the rate of progress more than 50 percent.⁵

While the work on the tunnels proceeded according to schedule through the winter of 1866–67, the progress was slow, measured in only feet and inches. This was painfully frustrating for the directors of the Central Pacific as they read the frequent newspaper reports of the rapid progress of the Union Pacific Railroad, building westward from Omaha. The Union Pacific was the eastern segment of the transcontinental railroad, and both companies were franchised by the United States Congress to build toward each other until they met. While it was initially expected that the Union Pacific (with easier geography and ready access to eastern sources of supply) would build all the way to the California border, the Central Pacific was determined to reach at least into the Salt Lake Valley.

The Union Pacific's relatively rapid progress, achieved at the very time when the Central Pacific was struggling across the high Sierra, was more than a mere emotional embarrassment for the Central Pacific directors—it represented a potential financial disaster. Since the government was granting land and loaning bonds to each company for completed mileage, any mile of track the Central Pacific did not build was potential money in the bank for the Union Pacific. Of more immediate concern, the slow headway against the granite tunnel faces created the very real possibility that the Central Pacific would be unable to build any new track in 1867.

Until new track was built, there would be no new grants of land or government bonds. Without land to sell to settlers or bonds to sell to investors, the Central Pacific would be without the primary sources of funds necessary to pay for the construction of its railroad. Without those funds, the company's only significant income would be that earned by hauling passengers and Nevada-bound freight to Cisco. However, while Cisco was well into the mountains, a considerable amount of the Comstock traffic still crossed the Sierra by way of Placerville and the Johnson Pass wagon road, and the Central Pacific did not earn enough from train operations to pay all of its construction expenses.⁶

As a solution to this predicament, the directors of the Central Pacific decided

in mid-January 1867 to leap-frog ahead of the current end-of-track at Cisco and begin construction of an "independent link" of track down along the Truckee River, where the snow and terrain were less severe.⁷ In fact, by the date of this decision, some two thousand Chinese workers were already scraping out the roadbed along the Truckee River east of the mountains.⁸ But until the decision to jump ahead was made in January, the company had not expected to build track on this grade until the railroad reached that point from Cisco.

Because the government issued bonds on track for the transcontinental railroad in increments of twenty miles or more, the Central Pacific would have to build at least that many miles of railroad along the Truckee to earn any of the desired bonds. Building this much required a great deal more than merely preparing the roadbed. Five bridges had to be built to carry the proposed track across the Truckee and various tributaries; in New York the company's vice president, Collis P. Huntington, was immediately instructed to rush the iron work for these spans via Panama, rather than by sail around South America.⁹ Meanwhile, work commenced on the foundations for the bridges, and logging camps and sawmills were established east of the mountains to begin producing the bridge timbers, as well as the thousands of cross-ties that would be needed. These bridge foundations were completed and the masonry piers were being built by the end of April 1867. Tunnel 14, one of the two short tunnels located in the Truckee canyon, was also finished by that date.¹⁰

While the wooden ties and timbers, and the stone for the masonry, could be procured locally, all of the iron for the railroad would have to be hauled by teams some twenty-five miles across the Sierra on the wagon road from Cisco. Altogether, three thousand tons of rail, in sections twenty-four-feet long and weighing nearly five hundred pounds apiece, along with countless kegs of spikes and fasteners, would be needed.¹¹ There is indication that some attempt was made to carry material across the mountains on sleighs in January 1867. However, the roadbed along the Truckee was far from ready for the iron at that time, and the difficulties of this early effort and the pressure to transport revenue-generating freight across the Sierra discouraged the company from moving more railroad material to the Truckee until the snow had melted from the wagon road.¹²

The snow created problems down along the Truckee River, too, and interfered with construction well into the spring. With eight feet of snow on the ground at Donner Lake, and two feet as far east as the Little Truckee as late as April, grading for this segment east of the mountains had to begin at the lower elevations on the very eastern section and proceed westward as the snow melted.¹³

Distribution of rail and supplies along this planned stretch of railroad also required a locomotive and some cars. While the Central Pacific then had nineteen locomotives, all of these were being used just to handle the company's business between Sacramento and Cisco. Furthermore, as these engines were already set up in operating condition, disassembly would be necessary if any were to be carried across the mountains in wagons. There were four additional

locomotives then at sea on the long voyage around South America from New York, but these were six-driven freight locomotives—much heavier than needed for construction service—and there was no telling when they would arrive in San Francisco.¹⁴

The eventual solution to the problem of rolling stock for use east of the mountains came from an unexpected quarter. Even while the Central Pacific was pushing its new construction, the company was negotiating for the purchase of the Western Pacific Railroad, an independent company that owned the franchise to build the portion of the transcontinental railroad between Sacramento and San Francisco Bay by way of Stockton. Though this company had existed about as long as the Central Pacific, it had by 1867 built only twenty miles of railroad and was nearly bankrupt. Finally, in June 1867, the Western Pacific sold out.¹⁵ This transaction inadvertently solved the Central Pacific's problem of getting a locomotive for use east of the mountains, for at the time of its sale the Western Pacific owned ten locomotives, several of which had never been assembled following their delivery from the East. One of these was a Baldwin-built engine named *San Mateo*, which was still warehoused in San Francisco, packed in its factory crates.

Obtaining the Western Pacific's *San Mateo* solved only half the problem; the Central Pacific still had to get it over to the Truckee River. Soon after the purchase of the Western Pacific was made final, the unassembled components of



Truckee, California, originally Coburn's Station, in 1868. (A. A. Hart photo, Kyle Wyatt Collection)

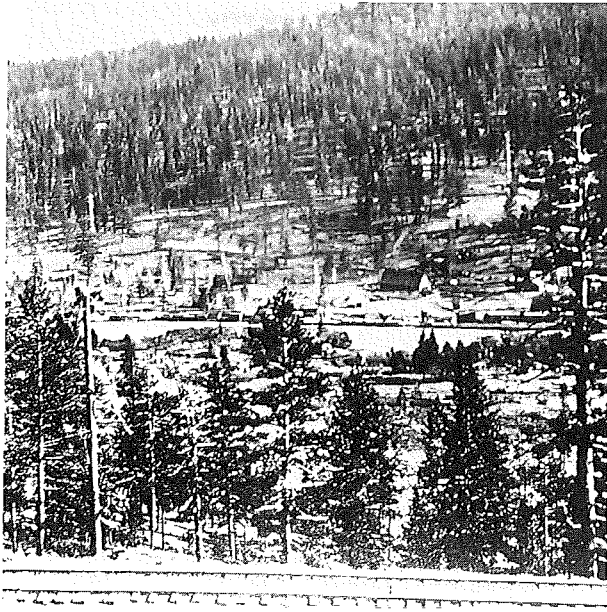
the *San Mateo* were brought up the river by schooner to Sacramento, and in early July they were loaded onto a train for the end-of-track. From Cisco, the crates of locomotive parts traveled by wagon across the summit to Coburn's Station, where the wagon road reached the Truckee River. The iron work and trucks for ten flatcars were also sent across from Cisco, while the timbers for these cars were being milled at Coburn's.¹⁶ By the end of July, the task of assembling the *San Mateo* and the cars had begun; and from Coburn's Station to a point well into the Truckee canyon the roadbed was nearly ready for the rails.¹⁷

Coburn's Station became the Central Pacific's headquarters and supply depot for the construction of the isolated railroad down the Truckee River. Four saw-mills were soon in operation, and new stores and dwellings were rapidly being built. Immediately after the *San Mateo* and the car hardware arrived at Coburn's, teamsters began bringing from Cisco the three thousand tons of rail that would soon be needed.¹⁸ In late July, the railroad company changed the name of Coburn's Station to Truckee.¹⁹

With summer, most of the snow had melted from the right-of-way between the tunnels at the upper elevations, and all available men were put to work preparing the grade for the railroad between Cisco and Coldstream. Altogether, some two thousand men were soon at work on forty-five miles of grade between Cisco and the state line. While several of the tunnels remained unfinished, the company fully understood by now that there would be only a short season of fair weather during which the men could work outside on the mountain. There would be time enough for finishing the tunnels in the fall; and, if the snow held off, they might then even be able to complete the railroad all the way across the mountains to the Truckee River.²⁰

Meanwhile, at Truckee, rail and supplies continued to pile up, and in early September, when the *San Mateo* and a train of flatcars were finally assembled, tracklaying began in an eastward direction along the waiting roadbed. Progress was slow at first; by October, only four miles of track were finished, though by that date, rails were being spiked down at a rate of about one-half mile per day.²¹ On October 29, company director Edwin B. Crocker reported that within another two days the railroad would be completed as far east as they planned to go.²² Then, the tracklayers returned to Truckee and began to lay rails westward, completing the few miles to the crossing of Coldstream by November 18. When the work stopped, a total of twenty-four miles of track had been constructed. The next day government commissioners inspected the finished track and approved the issue of bonds for this section of railroad.²³

The exact location of the eastern end of this twenty-four miles of railroad along the Truckee River is of prime importance to the question of when the railroad reached Nevada. Unfortunately, it may now be impossible to determine with any certainty exactly where the tracklayers stopped. We do know that the railroad reached a construction camp called Camp 24, and that the end-of-track and Camp 24 were generally described as being "at the state line."²⁴ While the



The Sawmill in Coldstream Valley in 1868. (A. A. Hart photo, Kyle Wyatt Collection)

precise location of the border was probably not generally known, John F. Kidder, who had surveyed the state line for the Houghton-Ives Commission in 1863, was employed as the Central Pacific's location engineer on the segment east of Truckee; certainly, Kidder was quite capable of indicating to the construction crews the exact point at which the railroad reached the boundary. Furthermore, because the railroad directors had created a new construction company for work east of the state line, there may have been a reason for work to pause at the Nevada border. If tracklaying stopped precisely at the boundary, as these indications suggest, and if E. B. Crocker was accurate in his estimate that work eastward would be finished two days following October 29, then we can claim with some confidence that the rails of the Central Pacific reached at least to the Nevada border on October 31, 1867.

One clue has come to light that tends to support the view that the railroad reached the state line in late 1867 but did not actually enter Nevada. This clue is derived from the fact that the only locomotive on the railroad east of Coldstream before February 1868 was the *San Mateo*, and the only engineer paid for operating this locomotive in 1867 was James Campbell.²⁵ A report in the *Virginia City Daily Tresspass*, however, identifies G. Reilly as the engineer to run the first locomotive into Nevada.²⁶ The obvious implication is that, if Campbell was not the driver of the first locomotive into Nevada, then that event did not take place in 1867 when Campbell was the regular engineer of the only locomotive then on

the railroad east of Truckee. While there is the possibility that Reilly was only temporarily operating the *San Mateo* when the first train crossed, the implication that this crossing did not happen in 1867 is strengthened by the fact that the *Daily Trespass* report was published in the spring of 1868, shortly after construction resumed eastward from Camp 24.

On the other hand, although the railroad may indeed have stopped precisely at the California-Nevada state line, other evidence raises the possibility that the actual end-of-track at Camp 24 was in fact inside Nevada in November 1867. Contemporary newspapers reported that construction in late 1867 included the 138th mile (from Sacramento), and that the track extended twenty miles east of Truckee.²⁷ While these measures might not be precise, both figures require the railroad to have been built east of the border. Camp 24 itself, where the railroad stopped, was not a point but was spread out for some distance on both sides of the Truckee River east of the state line. This camp was primarily a base for construction eastward, but it was also headquarters for the erection of the bridge



The bridge at the second crossing of the Truckee, near the Nevada state line in 1868. (Thomas Houseworth & Co. photo, DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University)

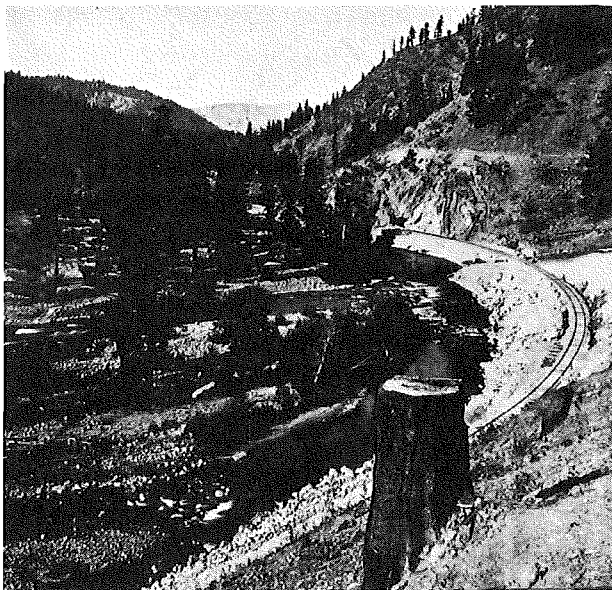
at the railroad's second crossing of the Truckee River—some 0.3 mile east of the border. While the railroad could not have gone past this crossing point until the bridge was finished, late in March 1868, the rails may have been laid right up to the site of the bridge. Indeed, this is indicated by the *Gold Hill Daily News* of November 11, 1867, which reported that the track had been completed "to the second crossing of the Truckee."

The distance from the border to the bridge was not far, and the newspaper may only have been loosely describing, by reference to the nearby second crossing, an end-of-track at the state line. But there is good reason to suppose that the author of that report meant precisely what was printed. In the first place, while the Central Pacific had only to lay twenty miles of track along the Truckee to qualify for federal bonds, the company built at least the twenty-four miles for which bonds were issued. This suggests that rails were being laid on all available roadbed, not merely the minimum needed to receive bonds. This decision must have been deliberate, for all the iron for those extra miles had to be laboriously hauled across the mountains from Cisco.

Certainly, those extra miles of track produced additional bonds, but a second reason for building on the entire grade between Coldstream and the second crossing may have been the need to provide rail access to those bridges. Laying track all the way to the sites of both the Coldstream and the second-crossing bridges would have allowed the railroad to deliver bridge timbers sawn near Truckee directly to the bridge projects. To have stopped right at the state line would have required that timbers for the Camp 24 bridge be unloaded from the cars at that point and hauled by teams for the intervening 0.3 mile to the bridge. While we do not know exactly what was done, it seems to make more sense to believe that the railroad was built right to the bridge site—past the border and into Nevada. And this is, after all, what the *Gold Hill Daily News* states was done. If so, the railroad may actually have entered Nevada on the last day of October 1867, before the tracklayers returned to Truckee to lay the rails from that point to Coldstream.

Obviously, this requires that the descriptions of the end-of-track and Camp 24 as being "at the state line" be interpreted as statements of only general location. Even though Kidder and some of the railroad engineers knew the location of the boundary, its exact location was probably not widely known; the reference to Camp 24 being "at the state line" can thus easily be understood as only a loose designation, especially in light of the fact that those descriptions were written in Sacramento—from which perspective any location even in the neighborhood of the border might be seen as "at the state line."²⁸

The argument that an imprecise understanding of the location of the boundary led to vague statements as to the relation of the end-of-track to the state line can also be applied to the local claim that Reilly was the locomotive engineer who ran the first train into Nevada. Without a clear demarcation of the state line, the second crossing of the Truckee River may itself have stood as a symbol of the



The Truckee River entering the Eastern Summits. (*A. A. Hart photo, Kyle Wyatt Collection*)



"Boundary Peak" and Tunnel 15, just west of the Nevada state line in 1868. (*A. A. Hart photo, Kyle Wyatt Collection*)

border during the five months that this bridge was under construction. Reilly may in fact have driven the first locomotive across that bridge in late March 1868, an event which could well have been perceived even among those living at Camp 24 as the crossing over into Nevada.

The shadow of confirmation that the railroad had indeed entered Nevada at Camp 24 in 1867 is contained in Myron Angel's account of the first train reaching Crystal Peak on December 13, 1867, although the railroad was never built to that community, but rather to the yet-to-be designated Verdi. While it would have been impossible for trains to reach Crystal Peak before the bridges between Camp 24 and Crystal Peak were finished, Angel's relation of events is otherwise surprisingly close to what we know was going on at the time. E. B. Crocker wrote on December 11 that passengers were being carried between Truckee and Camp 24, and this was reported in the *Territorial Enterprise* on December 13—the very day Angel indicated as the date of the first train into Nevada. Angel's identification of a date so close to that of the first passenger train to Camp 24 is either a remarkable coincidence or his statement may somehow be based on that very event.

One possible connection between Angel's story and the first passenger train service is that he may have taken the date of the *Territorial Enterprise's* report as the actual date of the event itself. However, if he had read the newspapers at all, he should have realized that trains could not have reached near Crystal Peak at that time. A more likely possibility is that Angel gathered his information from interviews. The slight discrepancy in date and apparent disregard for earlier construction trains is the kind of thing one might expect in information drawn from memory a decade after the event. Even the misstatement that the first train ran all the way to Crystal Peak is understandable in an oral account, since Crystal Peak was the closest real town to Camp 24 (about six miles away), and Camp 24 itself had effectively disappeared by the time Angel was doing his research and writing.²⁹

Clearly, there are many things about the arrival of the railroad into Nevada that we just do not know, and the relationship of Angel's account to the event it reflects is one of those unknowns. However, what is perhaps most important about Angel's history of the railroad's arrival is the claim that the train of December 13, 1867, *ran into Nevada*. If nothing else, this can be taken as evidence that the actual end-of-track (at Camp 24 rather than Crystal Peak) in December 1867 was perceived in 1880 as having been inside Nevada. As such, it increases the likelihood that the railroad had actually crossed the border on October 31, 1867, rather than in March 1868.

Although our focus has been on the end-of-track at Camp 24, that was certainly not the only scene of construction activity on the Central Pacific during the fall of 1867. While crews were laying rails along the Truckee River, other crews were racing to complete the railroad across the Sierra summit between Cisco and Coldstream before the arrival of winter storms. With enough workmen on hand,

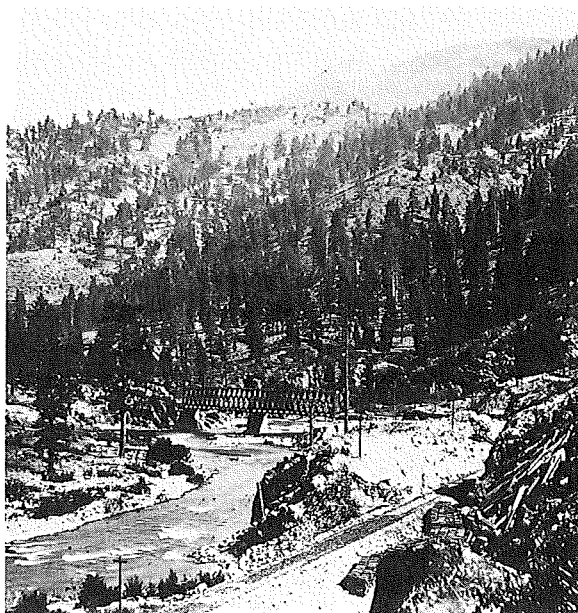
the tunnels and most of the roadbed from Cisco to within nine miles of Coldstream were soon finished, and on October 30 (about the time that the track along the Truckee reached Nevada at Camp 24), crews began to lay track eastward from the end-of-track near Cisco.³⁰ Within a month, the railroad climbed to Donner Pass, and on November 30 company officers, friends, and representatives of the press, with appropriate ceremony, watched as a length of rail was spiked onto the highest point on the Central Pacific. Just yards to the east, the roadbed pointed downward through the completed Summit Tunnel toward the Truckee River and Nevada.³¹

For the directors of the Central Pacific, this was the climactic event. Having struggled upward for more than four difficult years, they surely viewed the waiting eastern downhill grade with the confidence that nothing could stop them. Now, with only nine miles to go between the summit and the completed track beyond Coldstream, they began to predict that they would indeed beat the storms and complete the connection all the way to the Truckee. All available forces were concentrated on this section of grade; yet, with one foot of snow already on the ground, it was obvious that the race against the season would be close.³² Just in case they failed, carloads of rails were unloaded onto the ground near the wagon road at the summit for ready access should they need to be sledded down the mountain in the spring when construction east of Camp 24 could resume.³³

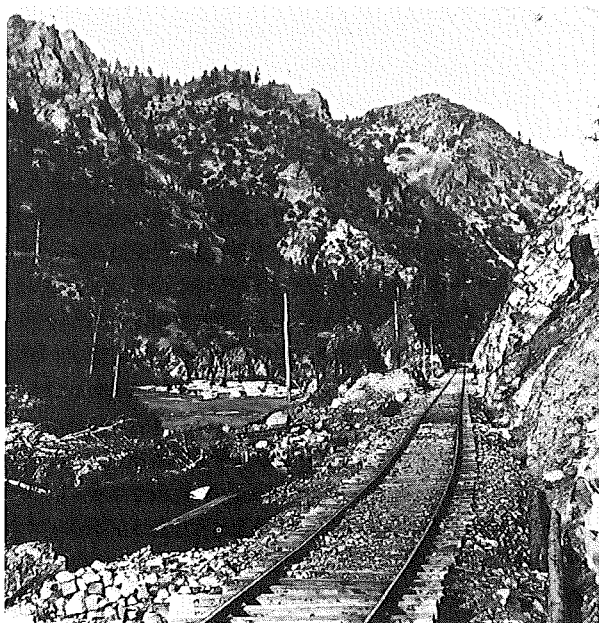
The track was extended east of the Summit Tunnel as fast as the grade was finished, and for a time it looked as though the connection between Donner Pass and Coldstream might actually be completed. On December 7 an excursion train of legislators and pioneers from Sacramento ran over a mile east of the pass, but it was snowing so hard that they could not see Donner Lake just below.³⁴ Crews persisted in the snow for several days, and had reached through Tunnel 12 (two and a half miles east of Summit Tunnel) by December 17. Then, a fierce storm broke, dropping up to eight feet of snow on the mountain and bringing all work to a halt. With this storm, all of the connected track east of Cisco was abandoned to the snow, and Cisco resumed its role as the end of the line for a second winter.³⁵

Despite the heroic effort, a seven-mile gap separated the two segments of the Central Pacific, stretching between Tunnel 12, on the west side of Strong's Canyon, and the western extremity of the railroad along the Truckee River, at the crossing of Coldstream. This uncompleted section included the line that runs high above the south shore of Donner Lake. The twenty-four miles of railroad along the Truckee River remained without rail connection to the main portion of the Central Pacific. However, sleds and sleighs ferried freight and passengers between Cisco and Truckee, and the railroad between Truckee and Camp 24 remained in operation through the winter.

Because this railroad east of Truckee was equipped with only a single locomotive and a handful of flatcars, accommodations were extremely limited. A



The Central Pacific's second crossing of the Truckee River, looking from the state line into Nevada, 1868. (*A. A. Hart photo, Kyle Wyatt Collection*)



The view near the state line. (*A. A. Hart photo, Kyle Wyatt Collection*)

local reporter noted that passengers rode on open gravel cars—no doubt an invigorating experience through the Truckee canyon, where winter temperatures are often the coldest in the nation.³⁶ Perhaps because of the primitive facilities, use of this railroad for passengers was apparently restricted to times when the stage road between Truckee and Crystal Peak was blocked by snow or mud.³⁷

Early in 1868, in anticipation of the extension of track eastward from Camp 24 in the spring, enough rail to lay another forty miles of track was sledged down from the stockpile at Donner Pass and from Cisco. Several more freight cars and two additional locomotives were also sledged across the mountains from Cisco in February.³⁸ The identities of these locomotives is at present unknown. One report indicates that a sixty-passenger coach was in service east of Truckee by June, before the connection west of Coldstream had been completed; no evidence yet found discloses whether this car was hauled across the mountains like the locomotives or the company had it built in Truckee of local materials.³⁹

Meanwhile, some six thousand Chinese workers were preparing the roadbed beyond Camp 24 and out into the Truckee Meadows, and with the completion of the second-crossing bridge, tracklaying eastward was resumed sometime between March 24 and 30.⁴⁰ Progress was only moderate at first, as the bridge crew rushed to finish the third crossing of the Truckee, three miles beyond Camp 24. By April 12 rails were being laid just east of Crystal Peak near the Verdi station that had yet to be established. The area east of Crystal Peak had replaced Camp 24 as the end of train service by April 16.⁴¹ The final work on another bridge across the Truckee at Hunter's Station further delayed the tracklayers, but Hunter's itself became the terminus for train and stage connections on April 29.⁴² Rails reached Reno (formerly Lake's Crossing) at noon on May 4, and service was established to that point from Truckee the following day.⁴³

Few obstacles lay beyond the fourth crossing of the Truckee River at Hunter's, and the tracklayers hardly paused as they surged eastward through Reno. By May 22 cars were running nine miles beyond Reno, and the front was being advanced at a rate of more than a half mile per day. With fair weather and open country, the Chinese graders had moved far ahead, and by June the completed roadbed stretched past the site of Wadsworth, where, after following the Truckee River for seventy miles, the Central Pacific turned away and headed out onto the desert toward the Humboldt River.⁴⁴

Even before tracklaying began at Camp 24 in the spring of 1868, other workers had begun clearing snow from the line east of Cisco in preparation for spanning the gap between Tunnel 12 and Coldstream. In places the snow was frozen solid to a depth of thirty feet and had to be broken out with picks.⁴⁵ On May 15, about a week after the track from Truckee reached Reno, the eastern terminus of the main portion of the Central Pacific was moved from Cisco to Summit Valley, just west of the Summit Tunnel.⁴⁶ It remained the end-of-track until the missing segment further east was completed. By June 14 the grade between Tunnel 12

and Coldstream was ready for rail, and tracklaying to close the gap between the two segments of the Central Pacific began. The seven miles were rapidly covered, apparently by crews working from both directions, and the final spike securing the connection between Reno and Sacramento was driven at 8:20 P.M. on June 17.⁴⁷

At 6:30 the following morning, the locomotive *Antelope* departed Sacramento with a train of one freight car, a baggage car, and three coaches; it ran all the way to Reno, arriving at 8:00 that evening—the first train to run through from Sacramento. The train returned to Sacramento the following day, and thereafter there was regular service between Reno and Sacramento, with the fare established at \$15 and the 154 miles covered in a scheduled nine and one-half hours.⁴⁸

Once the Central Pacific reached Nevada, its construction organization was in high gear and there were few obstacles. East of Reno, there were no tunnels and only five bridges in all of the rest of the way across Nevada. While it had taken almost five years to complete the 154 miles of track from Sacramento to Reno, it took only another ten months to build the remaining 536 miles to a connection with the Union Pacific at Promontory, Utah.

Though achieved at great effort and expense, building the isolated stretch of railroad along the Truckee River from Coldstream to Camp 24 produced the desired result for the Central Pacific. It immediately yielded federal bonds worth more than \$1 million, the sale of which helped offset the expense of tunnel



Reno and the Truckee Meadows from the west. (A. A. Hart photo, Kyle Wyatt Collection)

construction in 1867. Furthermore, it put the end-of-track some sixty miles ahead of where it would otherwise have been in June 1868. If nothing else, this moved the eventual connection with the Union Pacific at least that many miles farther east, thereby producing government bonds and corresponding grants of land for the Central Pacific that would otherwise have gone to the Union Pacific.

Moreover, by meeting the Union Pacific at Promontory, the Central Pacific was within striking distance of the Salt Lake Valley and was able to negotiate the purchase of Union Pacific track to Ogden, where the junction between the two railroads was established. Had the initial connection been too many miles west of Promontory, the Central Pacific may have been denied affordable access to Salt Lake, and would have lost considerable revenue over the subsequent years as a consequence.

Unfortunately for historians and railroad buffs, the actual entry of the railroad into Nevada appears to have gone unheralded in contemporary accounts. This can probably be attributed to the fact that the railroad which reached Nevada in late October 1867 provided only limited service and, because it ran only to Truckee, clearly did not fulfill Nevada's desire for a railroad connection with the California tidewater. Even when this railroad was extended east of Camp 24 in March 1868, and service became more regular, trains still ran only to Truckee, and passengers and freight continued to cross the summit via the wagon road. Coupled with this incomplete connection with California, the general ignorance as to the exact location of the state border may also be to blame for the failure to note the railroad's arrival into Nevada.

The effect of this silence is that we do not know precisely when the railroad actually entered Nevada. Based on the limited evidence at hand, including E. B. Crocker's two-day estimate for completion of the section of railroad east of Truckee, the only thing we can claim with any degree of confidence is that the Central Pacific reached the Nevada border on October 31—Nevada Day—1867. The railroad may indeed have extended some 0.3 mile into Nevada at that time or shortly thereafter, but it certainly did not pass the site of the second crossing of the Truckee River until completion of that span late in March 1868. Myron Angel's account, which set us on this inquiry by its impossible claim that a train reached Crystal Peak in 1867—before the two bridges between the state line and that point had been completed—turns out to be a subtle clue that the end-of-track at Camp 24 was actually inside Nevada by December 1867.

NOTES

¹Myron Angel, *History of Nevada* (Oakland: Thompson and West, 1881), 275.

²For instance, David F. Myrick, *Railroads of Nevada and Eastern California* (Berkeley: Howell-North, 1962), 2; George Kraus, *High Road to Promontory* (Palo Alto: American West, 1969), 183.

³Virginia City *Territorial Enterprise* (21 March 1868); Mark Hopkins to Collis P. Huntington, 30 March 1868, Collis P. Huntington Papers, Microfilm, Syracuse University.

⁴This locomotive was the *Sacramento*, which the Central Pacific purchased specifically for this task

from the Sacramento Valley Railroad, under which, back in August 1855, it had been the first locomotive to operate anywhere west of the Great Plains.

⁵Hopkins to Huntington, 7 February 1867; Edwin B. Crocker to Huntington, 20 March and 3 May 1867; John R. Gilliss, "Tunnels of the Pacific Railroad," *Transactions of the American Society of Civil Engineers*, 1 (1870), 161–62.

⁶The Central Pacific's total profit from operations in 1867 (when Cisco was the end-of-track) was \$869,273.68, while the total amount paid to Crocker and Company for construction in 1867 was \$9,930,282.19. "Current Statement of the Central Pacific Railroad Company of California for the Year Ending December 31, 1867," reproduced as Exhibit 5 in "Report of Richard F. Stevens, Chief Accountant, to the United States Pacific Investigation Commission on the Accounts of the Central Pacific and Western Pacific Railroad Companies, October 8, 1887," U.S. Congress, Senate, *Report of the United States Pacific Railway Commission*, 50th Cong., 1st sess., 1887, Sen. Ex. Doc., p. 4538.

⁷Letters of E. B. Crocker and Leland Stanford to Huntington on January 9, 1867, indicate that the idea of skipping ahead to the Truckee River was being discussed at that time. Letters to Huntington from Crocker on January 15, from Stanford on January 17, and from Hopkins on January 21 reveal that the decision to build ahead along the Truckee had by then been made. The phrase "independent link" for the isolated railroad on the Truckee River was attributed to the Central Pacific in the *Gold Hill Daily News* of August 21, 1867.

⁸*Auburn Placer Herald* (29 December 1866); *Sacramento Union* (15 September 1866).

⁹Hopkins to Huntington, 21 January 1867.

¹⁰Charles Crocker to Huntington, 25 April 1867.

¹¹*Sacramento Union* (8 February 1867).

¹²E. B. Crocker to Huntington, 31 January, 3 May, and 4 June 1867.

¹³C. Crocker to Huntington, 25 April 1867.

¹⁴The last of the Central Pacific's first nineteen locomotives arrived in San Francisco on November 3, 1866. Engines 20 through 23 departed New York in August, September, and October 1866. Engines 24 and 25 had been delivered from the factory by the date of the January decision to build ahead on the Truckee, but they were not shipped from New York until February and March of 1867. *San Francisco Alta California* (3 November 1866); Huntington, "Records of Invoices, 1863–1885," 52, 55, 61, 78, 88.

¹⁵Stanford to Huntington, 6 April 1867; E. B. Crocker to Huntington, 8 June 1867. Incidentally, though their routes between Sacramento and San Francisco Bay are parallel, this early Western Pacific was in no way related to the Western Pacific Railroad built forty years later.

¹⁶E. B. Crocker to Huntington, 10 July 1867; *Sacramento Bee* (13 July 1867); *Sacramento Union* (18 July 1867). Too many contemporary sources identify the *San Mateo* as the first locomotive brought across the Sierra for there to be any doubt. Whether this was the first locomotive into Nevada depends upon whether or not the rails had been extended across the state line before March 1868, when two additional locomotives were set up for use on the railroad east of Truckee. Though the *San Mateo* was operated by the Central Pacific in construction service in Nevada, it remained a Western Pacific locomotive until the summer of 1870, when it became Central Pacific No. 171. It was sold in 1889—presumably for scrap. The locomotive erroneously identified in the *History of Nevada* (edited by Sam Davis [Reno: Elms, 1913], 608–9) as the first locomotive east of the Sierra was the former California Pacific *Flea*, sold to the Central Pacific in 1879, and not brought across the Sierra until after 1893.

¹⁷E. B. Crocker to Huntington, 23 July 1867.

¹⁸*Gold Hill Daily News* (19 July and 6 August 1867).

¹⁹E. B. Crocker to Huntington, 1 August 1867; confirmed in *Sacramento Bee* (3 August 1867) and *Gold Hill Daily News* (6 August 1867). Subsequent use of the name Coburn's in the newspapers and by railroad officials, and the fact that the name change was announced again the following spring in the *Sacramento Union* (11 April 1868) and the *Virginia City Territorial Enterprise* (14 April 1868) indicate that the new name was not immediately adopted.

²⁰E. B. Crocker to Huntington, 2 July 1867.

²¹*Folsom Telegraph* (21 September 1867); *Gold Hill Daily News* (2 October 1867).

²²E. B. Crocker to Huntington, 29 October 1867.

²³*Ibid.*, 19 November and 5 December 1867.

²⁴Hopkins to Huntington, 16 and 30 March 1868.

²⁵Central Pacific vouchers (1868) 235, 236, and 236 (for October, November, and December 1867).

²⁶Virginia City *Daily Trespass* (17 April 1868).

²⁷Sacramento *Union* (21 November 1867); Gold Hill *Daily News* (27 November 1867).

²⁸As if the matter of dating the railroad's entry into Nevada were not complicated enough, it was confused even more in 1872, when a new state line was surveyed and marked about 0.6 mile to the east of the 1863 border. Clearly, the railroad did not reach the point where this new line would be established until April 1868; but as that line did not then exist, to use it for dating the railroad's entry would be anachronistic. For a history of this state line, see James W. Hulse, "The California-Nevada Boundary: History of a Conflict. Part I" *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 23 (Summer 1980), 87-109, "Part II," 23 (Fall 1980) 157-78.

²⁹Yet another possibility is that Angel's date of December 13 had nothing at all to do with the first passenger train to Camp 24, but was derived from some now-lost record or recollection that the actual end-of-track at Camp 24 was only extended across the border and into Nevada on December 13. In that case, earlier trains could not actually have entered the state. If this was the case, then the November 11 Gold Hill *Daily News* report that the railroad had reached the second crossing by that date is without literal meaning. But, if Angel knew that the track had only been extended as far as the border on December 13, how could he say that the train of that date ran all the way to Crystal Peak, some six miles beyond?

³⁰E. B. Crocker to Huntington, 29 October 1867; Sacramento *Union* (31 October 1867).

³¹Hopkins to Huntington, 1 December 1867; Sacramento *Union* (2 December 1867); Virginia City *Daily Trespass* (2 December 1867). Profiles confirm that the true summit of the Central Pacific was just west of Tunnel 6, the Summit Tunnel.

³²E. B. Crocker to Huntington, 5 December 1867.

³³Samuel S. Montague, "Report of Chief Engineer of Central Pacific upon the Location, Construction, and Equipment of the Road" (1 July 1869), reproduced as Exhibit 3, *Report of the United States Pacific Railway Commission*, p. 3480.

³⁴Sacramento *Union* (9 December 1867).

³⁵E. B. Crocker to Huntington, 21 December 1867, 3 January 1868.

³⁶Carson City *Daily Appeal* (11 April 1868).

³⁷Reports in the Virginia City *Daily Trespass* (27 March 1868) and the Virginia City *Territorial Enterprise* (2 April 1868) to the effect that passenger service was just then commencing on the railroad between Camp 24 and Truckee imply that the earlier attempt at passenger service was short lived.

³⁸E. B. Crocker to Huntington, 11 February 1868; San Francisco *Alta California* (4 February 1868); Virginia City *Daily Trespass* (17 February 1868).

³⁹Sacramento *Union* (3 June 1868), quoting Grass Valley *Union* (2 June 1868).

⁴⁰Virginia City *Daily Trespass* (17 February 1868); E. B. Crocker to Huntington, 24 March 1868; Hopkins to Huntington, 30 March 1868.

⁴¹Virginia City *Territorial Enterprise* (12, 16 April 1868).

⁴²*Ibid.* (12, 30 April 1868); Virginia City *Daily Trespass* (27 April 1868).

⁴³Virginia City *Territorial Enterprise* (5 May 1868).

⁴⁴*Ibid.* (22, 27, 30 May 1868).

⁴⁵E. B. Crocker, to Huntington, 11 February 1868; Virginia City *Territorial Enterprise* (14 February 1868); Montague, "Report of Chief Engineer," p. 3480.

⁴⁶Virginia City *Daily Trespass* (16 May 1868).

⁴⁷Virginia City *Territorial Enterprise* (14, 18 June 1868). Angel, *History of Nevada*, 275, records the date of this event as June 19, 1868.

⁴⁸Sacramento *Bee* (18 June 1868); Sacramento *Union* (19, 20 June 1868); Virginia City *Territorial Enterprise* (24 June 1868).

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

THE JOSEPHINE AND GEORGE SCOTT DIARIES

A 1914 DESERT JOURNEY

Sally S. Zanjani

A diary of a prospecting trip in which a woman participated remains a great rarity. Sources on women prospectors in the American West tend to be brief and fragmentary. Only one dictated her memoirs, two appear in biographies, and occasionally a few of the more colorful characters emerge in an article. Women prospectors did not often keep diaries or leave their letters and collected papers to historical institutions. Many came from the working classes and were thus less likely to have the leisure to be diarists and correspondents than middle class women. Moreover, the character of the prospector ran counter to self-conscious revelation. Not only did prospectors lack that sense of their own importance that moves politicians and the like to preserve themselves for posterity through donations of papers, but they also tended to be secretive loners. This preference was often heightened by the perceived need to conceal their areas of activity from those with nefarious designs, even to mislead them. "Never believe a prospector," said prospector Anna Rechel to her friends. "If they tell you to go that way, you go the other way, the exact opposite."¹

For these reasons, the three volume Josephine and George Scott diary, "A Thousand Miles of Desert and Mountains: A Prospecting Trip across Nevada and over the Sierras," acquired by the new Women's Archive at Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno holds a good deal of interest. Unlike most diaries, this one was a mutual endeavor, dictated by George and typed from notes taken down in shorthand by Josephine, difficult as it is to imagine her sitting with her typewriter on a box between her knees in the shade of a grease-

A frequent contributor to the *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, Sally S. Zanjani is also the author of *Ghost Dance Winter and Other Tales of the Frontier*, which was published by the Nevada Historical Society in 1994.

wood bush in the remoter reaches of the desert. The Scott diary is actually a scrapbook that contains not only the typed journal but also clippings, photos, bills, letters, and labels from canned foods (probably Josephine's domestic touch). While written in the first person in George's voice, the diary may have incorporated Josephine's observations along with the cannery labels.

The prospecting trip the Scotts undertook, beginning on March 4, 1914 and ending in the fall, brought them from the Moapa Valley northeast of Las Vegas, Nevada, to the Amargosa, to Goldfield, and across the Sierra by Sonora Pass to California—not the thousand miles of desert of the title. By George's calculations, it was less than 600. Their outfit consisted of a wagon equipped with supplies, a team of burros to draw it, and an additional pair of burros loaded with pack saddles.

Very little information on the couple has emerged aside from the experiences they recorded in their journal. Apparently they had no children and previously lived in Orangevale, a suburb of Sacramento. George was unemployed, and their financial circumstances appeared modest but not desperate. Although they could afford their basic supplies, they rummaged through a scrap heap for usable items, and Josephine made hairpins from bent wire. George had done a little writing on mining and construction subjects and may have hoped to do



Josephine and the Scotts' dog. (*Special Collections, University of Nevada–Reno Library*)

more based upon the experiences to be recorded in the diary. While the Scotts were doubtless unaware of it, middle age was by no means an unusual stage of life at which to embark upon prospecting. When Josephine and George were about to turn fifty-two and fifty-six respectively, they may have felt that if a long-cherished fantasy were not soon realized, it never would be. One thing is absolutely clear, because the Scotts state it in unequivocal terms: The prospecting trip was Josephine's idea.²



"Our camp at Las Vegas" (Special Collections, University of Nevada-Reno Library)

The Scotts found Las Vegas well stocked with novice prospectors like themselves, and also with advice for novice prospectors, all of which they gratefully accepted. It is fortunate, however, that they had no occasion to act upon that portion of it that related to swallowing black gunpowder as a remedy for rattlesnake bite. Their most respected adviser was John Paxton, a life-long prospector, who sagely told them, "The average prospector never finds anything until he has to climb over it." This no doubt encouraged the Scotts to believe that even greenhorns like themselves had as good a chance of stumbling across a ledge of pay ore as anyone else.³

Much of the advice concerned dealing with the burros, a consuming preoccupation for the desert prospector, who cursed the "jack" for its intractability at the same time that he depended on it because it could survive in the back country on less feed and water than a horse. The Scotts feelingly wrote of the prospector who said that three-quarters of his twenty-eight years on the desert had been spent looking for his burros and recounted their own difficulties in rich detail. At Tule Springs, Josephine put on her boots and led the burros around in the water, giving them "practice" so that they might consent to cross. Elsewhere the burros had to be blindfolded before they could be pulled across a bridge, or Josephine had to lead them through heavy sand while George urged them on from the side. The Scotts made recurrent reference to the burros' "ugly moods": Jack lay down and refused to go further twelve times in an afternoon; "the burros were not anxious to resume work and Jack showed his views about it by kicking at me twice."⁴

Although wild jacks sometimes hung around the camp sounding the call of the wild and the Scotts spent a good deal of time chasing runaways, their major problem lay in keeping their burros in motion. North of Goldfield in July, they noted: "Nothing we could do would force the grays into more than just the slowest kind of a gait—a mile an hour. And Chino limped . . . I lead Tucson while Chino was tied to the rear axle. Tucson dropped on the trail twice and refused to get up, although a small stick applied to her ears soon brought her to her feet. And how she pulled back and sagged and showed every sign of distress. But when we reached camp and she knew that the day's work was done, she walked nimbly around the neighborhood browsing and feeding." Yet, even as Josephine "baked bread for us and the burros" and the Scotts gradually schooled themselves in the intricacies of burro management, a harbinger of a new way of life for the desert prospector came roaring over the horizon in a cloud of dust. On a road near Yerington, Josephine "unloaded the shotgun" to ward off a speeding automobile that had earlier forced their wagon off the road.⁵

Just as the Scotts' difficulties with the burros give a sense of other women prospectors' experiences in the desert, so too do the hardships the couple encountered. Like all Nevadans outdoors, they had to contend with wind sometimes so strong that it ripped the tent pegs from the ground, the heat, and worst



"Chino and Tucson on the trail to Tule Springs." (*Special Collections, University of Nevada-Reno Library*)



"Josephine took a snapshot of us when we came in." (*Special Collections, University of Nevada-Reno Library*)

of all, the combination of the two: "The wind comes off the desert and the skin fairly shrunk under its heat"; "The hot wind burned our eyeballs again so that they were all aflame"; "A man does not decay on the desert, he dries up. Josephine's lips were swollen and caked with alkali when we came in." "We have been sitting in a furnace," they observed after the trip from Ash Meadows to Rosewell. Once Josephine nearly succumbed to heat stroke. On another occasion, as George returned from a long, hot tramp, he saw a mirage of Josephine coming to meet him, an image that perhaps contained the inner truth that he thought of his wife as his savior. This vision contrasted with the customary desert traveler's image of a pool fringed with greenery. Sometimes, to avoid the heat, they traveled in the night and early morning and laid up for the rest of the day: "We turned in and just as soon as I shut my eyes Josephine told me it was time to get up. I consulted my stem-winder—Ansonia, \$1.25—and noticed that both the hands pointed straight up . . . I hung on to the ties till 2:40, then we turned out and made our coffee and fed the burros by the light of the stars . . . We broke camp at 4:40 and reached running water, near Carrara, in five hours." At best, the Scotts could cover about twenty-eight miles in a day-and-a-half, and usually a good deal less. As a rule, Josephine drove the team while George walked, occasionally changing places. Some prospectors shunned the desert during the hot summers; the Scotts, however, had probably opted for summer because their plan entailed crossing the Sierra before the snows fell.⁶

Recalcitrant burros and scorching heat were not the only troubles encountered by the Scotts. They also contended with pests: "In Ash Meadows the air is fairly alive with horseflies and deer flies. We killed some 700 horse flies in our camp, at Fairbanks, and they attacked us so fiercely that we could not have staid there if we had not destroyed them." Elsewhere they noted "tarantulas in everything." By that time, they had learned a lesson: "We sleep in the wagon, as it gets us entirely away from such things as rattlesnakes, tarantulas, scorpions, centipedes and hydrophobia skunks." When a rattlesnake bit their dog, they "declared the truth" over the little animal in keeping with the precepts of Christian Science. Both Scotts were devout Christian Scientists. They regularly held services wherever they happened to be on their desert journey, and Josephine believed that Christian Science had cured her of bad lungs, heart disease, and an internal abscess, and helped her to stop using morphine and strychnine (the dog also recovered).⁷

In addition to contending with rattlesnakes and hydrophobia skunks, the Scotts compounded the difficulties of the journey by making their share of mistakes. At one point, Josephine remarked that their record for taking the wrong road was practically flawless, with the result that they sometimes landed in a deserted mining camp with no water. "Mistakes are fatal on the desert," George darkly observed. Other novice prospectors were arriving at the same conclusion. The Scotts told of one man who, after getting himself similarly lost, declared that he was "going back to the city where he belonged and knew

enough to keep alive." A poem pasted into the diary hints that the Scotts may have entertained the same thought at times:

I've got to get back to the city,
My room where the trolley line curves;
With "L" trains o'erhead every minute
That act like a dope on my nerves.
I want to hear fire bells ringing,
The rattle ty-bang of the street,
Where hawkers of fish and of berries
Their cries for more business repeat

They noticed that they had developed a habit of grumbling.⁸

Yet they persisted, even though the lucky strike they had hoped for failed to materialize. They prospected occasionally, but the diary conveys none of the true prospector's obsessional excitement. Perhaps they found the search less absorbing than they had anticipated. George did the greater part of the pros-



"Our camp at Amargosa." (*Special Collections, University of Nevada-Reno Library*)

pecting, while Josephine performed the lion's share of roasting and panning ore samples, as well as most of the domestic responsibilities and a share of the hunting. It is likely that the Scotts had hoped to live off the land to a larger extent than the Nevada desert afforded. Although they sometimes ate doves for breakfast or shot a jack rabbit and shared it with the dog, several days could pass without seeing so much as a rabbit. Once, when George once came upon a duck and a snipe at a Tule Springs water hole while hunting, they seemed like such ornaments upon the empty landscape that he could not bring himself to shoot them.⁹

No information has yet emerged on the lives of the Scotts after they completed their trip. Possibly the seed of prospecting, once planted, brought them into the field again on future occasions. Despite the hardships they endured, they found much to interest them on their journey. They seemed to derive less pleasure from the scenery than many other prospectors did, though Josephine admired the spring wild flowers in the Amargosa. What most excited their attention was the odd characters they met, individuals who, in Wallace Stegner's memorable phrase, took on "the dignity of rareness" in their remote surroundings.¹⁰ The Scotts recounted the stories of these desert rats with the rapt appreciation of tourists encountering an exotic tribe. Prospecting undoubtedly contains a large element of tourism, albeit of a more strenuous variety than vacationing on a cruise ship. For the Scotts, who did not depend on prospecting for a living or pursue it with much determination, the search for pay ore provided the pretext that enabled them to "come into the country." Tourists they were but of a rather special kind—tourists less intent upon the scenery or the ruins than meeting the natives.

NOTES

¹Barbara Powell, interview with author, Winnemucca, Nevada, May 8, 1992. On frontier women's diaries, see Sandra L. Myres, *Westering Women and the Frontier Experience 1800–1915* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), xviii–xix.

²Josephine and George Scott, "A Thousand Miles of Desert and Mountains: A Prospecting Trip across Nevada and over the Sierras," unpublished diary in 3 vols., Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno: I, 31, 95; II, 240–41; III, 275, 298, 374. I am indebted to Susan Searcy, Manuscript Curator, Special Collections, for drawing the Scott diaries to my attention; she believes that there may have been a fourth volume, which has not yet been located.

³*Ibid.*, I, 39, 74.

⁴*Ibid.*, I, 70, 127; III, 282, 286, 316, 363. On burros, also see, Walt Wilhelm, *Last Rig to Battle Mountain* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1970), 147–48.

⁵Scott diaries: II, 166; III, 265, 319, 361.

⁶*Ibid.*: II, 245, 247, 249, 251–52, 259; III, 286, 316.

⁷*Ibid.*: I, 86; II, 209–10, 244, 254; III, 346.

⁸*Ibid.*: II, 234, poem facing p. 142; III, 320, 328–29.

⁹*Ibid.*: I, 66, 88–89; II, 178–79, 182, 187; III, 271, 275, 322.

¹⁰Richard W. Etulain, "A Conversation with Wallace Stegner," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, 40 (Summer, 1990), 8.

BOOK REVIEWS

Senator Alan Bible and the Politics of the New West. By Gary E. Elliott. (Reno and Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 1994, xix + 273 pp.)

There is an old saying that there are two types of senators who work the Washington scene, "show horses" and "work horses." During his twenty years in the United States Senate from 1954-74, Alan Bible was the epitome of the "work horse." Shunning publicity, seldom introducing legislation, making only an occasional speech, avoiding the glare of the klieg lights of television, he contented himself to work obtrusively out of the media spotlight to advance the economic development of Nevada.

Gary Elliott, who teaches history at the Community College of Southern Nevada, contends that Bible believed his only role in the senate was to use his powers to secure federal support for Nevada's economic development. Bible believed that "all politics is local," and he practiced what he preached, taking that maxim to the extreme. In so doing he placed himself in a long tradition of Nevada senators and representatives who worked the halls of congress on behalf of Nevada's development while largely shunning national issues that transcended Nevada's particular interests. He correctly perceived that this strategy would be rewarded by Nevada voters on election day.

Even considering his personal mission, however, Alan Bible took a very narrow and parochial view of his senate seat, seldom deviating from his plan to devote all of his energies to securing for the nation's least populated state as great a share of the federal largesse as possible. Like most successful Nevada politicians, Bible avoided narrow partisanship whenever possible. He worked cooperatively with Democrat and Republican, liberal and conservative alike to secure projects and funds for his state. In that regard he was quite typical of many western congressmen who saw the federal government as the fount of dollars for state and regional economic development.

It is somewhat eerie to read this political biography, because there is little mention of most of the great historical developments of the tumultuous times during which Bible served in the senate. Although he voted for major civil rights legislation, the movement largely passed him by because Nevada had few black residents. One reads this book as if the Cold War were an ethereal dream, because Bible went about his pork barrelling chores without ever becoming

involved in the major debates over Soviet-American relations, atomic weapons policy, Middle Eastern oil, NATO, the United Nations, or foreign aid. Of course he readily pursued expanded roles for the Fallon Naval Air Station, Nellis Air Force Base and the Atomic Test Site, but he never seemed to view those installations within the broader context of American foreign policy. Even the bitter and divisive politics which grew out of the war in Viet Nam concerned him only in passing, although he supported America's military mission in southeast Asia with his votes. He seems to have been oblivious to the social upheavals of the 1960s, because they did not impinge upon his senatorial mission. Improbable as it seems, there is no mention in this study of Bible's even contemplating involving himself in the issue of Watergate. He had far more important things to concern himself with, namely closing yet another senate cloakroom deal to benefit one of his Nevada constituencies.

Thus Bible devoted his energies to protecting grazing rights for ranchers or to fighting importation of foreign minerals to help keep copper and gold prices high. Bible's major interest, of course, lay in an unending quest for additional sources of water for his semi-arid state. Using his ingratiating personality and his willingness to give other senators the limelight, Bible worked very effectively with federal agency heads, lobbyists, and congressmen from western states to expand vital water sources for his parched but growing state. His first major legislative achievement was enactment of the Washoe Reclamation Project in 1956, culminating a long and arduous process begun by his political mentor and predecessor, Patrick McCarran.

Bible's stunning triumph in securing passage of the Southern Nevada Water Project in 1968 is one of the most important events in modern Nevada history. It is also testimony to Bible's persistence and back room legislative skills. After more than a decade of politicking he gained passage of legislation that provided an additional 300,000 acre-feet of Colorado River water to southern Nevada and federal dollars to construct the delivery system. This political coup made possible the enormous growth of Clark County in the past quarter century. A native of Lovelock and a resident of Reno, Bible apparently never stopped to consider the implications of his legislative effort. "No doubt unintentionally," Elliott wryly observes, "Bible did more than any other man to cause the shift in power from Reno to Las Vegas. . . ."

One of the major ironies of Bible's career was that his deep involvement in issues regarding water and land policy led him to drift inexorably into becoming an advocate for environmental interests. He probably would never have accepted such a label for fear of inflaming Nevada voters, but during his tenure as chair of the subcommittee on Parks and Recreation, he oversaw the establishment of twenty-nine national parks, monuments, or historical sites. His interest began with his strong desire to help establish the Great Basin National Park, an event which occurred long after he left public life. It bothered him greatly that

his state did not contain a single national park. This was especially bothersome, because he understood that fact was testimony to the powerful influence upon public policy wielded by ranching and mining interests. Even this mild-mannered, non-confrontational gentleman became irritated with those interests when they adamantly opposed establishment of a park in eastern Nevada on what he considered to be relatively worthless and unused land. This realization prompted him to review carefully his position on conservation and environmental issues. During the later years of his senate career Bible joined the tradition established by Gifford Pinchot and Theodore Roosevelt, believing that there should be multiple uses made of natural resources, and that they should be made available to the largest possible number of Americans. In his later days in the senate Bible also found that he had little in common with the leaders of the powerful political movement that was coalescing under the name of the Sagebrush Rebellion.

Elliott makes clear that Alan Bible derived his political clout as a quintessential member of the "Senate Club." He was a consummate senate insider who had infinite faith in the power of the federal government to influence the life of his constituents in a positive fashion. The dramatic political developments of the mid-1990s, which are aimed at sharply curtailing federal involvement in local affairs and cutting the cost of government, are a backlash against the political persona that Alan Bible represented. As Elliott emphasizes, "From his perspective, the flow of federal dollars into Nevada was federalism operating at its highest and best level."

Bible was universally liked by his peers for his honesty, his consistency on policy and political matters, his down-to-earth likeable personality. During his early days in the senate he cultivated a special relationship with Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson which worked to Nevada's benefit time and again, especially after Johnson became president. Without LBJ's support, passage of the Southern Nevada Water Project would have been, at best, problematical. When illness prompted Bible's decision to retire in 1974, his departure was genuinely lamented by senators of all political persuasions.

Gary Elliott has written the definitive political biography of Alan Bible. The author has immersed himself in the massive body of relevant government documents, published materials, and manuscript collections upon which he has drawn to write this balanced, incisive biography. Elliott's considerable scholarly skills have enabled him to focus upon the major issues and to distill them into a coherent and meaningful critical analysis of an important public life. The result is an important contribution to our understanding of the dynamics of modern Nevada history.

Richard O. Davies
University of Nevada, Reno

Shoshone Mike. By Frank Bergon. (Viking Penguin, 1987, Reprinted Reno and Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 1994, 304 pp.)

The year is 1911. In San Francisco, patrons at Jack's Restaurant dine on buttery sand-dabs that flake apart on the tongue, attended by waiters attired in tuxedos and silk shirts. Outside, airplanes fly relay races, endurance tests, and altitude flights, as the bold aviators vie for fame and prizes. Tourists stroll through St. James Cathedral, feed the ducks in the city park, or attend one of the many edifying lectures being delivered in museums, libraries, and churches throughout the city. The scene is civilized, urbane, modern.

Meanwhile, what the newspapers call "the most brutal murder in the history of Nevada" has just taken place in a remote canyon in northern Nevada, "a cold, bleak country of box canyons and lava beds" (p. 11), a raw land of "dry, brush-covered wastes and bleak, wrinkled mountains" (p. 89). In Little High Rock Canyon, four stockmen have been slain by a roving band of Indians. A posse is forming to find the killers.

Frank Bergon's novel *Shoshone Mike* chronicles one of the last Indian skirmishes in the "Old West" of the early twentieth century. Who killed the stockmen, and why? Based on extensive historical research, Bergon—born in Ely, Nevada, and professor of English at Vassar College—reconstructs the events leading up to and following the famous Little High Rock massacre. Much of the book reads like a detective story, as Humboldt County Sheriff Graham Lamb attempts to get to the bottom of things before the hot-headed posse led by Captain Donelley of the Nevada State Police catches up with the fleeing Indians. In the end, the posse corners the Indians before Lamb can reason with the posse. In a sordid blood bath, eight Indians are slaughtered and the four surviving children taken prisoner.

Was justice done? Some think so. Some think not. Each character maintains his or her own interpretation of events, and the story is told not from a single point of view, but through the eyes of almost a dozen different characters. These include Sheriff Lamb, a fair-minded, slow-acting civil servant; his wife Nellie, who insists that Indians are savages who stand in the way of progress; Captain Donelley, an ambitious man, eager for victory; Father Enright, who preaches that the white man should love his brothers the Indians; Mort West, a tough orphan seeking to prove his manhood; Jean Erramouspe, a disillusioned Basque sheepherder and a miner whose father was one of the murdered stockmen; the *Humboldt County* newspaper, always quick to sensationalize a lead; and Shoshone Mike, father of the Indian family group. Each of these characters is modeled on a historical person, whose perspective Bergon recreates from archival journals, diaries, newspaper articles, letters, government reports, and interviews with surviving family members and friends.

The book's strengths as history may account for its weaknesses as art. The

multiple points of view accurately reflect the competing versions of reality surrounding this disputed incident. Nonetheless, refracting the story through the eyes of so many different characters leads to irrelevant diversions, a split focus, and superficial character development. While genuinely laudable for its historical detail, *Shoshone Mike* suffers the faults of many first novels: it tells rather than shows; its minor plots threaten to eclipse the main plot; and the reader must plod through two hundred pages of background exposition before the action begins, and then it is over in a heartbeat. However, for a historical reconstruction of the Little High Rock massacre and subsequent man hunt, *Shoshone Mike* cannot be beat. It excels at presenting the Indian's side of the story, a side too often ignored in shoot-em-up Westerns. What *Shoshone Mike* lacks in entertainment value and aesthetic unity, then, it makes up for in educational value and intelligent sympathy.

Readers who enjoy exploring controversial Nevada issues presented in fictional form might wish to sample Bergon's two most recent novels, both available from the University of Nevada Press: *The Temptations of St. Ed and Brother S* (1993) about monasticism and nuclear energy, and *Wild Game* (1995) about the 1980 murder of two game wardens by wildlife poachers.

Cheryll Glotfelty
University of Nevada, Reno

John Sutter and a Wider West. Ed. by Kenneth N. Owens. (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1994.)

In this short, engaging volume, Kenneth N. Owens, professor of history at California State University, Sacramento, has gathered together several writings focusing on John Augustus Sutter, an important but controversial California pioneer. In 1839, the Swiss-born Sutter founded New Helvetia on the present-day site of Sacramento—establishing it as an important agricultural and commercial center and the first white settlement in California's vast Central Valley. Sutter also played an important role in the early politics of Mexican California, and later helped to facilitate the American takeover of the region through involvement in both the Bear Flag Revolt and Mexican-American War of 1846–48. He was later a central figure in the January 1848 discovery of gold at a saw mill he built at Coloma—a small settlement east of Sacramento on the American River. This event precipitated the famous California Gold Rush.

Owens presents Sutter's varied activities, utilizing one important primary source, namely Sutter's own recollections. He also presents five present-day evaluations written by Howard R. Lamar, Albert L. Hurtado, Iris H. W. Engstrand, Richard White, and Patricia Nelson Limerick—all leading exponents of the so-called "New Western History."

The volume begins with edited excerpts from Sutter's own so-called "Diary." Not really a diary, these recollections were actually written in 1856, several years after the events they purport to describe. Much of their historical accuracy is questionable. According to editor Kenneth Owens, Sutter attempted "to portray himself as the heroic founder of civilization in the Sacramento region," "overstating the importance" of his role in the Mexican-American War, and "claiming exaggerated credit for the gold discovery" (p. 2). Also Sutter's account reflected his "lifelong skill in finding excuses" for his failures. Specifically, Sutter blamed the California Gold Rush for his ultimate financial ruin. His recollections, moreover, provided the basis for formulation of the so-called "Sutter myth." (p. 3)

The following five historical essays strip away the "Sutter myth," critically assessing Sutter's actual impact on both California and the "wider West." Howard R. Lamar in his essay, "John Augustus Sutter, Western Entrepreneur," views Sutter as a significant figure whose importance transcends the narrow confines of California. Sutter was "but one of many wilderness entrepreneurs—or empire builders—who helped shape the American West and bring its resources and promise to the attention of the world." (p. 27) Sutter, according to Lamar, learned from, and imitated the practices of earlier "wilderness entrepreneurs," including William Bent, founder of Bent's Fort on the upper Arkansas River; and John McLoughlin, chief factor of Fort Vancouver, the Hudson's Bay Company outpost on the Columbia River. Lamar, while generally critical of Sutter, attempts a balanced presentation. "What Sutter tried to do to turn his wilderness outpost into an empire . . . in seven short years is impressive by itself" (p. 35). Despite his failures, Lamar concludes, "we can rightly pay tribute to [Sutter] as one of the great wilderness entrepreneurs" (p. 45).

By contrast Albert L. Hurtado in his essay "John A. Sutter and the Indian Business" is much less charitable. Hurtado is highly critical of both the man and the means he used to build his wilderness empire, specifically, Sutter's ruthless exploitation of "the native people of the Sacramento region," as his primary labor force. (p. 51) Hurtado, like Lamar, views Sutter as part of the wider West, a "practical man . . . quite capable of imitating" in a "calculating and ruthless" manner the behavior and tactics of those western entrepreneurs who preceded him. (p. 56)

Iris H. W. Engstrand in her "John Sutter: A Biographical Examination" is even more critical. Engstrand's fascinating, engaging essay considers the California pioneer as a total "human being" looking "at his private life and at those traits of character that contributed to his total personality" (p. 76). She acknowledges Sutter's "eloquence of speech" and "gift of making friends with ease," (p. 77) along with his widely-heralded generosity in helping overland emigrants entering California during the early 1840s. But in general, Engstrand judges Sutter a failure both in his professional and personal life. In response to business failure in Switzerland, Sutter abandoned not just his creditors but his wife and children

as well. Following his arrival in America, Sutter developed a heavy addiction to alcohol. He failed as a trader both in Missouri and along the Santa Fe Trail, once more fleeing his creditors, as he moved on to California. At New Helvetia, Sutter took on a native Hawaiian mistress, fathering by her a number of illegitimate children, and then abandoning her in her older age. Sutter also carried on numerous liaisons with Native American women, exhibiting a particular (some would say peculiar) preference for young adolescent girls. Sutter, moreover, avoided "responsibility for his own errors of judgment—great and small," always blaming others. (p. 89)

In a marked shift of focus, Richard White in a perceptive essay considers "John Sutter and the Natural World" from the perspective of the environmental history of California's Central Valley. Like other contemporary white Euro-Americans, Sutter considered the West a vast wilderness to be "conquered" with "unworthy rivals" (specifically, the Mexicans and Indians) to be "overcome, and progress ensured." (p. 94–5) White credits Sutter as an "innovator," effectively utilizing the varied resources of his local environment. But at the same time, White views Sutter as merely another "ecological invader . . . participating in an ongoing process" initiated years earlier by the region's Indian population. (p. 100) Sutter, moreover, was limited by his environment, never able to completely control it.

In a final essay, "John Sutter: Prototype for Failure," Patricia Nelson Limerick echoes the assessment of Iris H. W. Engstrand, in judging Sutter a failure in both his business and interpersonal relationships. Limerick, however, moves beyond Sutter himself in discussing a more basic failure, specifically the failure of Sutter's subsequent chroniclers to accurately present their subject's "rich and revealing story." These writers, according to Limerick, let Sutter's story shrink "to a thin pious parable" based on myths formulated by Sutter himself. The result is a "fake Sutter, a dehumanized Sutter, a Sutter who has been washed, sanitized, bleached, shrunk to size." Sutter's story, moreover, is not unique but endemic of the larger story of the American West, wherein all-too-many writers have, in the words of Limerick, reduced the region's "story of great drama and complexity [to] a dull and pious parable of a continent mastered and progress advanced, where a few failed so that others might succeed." (pp. 112–13)

In conclusion, the five well-written essays in this volume reflect both a fresh perspective and innovative methodology, standing at the cutting edge of "New Western History" scholarship. Here John Sutter is presented as an interesting, complex personality, not just in his own right, but more important, as an archetypal figure of the "wider West." *John Sutter and a Wider West* is a "model work," which will, hopefully, inspire similar future studies of other western figures of various racial, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds.

Newell G. Bringhurst
College of the Sequoias

The End of American Exceptionalism: Frontier Anxiety from the Old West to the New Deal. By David M. Wrobel. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993, x + 233 pp.)

In the century since Frederick Jackson Turner's landmark essay, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," historians have debated every facet of his argument. The historical community divided for a time in the 1930s into Turnerians and anti-Turnerians, debating when and whether the frontier had closed and whether frontier "individualism" had enriched the American spirit or impoverished civic life and cultural progress. More recently, a different response is reshaping our understanding of the American West. "New Western Historians" like Patricia Nelson Limerick and Richard White have relabeled westward expansion a process of conquest and begun to restore dispossessed groups to the history books that for a century had largely ignored them.

Rather than join these debates over the image, reality, and legacy of the frontier, David M. Wrobel describes how "frontier anxiety"—concern about what the frontier's closing meant for America—figured into the writings of scores of academics, popular authors, and political leaders and into significant public policy debates from the 1870s to the 1930s. A quarter-century before Turner's essay, magazine writers, explorers, and intellectuals from John Wesley Powell to Henry George began to predict the end of the frontier. In the 1880s and 1890s these predictions fueled debates over alien landholding, and the specter of a closing frontier contributed to arguments for immigration restriction and territorial expansion. The anxieties were both cultural and economic: Turner emphasized how the "safety valve" of the frontier had nurtured American individualism, while the economist Richard Ely expressed the Malthusian view that the end of free land would eventually lead to overpopulation, insufficient production, and poverty heretofore unknown in the United States. "Postfrontier anxiety," a new set of concerns predicated on the belief that the frontier *had* closed, emerged amid the predominant optimism of the turn of the century. Arguing that frontier individualism had attenuated civic spirit and collective responsibility, Progressive-era thinkers encouraged a "necessary transition from individualism to cooperation in the absence of the frontier" (p. 85). Wrobel finds elements of postfrontier anxiety in conservationism and "back-to-the-land" movements early in this century, as well as in renewed calls for immigration restriction during the short-lived "Malthusian Alarmism" of the 1920s (an ironic fear, given that agricultural overproduction, not its opposite, plagued American farmers). By the 1930s evocations of the frontier could be seen across the political spectrum: Conservatives like Herbert Hoover argued that the American "pioneer spirit" persisted and that new frontiers remained, New Dealers echoed the Progressives, and writers like John Steinbeck and Archibald MacLeish exhorted Americans to open their eyes to the excesses and exploitation that had occurred

in the name of laissez-faire frontier individualism. After the New Deal years, frontier and postfrontier anxieties no longer "helped define the parameters of important public policy debates and shape the broader cultural milieu of the age," and the frontier became a cliché, to be invoked by writers and politicians as another word for "promise, progress, and ingenuity" (p. 145).

The paramount strength of *The End of American Exceptionalism* is its wide array of primary source material: Wrobel has drawn evidence from academic journals and books in numerous disciplines (geography, economics, biology, history, political science), intellectual and popular periodicals ranging from *Harper's* to *World's Work*, the fiction of Twain, Hamlin Garland, Jack London, Steinbeck, and numerous others, Congressional debates, and dozens of middlebrow diagnoses of the nation's past and prospects. This eclectic and impressive assemblage clearly confirms Wrobel's thesis that the frontier theme remained vital for over sixty years. Wrobel is careful not to overstate the impact of frontier anxiety on the policy issues he discusses; he seeks to identify this overlooked trope within familiar debates, not to claim primacy for it. Indeed, his many qualifications on this score leave one wondering whether the frontier theme was ever a significant motivating factor within public policy debates, or *only* a trope culled from the writings of intellectuals to buttress an already-formulated argument, a rhetorical theme available for convenient use.

When Wrobel analyzes the arguments of figures like William Graham Sumner, Jack London, and Walter Weyl, *The End of American Exceptionalism* becomes true intellectual history. Such analyses, however, are far too brief (the longest run about three pages) and infrequent. Much of the book reads like an extended list, which demonstrates the existence of frontier and postfrontier anxiety but rarely probes its sources in individual writers' careers, traces its transmission through institutions, professions, and literary genres, or explores intellectual connections among the diverse writers. Richard Slotkin's three-volume work on the frontier myth, which brings together a comparably rich variety of sources, succeeds better in crafting an argument about the ideological meaning of Americans' obsession with the frontier. Wrobel's unwillingness to engage recent scholarly debates—Slotkin's work appears in the bibliography but never in the notes—ultimately makes his fine work of discovery and recovery seem hermetically sealed off from a wider world of scholarship. Wrobel is sensible to distinguish his aim from those of the New Western Historians, although one might ask whether frontier anxiety was relatively limited to white, male intellectuals, politicians, and literary writers. Numerous other works of intellectual history, however, deal with a similar cast of characters in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; it would be enlightening to explore, for instance, to what extent Wrobel's frontier anxiety coincided with the anxieties about modernity and consumer culture that T. J. Jackson Lears details in *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880–1920* (1981).

If the "postfrontier" period has now, like Turner's frontier period, come to a

close, we certainly need to understand what the process *and* the perception of frontier closing meant to Americans of all sorts, including the nation's intellectual, political, and literary elites. *The End of American Exceptionalism* identifies many of the sources to which we still must look, even as we seek more interpretive frameworks for comprehending them.

Scott E. Casper
University of Nevada, Reno

Temples of Justice. By Ronald M. James. (Reno and Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 1994. pp. xiii, 199. Illustrations, notes, glossary bibliography, index.)

Perhaps no other single architectural structure within a community carries as much symbolic meaning as the local courthouse. Signalling the arrival of law and order, sanctified as the dwelling place of justice, and demonstrating the community's prosperity and stability, county courthouse structures do much more than merely house the mundane processes of county and court business; they are a weathervane commemorating the past and pointing to the future of their localities. In a similar manner, this work is much more than merely an architectural history of Nevada courthouses. In it Ronald James, Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer, examines all the courthouses that have ever existed in Nevada, explores the motivations of the citizens who planned and paid for them, examines the qualifications of those who designed and constructed them, discusses the architectural styles of each relating them to regional and national trends in design, and demonstrates how each structure reflects the context of its location and time. James states that his intention is to enhance an appreciation for these important buildings which would serve to better our understanding of ourselves and our past. He has accomplished his goal.

Temples of Justice is meticulously researched and clearly organized. Based largely upon primary sources including county records, newspaper stories, courthouse plans, collections of private papers, and, of course, the structures themselves, this study also incorporates numerous secondary material addressing the general history of the state and of particular locales as well as material denoting architectural history. After an introduction which sketches a history of county government in England, the colonial United States, the far West, and Nevada, the first chapter discusses local, state, and national factors which influence courthouse design, stresses the important element of the training (or lack of it) of the designer, and outlines four eras of courthouse building in Nevada. James next devotes one chapter to each of the seventeen counties, arranged in alphabetical order. In each he discusses early courthouse structures, even those temporarily leased, and examines conditions that prompted con-

struction of permanent structures including those that limited or inflated the size, quality, or ornamentation. He delineates the values the community wished its courthouse to embody, relating these values to economic, political, or social history. Finally, he studies the reasons leading to decisions to renovate existing structures or build new facilities, either abandoning earlier courthouses or fitting them for other civic uses. James's final chapter addresses the topic of preservation. In it he bemoans the fact that eleven of Nevada's early courthouses no longer stand, three falling victim to fire but eight to the whims of public opinion which all too often place little value on preserving public architecture.

The book is appealingly written. While a study of this type could easily make for dull reading, James breathes life and color into the subject through clear, precise, descriptive and interesting language, demonstrating only an occasional tendency toward redundancy. Of real assistance to the reader who lacks an architectural background are the many pictures and diagrams scattered throughout the book and the glossary of architectural terms found in the back. Intriguing figures in the work are the architects, none more so than Frederick J. DeLongchamps who designed seven of Nevada's courthouses and two of California's. DeLongchamps signalled a transition in Nevada courthouse building from what was called "vernacular" architecture designed by those with little or no training, to that of professional architects. While James does an excellent job of outlining the professional lives of the architects, the reader is left wishing for more information about the personalities behind the designs.

Another difficulty results from the alphabetical arrangement of chapters. James states that the material itself would not sustain any alternative organizational structure but this arrangement does detract at times from a fuller appreciation of the circumstances behind courthouse structure and design. For example, because of the alphabetical arrangement the reader first encounters DeLongchamps as he designed one of his later courthouses toward the end of his career, rather than at the beginning of it, making it difficult to trace the maturation of DeLongchamps's style. These flaws, however, do not detract from the very real contribution this book makes to Nevada history.

James has performed a real service for the state and the field of architectural history with this work. Studies of this nature which explore the relationship of public architecture to historical development are relatively rare because of difficulties imposed by the size of the examples or the expanse of time. Nevada is a prime subject for this type of study, having a fairly short history and only seventeen counties with a total of thirty-four courthouses. Texas, as James points out, boasts roughly one thousand courthouses. In performing this study, James adds knowledge previously uncollected and little documented. The book is highly recommended for both the specialist and the general reader.

Candace C. Kant
Community College of Southern Nevada

The Governor's Mansion. By Robert Laxalt. (Reno and Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 1994, 227 pp.)

This novel is the third volume, after *The Basque Hotel* and *Child of the Holy Ghost*, of Robert Laxalt's trilogy about the experiences of his family in the Basque country of France and in Nevada. The story is straightforward, and obviously based on his brother Paul's experience as governor of Nevada. Narrator Peter Indart is a Nevada newspaperman. His brother Leon is persuaded by former silent movie star and Republican gubernatorial candidate Tex Maynard to run for lieutenant governor to geographically balance the ticket. When Tex suddenly dies, after a rendezvous with his mistress, Leon decides to run for governor against the slick Democratic incumbent, Dean Cooper. Despite Cooper's frantic attempts to shake down the casinos for campaign money, and rather to everybody's surprise, Leon wins. Since Cooper had cynically and "viciously" attacked the FBI and its director, J. Edgar Hoover, governor-elect Leon travels back to Washington for a clandestine meeting with Hoover, in order to make peace. He also endeavors to clean up the gaming industry. Leon encourages Howard Hughes in coming to Nevada, "quietly" develops the concept of corporate gaming, and eventually (in two or three years) "redeems Las Vegas" from mob control. Having swiftly accomplished these ambitious goals, Leon is sorely tempted to resign his governorship when Kirk Kerkorian secretly offers him the presidency of MGM Studios. Peter talks him out of this, so Leon serves out his term as governor, whereupon he decides to challenge three-term United States Senator Jack Horner "who had been doing favors for the financial and political giants for a long time" (p. 189). Ultimately, Leon is defeated by fifty-four votes, Horner having stolen the election and Leon being accorded the silent treatment from Nevada's liberal press. Leon does come out of the campaign with his honor intact, "the only Republican officeholder in the West to stand by Barry Goldwater in his darkest days" (p. 194). A few years later, upon the retirement of Nevada senior Senator Allen, Leon decides to run once again. This time he wins; he becomes a prominent United States senator, but Peter goes his own way, having "seen as much as I wanted to see" of the world of politics.

There are several recurring themes in this narrative. Cow county Nevada is good Nevada, where solid values hold true. In contrast the emergent world of Las Vegas is corrupt, its "new social set . . . considered themselves exempt from rules of conduct" (p. 152). Oddly enough, Leon's election ratifies the permanent importance of the cow counties to the Nevada political experience. "From that election on, save one, no candidate for major office in Nevada could ignore the cow counties. They were looked down upon no longer" (p. 121). Also because of Leon's excellent policies, corporate gaming replaces the Mafia, although Peter is forced to admit that the gangsters had a sturdier morality than did the ambitious politicians.

Does all this sound familiar? The names are only thinly disguised. Peter Indart of course is Robert Laxalt and his brother Leon is Paul. Dean Cooper is Grant Sawyer; Tex Maynard Rex Bell, Jack Horner Howard Cannon, Senator Allen Alan Bible. Many characters such as Howard Hughes, Ronald Reagan, and J. Edgar Hoover go by their real names. Real and fictionally-named characters flit in and out of the narrative, and it's great fun to figure out who is who. I wish I could say this all works.

Robert Laxalt, the novelist-artist has not succeeded in distancing himself sufficiently from the actual historical events of the 1960s. He ties himself too intimately to his brother Paul's career. He dishes it out to Leon's (Paul's) political enemies, and attempts to even far too many old political scores. Many statements about readily-identifiable people are quite scurrilous. In short, the book is a political, rather than an artistic statement and, at that, a highly partisan, and in this reviewer's estimation, misleading one. Also, there is no way that the events detailed in the book can be made to fit into any coherent chronological scheme, even taken on its own terms. Howard Hughes comes to Nevada on November 27, 1966 (the date is given correctly), while Leon is governor. After that, Leon challenges Jack Horner on a ticket headed by Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater, which of course occurred in 1964.

Thus reality and fiction are confusingly enmeshed. *The Governor's Mansion* is not an artistic outgrowth from the first two novels of Robert Laxalt's trilogy; rather it discusses the themes developed in the author's earlier, fine *Nevada, A Bicentennial History* (1977). As a very short novel, it lacks sufficient texture for a satisfying political novel, and it lacks the rich and coherent world view to be found in the works of Allen Drury or Anthony Trollope. The result is disappointing, both artistically and historically.

Jerome E. Edwards
University of Nevada, Reno

NEW RESOURCE MATERIALS

Nevada Historical Society

RENO BUSINESS RECORDS

During the past year, the Society has acquired records from a number of Reno businesses that figured prominently in the economic, political and cultural development of the community. Among the enterprises represented are two of the city's most important hardware and building supply stores, one of its leading newspapers, a music studio, and a school of dance.

Vernon Segale, president of the Flanigan Warehouse Company, has transferred to the Society a substantial group of financial and other records from the company, which was incorporated by stockman and state senator Patrick Flanigan in 1902 and initially operated a wool storage warehouse on East Fourth Street. Eventually, the large brick warehouse, which boasted its own railroad spur, evolved into the Flanigan Home Improvement Center. Among the donated items, which date from 1902 into the 1960s, are minute books, stock ledgers, customer accounts, payroll ledgers, shipping journals, railroad tariff schedules, and a variety of insurance and legal documents.

Edward J. "Jack" Horgan has donated records of the Commercial Hardware Company, which had its store on West Commercial Row and then East Fourth Street, and which was owned by the Horgan family from early in this century until it was sold in 1994. The records, from the years 1906-1984, include company minute books, profit and loss statements, customer account ledgers, building construction records, legal documents, business and personal papers of John E. Horgan (the first member of the family to head the company), lists of employees, a scrapbook containing advertising materials generated by or for Commercial Hardware, and an album of photographs taken at a 1984 luncheon honoring the business, its proprietors and employees.

The Society has also received, from William Shinnars, a group of records of the Nevada State Journal Publishing Company. The letters and other papers help to document the activities and internal workings of one of Reno's two leading newspaper publishers during the period 1907-1919. At that time, the *Nevada State Journal* and the *Reno Evening Gazette*, representing decidedly different political views, were rivals for the title of leading newspaper in the city. (The Society already holds a significant collection of *Reno Evening Gazette* records.)

Margaret Ryan Sampson has donated a sizable collection of personal papers that contain materials relating to businesses she and her sister, Ruth Ryan,

conducted in Reno for many years. Scrapbooks kept by Margaret Sampson document, through newspaper clippings, recital invitations and programs, photographs, correspondence, and other items, the activities of the Margaret Ryan Sampson Studio, in which she taught piano to generations of northern Nevadans. The scrapbooks, which cover the decades of the 1920s to 1960s, provide abundant evidence of their compiler's prominent place in the cultural life of Reno.

One large scrapbook in the Sampson papers belonged to Margaret's sister, Ruth Ryan (1905–1969). As Margaret's volumes do, this book demonstrates its creator's importance to the Reno cultural community. Containing newspaper clippings, programs, some correspondence, and many photographs from the 1940s and 1950s (as well as some personal materials from as far back as the 1920s), the scrapbook records much of the history of the Ruth Ryan School of Dance, later the Ruth Ryan Dance Studio, which first opened its doors in the late 1930s.

Eric N. Moody
Manuscript Curator

University of Nevada, Reno

The Special Collections Department was recently notified that it has been awarded a \$54,000 grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission to continue the Nevada Women's Archives Project. The grant will enable the Department to continue Jean Ford's surveyor position and to hire a full-time manuscript processor for one year. In addition to processing and cataloging women's manuscript collections, the processor will assist the Department in preparing an annotated guide to the Nevada Women's Archives collections.

A number of new collections have been received in the past months. Although most remain unprocessed, access can be provided to some of the materials on a limited basis. A collection register will be available for the larger collections when they are fully processed.

Y.W.C.A. of Reno-Sparks. 1921–1991. 5 cubic feet. Included are minutes, reports, financial records, programs, photographs, and scrapbooks. Additional materials are being gathered for donation by the "Y."

Friends of Pyramid Lake. 7 cubic feet. Records, clippings, publication.

Common Cause (Nevada). ca 1975–1993. 3 cubic feet. Bylaws, minutes, reports, issues files, correspondence.

Governor's Conference for Women. 1987; 1989. 1 cubic foot. Records, photographs.

Campaign for Choice. 1989. 4 cubic feet. Records.

Sue Wagner. Papers [excludes official records of the Lieutenant Governor's office]. 26 cubic feet.

Sierra Interfaith Action for Peace. 1987–1992. 5.5 cubic feet. Minutes, bylaws, newsletters of S.I.A.P. and other peace organizations, newspaper clippings, and subject files related to issues such as the Nevada nuclear test site, the Middle East war, and Central America. Also included are a few records of the Peace Studios Group of the University of Nevada, Reno.

Ann and William Scott. Papers. ca 1920s–1993. ca 43 cubic feet. Correspondence, manuscripts, financial records, and reports related to their multiple personal and professional interests. Also includes American Friends Field Service materials.

Reno Friends Meeting (Quakers). Records. 5 cubic feet.

Unitarian Universalist Church, Reno. Records. 9 cubic feet. Minutes, programs, correspondence, reports.

Susan Searcy
Manuscript Curator

THE NEW JEANNE ELIZABETH WIER SCHOLARSHIP FUND

A new scholarship fund has been established with the History Department of the University of Nevada–Reno in honor of Jeanne Elizabeth Wier, the long-time secretary and director of the Nevada Historical Society. The founder and primary donor to the scholarship endowment is the Shepperson Family Trust.

Wier came to Nevada in 1897 to study the Washo Indians. Two years later she became an associate professor of history at the University. By 1907 she was head of the department, which she guided for more than thirty years. In 1904 she was one of the founders of the Nevada Historical Society, which she served as secretary until her death in 1950. She was a leader in the woman suffrage movement.

The History Department has been encouraged to consider a promising woman student, possibly a student returning to school after a career delay, as it makes the selection each year. The first award went to Jaime Dee Kille during the fall semester of 1994.

The History Department also awards two other scholarships. One is awarded in memory of Wilbur S. Shepperson, a longtime professor of history and board member of the Historical Society. The other, called the Distinguished Retired Professors scholarship, was awarded in 1994–95 in memory of John G. Folkes and in 1993–94 honored Russell R. Elliott. The award for 1995–96 will honor Michael Brodhead, now retired from the UNR History Department.

All of these scholarships are funded through endowments with the University of Nevada-Reno Foundation. More information about the funds and opportunities to contribute to them may be obtained from the University of Nevada-Reno Foundation, Morrill Hall, Mail Stop 162, Reno NV 89557.

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY OR GIVE A GIFT MEMBERSHIP

Memberships help the NHS by providing funds to publish the *QUARTERLY* and to create new exhibitions for the changing galleries.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- **Nevada Historical Society Quarterly**
- **Nevada Historical Society Newsletter** — the newsletter keeps all members informed of upcoming events.
- **Discount** of 10% in the Nevada Historical Society Gift Shop, the gift shops of the other museums of the Department of Museums and History and on copies of NHS photos.
- **Tours** — Society sponsored tours take members to historic sites within reach of Reno. 10% discount on tour fares.
- Special notice to all Society events and activities.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regular — \$25. | <input type="checkbox"/> Departmental Fellow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family — \$35. | (Benefits from all |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student — \$15. | museums in |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Citizen (60 or over) | DMH.) — \$250. |
| without <i>Quarterly</i> — \$15. | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron — \$500. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining — \$50. | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor — \$1,000. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing — \$100. | <input type="checkbox"/> Life — \$2,500. |

Of each membership fee, \$20 is not tax deductible.

☐ Check enclosed for \$_____

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

☐ This is a gift. Please send to above name with compliments of

Mail to Membership Department, Nevada Historical Society
1650 N. Virginia Street, Reno, NV 89503

Get your copies while they last.

Some collectors are charging up to **\$125**
each for the first five volumes of the
Nevada Historical Society Papers.

1913-1916
VOLUME II, 1917-1920
VOLUME III, 1921-1922
VOLUME IV, 1923-1924
VOLUME V, 1925-1926

At the Chalkboard Giftshop in
the Nevada Historical Society you
pay only \$10 a copy for these
"rare" volumes.

(For mail orders please add \$2.50 for shipping and handling)

Stop by and see what other bargains
you can pick up.

Nevada Historical Society
1650 N. Virginia Street • Reno, Nevada 89503
(702) 688-1191 • FAX (702) 688-2917

New from the Nevada Historical Society ...

GHOST DANCE WINTER AND OTHER STORIES

by Sally Zanjani

One of Nevada's premier historians, Sally Zanjani, is also a superb storyteller who mines the rich lode of the Silver State's fascinating past for nuggets of truth about the human condition. From miners to ranchers, gold diggers to desperadoes, bankers to mirages--Zanjani tells about some of the characters and phenomena that make Nevada unique, even in the West. Native Americans, Germans, Yankees, Slavs--all the cultural panoply is there as well. This collection of articles and stories showcases her genuine talent and provides rare insights into the history of Nevada.

152 pages with 50 photographs, softcover. \$14.95
(For mail orders please add \$2.50 for shipping and handling)

To get your copy call the Nevada Historical Society at (702) 688-1191 or stop by at 1650 N. Virginia Street, Reno, NV 89503. Located just above the Fleischmann Planetarium on the University of Nevada campus.



Goldfield Maidens from the story "Looking for Mr. Goldbar," in the book *Ghost Dance Winter and Other Stories* by Sally Zanjani.

NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



DEPARTMENT OF MUSEUMS, LIBRARY AND ARTS

Joan Kerschner, *Director*

DIVISION OF MUSEUMS AND HISTORY

Scott Miller, *Administrator*

ADMINISTRATION

Peter L. Bandurraga, *Director*

Phillip I. Earl, *Curator of History*

Eric N. Moody, *Curator of Manuscripts*

Lee Mortensen, *Librarian*

BOARD OF MUSEUMS AND HISTORY

I. R. Ashleman, *Reno*

Steven P. Carr, *Las Vegas*

Diane M. Deming, *Reno*

Renee Diamond, *Las Vegas*

Doris Dwyer, *Fallon*

Fritsi Ericson, *Reno*

Morris Gallagher, *Elko*

Donald Hardesty, *Reno*

Janice Pine, *Reno*

Kevin Rafferty, *Las Vegas*

Joseph P. Thornton, *Las Vegas*

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.