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NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

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.

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Nevada
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Contents

Front Cover: Casino Row on Virginia Street in Reno, c. 1940s *(Nevada Historical Society).*

Book Reviews

PEOPLE OF GOOD HOPE IN THE LAND OF NOD

William D. Rowley

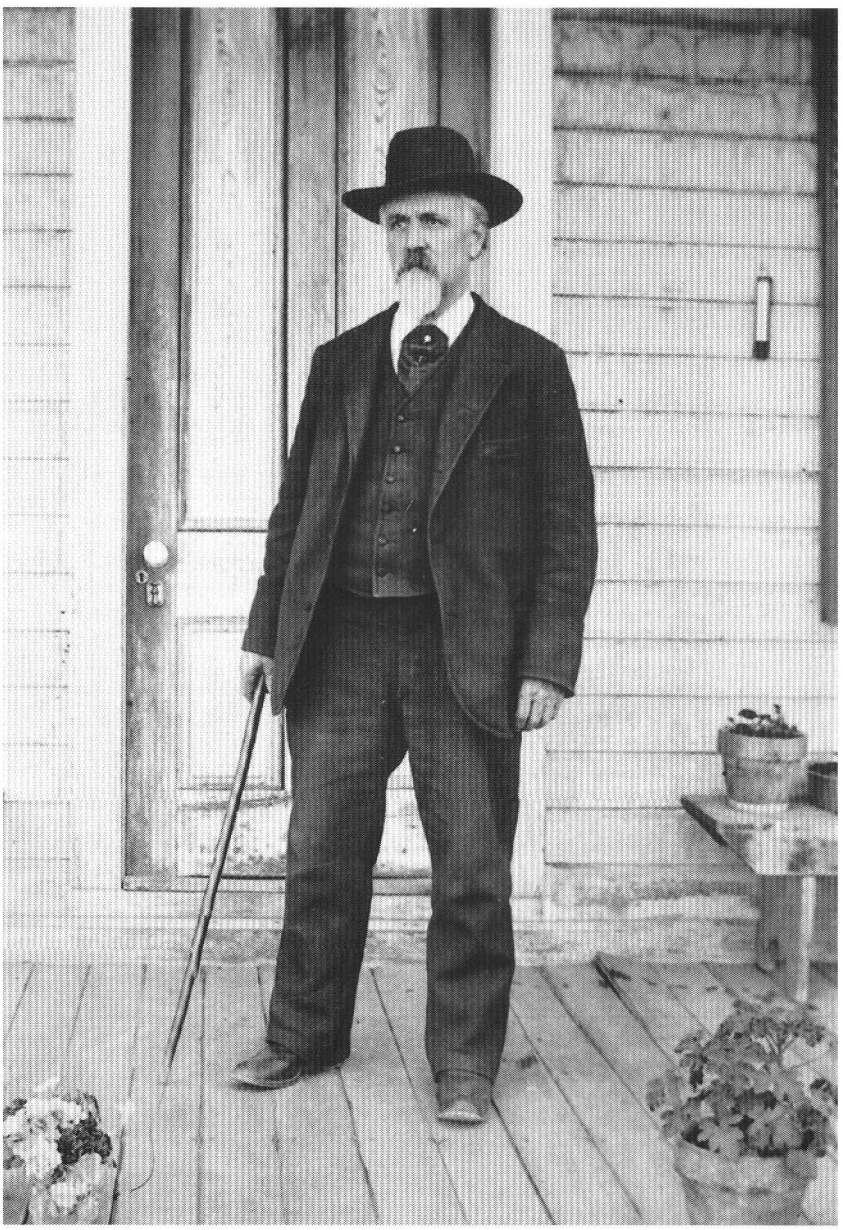
Some geographers try to tell us that "where we live is what we are."[1] If so, those who live in the Great Basin of the intermountain West have always faced a place of challenge, contention, and deprecation. Their responses to this "desert challenge" have in many ways shaped who they are. Those in the eastern portion of the Great Basin have been sustained with the passionate ally of religious conviction. This was never so in the secular mining society of the western portion of the Great Basin (where, I suppose, a high degree of skepticism prevailed, if we are to take our cue from an early resident who called himself Mark Twain). In many ways this distinct intermountain region of the American West was one land but two cultures—one owing its origins to religious migrants and the other to the discoveries of fantastic wealth in the streams and mountain sides of this range and basin province.

More than a decade before the arrival of the Saints in the Valley of the Salt Lake, thirty to forty adventurers under the guidance of a mountain man, fur trader Joseph Walker, made their way across the Great Basin in 1833 from the Great Salt Lake over the Sierra and to the Bay of San Francisco. A member of the party, one Zenas Leonard, kept a journal. We learn from that journal that this narrator looked out over the Bay of San Francisco, and with all of California at hand, he commented: "What a theme to contemplate its settlement and civilization." In great wonderment he foresaw the jurisdiction of the federal government and that the "hardy freeborn population of the United States would succeed in planting their homes, building towns, and cities here" and ultimately he declared that "here shall the arts and sciences of civilization take root and flourish."

About the great east across the mountains Leonard made different observations in his narratives about a land close at hand to California but yet far removed. When the fur trader brigade came upon the Humboldt River not yet

William D. Rowley is the editor of the *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*. He delivered this address to the faculty, students, and friends of the University of Nevada, Reno on the occasion of accepting the Grace A. Griffen Chair in Nevada and Western History, April 28, 1998.

John C. Frémont *(Nevada Historical Society).*



Alfred Doten was an argonaut to California and new arrival in Nevada in 1863 *(Nevada Historical Society).*

given that name by John C. Frémont, one of the names they gave it was "the Barren River" . . . "a name which we thought would be quite appropriate, as the country, natives, and everything belonging to it, justly deserves the name."[2]

John C. Frémont, too, was struck by the anomalous, strange nature of this country. He wrote: "The whole idea of such a desert is a novelty in our country, and excites Asiatic, not American ideas. Interior basins, with their own system of lakes and rivers, and often sterile, are common enough in Asia . . . but in America such things are new and strange, unknown and suspected, and discredited when related."[3]

This country east of the Eden of California and soon to be the West of the Mormon Zion was a virtual land of Nod. We are told that the land of Nod is an untillable region to which the tiller of the earth and first murderer Cain fled. And that it is a land of dreams and illusions where the first city arose because of the considerable mechanical arts of the Cainites.

In the decade of the 1860s, the great city of the Comstock, Virginia City, became synonymous with Nevada — a city built upon the technical achievements of industrialized underground mining and industrialized ore processing. The frenetic activities of Comstock Nevada and the arrival of the transcontinental railroad by the end of the 1860s drew many to the attractions of this strange land just to the east of California. Frances Fuller Victor, the tireless aide to historian businessman H.H. Bancroft in San Francisco and an author in her own right, addressed the enigma of Nevada in a poem appearing in the *Overland Monthly* in 1869. She saw in the environment, in the mountainous desert landscape of the state, a Sphinx-like mystery; a riddle that yielded no answers to the quests of men and offered only mystery — A Nevada Mystery. She writes of:

> Nevada—desert, waste
> I sit beneath thy stars
> The shallop moon beached on a bank of clouds
> And mountains wrapped in shadowy shrouds[4]

Argonaut to California and new arrival in Nevada in 1863, Alfred Doten notes in his journals that year that Dayton offers "no trees, flowers, or anything of the sort. This place, like all other towns, is created and kept up by the mining, which is all this Territory is good for — not worth living in."[5]

Many years later his son, Sam Doten, repeated and recalled this observation: "We have said that the first people who came to Nevada in the days of the wild 'rush to Washoe' were not settlers. They did not intend to stay. They meant to make a fortune and get out."[6]

By 1942 the literary scholar, Richard Lillard in his book *Desert Chal-*

lenge: An Interpretation of Nevada simply called Nevada "geology by day astronomy by night" and celebrated the state's search for a stable economy in games of chance and enterprises disallowed in other states.[7]

But the road to this entrepreneurial style and success was long and rocky. After the failure of the Comstock, widely recognized by 1880, Nevada became in the view of the eastern press and certainly California the most notorious of the western rotten borough states — states with more political power than their populations justified. That caustic California writer Ambrose Bierce rarely missed an opportunity to pillory Nevada, its politicians, its alkali flats, its mines and its demand for silver money in the late nineteenth century. On Virginia City he reported, "Virginia City has had a dense fog, lasting all day — so dense that everything was invisible, and for once the blind were truly happy. These fogs are a good thing for Virginia City; more people would go there to live if they couldn't see the place."[8]

On notorious Comstock Senator William Sharon he commented:

> Sharon, some years, perchance, remain of life
> of vice and greed, vulgarity and strife;
> And then—God speed the day if such His will—
> You'll lie among the dead you help to kill,
> And be in good society at last,
>
> Your purse unsilvered and your face unbrassed.[9]

All of this is to portray a Nevada held up to ridicule after the failure of the Comstock and in the midst of borrasca (out of luck and out of ore), a commonwealth that hardly merited the name and whose statehood many suggested should be rescinded by the 1890s. With a population of only 47,000 in 1890 and 42,000 in 1900, it was truly a rotten borough with only 12,000 male voters sending two United States senators to Washington.

But there were forces of rejuvenation afoot. Reno astride the transcontinental railroad exhibited a vitality long since drained from its mining town sisters in the state. The fledgling Nevada State University established itself in Reno in 1885-86. Francis Newlands, heir to Sharon's Comstock millions, arrived in Reno in 1888 presenting plans for civic improvement and expanded irrigation of western Nevada lands to build a stable economy to replace the boom-and-bust cycles of the mining society or the curse of Comstockism. A new president of the state university, Dr. Joseph E. Stubbs, arrived for the fall term of 1894. Sam Doten's 1924 history of the university describes his inaugural address to the people of the state in the old McKissick Opera House in Reno on September 10, 1894.

Virginia City, Nevada *(Nevada Historical Society).*

Boldly and without hesitation, meeting the people face to face, he gave himself to their service. His inaugural address made a deep impression upon an audience accustomed to hearing orators of more than local distinction. At the climax, with uplifted hand and ringing voice, he pledged himself utterly to the work which he was undertaking, with an emotion which left his auditors shrinking a little as when a man in an outburst of religious earnestness has uncovered his very soul.[10]

Stubbs and the university formed the center of a cluster of individuals (men and women) of what muckraker Lincoln Steffens (of *Shame of the Cities* fame) would call *Upbuilders,* and in this case upbuilders of Nevada who would come into prominence in the state during the first decade of the twentieth-century. Among others, they included Stubbs, Jeanne Wier, Romanzo Adams, Mrs. A.E. Hershiser and daughter Beulah Hershiser, Francis G. Newlands, Hannah Clapp, Robert Fulton, Anne Martin, Reverend Brewster Adams, J.E. Church, and Mary S. Doten. Their energies in the state coincided with an economic upswing brought by the discoveries resulting in Nevada's early twentieth-century mining boom in Tonopah and Goldfield and the copper developments in White Pine. These so-called Progressives, however, had a vision for Nevada beyond the ephemeral riches of the mining economy and society. Riches from the mines and even the ranges of Nevada were welcome, but these range and mineral resources could never build the type of society they envisioned in small farms, commerce, and manufacturing. Only the latter would bring a stability to Nevada wherein the arts and sciences and civilization could flourish as Zenas

Comstock Senator William Sharon *(Nevada Historical Society).*

New president of the state university, Dr. Joseph E. Stubbs, arrived for the fall term of 1894 *(Nevada Historical Society).*

Jeanne Wier was one of the *Upbuilders,* a cluster of individuals who would come into prominence in Nevada during the first decade of the twentieth-century *(Nevada Historical Society).*

Leonard had envisioned on California's shores. Over the next years their progressive energies in Nevada brought greater democracy, women's suffrage (1914); political primary laws, initiative, referendum recall; the regulation of public utilities, including the railroad; and, finally, moral uplift efforts, prohibition of gambling (1910), and prohibition of drink itself against the determined opposition of the saloon crowd.

Many of these same people came together for a meeting of the newly formed Nevada Academy of Sciences on February 11, 1904, in Morrill Hall on this campus. Jeanne Wier gave a report on the activities of the Social Science Section of the Academy of Sciences, and in response university professor Dr. Romanzo Adams suggested an historical society for the state—an organization which by its nature, he said, would "appeal more strongly to the people at large than could the Academy of Sciences." The first meeting of the Nevada Historical Society occurred on May 31, 1904.[11] The following year (1905) the society's secretary and curator as well as professor of history at N.S.U., Jeanne Elizabeth Wier gave an address to the Nevada Academy of Sciences on behalf of the historical society. She stressed the necessity for a strong relationship between the historical society and the goals of the university in the state. She saw both institutions as instruments of progress (we might interpret this as instruments of reform and uplift) in a state that desperately needed both. She noted, "The importance of history as a branch of education which is the most important factor in our civilization and advancement, is so apparent that it ought to receive the support of all cultured and progressive citizens." She described "the historical society as an education force [similar to the University] an instrument in the fostering of that historic consciousness among our people which is the basis of civic patriotism." She feared that the youth of Nevada knew little of its past and it would be a sad day when they, "knew not Joseph and the way by which he came into this land," as she put it. The past that Miss Wier proposed to know was a *new* type of history: "The time has forever gone by when the writer of history has but to chronicle the deeds of kings, presidents, governors, or others who sit in high places. The history of today and that of the future must be the record of the masses, the events which have to do with human nature, with human hopes and ideals, and which point the way to the working out of the political and social order of the world." Wier was not a native of Nevada but of Iowa (a rather stark contrast in environments). When she came to Nevada after studies at Stanford she described how she "became acclimated to these strange new conditions, to come to understand something of the struggle of the past by riding or driving over large sections of our desert wastes, and having borne in upon the senses the scarcity of population, the meagerness of developed resources, and the hardy, determined spirit with which these conditions are being met." [12]

She asked three questions in this address about Nevada:

1) the present condition of the State

2) the reasons for that condition

3) the possibility of promoting favorable changes in that condition.

To the first question, she responded, "to my mind, in but few other places in these United States is there to be found in the same space such poverty of ideals in social and intellectual life, and, perhaps I might add, in political life as well." She went on to relate the familiar story that, "The East never tires of girding at Nevada, denouncing her as a 'rotten borough,' scoffing at her so-called barbarism and uncouth ways."

2) What then are the reasons for this condition?

She attributed it to the physiographic conditions and the failure of a frontier process that left a scar in the ordinary development of civilization here. A scar not merely of scant population, but of retarded development as well—the scar that comes from the lack of home-building instinct and from the absence of an agricultural stage in its proper time and place. How "unfortunate has it been for Nevada that its youth was spent, not under the open skies in closest contact with even a desert soil, but in the deeps of the darksome mines." "Something of the light and joyousness of her life has been sacrificed forever."

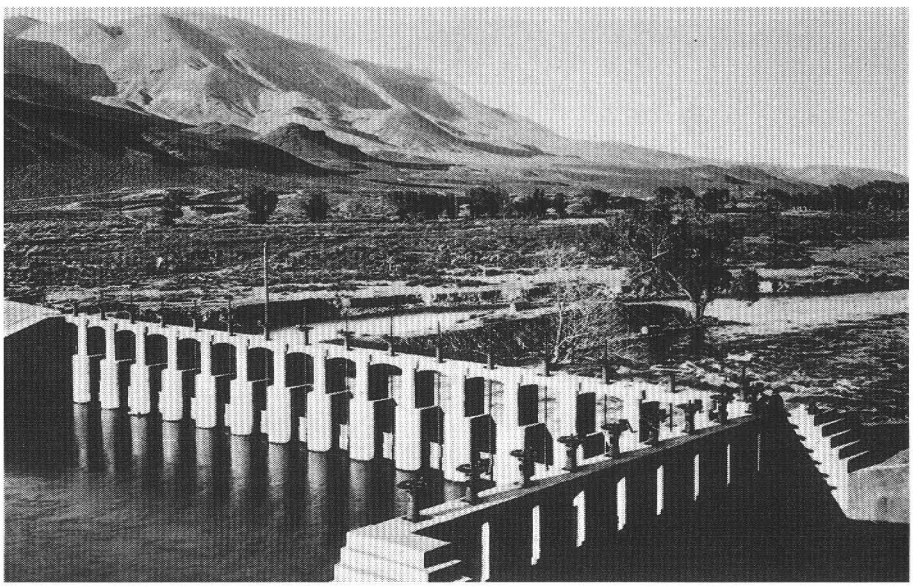
3) What are the possibilities of promoting change in this condition?

She noted the forces of reclamation afoot to make the desert bloom and asserted that Nevadans are not willing that Nature should come to her own again here. "Even now we plan the extension of cultivated fields and the promotion of manufactures and commerce as well as the future development of the mines. We are indeed determined that Nature shall reap, if it be necessary, even where she has not sown. How is it with respect to the less material interests of the State?" She identified history as moral knowledge and studied correctly it pointed to progress from the past and on into the future.

> But in Nevada the call of the wild was strong. Places once humanized and full of life have become desolate within a few miles of where we are tonight. Nature has come to her own again at Washoe City and many another spot within our borders.
>
> But we are determined that Nature shall not always conquer us thus. We are determined that out of all this adversity and pain and struggle there shall finally emerge a strong, enduring, and self-trusting Commonwealth, that the final triumph in government, in social development, in intellectual advancement, and in material supremacy shall be on a scale commensurate with the hardness of the way by which we have come. The American frontier zone has moved on into the midst of the Pacific. We should cease, then, to be a frontier State by rising, even though it be by stupendous effort to our opportunities. Let us hope that in this work both the Academy and the Historical Society may find an honored and useful place.[13]

Jeanne Wier continued these themes in her work at the university and in a paper, "The Work of the Western State Historical Society as Illustrated by Nevada," read to the Pacific Coast Branch of the American History Association at the University of California in Berkeley in 1910.

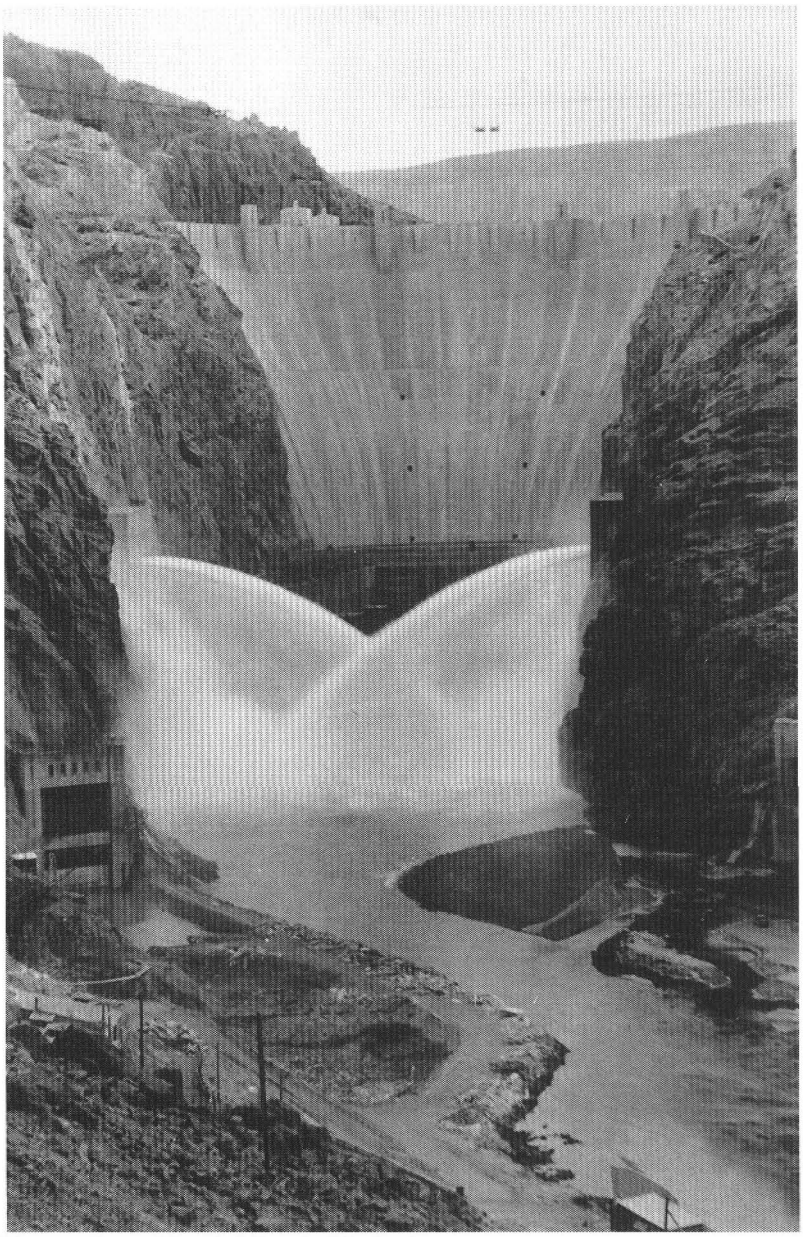
In 1912 she invited Professor Herbert E. Bolton of the University of California, Berkeley, later noted as the historian of the Spanish Borderlands, to give an



Newland's Project, c. 1911, Derby Dam construction, diversion from the Truckee River *(Nevada Historical Society).*

address to the Nevada Historical Society. He, like Jeanne Wier, was to be greatly influenced by Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier school of history. It originated at the University of Wisconsin and evolved into one of the principal American Creation Myths. The title of Dr. Bolton's speech to the gathering of the Nevada Historical Society on May 13, 1912, was "The Obligation of Nevada Toward the Writing of Her Own History."

Like Jeanne Wier, he noted the importance of arousing "historic consciousness." Each region and community has the obligation of writing its own history. He saw the history of the U.S. being principally written by New Englanders in a manner that neglected every other region. He saw the West "misrepresented, underestimated, or misunderstood. If history has dealt unfairly, unsympathetically or slightingly with Nevada, with Nevada lies the remedy, through providing the means, the materials, the incentive and the scholarship necessary for having her history fairly and adequately written." [14] He attributed to the work at Wisconsin, in its grand Historical Society and in the work of professor Turner recently of the University of Wisconsin, the rise of an historical consciousness in the Midwest and more importantly "a revolution in the telling of our national story." A revolution had been brought about by people who were born and lived in the Middle West. The new school of American history—an inclusive history that embraced the West—"taught that the West has been the place where institutions most characteristically American have developed."[15]



Hoover Dam *(Nevada Historical Society).*

"The place where these conditions have been newest and most constant has been on the ever receding frontier, in the ever advancing West. It is there that what is most distinctively American has been made." These characteristics of the frontier include the following:

(1) served as melting pot for the Americanization of immigrants

(2) fostered martial strength for the defense of the country

(3) developed principles of liberty and democracy through a frontier leveling process

(4) provided economic independence from Europe

(5) fostered individualism and hence separation of church and state

(6) supported nationalism over narrow sectional interests to the point that "resisted secession, and if necessary would have fought the Civil War unaided by the East."[16]

The West always felt close to the Federal government and called upon it to aid transportation and more recently reclamation. "Thus, the West, by habitually calling for and supporting national legislation and the exercise of nationalistic powers, has been one of the primary factors in overpowering the old doctrine of state rights and making a nation of many and widely separated parts."[17]

If this reorientation of American history had been partly accomplished by a midwestern state historical society and a vital nearby state university, surely far western states had an obligation to follow in this path in the preservation, writing, and teaching of their local history. Nevada must take up this obligation to better understand its history and then Nevada's significance in the making of the nation would be understood.[18]

Professor Bolton concluded by lauding the state support coming from the legislatures of California and Nevada for their state universities. He said that Nevada has produced great fortunes:

> Why should not some portion of this wealth be devoted in liberal measure by legislative appropriation and private gift to making possible the writing of the state's history? Let some other wealthy citizen serve the state by erecting a suitable and safe building for the State Historical Society. Let another endow the Society; let another establish a chair of Western History in the University of Nevada.[19]

These were the high prospects held out by Professor Bolton for Nevada in 1912. He even chided Jeanne Wier at one point for her "pessimistic view" of placing Nevada "at the bottom of the scale in ideals" and portraying its development "almost wholly and solely materialistic." But he said. ". . . it represents, perhaps, the righteous and permissible impatience of the zealous reformer."[20]

Jeanne Wier, no matter the conciliating words of professor Bolton, knew her adopted state. She watched reform flourish for a few years during the Progressive Period until World War I in 1917. The war and the continued stagnation of the Nevada mining economy after the passing of the southern Nevada boom

again reduced population in the state down from 81,000 in 1910 to 77,000 in 1920. Nevada's environment and physiography worked against the successful establishment of that small farmer agricultural stage of development in the state that might have been the back bone of reform and springboard to an expanding commerce and manufacture. Nevada's natural resources failed to sustain a real society and even social values. By 1922 Wier's contemporary, Anne Martin, complained of progressive failure and disillusionment in Nevada in an article for the *Nation* magazine whose title speaks for itself: "Nevada: Beautiful Desert of Buried Hopes."[21]

She saw Nevada reverting to its old ways dominated by machine politics that ignored the moral uplift legislation sought in the previous Progressive Era. Representatives of that materialism in Nevada life were transforming Reno into a wide-open town. The election of Mayor E.E. Roberts, divorce lawyer and former Congressman, in 1923 confirmed the trend with the backing of the champion of the saloon crowd and its values, George Wingfield, mine owner, banker, hotel owner.[22]

The business people of Nevada saw profits in Reno's divorce industry (that had become prominent as early as 1910) and the naughty vices of gambling, drink, boxing matches, and even prostitution (which President Stubbs had denounced to no avail through his Red-light Abatement Campaign). What was developing in Nevada was a leisure, entertainment-seeking economy based *not* upon the development of Nevada's natural resources either below the ground or in its not so fertile soil, but an economic enterprise based upon human resources—desires, however ignoble. Progressive reformers would say it was an economy based upon the exploitation of the frailties and foibles of human beings.

By 1931, under pressures from the national depression, Nevada formally legalized gambling and reduced the residency period for an already-established divorce industry to a scandalous six weeks. Its One Sound State policy of the 1930s further played upon the sensibilities of people and their aversion to taxes when it offered low or no taxes to the wealthy who wished a Nevada residency.[23] These, too, attracted human resources with dollars behind them. With the application of technologies in transportation (railroads, autos and interstates, and airline service), the production of electricity (Hoover Dam), and the delivery of water to the desert, Nevada was in the process of declaring itself free of its limited natural resource base.

By 1942, historian, writer, and Twain scholar Richard Lillard congratulated Nevada in his large history of the state, *Desert Challenge,* published in 1942 and reissued in 1949. He believed Nevada was meeting the challenge of its very limited natural resource base. The state legislatively permitted or privileged activities that afforded it an economic base. How prophetic this vision was could only be guessed at the beginning of World War II, but it was an accurate guess. The dislocations of war (really internal migrations) and the postwar

By 1922, Wier's contemporary, Anne Martin, complained of progressive failure and disillusionment in Nevada in an article for the *Nation* magazine *(Nevada Historical Society)*.

prosperity promoted immense social change and a more open society in the nation. The greater acceptance and toleration of vices or marginal activity nourished Nevada's economy. But it was an acceptance that was not quite wide enough to permit those activities, as yet, outside of Nevada. The new Nevada featured destination-resort tourism with the amenities of gambling, big-name entertainers, and more recently theme park agendas in the casinos. This adult Disney World was the very antithesis of the Progressive vision for Nevada. Certainly it was not the Progressive vision of the Model Commonwealth, of which they often spoke.[24]

How far afield, how out-of-touch the Progressives now appear with the fu-

ture development of Nevada. But were their good hopes for the state merely wrong-headed idealism (especially, the small irrigated farm), perhaps even feminine compared to the traditional demography and vocations in the state—mining, ranching, railroading? Or might we find much to admire in their critical spirit today? A critical spirit that would ask about the relationship of Nevada's modern economy to the building of cultural values that the university, the historical society, and even other less secular institutions espouse.

Let us not be naïve—modern Nevada and its human resource economy, based upon human frailties, foibles, and avarice, is a success, just as world capitalism for all of its brutality coupled with rewards is a success—at least for now. The grave questions continue for Nevada: Can this economy foster the additional, more diverse, richer human resources that will be needed as this time closes and the future opens to whatever unknown possibilities? As Nevada begins a new century, can its present human resource economy (which has far surpassed its production in natural resource wealth) nurture the genius of education, culture, and the life of the mind? As the Progressives, "People of Good Hope," recognized, all of these will be needed for the possibilities of the future in this place called Nevada in the land of Nod, *East of Eden and West of Zion*.[25]

NOTES

1 *New York Times*, March 21, 1998; David S. Landes, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations: Why Some Are So Rich and Some So Poor* (New York: Norton, 1998); Charles P. Kindleberger, *World Economic Primacy: 1500-1990* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998). All suggest the "geography is destiny" theme.

2 Zenas Leonard, *Narrative of the Adventures of Zenas Leonard, Fur Trader*, ed. John C. Ewers (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959), 94-95.

3 John C. Frémont, *The Journals of John C. Frémont* (1845)

4 Frances Fuller Victor, *The Overland Monthly* 3 (December, 1869), 523-24.

5 Alfred S. Doten, *Journals of Alfred S. Doten*, ed. Walter Van Tilburg Clark, (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1973), I, 714.

6 Samuel Bradford Doten, *An Illustrated History of the University of Nevada* (Reno: The University of Nevada, 1924), 78.

7 Richard G. Lillard, *Desert Challenge: An Interpretation of Nevada* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1942), 107.

8 *Argonaut* (January 5, 1878), 5.

9 Ambrose Bierce, "Three Kinds of Rogue," in *Black Beetles in Amber* (San Francisco: Western Authors, 1892), 25.

10 Doten, *An Illustrated History of the University of Nevada*, 84-85.

11 *First Biennial Report of the Nevada Historical Society, 1907-1908* (Carson City: State Printing Office, 1909), 18-21.

12 Jeanne Elizabeth Wier, "The Mission of the State Historical Society," *First Biennial Report of the Nevada Historical Society*, 1907-1908), 61-62.

13 Wier, "Mission," 62-70.

14 Herbert E. Bolton, "The Obligation of Nevada Toward the Writing of Her Own History," *Third Biennial Report of the Nevada Historical Society, 1911-1912* (Carson City: State Printing Office, 1913), 62.

15 *Ibid*, 63.

16 *Ibid*, 64-65.

17 *Ibid*, 67.

18 *Ibid*, 76.

19 *Ibid*, 79.

20 *Ibid*, 74.

21 Anne Martin, "Nevada: Beautiful Desert of Buried Hopes," *Nation* (July 1922).

22 William D. Rowley, *Reno: Hub of the Washoe Country* (Woodland Hills, Calif.: Windsor Publications, 1984) 52.

23 Rowley, *Reno*, 61.

24 William D. Rowley, *Reclaiming the Arid West: The Career of Francis G. Newlands* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 173.

25 This is a modification of Daniel Aaron's title, *Men of Good Hope: A Story of American Progressives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951); *East of Eden, West of Zion*, ed. Wilbur S. Shepperson (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1986). The title of this collection of essays was offered to Professor Shepperson by me and acknowledged by him in the preface.

THE AGE OF JIMMY THE GREEK
Sports Wagering in Modern America

Richard O. Davies

"Why do people bet? The answer is that the American public has a deep-seated and incurable mania for taking a chance."

W. Thornton Martin,
"The Pig-Skin Game"
Saturday Evening Post
February 8, 1936

Gambling was instilled deep within the American social fabric during the very earliest days of settlement, and it has flourished ever since. The historian John Findlay gets it right when he describes Americans as a "people of chance."[1] His perceptive treatment of the often overlooked gambling culture not only chronicles this important and fascinating aspect of American social history, but establishes the relationship between gambling and the entrepreneurial spirit that has contributed substantially to the building of the American enterprise. High stakes gambling thrived on the frontier and it is not surprising that it ultimately took permanent root in a far western state. In fact, the unique phenomenon of contemporary Las Vegas is the logical outcome of an historical process that can be traced all the way back to Jamestown. As Findlay observes, Las Vegas

summarized the cultural significance of successive Wests in American history, for the games played by visitors reflected centuries of shaping by a series of frontiers. Although each generation of players had naturally derived different meanings from betting, most Westerners shared the sense that gambling paralleled the risk and chance that had characterized their way of living.[2]

Richard 0. Davies is professor of history at the University of Nevada, Reno, where he offers courses in modern American history and the history of American sports. His recent publications include *America's Obsession; Sports and Society Since 1945* (Harcourt Brace, 1994); *Main Street Blues: The Decline of Small Town America* (Ohio State University Press, 1998), and *The Maverick Spirit: Building the New Nevada* (University of Nevada Press, 1999).

Given the pervasive and persistent presence of gambling within American society, it is curious that more historians have not been prompted to explore its considerable influence. An examination of Findlay's sources indicates that he was forced to rely almost exclusively upon primary materials and the less-than-comprehensive work of social scientists and journalists. The inattention by historians to gambling is especially glaring if one examines the rapidly expanding body of literature on sports history that has appeared during the past two decades.[3]

To be certain, many sports historians mention sports gambling, but no scholar has given it serious or extensive scrutiny. Even Professor Findlay deftly sidesteps the subject, providing only a few generalized comments about boxing and horse racing at the turn of the twentieth century, thereby overlooking one of the most intriguing aspects of all American gambling history.[4] This neglect by sports historians is readily understandable; despite gambling's stupendous rate of growth in recent times and a growing public acceptance (or at least tolerance) of the activity, the issue of sports wagering is not a hot-button topic on the academic scene. Further, research into the subject is not easy to do; primary documentary sources are limited, and most published primary materials are of such self-serving or dubious nature that they must be used with extreme caution. After all, the streetwise bookie who maintains detailed files of his correspondence and business transactions and upon retirement turns them over to the state historical society has yet to be born. Anyone familiar with the operations of the legal sports books in Nevada understands that their activities are enshrouded within an iron curtain of silence, mystery, and stone-faced security guards.

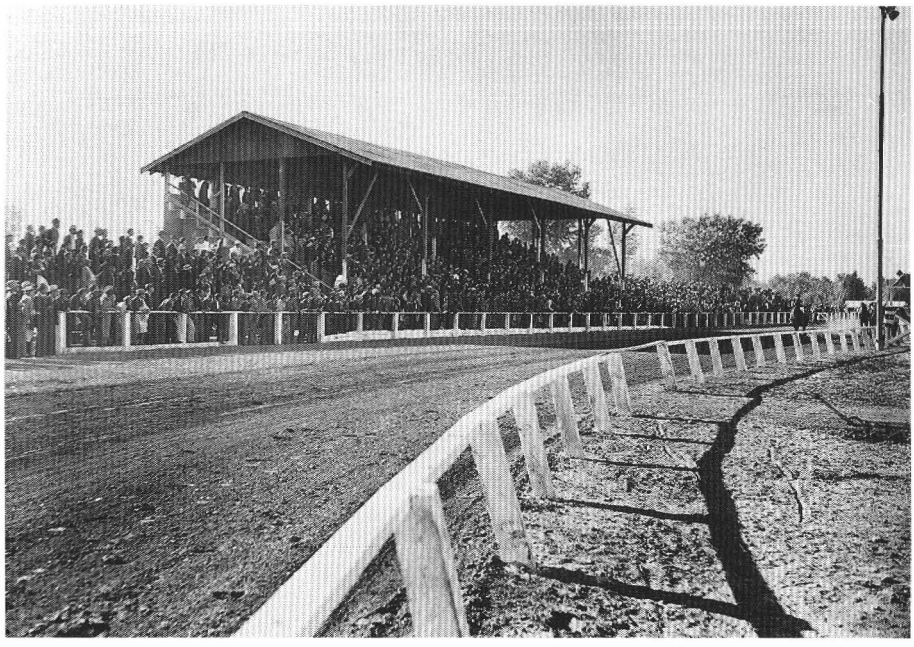
Nonetheless, the role of sports wagering has long been an important part of American popular culture. It has also deeply influenced the manner in which American sports have developed. Following World War II, sports gambling moved in important new directions in response to technological change, becoming an integral part of the nation's little understood but enormous underground economy. Much to the consternation of the leadership of American collegiate and professional sports, gambling has also substantially influenced the contemporary structure of American professional and amateur sports.[5]

Like many aspects of twentieth century American society, the great watershed in the history of sports history—and sports wagering—occurred about the time of World War II. Until the 1940s wagering on all human sports events was almost universally illegal, except in Nevada, where a few modest bookmakers began to offer odds on some human sports competitions in small "turf and sports books" located in Reno and Las Vegas. Although these new gambling emporiums were the logical outgrowth of deeply entrenched historical forces, they went counter to a powerful tradition that considered gambling to be immoral, or at least inappropriate for members of an orderly society. Al-

though gambling is not identified in the Bible as a sin, the powerful Puritan code held that gambling encouraged detrimental behavioral traits and subverted community standards. A statement by a Methodist minister in 1963 cogently summarized this sentiment: "Gambling is a moral and social evil that tends to undermine the ethical teachings of our churches and glorifies the philosophy of getting something for nothing." For this and other reasons, throughout much of American history, society's moral arbiters held gambling and gamblers in contempt.[6]

Nonetheless, gambling provided excitement and enjoyment for its practitioners, and in the process produced a reasonably accurate reflection of the risk-taking that occurred in the everyday world of business and trade. Until the late nineteenth century most sports wagering revolved around horse racing and bare-knuckle prize fighting, although large sums were known to have been wagered on college crew races and long distance human races during the antebellum period.[7] By the late nineteenth century, bookmakers openly operated at race tracks, each establishing his own odds or offering horses at "auction" to individual bidders, and paying the track management rent for business space. By the 1930s, several state governments recognized the potential for tax revenue to be generated by tapping into horse racing. Overcoming staunch moral opposition, they installed the pari-mutuel system, a French innovation. The system routinely reserved for the government, about 18 percent of the betting handle on every race, paid the prizes to the owners of the winning, place, and show horses, and perhaps even contributed to the track maintenance fund, before paying off the holders of winning tickets whose take was based upon the odds established by the wagering pattern.[8]

The rapid growth in popularity of organized professional baseball in the latter half of the nineteenth century was intimately connected to the prominent role that gambling played in stimulating spectator interest. Team owners were often big time gamblers, and many persons close to the game had a similar identification. The sports historian Benjamin Rader emphasizes this close connection: "Patrons of the Victorian underworld found in baseball a sport to satisfy the widespread hunger for gambling. In all the larger cities, poolrooms determined odds, kept records of bets, and assured payments—all for a commission. At some [ball] parks, gamblers openly hawked their odds." Rader also observes that because so many games were "hippodromed," i.e. fixed, the game became the source of considerable public skepticism. Rader reports that on many an occasion, bettors even swarmed onto the field of play to prevent the completion of a game in which they were about to lose money, or set off firecrackers when an outfielder was about to make an important catch that impinged upon their immediate financial futures. As early as 1867, *Harper's Weekly* dourly commented that "the most respectable clubs in the country indulge in it [gambling] to a highly culpable degree." The magazine concluded that the future of the game was imperiled because of "the tricks by which games

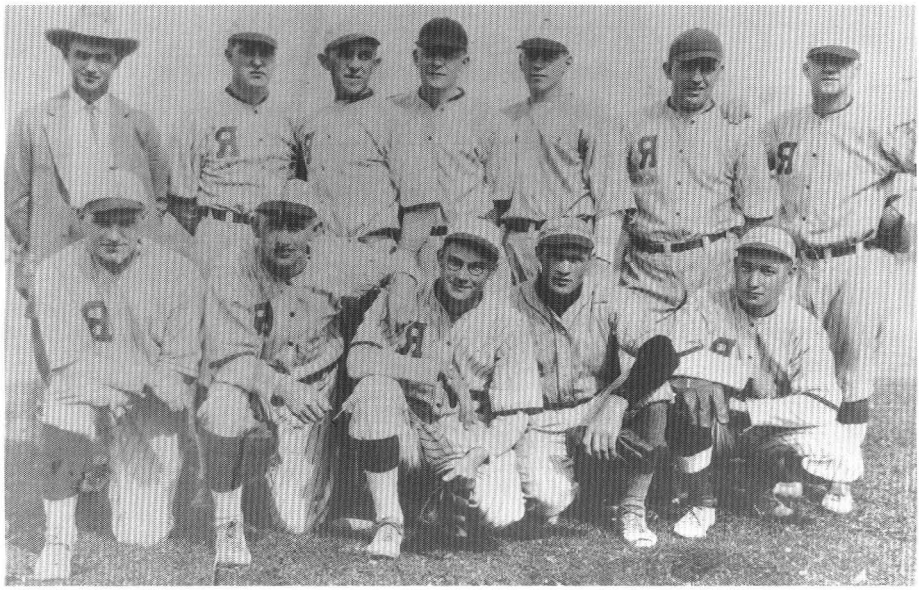


By the 1930s, several state governments recognized the potential for tax revenue to be generated by tapping into horse racing *(Nevada Historical Society)*.

have been 'sold' for the benefit of gamblers."[9]

The most surprising aspect of the 1919 World Series scandal, in which eight members of the Chicago White Sox were accused of accepting bribes to throw the fall classic to the underdog Cincinnati Reds is that such practices did not come to public attention many years earlier. The premier historian of baseball, Charles C. Alexander, contends that the influence of high-stakes gamblers was a much larger part of the national pastime than its many naïve adherents were willing to admit. Alexander's authoritative *Our Game* describes a continuum of highly suspicious events that occurred between 1905 and the much publicized 1919 World Series.[10]

The 1920s have long been identified as the golden age of spectator sports. Sports pages were appearing in most daily newspapers and radio and motion-picture newsreels stimulated spectator interest. With legalization in several states, boxing enjoyed a boom, and baseball, now presumed safe from scandal under the iron dictatorship of Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis, and propelled to even greater popularity by the soaring home runs of Babe Ruth, quickly overcame the public distrust generated by the Chicago Black Sox. Big-time college football moved center stage and proved to be a bonanza for gamblers. The golden age of American sports also ushered in a golden age for bookies. The rapid growth of sports wagering produced a flurry of indignant magazine



Reno garage baseball team - 1920s (*Nevada Historical Society*).

articles denouncing stateoperated pari-mutuel betting as well as the rapidly increasing business being conducted by street-corner bookies. The upsurge in gambling on sports during the 1920s and 1930s was variously condemned in national journals as "a Faustian bargain," "a degradation of citizenship," and "a practice destructive to morals."[11] Among other things.

At the eve of World War II, one authoritative source estimated that 60,000 illegal bookies operated on the streets of America.[12] Others placed the number at a much higher level. If someone wanted to get down on Army-Notre Dame or even a minor-league baseball game, there was usually an eager local entrepreneur ready to oblige. During the Great Depression betting on college football grew rapidly with the introduction of parlay cards that required bettors to pick a minimum of three winners and had payoff odds notoriously skewed in favor of the bookmakers. In major cities the football cards—often called "pools"—as well as traditional individual game bets based upon odds were often operated within the purview of the local organized crime syndicate. "The football pool is America's fastest growing industry," one journalist commented in 1936.[13]

All of this, however, was merely prelude to the enormous growth in the underground economic enterprise of sports betting that occurred when peace returned. The war unleashed a complex set of forces that propelled sports wagering—legal and otherwise—into the mainstream of American society. Its

mind-boggling growth has continued throughout the remainder of the century. By 1997, wagers on sporting events, as estimated by federal tax and law enforcement agencies, approached $120 billion dollars a year, making it a substantial and integral part of the modern American economy even though the great percentage of the action is illegal—and therefore untaxed. For purposes of comparison, the same federal agencies placed the dollar amount generated by the illegal drug and narcotics industry at about *$50* billion, less than one half the amount estimated to be bet by the American people.[14] It is significant that only about $2.5 billion of those dollars were bet in the seventy-five legal sports books located in Reno and Las Vegas; even in Nevada many illegal bookies have operated alongside the regulated sports books because their players are not subjected to federal tax on their winnings, and the marginal gambler can, for a hefty price, obtain credit, although at usurious rates, from his bookie when he is down on his luck.[15]

Several factors point to the 1940s as the watershed of sports wagering in the United States. The first primitive—albeit legal—sports books had, by then appeared on the streets of Las Vegas and Reno, providing at least a modicum of respectability to the enterprise. They were the result of the Nevada legislature having legalized gambling in 1931 in what was a relatively routine political decision made by a conservative Republican administration desperately seeking new sources of tax revenue during the early years of the Great Depression.[16] The enormous federal investment in Nevada during the war set in motion a period of rapid growth that in turn created new opportunities for eastern organized-crime groups to exploit the state's embrace of legalized gambling. When in 1946 one of Nevada's most famous folk heroes, former New York mobster Benjamin "Bugsy" Seigal, opened his Flamingo Hotel-Casino on the highway leading toward Los Angeles, Nevada changed forever. By the 1960s the Las Vegas Strip had emerged as a controversial icon of a new and different America, one that regarded gambling as a legitimate, even benign, form of entertainment. "Gaming," as it is gingerly referred to by Nevada's cautious image makers, also became the primary economic engine that would fuel a fifteenfold increase in population within the Sagebrush State over the next forty years.[17]

Nevada grew and prospered in the postwar period, albeit for a time as a social outcast that middle America nonetheless loved to visit. But as one state after another, in quest of new tax revenues, sought its own piece of the gambling action, the image of Nevada became ever more mainstream and much more closely attuned to life in other parts of the United States. During the first two decades after the war, legalized gambling, the state's local-option law permitting brothels, and its 1920s quickie-divorce fame combined to produce its reputation as the Sin State.[18] After a 1955 flight from Kansas City to San Francisco took him over northern Nevada, former President Harry S Truman weighed in with a harsh, but not unusual, indictment in his personal diary:

"Then we came to the great gambling and marriage destruction hell, known as Nevada. To look at it from the air it is just that—hell on earth [where] dice, roulette, light-of-loves, crooked poker and gambling thugs thrive. Such places should be abolished and so should Nevada."[19]

By the 1970s the dubious image to which the former president alluded had begun to fade before the seismic changes in social attitudes that were occurring within American society. These changes included the rapid expansion of state-sanctioned or even state-operated gambling ventures. By the 1980s, clearly, the values of Las Vegas had seeped deeply into the American mainstream as state lotteries, video poker games, and Indian casinos appeared with increasing frequency. Between the 1960s and the 1980s Nevada shed its Sin State label; the image of Las Vegas morphed into what its image makers projected as "a wholesome family vacation destination." "Gambling, once widely thought of as a sin or even a crime, is increasingly considered just another leisure and recreation activity," concludes the historian Jerome E. Edwards.[20] By the mid-1990s, according to journalist Kurt Andersen, a "hang loose, all-American embrace of Las Vegas" had occurred. Nevada had long since lost its monopoly on gambling. For better or worse, its cultural values, its lifestyle, even its primary economic endeavor, had been accepted, even embraced, by the rest of the country.[21]

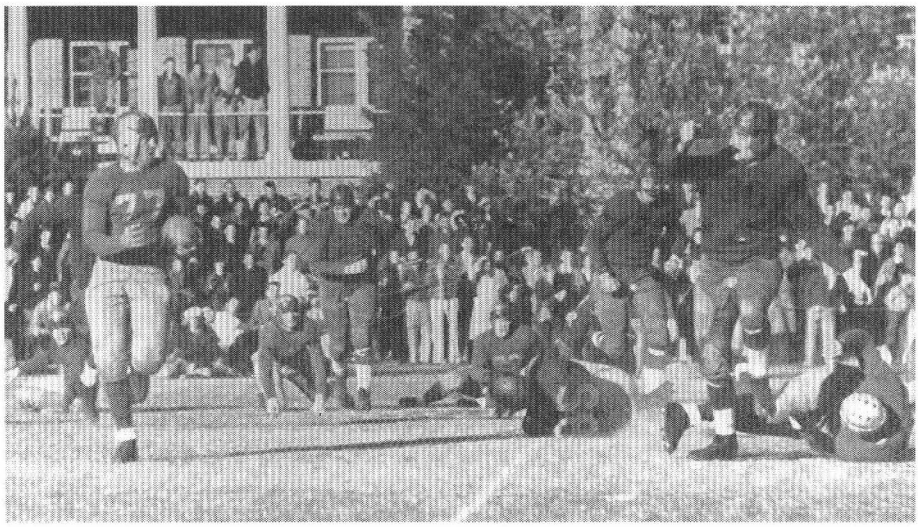
In 1976 Nevada's Gaming Control Board made a crucial decision that irrevocably changed forever the structure of sports wagering in the United States. It now permitted casinos to operate sports books within their premises, thereby creating a pleasant and seductive place for bettors to play, and displacing the grimy atmosphere of the old turf-and-sports-book clubs where the aroma of stale cigar smoke, day-old spilled beer, and greasy hot dogs generated an ambience only a dedicated horse player could appreciate. Driving this new initiative was 1974 federal legislation that lowered the federal tax on sports wagers from 10 percent to 2 percent. The 10 percent rate enacted in 1951 and inspired by the United States Senate's Kefauver Hearings was a naïve attempt to eliminate illegal sports betting from American life. The tax had made sports gambling, with its normal 3-5 percent rate of return to bookmakers, a sure-fire money loser for casinos. In 1983 Congress further lowered the tax to just one quarter of one percent and the number of casino-based sports books proliferated in Nevada. These luxurious new sports books soon drove the tawdry old race-and-sports books out of business. Gamblers were now entitled to richly appointed, high-tech betting parlors that featured plush carpeting, comfortable leather seats, multiple-large screen television sets, and mesmerizing flashing digital-odds boards that responded to the instructions of sophisticated computers. The incorporation of sports books within the major casinos indicated that sports betting had come of age in America. The time had come for sports wagering to take a prominent place alongside slot machines and green-felt tables within

the hallowed confines of Nevada's most opulent gambling emporiums.[22]

In the wake of the revolutionary corporate gaming law of 1969, corporate management teams were now operating Nevada's casinos, having largely replaced the shady characters representative of eastern and midwestern crime organizations. These managers correctly viewed sports books as marginal in terms of producing the high revenue streams they demanded from the casino floors. However, they also understood that the new books were potentially very important in luring new customers to their table games, a fact reflected by casino floor-traffic patterns that almost always require the would-be sports bettor to traverse a labyrinth of green-felt tables and slot machines to reach the sports book. Consistent with modern corporate management techniques, the new casino sports books quickly took on an ambiance that would have been foreign, even repugnant, to the old-time seat-of-the-pants street-corner sports bookie; computerized operations directed by no-nonsense bottom-line MBAs now controlled the odds and point spreads. It is not surprising that within a few years of the advent of these plush new sports books, the old-guard line makers such as Brooklyn's legendary Bob Martin—who had for so long operated on hunches and sixth senses—were replaced by the MBAs and their probability tables and computers. Typical of this new buttoned-down image of modern sports betting is the chief executive of today's most prominent odds-setting firm in Las Vegas, Michael "Roxy" Roxborough. His Las Vegas Sports Consultants offices are discretely located in a high-rise bank building; there, using the latest in computer and telecommunications technology, a group of dispassionate experts churn out the daily betting line for the nation from within a staid environment not unlike that of an old-line silk-stocking brokerage firm.[23]

Three fundamental forces contributed to the enormous financial success of the casino-based Nevada sports books as well as to the rapid growth in illegal sports betting, which in 1998 saw an estimated 300,000 bookmakers handling illegal action in all of the fifty states. The first of these factors—and undoubtedly the most important—was the introduction of the point spread. Its origins are murky at best, but evidently the concept was formalized by a onetime prep-school social studies teacher and former securities analyst for a Chicago bank by the name of Charles K. McNeil. The possessor of a degree in history from the University of Chicago, McNeil apparently enjoyed a level of success in picking winners during the college football season sufficient to convince him in 1940 to forsake his banking career in order to concentrate upon his lucrative gambling gambit. During this time he was alledgedly betting upwards of $200,000 a week on college football games, winning on average 60 percent of his wagers, and earning an annual income in excess of $300,000.[24]

Presumably a believer in the concept of vertical integration, during the early 1940s McNeil opened his own bookmaking operation, and around 1945 introduced his clientele to what he called the "wholesale odds system" that he ap-



Football - University of Nevada versus Santa Barbara State College in 1936 *(Artemesia 1937 [Reno: Associated Students of the University of Nevada, 1937]).*

plied to college football and basketball. His business flourished under this revolutionary new system, which was in fact a rudimentary form of today's sophisticated point spread. McNeil's success soon came to the attention of one of the nation's most powerful sports gambling figures, a Minneapolis gambling consultant (i.e., odds maker for other bookmakers) by the name of Billy Hecht. This graduate of the streets of Chicago, where he interacted with McNeil, had become a senior executive for the nationally prominent sports betting service operated in that city by Leo Hirshfield.[25]

Ever since the early 1930s the entrepreneurial Hirshfield had operated out of Minneapolis because of its efficient long-distance telephone services and strategic location in the nation's heartland. From his Minneapolis office Hirshfield distributed to his clients across the land for a substantial fee, the oracle of American sports gambling—the Minnesota Line. In addition to setting odds on college football and major league baseball games for his bookie clientele, Hirschfield also provided betting recommendations for serious bettors that appeared on green newsprint—*The Green Sheet.* Hirschfield's influence became so great that when he released a point spread to his paying customers, it was adopted almost overnight by bookmakers nationwide.[26]

The point spread proved to be one of the most significant elements in the history of modern American sports. Betting on football and basketball became, according to no less an authority than *Sports Illustrated,* "a huge nationwide business" that enjoyed "vast popularity."[27] It also contributed to the steady

decline in interest in pari-mutuel horse racing by money-wise members of the gambling community. It increased interest in college basketball, created a major opportunity for bribery and conspiracy in the form of point-shaving scams, and ultimately stimulated the rapid ascent in popularity of professional football and basketball. Over-all, the point spread provided an enticing formula that greatly increased interest in sports wagering, which in turn had a signal influence upon the growing popularity of team sports. This occurred despite the facts that betting on human sports was illegal in forty-nine of the fifty states and the District of Columbia and that illegal bookmaking was subject to federal courts of fines up to $20,000 and five years in prison.[28] The point spread also created special problems for major college coaches; now they were not only expected by impatient boosters, alumni, and fans to win the game, but in the process also to beat the spread.

Ever since the first bets were placed on horses owned by rival colonial Virginia gentlemen, or on bare-knuckle prize fighters on the Kentucky frontier, establishing appropriate odds has been the basis for serious wagering. Fair odds were the means of stimulating high-stakes betting, especially if one of the contestants seemed to be far superior to his opponent. Reflective of the growing organization and sophistication of all aspects of American economic enterprise during the nineteenth century, sports betting increasingly fell under the purview of professional managers—in this case the bookmaker.

It is important to understand that the successful bookmaker was rarely a gambler himself. He was the intermediary, the impartial broker who serviced his clientele by offering odds, handling the money, and paying off the winners, for a fee, of course. He made his money from a 10 percent service charge on losing bets, or as it has long been called by practitioners, the "vigorish." One journalist recognized as much as early as 1934: "Professional gamblers have reached their promised land in and out of their trade through constant and studied devotion to the Great God Percentage, and not to any special favors bestowed by the Goddess Luck."[29]

The successful bookmakers were those who had the ability to set odds on sporting events that generated a more or less equal amount of money on both sides. If his books leaned a little in one direction he stood to make an additional gain if that side prevailed, but if not he still would be covered sufficiently to earn a decent profit. The successful bookmaker cared not a whit who won or lost as long as he could balance the books and collect his vig.

Prior to the introduction of the point spread, achieving such a delicate balance was oftentimes difficult to accomplish. When an overwhelming powerhouse college football team was scheduled against a hopelessly outclassed opponent, even the most lopsided of odds could not generate an even betting handle. Thus the prudent bookmaker simply refused to take bets on such games. He avoided a major loss, but in the process had to forego the opportunity of

earning a commission on the game.

That unfortunate (and unprofitable) situation changed with the introduction of Charles McNeil's magical point spread. Now it was possible to adjust the points to make even a vastly inferior opponent an attractive bet. As the bookmaker monitored the flow of monies on a contest, he adjusted the point spread upward or downward to encourage new money that would balance his books. The point spread proved most applicable to basketball and football. Many reasons have been offered to explain the slow decline in the popularity of baseball. Perhaps one that has not been adequately considered is that the game is not conducive to point-spread betting but must rely upon the odds offered by the traditional money line. The point spread encouraged the widely held perception (or myth, depending upon one's take on things) that, over the long haul, a hard-working and intelligent person could consistently make money by betting on sporting events.[30]

The prospect of beating the spread posed an intellectual challenge that many heretofore nonbettors—often possessed of college educations—could not pass up. It also provided the diligent bookie with a system that provided a reasonable guarantee that he would walk away from most games with his vigorish intact. For prudent bookmakers, adoption of the point spread put them a much safer remove from the vagaries of athletic contests, where upsets, injuries to key players, bad weather, strange bounces of the ball, inept officiating, or whatever could play havoc with even the most carefully considered wager. By encouraging action on every major contest, no matter how lopsided the final outcome was considered to be, the point spread greatly increased the likelihood of a larger pool of wagered money, from which an enhanced vigorish could be derived.[31]

For millions of new bettors who joined in the action after 1945 the intellectual challenge of beating the spread was enticing indeed. Although research on the subject is largely nonexistent, it seems clear to those who follow sports betting trends closely that the demographics of American bettors changed significantly as more middle- and upper-middle-class men (and a growing number of women) became caught up in the challenges of sports handicapping. This led to a new cottage industry. Whereas fifty years ago the only serious publications were Hirschfield's *Green Sheet* and Moses Annenberg's *Daily Racing Form and Morning Telegraph,* there now emerged in modern America a deluge of advisory tout sheets and telephone services that sold "picks" for a fee; it is estimated that in the mid-1990s at least 700 such services were functioning at any one time. However, one of the legendary successful gamblers of modern times, a man who has long enjoyed a comfortable existence in Las Vegas and never held a regular daytime job, Lester "Lem" Banker, is not far from the truth when he describes the great majority of touts as "guys who went broke gambling their own money, and now are trying it with yours."[32]

The growth of sports betting generated by the point spread was further accelerated by a second major force, the advent of television. Anyone knowledgeable about the psychology of sports betting will affirm that for a large segment of American sports fans, having a bet down on a game that he or she is watching substantially heightens the excitement and enjoyment. Surprisingly, it was some time before the influence of television upon sports wagering became fully appreciated—at least two decades by my estimate. However, when Nevada's first casino-based sports books opened in 1976 one of their most prominent features was a bank of large-screen television sets that stimulated not only traditional bets on the outcome of games, but also "proposition" bets that could be made during the course of a contest. At half time of a big game, a Nevada casino bookmaker can adjust the odds on the outcome and offer new wagering opportunities to squeeze additional bets out of enthusiastic gamblers.[33]

Television's impact, however, was not fully exploited by bookmakers until the new technologies of the 1980s dramatically altered the structure of telecommunications. Cable television spawned the first all-sports network, the Entertainment and Sports Programming Network (ESPN), in 1980. Shortly thereafter came the advent of satellite dishes for private use. Embracing this new technology, sports bars sprouted across the land like so many mushrooms in the warm springtime, with gambling being an unwritten but apparent incentive for many of their customers. Cable television networks, expanded commercial broadcast network sports coverage, and satellite dishes provided gamblers an endless supply of games to watch. This new pot pourri of televised sporting events not only provided incentives for increased betting, but also afforded the serious bettor a means of evaluating teams regarding possible future wagers. The television set became an electronic version of the old racing form.

Prior to World War II, substantial amounts of illegal betting occurred in "wire rooms" such as that made famous in the popular motion picture, *The Sting*, which portrayed off-track gambling during the mid-1930s. Telegraph or telephone lines connected the bookie's illegal enterprise to a distant race track, but by the 1950s virtually every tavern in America had its own wire service perched prominently over the bar. Any potential bettor could now personally evaluate the teams upon which he might make a future investment. During the last quarter century the two sporting events most prominent in terms of sheer dollars wagered have been, not surprisingly, the two events that have been designed with the television audience uppermost in mind—the Super Bowl and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) basketball tournament.[34]

The third factor in the enormous growth in sports wagering is the widespread acceptance by the American people of gambling as a form of entertainment. It is impossible to identify precisely when this change in public opinion occurred, but it seems clear that it happened sometime before 1980. By that

time several major developments provided evidence that a seismic shift had taken place in the public perception. In 1976 the State of New Jersey permitted a few carefully screened casinos to operate along the Boardwalk of Atlantic City, a novel approach to the challenges posed by slum clearance and urban redevelopment. By 1980 more than 70 percent of all daily newspapers published in their sports pages the Las Vegas Line, supposedly for the edification of their readers, but in reality for the convenience of local gamblers. This practice has long been condemned by NCAA officials and professional sports executives, but to no avail. A spokesman for the most famous holdout, the *New York Times,* commented that "newspapers do not have a responsibility to encourage illegal acts, but to discourage them," and the acerbic basketball coach of Indiana University, Bobby Knight, said the practice was akin to newspapers publishing the telephone numbers of local prostitutes as a public service. The critics were correct in contending that publication of the betting line is an implicit endorsement of illegal gambling, but whenever a newspaper makes noises about dropping this service, its owners are inundated by angry protests from aggrieved subscribers.[35]

In 1976, CBS-TV Sports made an important symbolic statement when it brought to its popular "NFL Today" show one of the nation's most prominent sports bettors, the most famous native of Steubenville, Ohio, Demetrious Synodinos, a.k.a. Jimmy Snyder or "Jimmy the Greek."

The weekly appearance on the Sunday pregame show by the nation's most famous sports gambler and odds maker—and pardoned felon—brought to the Greek's craft an immediate legitimacy within American society. Along with Brent Musburger, Phyllis George, and Irv Cross, each Sunday Snyder commented knowingly upon current National Football League issues, and, in one closely watched segment of the show, announced his picks for the day. As that segment ended and CBS faded to yet another advertisement, bettors all across America rushed to their telephones to sneak in a final bet. In self-defense, nervous bookies also monitored the show and made deft last-minute adjustments in their point spreads. In a quaint nod toward conventional morality—not to mention the federal criminal code—CBS's legal staff adamantly forbade Snyder to mention odds or points spreads, and so he merely picked winners. It is not surprising that many of his best picks were upsets, thereby giving a clear signal to eager listeners, who had referenced the point spread in their local newspaper, to call their local bookmakers and take the points on the "dog."[36]

Operating under the blanket of the Las Vegas public relations firm he founded in 1965, Snyder enjoyed greater latitude in discussing upcoming games on his weekly Mutual Broadcasting radio program, aired over 360 radio outlets. Further, his long-running newspaper column focused upon the point spread. Begun as a lark in 1963 with the maverick *Las Vegas Sun,* by the mid-1970s the column was syndicated in more than 300 daily newspapers.[37] The media phe-

nomenon of Jimmy the Greek, whose on-the-air performances were anything but polished, signaled the obvious: Sports wagering had definitely arrived as an important ingredient in American popular culture when Snyder could take sports betting into the living rooms of middle America on Sunday afternoon.

Snyder brought to CBS a reputation as one of America's major players. Born in 1918 to immigrant Greek parents, he grew up on the streets of the tough Ohio River town of Steubenville during the depression years. As a teenager he earned money as a runner for several of the town's ten illegal bookmakers, most of whom operated out of grimy poolrooms that provided an invaluable internship in preparation for his future career. By the time he was sixteen, Snyder had demonstrated an acumen for picking winning horses, and he naturally gravitated in the winters to Florida's several tracks. Within a few years he was recognized as a major player, widely known within gambling's inner circles for his keen judgment. He was identified by the Kefauver Committee as one of the nation's most successful and influential professional sports gamblers. By the mid-1950s Snyder's reputation had already become the stuff of gambling legend; he was known to put upward of $100,000 on a single horse race or college football game if his research indicated good value. His tips were eagerly sought by prominant gamblers.[38]

Like any professional gambler, Snyder enjoyed periods of success that were counterbalanced by desperate times when he was down to his last few dollars. Although he came into contact with many an unsavory character and at least once had a gun held to his head in an extortion effort, Snyder managed to stay beyond the clutches of both organized crime and, for a time, law enforcement. By the early 1960s he had sworn off Florida and its horses. He had become convinced that "If you can't have a conversation with them, don't bet on them," and he took his act to Las Vegas where he did not have to worry about breaking the law as he pursued his chosen profession. In 1965 he established his own company, Sports Unlimited, that sold odds and point spreads to Nevada's sports books, provided an expensive tout service to high-roller subscribers, and offered public relations services for a high fee. *Sports Illustrated* gave him national prominence with a flattering article in 1961, identifying him as "The Greek Who Makes the Odds."[39]

Such notoriety, however, also attracted the attention of Attorney General Robert Kennedy and FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, both of whom were zealously pursing organized crime—not to mention attendant headlines. Kennedy, in particular, held an especially intense personal dislike for anything and anyone associated with Las Vegas. A tapped telephone conversation between Snyder and a friend in Salt Lake City led to an indictment in 1963; Snyder was charged with providing gambling information across state lines regarding an upcoming football game between Utah State and the University of Utah. Jimmy had apparently irritated the brothers Kennedy with a caustic quip in *Sports Illustrated* that had generated considerable comment: "They lost in Laos, they lost

in Cuba, they lost in East Berlin, but they sure are giving the gamblers a beating." Snyder had indeed made a few statements, which he considered personal and between friends, about the game and across state lines. Technically, this was a violation of the 1951 antigambling law inspired by the Kefauver Committee findings on the relationship between sports gambling and organized crime. Despite protestations of innocence, he eventually pled nolo contendere and paid a $10,000 fine. In late 1974 Gerald Ford granted him a presidential pardon, apparently arranged by Nevada's recently elected United States senator and former governor, Paul Laxalt.[40]

Snyder's elevation to national prominence by CBS-TV two years later was the culmination of his meteoric rise. Millions of viewers were enthralled by the chance to view a successful professional gambler discuss the basis for his selections. Ratings for "NFL Today" were high, and audiences seemed to remember best his upset predictions (in 1980 he correctly called twenty-seven of thirty-two upset games, a phenomenal streak of good fortune), while forgetting the many games on which he demonstrated his human fallibility. Snyder's run on CBS was long and successful, and it clearly elevated the status of sports betting by emphasizing the serious intellectual processes required by the craft: extensive research, acute analysis and judgment, cautious money management, and prudent risk taking. Behind the scenes, however, he conducted a running feud with the affable host Brent Musburger (with whom he reportedly engaged in fisticuffs on two occasions) and many a producer and director.

Snyder's infamous off-the-cuff comments about black athletes, made to a reporter in January of 1988 while waiting for a seat in a Washington, D.C. restaurant, produced a national uproar that led CBS to order his abrupt termination. That his firing produced an enormous flurry of national controversy provided ample testimony to his prominence—and indirectly that of his profession.[41]

The controversy that followed Snyder's ill-advised and misinformed remarks about African-American athletes and his subsequent unceremonial termination by CBS-TV led to a period of intense debate about the heavy fog of racism that has always surrounded American sports. That it revolved around a pardoned felon whose profession was gambling also said much about the enhanced stature of gambling within American sports. By the time Snyder made his bumbling, off-the-cuff comments, betting on American sporting events had become so routine that it was no longer the subject of much critical attention. But it did concern those close to collegiate and professional sports, and the amounts bet definitely concerned federal law enforcement officials. The incredibly high figures that they bandied about were certainly reason to raise serious questions. Reputable social research organizations have made well-researched guesstimates. The numbers are staggering. In 1983, Christiansen/Cummings and Associates, a prominent New York City social research firm, estimated that a total of about $8 billion was being bet on American sports events. By 1995 that

figure had risen to $84 billion according to the American Council on Compulsive Gambling. In 1997, federal tax and law enforcement agencies said that the amount then exceeded $100 billion, quite possibly reaching $120 billion.[42]

The reasons for this exponential expansion are many, but the primary factor has been the growth of all-sports radio and television networks, heavy investment by the major networks in their sports programming, the spread of cable and satellite services, and the continued increase in the amount of leisure time and discretionary income that has contributed to the popularity of sports at all levels of American society. And, of course, the enticing prospect of beating the point spread. The moral stigma once attached to gambling perhaps has not disappeared, but it no longer packs much of a punch. And, to the intelligent and disciplined gambler, sports are unusually attractive when compared to other gambling options. With casino games the odds are always stacked in favor of the house, but according to the experts a dedicated and disciplined sports bettor can win with regularity if he or she sets a reasonable season-long goal of between 55 and 60 percent winners and works very hard at the process. Even such a Las Vegas icon as Jimmy the Greek openly denounced standard casino gambling as "a killer," "a disease," and a "nonprofit sport" in which "the percentages are always against you." But sports betting, he contended, provides the intelligent and persistent player an opportunity to win on a more-or-less predictable basis .[43]

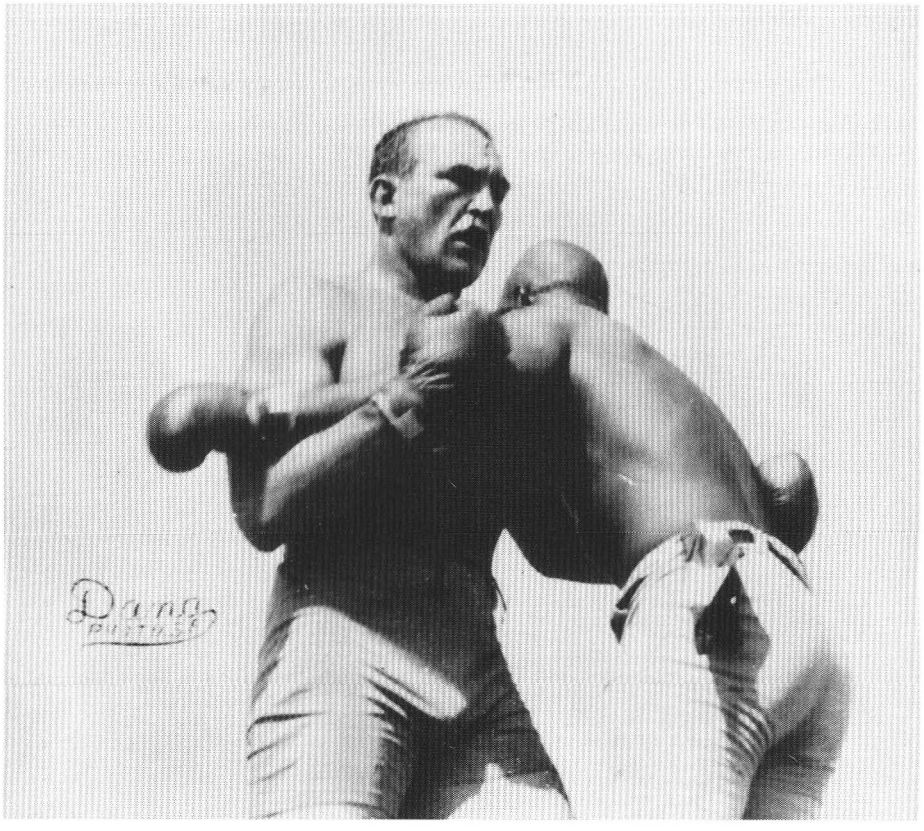
It is this intellectual challenge that has lured millions of Americans into the routine of betting on team sports—primarily football and basketball—during the past half century." In recent years gambling has become much more an idler's pastime or a mass opiate," *Newsweek* intoned in 1972. "The modern gambler may be the middle class suburbanite who calls his equally middle class bookmaker in Scarsdale or Santa Monica to bet a few dollars on each of a weekend's televised football games." These bettors know that they have a much better chance of beating the spread than of winning on a state lottery ticket (where the odds are about fourteen million to one), at the slot machines where the best payoff is 97 percent of the handle, at the blackjack tables where the house enjoys between a 1-to-3 percent edge based upon rules variations and the size of the deck, or at roulette, where the cage is a hefty 5.75 percent. The intelligent bettor also knows that a wager on a human sport supplies a much better opportunity to exit with a profit than pari-mutuel horse racing, where the state government can rake off 18 percent or more before beginning to distribute the winnings on odds that may fluctuate considerably after a bettor has put down his money. This understanding has led to a steady decline in attendance at horse races, along with a parallel diminution in state revenues despite the extension of racing seasons and the introduction of off-track betting parlors in several states.[44]

An integral part of the history of sports betting, of course, has been the ef-

forts by gamblers to arrange a sure thing for themselves. The fix has always been with us, and in 1998 it appeared once more on, of all places, the campus of Northwestern University. In that year Division I college players at Northwestern and Arizona State University pled guilty to federal charges of conspiracy and bribery. Another major basketball program at Fresno State University was extensively investigated but no criminal charges were filed; nonetheless, the attention of the national media was intense. Ever since the point spread appeared, allegations of point shaving have rattled back and forth across the bow of big-time college basketball. To put things in perspective, the known attempts at fixes have actually been relatively few, but of course we know of only those conspiracies that have been brought to the attention of the law.[45]

As the gambling business grows increasingly sophisticated, with its reliance upon complex statistical programs, extensive computer data banks, and special computerized tracking programs that monitor the flow of money on every game on the board by the minute, it is highly improbable that we will see many such episodes in the future. The legal books in Las Vegas can readily spot almost immediately any unusual betting activity because of the fact that the Las Vegas books are invariably used by illegal bookmakers around the country to "lay off' unusually large amounts of monies bet on a particular game. When this happens, it sets off an alarm that resonates across the land in a nanosecond. It was Las Vegas bookmakers, in fact, who alerted the FBI regarding the point-shaving shenanigans at Arizona State and sounded the alarm about a similar possibility at Fresno State in 1996. There is no question but that the legal sports books in Nevada, equipped with state-of-the-art computer and communications technology, provide a distinct service for their illegal counterparts in other states by assuring a level of integrity heretofore unheard of in the business. That assurance, in turn, inspires the self-confident American sports bettor to gamble even more. If confidence in the integrity of the process were not assured, bookmakers everywhere would see an immediate decline in the number of consumers.[46]

Such safeguards were not in place fifty years ago when the point spread was still in its infancy. The infamous Scandal of '51 was a shocking event that saw thirty-eight college basketball players indicted on bribery and conspiracy charges. A few of the culprits spent some time in jail, others paid hefty fines, the most talented lost the opportunity to play professionally, and all suffered public humiliation. The legacy of that unfortunate occurrence reverberates yet today throughout the world of American sports. Although the net that District Attorney Frank Hogan cast at the time seemed to be an extensive one—it eventually extended to thirty-two college teams including such midwestern powerhouses as Kentucky, Toledo, and Bradley—nagging questions have since been raised suggesting that his much-publicized crusade was itself tainted by the political fix. In particular, many persons close to the New York basketball scene and the investigation have suggested that Hogan bowed to strong political



Johnson-Jeffries fight in Reno on July 4, 1910 *(Nevada Historical Society)*.

and clerical pressures and did not pursue hot leads that pointed in the direction of high-powered Jesuit institutions.[47]

In the wake of Hogan's headline-making crusade, famed *New York Times* sports writer Arthur Daley used colorful language in placing the blame for the scandals on the "diabolical device" of the recently introduced point spread: "The gambling craze has swept the country with the avariciousness of a prairie fire . . . . The flames are out of control. Nothing can extinguish them now." Daley pointed toward "the satanic gimmick of the point spread [that] made gambling irresistible to those heretofore uninterested in a wager." He was, of course, technically correct. But as the street-wise journalist and former basketball star Charles Rosen contends, players in the area had been "doing business" with gamblers long before the point spread was introduced. Daley's targets, of course, should have been the greed of players and the gamblers who plied them with modest bribes to shave points.[48]

Of course, efforts to fix contests have long been part of American sports lore

and history. The point spread, however, moved the fixing of games into a completely new and seductive context. As Rosen points out, a college basketball player could pick up a quick $1,000-to-$2,000 from a gambler by shaving points, and could rationalize his actions because he was still helping his team win the game. The recently implicated Northwestern players provide an interesting new twist to things: They knew their team was doomed to lose, and they merely had to make certain the loss was by more points than the double-digit spreads established by Michael Roxborough's Las Vegas firm.[49]

Because of several elements inherent to the game, basketball was the sport most vulnerable to a new variety of the old fix. Football involves too many players and too many variables; a fix would be a hazardous proposition at best, and no major scandal has ever broken over a fixed football game. Not that a few notable efforts were not made, the most famous being overtures to key New York Giant backfield stars prior to the 1946 NFL championship game.[50] Baseball is too complex a game and also involves too many players for a fix to work effectively, although former-major-league-pitcher-turned-novelist Jim Bouton has suggested that a vulnerable home-plate umpire is in a unique position to affect the outcome of a close game by squeezing or expanding the strike zone.[51] Like football, however, baseball presents too many variables for one or two players to control the outcome—making the prudent fixer unlikely to place large bets on such a risky enterprise.

In basketball, however, one or two key players can much more readily provide aid and comfort to a gambler. An errant pass by a star player at a crucial moment, a missed lay-up, or a few bricks from the free throw line at crunch time might frustrate coaches and fans alike but not lead to suspicions of foul play, especially if such off nights occur infrequently. Actually, the method of choice according to All-American forward Sherman White of Long Island University, one of the central figures in the 1951 scandals, was to let down on defense rather than offense: failing to fight through a screen, losing one's position on a rebound, or committing a foul at a critical moment. White recently informed the *New York Times* that such defensive lapses were much less obvious than offensive ones, even to astute coaches, and a more effective means of controlling a game's final point differential.[52]

Subsequent point-shaving scandals created headlines every decade or so thereafter, but none of the incidents approached anything like the magnitude of 1951. It is significant that no solid connection between attempts to fix games and organized crime has ever been made; even the main perpetrator of the 1951 scandal, Salvatore Sollazzo, was a small-time punk and one-time resident of Sing-Sing (armed robbery) who was such an inept gambler that he lost a quarter of a million dollars while fixing games![53] It is important to remember that the long-term business fortunes of bookmakers depend upon the betting public having faith in the honesty of the enterprise. Although the heavily regulated sports books in Las Vegas serve as a rock of integrity for the entire nation

in safeguarding the financial well-being of sports betting, hope springs eternal among gamblers looking for a sure thing, so we can expect to see other fix attempts in the future. But it is also important to keep in mind the observation of Professor John Rosencrance: "Rigged or fixed sporting events are anathema to bookmakers . . . . In order to protect themselves . . . bookmakers carefully monitor betting patterns. If an unusual pattern emerges, they will stop taking wagers on the contest." And, he notes with some irony, "While it may seem to be oxymoronic, illegal bookmakers actually help keep sports on the up-and-up."[54]

Although we have no firm figures because sports betting in forty-nine of the fifty states is illegal (and therefore untaxed), there is no question that such gambling has grown exponentially since the watershed days of the 1940s. It has thrived in spite of the well-publicized college basketball scandals that have occurred each decade since the 1950s, and despite the suspensions of professional football superstars Alex Karras and Paul Hornung in 1963 for betting on their own teams to win, and the lifetime suspension of baseball's Pete Rose in 1989 for violating the game's ironclad rule—a product of the corrective actions taken following the debacle of 1919—prohibiting all players and team officials from wagering on any baseball game.[55]

During the past half century sports gambling has overcome traditional moral objections to become an elemental factor in America's obsession with sports. Despite concerns expressed by some behavioral psychologists about compulsive gambling—emphasized by headlines trumpeting the problems of baseball star pitcher Denny McClain, would-be Hall of Famer Pete Rose, and professional quarterback Art Schlichter—most Americans view sports betting as a legitimate and acceptable form of leisure activity, no matter what the law states.[56] It has increased in popularity despite a flurry of hostile government investigations: those of Senators Ernest McFarland (1950), Estes Kefauver (1950-52), and John McClellan (1961); the congressional Commission on the Review of National Policy Toward Betting(1975), and the 1998-99 Senate-appointed committee chaired by Kay Coles James of Virginia, whose ties to the Christian Coalition fanned fears deep in the hearts of Nevada's tax-averse gaming executives.

As government officials have watched the growth of sports wagering, proposals have occasionally surfaced that would establish a national network of state-operated sports books to tap into this substantial revenue stream. This was first proposed before the 1975 congressional Commission. Strong objections by a coalition of antigambling forces, supported by professional and college sports executives, stilled that proposal, but not before professional gamblers themselves deflated the concept by delineating the relatively low levels of profit that most bookmakers actually derive from their time consuming business—less than 5 percent of the total handle under normal conditions. Jimmy Snyder told the commission that he estimated the total profit for all illegal books

operating in the United States, after paying off winners and making expenses, to be about $300 million annually. Given the low profit margin, Snyder commented, "The government literally could not compete with bookmakers in sports betting. The present margin of bookmakers is only 5 percent of the gross, a margin too low to fight. Can you imagine our government operating on a 5 percent gross profit?" Recent studies have confirmed that Nevada's sports books return 97 percent of the monies bet to their customers.[57]

That view prevailed and was chiseled in stone in 1995 when, much to the delight of Nevada's casino executives, the Congress passed legislation forbidding any state to establish legal sports wagering where it did not already exist. Nevada's books and Oregon's modest NFL lottery were thus guaranteed a monopoly on legalized sports wagering for the foreseeable future. In passing this law, however, Congress also guaranteed the future of untold hundreds of thousands of small time bookies in every city in the country. The more things change, it seems, the more they stay the same. It is now evident that, thanks to the United States Congress, the future, well into the next millennium, is assured for one of the hardiest survivors of America's unfettered free enterprise system—your friendly, neighborhood bookie.

NOTES

[1]John M. Findlay, *People of Chance: Gambling in American Society from Jamestown to Las Vegas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

[2]Findlay, *People of Chance*, 5.

[3]See the *Journal of Sport History*, published since 1977 by the North American Society for Sport History. For an overview of the field, see such integrative works as Elliott J. Gorn and Warren Goldstein, *A Brief History of American Sports* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993); Benjamin G. Rader, *American Sports: From the Age of Folk Games to the Age of Televised Sports*, (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1983, 1990); Douglas A. Noverr and Lawrence E. Ziewacz, *The Games They Played: Sports in American History, 1865-1980* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall Publishers, 1988); Randy Roberts and James S. Olson, *Winning Is the Only Thing: Sports in America since 1945* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989); and Richard O. Davies, *America's Obsession: Sports and Society since 1945* (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace, 1994). One notable, but woefully inadequate, effort to deal with sports betting is the anecdotal treatment by former free-lance writer Henry Chafetz, *Play the Devil: A History of Gambling in the United States, from 1492 to 1950* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., Publishers, 1960). Also of interest is the encyclopedic study of gambling by the famous gaming consultant, John Scarne: *Scarne's New Compete Guide to Gambling* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974). The most useful book is Richard Sasuly, *Bookies and Bettors: Two Hundred Years of Gambling* (NewYork: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982). Sasuly's study is uneven and unpredictable in its selection of topics, and suffers from organizational problems and inadequate documentation. Based exclusively upon secondary sources and apparently a few interviews, it is woefully weak in its grounding in the literature of sports. Even so, it does contain useful and reliable information.

[4]Findlay, *People of Chance*, 36-39; 118-19.

[5]See, Dan McGraw, "The National Bet," *U.S. News and World Report* (7 April 1997), 50ff.

[6]See Findlay, *People of Chance*, 28, 49-50, 192, for a concise summary of anti-gambling sentiment at various stages of the American experience; Jimmy Breslin, "In Defense of Gambling," *Saturday Evening Post* (5 January 1963), 12ff. See also "What Legal Gambling Is Doing to U.S." *U. S. News and World Report* (8 July 1974), 52ff.

[7]Sasuly, *Bookies and Bettors*, 55-64; Elliott J. Gorn, *The Manly Art: Bare-Knuckle Prize Fighting in America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986).

[8]Sasuly, *Bookies and Bettors*, 55-90; Rader, *American Sports*, 36-38; 83-84; Gorn and Goldstein, *A Brief History of American Sports*, 134-46; and Peter Levine, *American Sport: A Documentary History* (Englewood, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1988) 18-25. There are many books that touch upon horse racing and the pari-mutuel system, most of them falling into the "how to win at the track" variety. But see Fred S. Buck, *Horse Race Betting* (New York: Arco Publishers, 1962), and Bob Moore, *Those Wonderful Days: Tales of Racing's Golden Era* (New York: Americpub Company, 1976).

[9]Quoted in Rader, *American Sports*, 70.

[10]Charles C. Alexander, *Our Game: An American Baseball History* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1991), 114-33. The best study of the extraordinarily complex scandal is Eliot Asinof, *Eight Men Out: The Black Sox and the 1919 World Series* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963).

[11]For example, see Jerome Davis, "Gambling by Wire," *Christian Century* (23 April 1930), 525-30; "The Press and the Gambling Craze," *Christian Century* (24 September 1930), 1142-44; "States Legalizing of Gambling for Revenue," *Literary Digest* (15 April 1933); "New Yorkers Place Bets Again with Bookies," *Newsweek* (28 April 1934); W. Thornton Martin, "The Pig-Skin Game," *Saturday Evening Post*, (8 February 1936), 8-9ff; "Bookies and Bosses," *Newsweek* (15 May 1939); Ring Lardner, "Money to Burn," *Newsweek* (21 August 1944); Stanley Frank, "Easy Pickings," *American Magazine*, (October 1939), 44-45ff; "The Gamblers Move in on College Sports," *Saturday Evening Post* (23 December 1944); and "The Gambling Game," *Newsweek* (24 November 1958), 75.

[12]"Bookies and Bosses," 15-16.

[13]Martin, "The Pig-Skin Game," 9; "Easy Pickings," 44ff; Allan Gould and Paul Gardner, "The Brains of the Bookies," *Collier's* (25 October 1947), 106ff; Charles Friedman, "Portrait of a New York Bookie," *New York Times Magazine* (7 September 1947), 18ff; Lardner, "Money to Burn," 80; Sasuly, *Bookies and Bettors*, 182.

[14]McGraw, "National Bet," 50-5.

[15]*International Gaming and Wagering Business* (August 1996), 85-86; Nevada gambling regulators have no way to assess the size of this illegal market, but knowledgeable observers (whose comments to this author were made in confidence) believe it is large. See, for example, the *Reno Gazette-Journal*, 20 April 1998, for a report of the arrest of five bookmakers who pled guilty of running a large operation in the Lake Tahoe area that had attracted telephone clients from as far away as New York City.

[16]Jerome E. Edwards, "Gambling and Politics in Nevada," in Richard Lowitt, ed., *Politics in the Postwar American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 148; Wallace Turner, *Gambler's Money: The New Force in American Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), 31-62; Oscar Lewis, *Sagebrush Casinos; The Story of Legal Gambling in Nevada* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1953), 57-58; Ed Reid and Ovid Demaris, *The Green Felt Jungle* (New York: Trident Press, 1963) 14-34.

[17]Findly, *People of Chance*, 110-208; Eugene Moehring, *Resort City in the Sunbelt: Las Vegas, 1930-1970* (Reno and Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 1989); Richard O. Davies, ed., *The Maverick Spirit: Building the New Nevada* (Reno and Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 1999), 5-7; and Jerome Edwards, "The Americanization of Nevada Gambling," *Halcyon: A Journal of the Humanities* (1992), 201-16.

[18]Robert Laxalt, *Nevada: A Bicentennial History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977), 89.

[19]Truman, quoted in Robert H. Ferrell, ed, *Off the Record: The Private Papers of Harry S Truman* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1980), 317.

[20]Edwards, "The Americanization of Nevada Gambling," 213-14.

[21]Kurt Andersen, "Las Vegas USA," *Time* (10 January 1994), 42-51; see also Findlay, *People of Chance*, 205-8.

[22]Jerome H. Skolnick, *House of Cards: The Legalization and Control of Casino Gambling* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1978), 61-62; Arne Lang, *Sports Betting 101: Making Sense of the Bookie Business and the Business of Beating the Bookie* (Las Vegas: GBC Press, 1992), 34.

[23]Roger Kahn, "Sports," *Esquire* (September 1971), 12-22; Richard Zacks, "The Linemakers," *Atlantic* (October 1986), 89-93; Robert McGarvey, "Sports Gambling '90s Style, *Sport Magazine* (April 1980), 57-59; Frank Deford, "Laying It All On the Line," *Newsweek* (27 January 1992), 54; James Cook, "If Roxborough Says the Spread is 7, It's 7," *Forbes Magazine* (14 September 1992), 350ff; Vic Ziegel, "The Money Game," *Sport Magazine* (January 1981), 50.

[24]Robert Boyle, "The Brain Who Gave Us the Point Spread," *Sports Illustrated* (10 March 1986), 34; Danny Sheridan, "The Spread's the Point: Sports Betting Has Come a Long Way," *Sport Magazine* (July 1991), 75-76.

[25]Boyle, "The Brain Who Gave Us the Point Spread," 34; Sasuly, *Bookies and Bettors*, 186-89. A few dubious sources suggest that the point spread was used as early as the 1920s, but there is no evidence to support such contentions. In his historical novel based on the 1951 basketball point shaving scandals, *Barney Polan's Game* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 1998), Charles Rosen implies that the spread was widely used during the 1930s, and Gerald Strine and Neil Isaacs, *Covering the Spread; How to Bet Pro Football* (New York: Random House, 1978), suggest its origins lay as early as the late 1920s. Whatever the case, it did not gain wide usage until the end of the World War II. All told, McNeil seems to be the logical popularizer, if not the actual creator, of the point spread.

[26]John Lardner, "Touchdown by the Slide Rule," *Nation's Business* (October 1950), 52ff; Gould and Gardner, "The Brain of the Bookies," 106ff; Sasuly, *Bookies and Bettors*, 186-89.

[27]"The Biggest Game in Town," *Sports Illustrated* (10 March 1986), 30.

[28]*Ibid*, 31.

[29]Joe Bigelow, "Inside the Gambling Industry," *American Mercury* (June 1934), 214-18; "Betting the Point Spread—How the Bookies Beat the Odds," *Newsweek* (15 September 1969), 59. The term vigorish, or vig as it is commonly referred to by players, is apparently derived, however loosely, from the Russian word for "winnings." It is charged against losing bets.

[30]Although many professional gamblers, especially those offering tout services (betting advisory), claim that they routinely win 80 percent or more of their bets against the spread, the most reputable observers of the contemporary scene believe that a full season of betting with 60 percent places gamblers in a very small and elite group.

[31]Winning bets are paid on the basis that a bet of $11 wins $10, meaning that on a successful $11 wager the gambler will receive back from the bookmaker $21. This means that the bettor must win *52.37* percent of his bets in order to break even. For a few years immediately after the point spread was introduced, bookies required a winning bet to beat the spread by at least two points, but competition among bookmakers led not only to the abolition of the two-point factor but also to the introduction of half-point differentials.

[32]Lem Banker, with Frederick C. Klein, *Sports Betting* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1986), 28. See also, Bernard Kirsch, "Bettors Beware," *Sport Magazine* (September, 1981), 79ff. Kirsch estimated that at least 100,000 bettors subscribed to one or more handicapping service. For an evaluation of the success of "tout sheets,"see comments by the legendary Mort Olshan, publisher of *The Gold Sheet* since 1957: "I've been tracking these things [success rates] for more than 40 years, and I have never known a single player to eclipse 70 percent for the full season. Only a sprinkling few have topped 65 percent." *(The Gold Sheet,* 28 August 1997). In the past few years the number of touts offering advice via the Internet has grown rapidly, a development that professional gambling executives view with alarm.

[33]The impact of television upon American sports has spawned the publication of many interesting and valuable books. The most comprehensive is Benjamin Rader, *In Its Own Image: How Television Has Transformed Sports* (New York: Free Press, 1984). See also Roberts and Olson, *Winning is the Only Thing,* 95-131; and Davies, *America's Obsession,* 62-101. For a different perspective on television and sports, see also Mary Ann Watson, *Defining Visions: Television and the American Experience Since 1945* (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace, 1997), 228-32.

[34]Davies, *America's Obsession,* 91-99.

[35]"Now, Epidemic of Legalized Gambling," *U. S. News and World Report* (23 July 1973), 22ff.

[36]Ginger Wadsworth, with Jimmy Snyder, *Farewell Jimmy the Greek, Wizard of Odds* (Austin: Eakin Press, 1996), 230-36.

[37]Wadsworth and Snyder, *Farewell Jimmy the Greek,* 107, 111, 227-47; Jimmy Snyder, *Jimmy the Greek, by Himself* (New York: Playboy Press, 1975), 118-27.

[38]Wadsworth and Snyder, *Farewell Jimmy the Greek,* 1-102; Snyder, *Jimmy the Greek, By Himself,* 90-99.

[39]Gil Rogin, "The Greek Who Makes the Odds," *Sports Illustrated* (18 December 1961), 56-60.

[40]Wadsworth and Snyder, *Farewell Jimmy the Greek,* 103-15.

[41]Wadsworth and Snyder, *Farewell Jimmy the Greek,* 237-55 provides Snyder's spin on things, including his "victim of network conspiracy." Snyder was quoted as saying: "They've [African-Americans] got everything, if they take over coaching like everybody wants them to there's not going to be anything left for the whites. I mean all the players are black . . . . The black talent is beautiful. It's great. It's out there. The only thing left for the whites is a couple of coaching jobs." This condition (which of course he vastly exaggerated), resulted, Snyder said, because of selective breeding of blacks during the slavery era: "I'm telling you that the black is the better athlete, and he is bred to be the better athlete, because this goes back all the way to the Civil War when during the slave trading . . . the slave owner would breed his big black to his big woman so that he could have a big black kid, you see. I mean that's where it all started."

[42]McGraw, "National Bet," 50ff.

[43]Snyder, *Jimmy the Greek, by Himself,* 216-22.

[44]"Everybody Wants a Piece of the Action," *Newsweek* (10 April 1972), 46ff.

[45]*New York Times,* 17 March 1998, C19. The potential number of point shavers is of course very large, but it should be noted that, unlike the scandals of 1951, it is now exceedingly unlikely that a star player will become involved because it could jeopardize a potentially lucrative professional career. Similarly, the high salaries paid to contemporary professional stars virtually preclude the fixing of a National Basketball Association game. It simply would make no economic sense for even the most marginal of professional players. Hence the college athletes now being caught up in such schemes are only modestly talented—good enough to play major college basketball and important enough to their teams to affect a game's outcome—but with scant professional prospects.

[46]See detailed stories regarding cooperation between Nevada books and Gaming Control Board officials and the FBI, *Las Vegas Sun,* 5 March 1997, and *Las Vegas Review Journal,* 24 July 1997, and 26 July 1997.

[47]The best study of the scandals is Charles Rosen, *Scandals of '51: How the Gamblers Almost Killed College Basketball* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978), although it is now out-of-date and lacks historical analysis and perspective. For a discussion of District Attorney Hogan's curious handling of many allegations, see Roberts and Olson, *Winning Is the Only Thing*, 84-86. Charles Rosen also forcefully drives home this point regarding a curiously curtailed investigation in his historical novel, *Barney Polan's Game*, 335-36.

[48]Arthur Daley, "Sports Are Honest: A Defense," *New York Times Magazine*, 4 March 1951, 20ff; see also, Arthur Daley, "Menace to All Sports—The Fix," *New York Times Magazine* (5 January 1947), 16ff.

[49]*New York Times* (16 April 1998), 26.

[50]Dan E. Moldea, *Interference: How Organized Crime Influences Professional Football* (William H. Morrow and Company, 1989), 57-59. In 1968 a great deal of controversy developed over highly unusual betting patterns regarding the Kansas City Chiefs. Intensive investigations led nowhere, and NFL officials pointed to the fact that the Chiefs had the best record in the American Football Conference at 12-2.

[51]Jim Bouton and Eliot Asinof, *Strike Zone* (New York: Viking Press, 1994).

[52] *New York Times* (22 March 1998), 27.

[53]Davies, *America's Obsession*, 25.

[54]Quoted in Garry Smith, "The 'To Do' over What To Do about Sports Gambling," in William R. Eadington and Judy A. Cornelius, *Gambling and Public Policy* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991), 27.

[55]Davies, *America's Obsession*, 248-51.

[56]Clive Gammon, "Tales of Self-Destruction," *Sports Illustrated* (10 March 1986), 64ff.

[57]"Commission on the Review of the National Policy Toward Gambling, Hearings on Sports Betting" (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office) 19 February 1975, 156.

GETTING RENOVATED
Reno Divorces in the 1930s

Mella Rothwell Harmon

Have you ever stayed in Reno? I never have but I'd like to. It must be some town. It's got only about 17,000 people in it but—say—I figure it isn't only a town. There's no place just like it anywhere in the world. People go there from all over the United States. There isn't a swell family that hasn't had somebody out in Reno. It's a cross-section of our country, you might say. A cross-section of American mistakes . . . .[1]

The divorce trade of the 1930s was much more widespread in its effects than has been portrayed and involved far more than the few divorce ranches that captured most of the coverage of the period. The divorce industry benefited a broad cross-section of Reno's population and economy, and cushioned many from the effects of the Great Depression. During the ten-year period from the stock market crash in October 1929 to the end of 1939, approximately 30,300 divorce-seekers (not including defendants, soon-to-be spouses, children, parents, attendants, and others accompanying a plaintiff) were present in Reno for at least six weeks.[2]

It was in response to the economic exigencies of the Great Depression, and to retain the long-held title of Divorce Mecca, that the state of Nevada in 1931 passed the most lenient divorce law of any state in the Union. Nevada's, and particularly Reno's, economy had relied on the divorce trade since 1906. Nevada recognized the economic opportunity in the raging national debate over divorce, and it was willing to do what no other state would. Ultimately, its legislative action had a profound effect on the economy of Reno during the depression years.

The influx of divorce-seekers after May 1, 1931, was so great that during that summer there were few available accommodations. Divorce-seekers camped along the Truckee River, at Incline, and at the Sparks Municipal Camp Yards.[3] In the spirit of American ingenuity, the local population sought to profit from

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Center Street, Reno, Nevada, c. 1930s *(Nevada Historical Society).*

Center Street, Reno, Nevada, c. 1940s *(Nevada Historical Society).*

Washoe County Courthouse, Reno, Nevada *(Nevada Historical Society).*

divorce fever. *A Guide to the Silver State,* a publication of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), reported that "for a time the rush of divorce-seekers was so great that people with very simple houses found it very lucrative to move in with relatives and rent their own abodes furnished; many returned to find that lavish tenants had completely redecorated the houses and left new expensive furnishings when they departed."[4]

A 1998 study of the divorce trade during the depression examined housing options available in Reno.[5] The study was based on testimonies contained in divorce records on file at the Washoe County Courthouse. Since it was necessary to demonstrate one's Nevada residency, addresses and other pertinent details were asked of plaintiffs during their court appearances. The data contained in a sample of divorce records from the 1930s identified approximately 800 separate addresses in Reno given in satisfaction of the residency requirement. The records also revealed a profile of these visitors.

Divorce-seekers came to Reno from all forty-eight United States, the territories of Alaska and Hawaii, as well as thirty-two foreign countries.[6] Although it has long been believed that women seeking divorce outnumbered men by as much as ten to one, the ratio was found to be closer to three to two. County Clerk Elwood Beemer reported that in 1932 one third of the final decrees were granted to men.[7]

The divorce trade shaped Reno society and its image in many ways. Richard Lillard suggested that the trade during the 1930s contributed in excess of $3 million annually to Nevada's economy.[8] An article in the April 1934 edition of *Fortune* set the amount at $3-4 million per year. This figure was based on an

Hollywood got in on Nevada's divorce act in 1920, when America's movie sweetheart, Mary Pickford, came to Minden to obtain a divorce from her actor husband, Owen Moore *(Nevada Historical Society)*.

average of 2,500 divorces per year at $1,500 per six-week stay.[9] The 1998 study, however, reports an annual average of 3,167 divorce-seekers from May 1931 through December 1939;[10] at $1,500 per stay, Reno's annual income from the divorce trade during this period would have been $4,750,000.

The WPA quotation above alludes to a basic level of community involvement in the divorce trade and the exploitation of unique economic opportunities.[11] Many of the activities of the 1930s became the stuff of urban legend and myth. Reno's sin-city image inspired movies, novels, and angry editorials across the nation. To say "I'm going to Reno" was a popular synonym for "I'm getting a divorce." And Walter Winchell, radio announcer and newspaper columnist, devised the coinage *Renovation* to describe divorce Reno-style. What follows is a brief look at the process of obtaining a Reno divorce during the divorce heyday of the 1930s, from finding a lawyer to finding a place to stay for the six-week "cure."

Nevada's first divorce legislation was passed in 1861 by the territorial legislature, allowing divorce for persons who had resided in the territory for six months. The first divorce in Nevada Territory was in 1863, between Mr. and Mrs. Powell of Gold Canyon.[12] Nevada's first celebrity divorce took place in 1900, when England's Second Earl Russell, a member of the House of Lords, came to Genoa to obtain a divorce from Lady Russell so he could marry a young woman named Mollie.[13] Another celebrity divorce occurred when the wife of United States Steel Company president, William Ellis Corey came to Reno in 1906. The Corey case was scandalous and the national publicity that followed it is credited with facilitating the birth of the Reno divorce colony.[14] Hollywood got in on Nevada's divorce act in 1920, when America's movie sweetheart, Mary Pickford, came to Minden to obtain a divorce from her actor husband, Owen Moore.[15] The Pickford-Owen case received considerable press, furthering Nevada's reputation as a haven for divorce.[16]

By the 1920s, several other states were vying for a share of the migratory divorce market, and in order to secure the state's pre-eminence, in 1927 the Nevada legislature reduced the residency requirement to three months. By 1931, more drastic measures were needed, not only to retain Nevada's image as the divorce mecca, but also to bring a much-needed boost to the economy. The 1931 legislation reduced the residency period to six weeks, resulting in a tidal wave of divorce-seekers clamoring for shelter and entertainment.

Nevada's new divorce law was the subject of much press, and the respected magazine *Fortune* discussed the economics and politics of Nevada divorce and also described the process for prospective divorcees:

> Your Washington lawyer has prepared the way for you. He has written an associate in Reno (as your doctor, sending you to Baltimore for an operation, would write to a surgeon) and given him the details of the case. When you reach Reno, you go first to the lawyer's office. He talks to you quietly, vaguely, and sympathetically for a few minutes, assures you that you can leave all the details to him. He will write the complaint. There

is a stereotyped form which it will follow. He may recommend a house (if you want a house) or a hotel or a ranch where you can live for six weeks. He will suggest a few simple precautions: that you employ some convenient person to watch you, so that she may later swear in court that you have been in the county daily for six weeks,[17] that you look out for predatory men who might try to blackmail you, that you ride and swim to soothe the natural shock of separation from your husband. Then you leave (feeling much better) and set about shopping for a home. You needn't see your lawyer again, unless you like his company, until the six weeks are over. [18]

The cost of a Reno divorce during the 1930s included such elements as lawyer's fees, filing fees and other court costs, housing, meals, and amusement. *Fortune* estimated that a Reno divorce could be had for as little as $500 to $1,000, although it estimated the average cost to be $1,500.[19] It also stated that by 1934, Reno had to adjust to bad economic times by accommodating a lower and poorer class of divorce-seeker: "Reno is no longer the cult of the fashionable divorcée. It has had to cater to the poor to keep its business going through the depression. Expenses have gone down,[20] the residence period has been cut, until today Reno is for anyone who can buy or beg transportation."[21]

Lawyers' fees were set by the Washoe County Bar Association.[22] During the 1930s the minimum fee for a plaintiff was $250, with a $50 minimum for an absent defendant, but there were many "poverty" clients who could not afford to pay in full, or up front, for their divorces. Arrangements were made, and it seems no one was turned away for lack of ability to pay.[23] Correspondence between the Washington, D.C., law firm of DeVries, Crawford, and McCook and George Bartlett, Reno judge and lawyer, describes the process of fee negotiation. Marion DeVries was seeking Bartlett's help for one of his prominent, albeit it financially - strapped, clients. He asked for a cut rate, to which George Bartlett responded, "We do, at times, take a case for one hundred fifty dollars where financial circumstances are such as to warrant the reduction, so I am taking this case for one hundred fifty dollars and Mr. Rasquin's *[sic]* is to pay me only the one hundred dollars, and in some happy day in the sweet bye and bye, when he is rich, he can send the other fifty—and, I never send bills."[24]

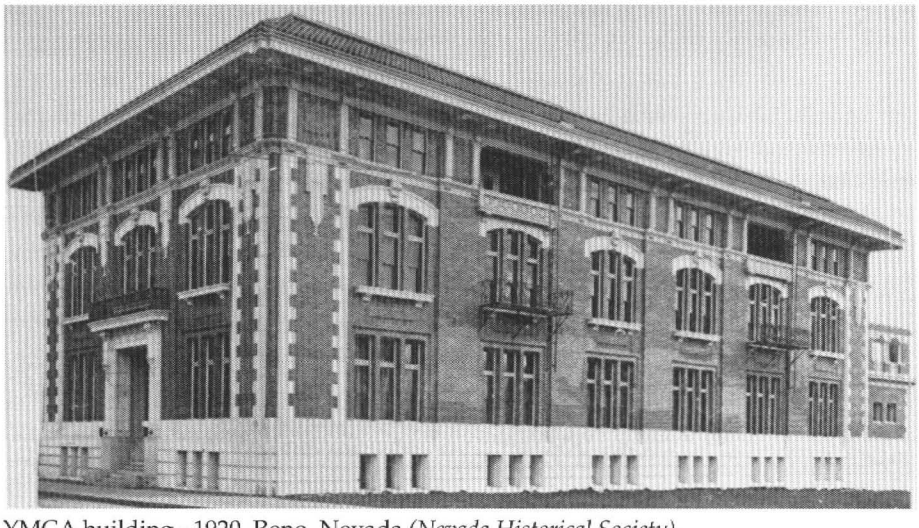
Although the minimum divorce lawyer's fee was $250, there was no maximum and Reno had its share of the rich and famous. In March 1935, Reno got wind of the impending arrival of Woolworth dime-store heiress, Barbara Hutton, who was divorcing Prince Alexis Mdivani. Reno lawyer Clel Georgetta recorded in his diary that Miss Hutton was worth some $50 million and that every lawyer in town would love to get her case.[25] On March 19, 1935, at a Washoe County Bar Association meeting, member Lloyd Smith suggested that regardless of which lawyer got the Hutton case, the entire fee should be given to the Bar Association and divided evenly among all the lawyers. This recommendation was not accepted. Barbara Hutton arrived in Reno about 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 30, 1935. She brought her case to the law firm of Thatcher and Woodburn for an estimated fee of $15,000 to $20,000. George Thatcher turned over his home, at 7 Elm Court, to Miss Hutton for the duration of her stay.[26]

Reno judge and lawyer, George Bartlett *(Nevada Historical Society)*.

Since the 1931 divorce law required that the plaintiff be a bona-fide resident of the state of Nevada for six weeks prior to filing for divorce, the issue of housing was an important one.[27] In general, housing could be obtained at a range of prices and luxury. One could share a room without a bath in a third-rate hotel or could occupy an apartment with kitchen, bath, and private servants at the best hotel. Among the other options were private homes, boarding houses, rooming houses, apartment houses, duplexes, auto courts, camp grounds, divorce ranches, and the YMCA. During the initial rush after the law changed on May 1, 1931, there were so many people in Reno waiting out their residency period that some, including mothers with small children, were camping along the Truckee River until accommodations could be secured in town.[28] The huge crush of out-of-town "visitors" was causing concern among Reno's city fathers, including police chief J. M. Kirkley, who recognized that a greater problem was accommodating the thousands more that were expected over the summer.[29]

After the initial surge, Reno businessmen and citizens rose to meet the call

Colonial Apartments, Reno, Nevada *(Nevada Historical Society).*



YMCA building - 1920, Reno, Nevada *(Nevada Historical Society).*

for housing. The Federal Writers' Project collected information on housing availability, reporting that Reno's hotels could accommodate 1,792 single occupants and the auto camps could provide 255 cabins.[30] Other guide books offered residency information, as well:

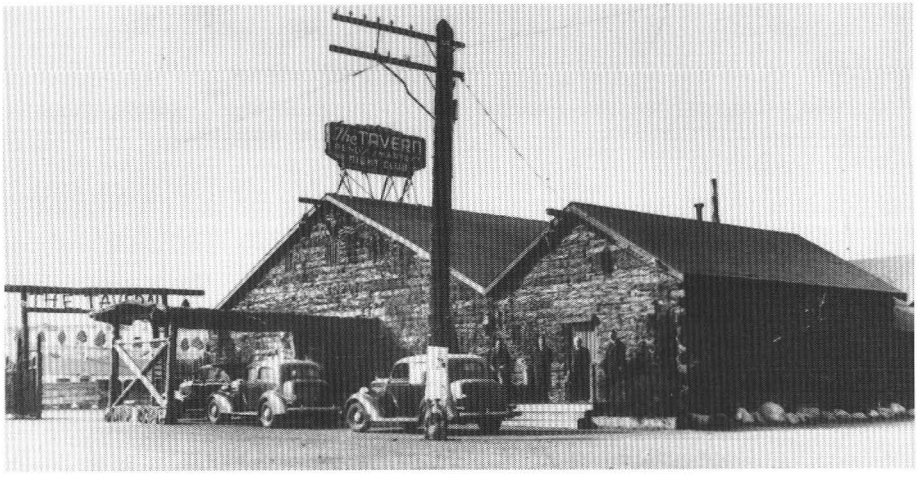
> One may live cheaply or extravagantly in Reno, and be happy whatever one does. A room may be rented for fifty cents a day in a boarding house or eight dollars a day in the best hotel; a housekeeping cabin in an auto-camp (of which there are a considerable number, especially in the east of Reno) may be had for less than one dollar a day, up to two dollars or more. Sunny apartments may be had at prices ranging from twenty dollars a month up to eighty or more. Small houses may be rented for between eighteen and fifty dollars a month . . . .
>
> For those who have incomes above the average, and who enjoy absolute freedom and daily horseback riding, life on one of the guest ranches is highly recommended. There are many dude ranches located south of Reno and a few north in a very lonely desert region near Pyramid Lake. It usually costs about $160 per month for board and room at guest ranches, with horses available at all hours, at no extra cost, although one resort advertises all these attractions for $25 a week. Hundreds of people who come to stay in Reno enjoy the free and easy life at guest ranches and would not consider living anywhere else. Anyone who comes to Reno alone will not lack companions at guest ranches, as it is the policy everywhere to see that guests have a good time.[31]

A variety of alternatives for obtaining food and drink was available in Reno. The 1930 city directory lists forty restaurants, cafes, and lunch counters, and by the 1937 edition there were forty-nine such entries.[32] In addition to these, the higher class hotels included rooms with cooking facilities, boarding houses served meals, as often did private homeowners who rented out but a single room, and of course apartments had kitchens. Divorce ranches typically provided three meals a day, and snacks. Organized activities such as barbecues and picnics were offered at the ranches as well. Reno's taverns and road houses served meals for one or two dollars, including liquor. For those preparing their own, Reno had several grocery stores, some of which were open on Sundays.[33]

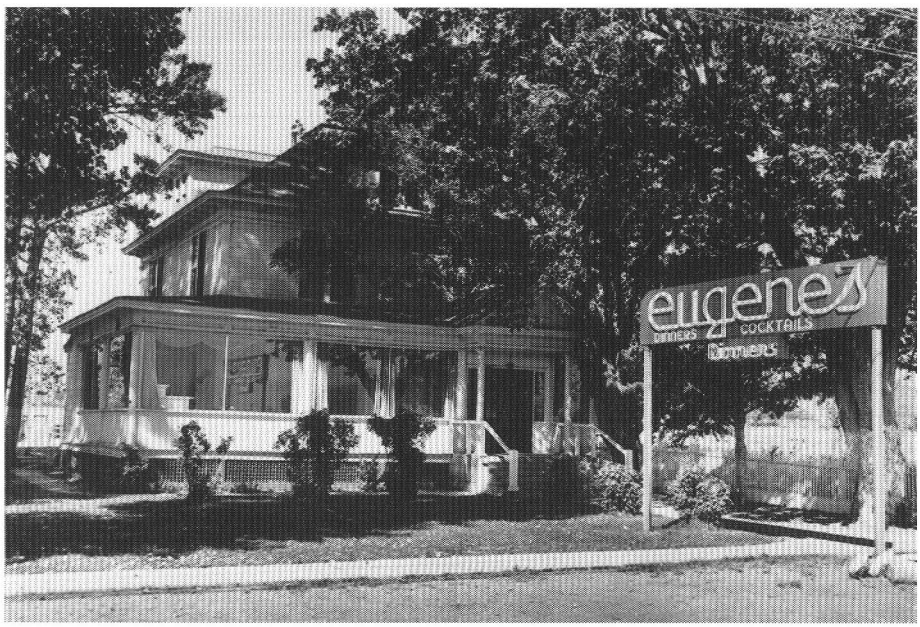
Prohibition was repealed in December 1933, and it did not take long for bars and liquor distributors to set up legitimate businesses. During prohibition, however, liquor was available by undercover arrangements. The Mayberry Ranch, formerly owned by Governor John Sparks, was bought by a rich divorcée, who turned it into a "divorce haven."[34] During prohibition the owner had a private bar built into the mansion. "Those girls would go in that bar—you'd be surprised what they were doing. And here'd be 1, 2, 3 more would show up, and then in another week I had so-and-so and so-and-so . . . nice-looking women . . . Oh. And it was against the law to have that secret bar. Of course, it was a private home."[35]

Once prohibition was repealed, liquor could be acquired legally, and Philip Siggers reported that Reno had many licensed places to purchase liquor, without restrictions. In these, a fine time could be had, with good fellowship, music, dancing, singing, and friendly company. Drinks were reasonably priced,

The Grand Hotel advertisement for The Grand Cafe, c. 1930s *(Nevada Historical Society).*



The Tavern-1930s *(Nevada Historical Society).*



Eugene's Restaurant on South Virginia Street in Reno, Nevada *(Nevada Historical Society).*

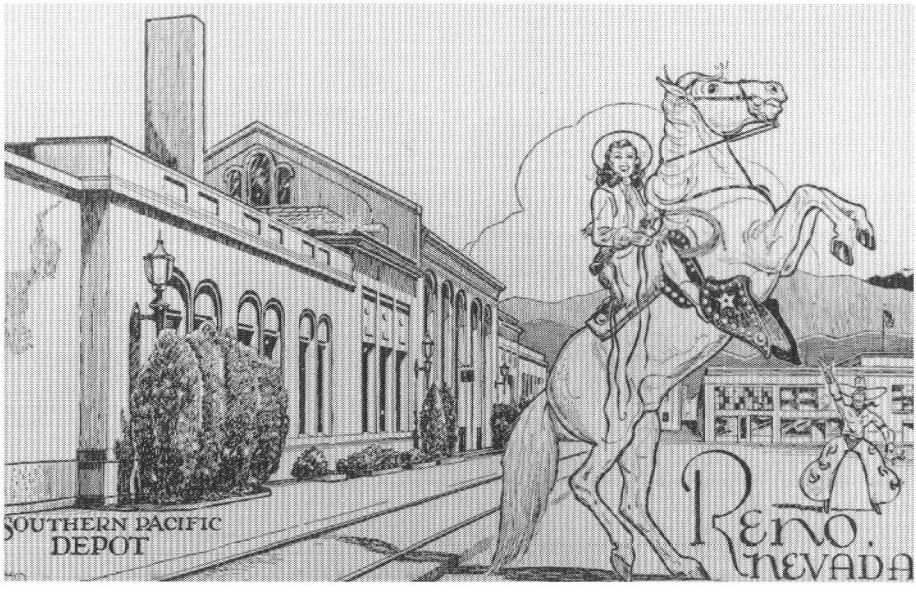
and the third or fourth round was on the house.[36]

Reno offered any number of entertainment options to divorce-seekers. Horseback riding, hiking, and other outdoor activities were popular with those who could afford them. As Clel Georgetta frequently mentioned in his diaries, dining, drinking, and dancing were common nightly activities. The 1935 Reno city directory listed twenty-one "Places of Amusement," which were mostly night clubs and casinos, although the Reno Race Track was included in the category as well.[37]

In addition to revising the divorce law, the 1931 Nevada legislature passed the "Wide-open Gambling Law," which legalized casino gambling. The nickel bet seemed to be the standard of the day. Gambling was openly conducted, and at several places went on twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. As is the case today, gaming machines were located in practically all stores and eating places.[38]

Reno boasted "rather handsome moving picture houses and several smaller theaters, showing first and second run pictures at prices ranging from fifteen to forty cents."[39] The public library allowed Reno's temporary residents access to its circulating collection.[40] Other activities available to those who did not need to find work for six weeks included intensive six-week secretarial courses offered by Reno College[41] and the Nevada Secretarial School.[42]

Getting around Reno could be accomplished by taxi, bus, or rented car. The



Postcard drawn by Lew Hymers *(Nevada Historical Society).*

Federal Writers' Project reported that there were seven taxi companies charging average rates of 25 cents per person in Reno, 15 cents per mile over 50 miles, 17 to 20 cents per mile for car and driver for trips under 50 miles, with hourly rates for car and driver at $2.50 to $3.00. A bus trip from Reno to Sparks was 10 cents.[43] Lawyers often provided sight-seeing trips for their clients, and newspaper articles reported that young men with access to automobiles would offer their services as drivers. No record of their prices has been discovered, but an advertisement in the August 1, 1931, *Nevada State Journal* suggests the costs were reasonable: "Young man, pleasing personality, wishes position as escort or chauffeur to divorcée: small salary and expenses."

The railroad was the most popular mode of transportation to and from Reno in the 1930s, although the transcontinental Greyhound Bus Lines made six arrivals and departures from Reno each day. United Airlines operated an airport at Hubbard Field (the site of the present-day RenoTahoe International Airport), and a county airfield was located south of town. The county's operations were transferred to Hubbard Field in the mid-1930s when the public airfield was turned into a county park with the help of WPA funds and manpower. Any number of people came to town in private motor cars along the newly-built Lincoln Highway, as evidenced by the number of auto camps that existed in Reno and appeared as residency addresses in divorce testimonies.[45]

The Southern Pacific Railroad arrived in Reno from the east and west, stopping at the Reno Depot. The Overland Limited was one of the trains from New

York, taking three days to make the trip west. Upon arrival, those who had made prior arrangements were met at the depot for transport to their places of residence. George Bartlett often sent his daughter, but Clel Georgetta met his clients himself. Other arrangements were made with landladies, apartment managers, hotel managers and clerks, and others. Those going straight to a first-class hotel or divorce ranch were picked up by a car and driver sent by the facility. The hotels Golden and Riverside (both owned by George Wingfield) operated a bus to transport guests.[46] The dude ranches sent station wagons with "dude cowboys acting as bellhops."[47] One ranch, the Lazy ME (on South Virginia Street, 2.5 miles south of Reno) sent its "train-meeting cowboys, handsome guys, rigged out in collegiate-like sweaters bearing the name of the ranch. It was all quite a lot of fun for the spectators around the station who were only too well aware of the Lazy ME's nickname, 'Lay Me Easy.'"[48]

Those who came to town without prior arrangements could rely on various resources to locate a place to live. The Chamber of Commerce maintained the Hotel and Housing Bureau, the YWCA provided residency information, lawyers made referrals, and when all else failed, word of mouth was used. Some poor, desperate souls were forced to go around town knocking on doors searching for a vacancy. Divorce-seekers would also inquire of waitresses, shopkeepers, and others they met on the street whether they might be interested in taking in a boarder.[49]

To further benefit from the divorce trade, several lawyers purchased hotels and/or boarding houses and set up their wives as managers (and resident witnesses). Attorney W.B. Ames purchased the Anderson Hotel at 218 Sierra Street and changed its name to the Ames Hotel: "It has been re-modeled and re-furnished—very nice place now. They plan on building an extension out to 2nd Street and Ames says he is going to have a large elegant office on the 2nd floor in front."[50] John Copren' s wife, Suzette, ran apartments at 131 Stevenson Street, as well as the Nevada Hotel at 26 East Second Street. F.K. Unsworth's wife operated the Sutherland Hotel at 353 North Virginia Street, and William Seeds's wife ran a boarding house at 706 West Second Street. Several lawyers also owned rental property, rented their own houses to clients (see the Barbara Hutton case, above), or took in roomers, such as William Seeds (403 Flint Street), Samuel Platt (444 Granite Street), H. H. Atkinson (31 Keystone Avenue), Albert Painter (604 Lander Street), C. L. Richards (1207 Riverside Drive), D.W. Priest (723 Sinclair Street), and E.W. Cheney (253 S. Virginia Street). Lawyer and Reno mayor, E. E. Roberts, took some of his clients to stay at his ranch in Spanish Springs Valley.[51] Other public officials participated in the divorce trade as well. Verdi postmistress Hermine Buckings rented her home to divorce-seekers, as did Washoe County Court Reporter J. A. Callahan (205 Elm Street). County assessor J. L Hash and his wife owned and operated the Lone Star Ranch, on South Virginia Road. A 1930s post card of the Lone Star Ranch described the ranch and its amenities: "Open all year. Rates $20 to $25 per week. Saddle horses

Lazy Me Dude Ranch-1930s, Reno, Nevada *(Nevada Historical Society).*

Riverside Hotel-1930s, Reno, Nevada *(Nevada Historical Society).*

at reasonable rates. Take Southern Pacific to Reno, Nevada where ranch car meets you by arrangement—no charge. Reno to ranch, 3 miles. A comfortable home, where guests find rest, quiet and excellent home cooking. Riding, hot springs, swimming, trap shooting."[52]

Although it was the rich and famous who received most of the divorce-related press, they were not the bulk of those seeking divorces. Most who came to Reno were middle-class and were feeling the effects of the depression. For many, finding employment was a necessary aspect of their Reno experience. Jobs were available for stenographers, waitresses, housekeepers, apartment managers, nurses, shop clerks, carpenters, and ranch workers, to name a few. Divorce ranches would offer employment to those who wanted to live on a ranch, but could not afford the fee. The YWCA operated an employment service for women seeking temporary jobs, and generally jobs seemed to be available for those who required them.[53] Employment in the gambling halls would have been available to males early on, but this opportunity was not afforded to females until World War II, when the manpower shortage necessitated it. Reno's ready supply of women waiting out their residency requirements kept Reno's gaming industry going through the war.[54]

That Reno could provide employment to so many during the early years of the depression bears witness to the favorable effects of the divorce trade on the city's economy. Little has been written about the employment situation, but a 1941 novel by Faith Baldwin mentions a policy restricting employment at beauty salons: "There's some sort of rule, I think . . . something about having to stay in Reno for three months before you can work in a beauty shop. Place overrun with girls from the East, our own girls could starve."[55]

Reno had a reputation for risqúe behavior among its visiting divorce-seekers. The opportunity to exercise lustful tendencies while away from home and in an open environment only served to fuel Reno's reputation as sin city. Joseph Mosconi relates the temptation that faced the working cowboys at the divorce ranches. He was the ranch foreman at the Sparks Ranch, which was converted into a divorce haven, and renamed the Mayberry Guest Ranch. On seeing the new facility, Mosconi recalls, "When I seen that—here I am going to get married, and here these gals coming out here. All they were thinking about is good, strong, husky young men. Them farmers boys is what they liked. When I seen that, I said, 'Joe, you're going to get the hell out of here!' Jesus, it was right there before you! Whoo! I'm not lying about that!"[56]

Needless to say, most of the novels written about the Reno divorce trade include some titillating sections about extracurricular activities. One such novel, *Reno Fever,* describes the opportunities available for men: "A good looking man anywhere in America who knew how to dance and make love could come to Reno and never do an honest day's work for the rest of his life."[57] That Reno's male population was preoccupied with sampling the divorcée smorgasbord was bemoaned in an early *Nevada State Journal* article: "And it is a continual

dread that the mothers of boys see their lads grow up to become the devotees and paramours of women who are prostituting their right to respect and honor."[58] Of the dangers to Reno's daughters, the article states: "Men among [the divorce-seekers] have degraded and destroyed the honor of daughters of some of the most prominent people in Reno."[59]

It was the cowboys that seemed to benefit most from the plethora of forsaken women. In *None of the Comforts of Home—But Oh, Those Cowboys,* Basil Woon describes the transition from working cattle ranches to divorce ranches: "Luxury ranches . . . built for the trade had begun to appear; these frankly 'ran' dudes instead of cows . . . . More often than not the wranglers were cowboys who had heard that some of the divorcées were not only young and pretty but had millions to spend on any attractive he-man they caught on the rebound."[60]

Handsome young men were particularly desirable commodities for ranch owners. In his 1996 *Smithsonian* article Robert Wernick relates the story of a young local man who had a flat tire while driving from Reno to Carson City and found himself without a jack. He had walked down the highway until he came to a lighted house. Finding the door open, he entered the large, empty parlor, lay down on the couch, and fell asleep. A maid awoke him in the morning with breakfast on a tray. It seems he had wandered into the famous Flying ME divorce ranch. The ranch's proprietress, Emmie Wood, liked his looks, and offered him room and board in return for being available to escort any of the female guests that were feeling lonely.[61]

That many female divorce-seekers were lonely and sought to assuage that loneliness with a divorce-ranch-cowboy is the stuff of legend, but there was a side to it that has been mentioned in no text other than Max Miller's 1941 journalistic tome, *Reno:*

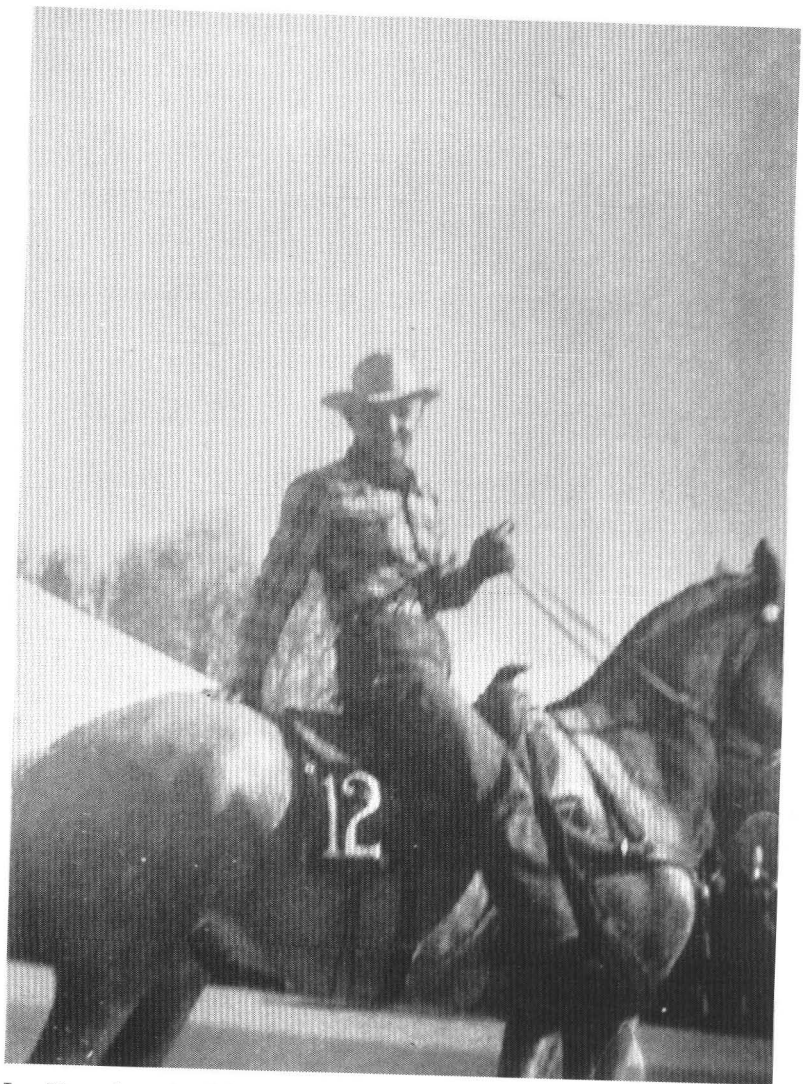
> For this sudden high altitude of Reno, combined with women's natural nervousness in having their lives turned upside-down by divorce, frequently upsets them to the point where, for secret reasons of their own, they presume they are beyond help of drugstores and are—bluntly—now eating for two . . . . Anyway, she is worried with what is called, appropriately enough, 'Reno Worry.' Female patent medicine advertisements call it something else, illustrated by a calendar. But in Reno even virgin visitors can have it, and this is something which the client does not know—and which is the duty of the dependable ranch-keeper to explain immediately. And without smiling.[62]

When one was not working or dating, Reno offered a wide variety of activities. As mentioned above, Reno provided movies, library privileges, secretarial courses, drinking, gambling, sight-seeing, and horseback riding. The area also offered several tennis clubs, golf courses, swimming pools, and hot springs (e.g., Lawtons, Steamboat, and Reno Hot Springs). In contrast to the perceived preoccupation with dating, Philip Siggers wrote of men who received invitations to attend meetings of the Lions Club, the Rotary Club, the Elks, and other fraternal organizations, and women who were invited to church, to play bridge, or to attend women's club meetings.[63]

Lawton's Hot Springs *(Nevada Historical Society).*

Finally, a divorce-seeker's six-week "term" in Reno would come to an end, and once all of the required paperwork was signed, sealed, and delivered, a court appearance before a divorce judge was the final step to freedom. In addition to sworn testimony by the plaintiff as to the grounds for the suit, and an answer by the defendant if a personal appearance was made, it was necessary to produce a witness who would swear that he or she had first-hand knowledge that the plaintiff had been in Nevada for a full six weeks prior to filing the suit. This was specifically required by the 1931 law, and it was the only aspect of a divorce case that required corroboration. That the grounds for divorce were often based on absurd circumstances did not seem to matter to the court, but the fact that someone had actually stayed in Nevada for six weeks required validation, under oath, by a local resident.[64] In the course of giving testimony the plaintiff was asked if he or she came to Nevada with the intention of making it his or her permanent home. An affirmative response was necessary in order to obtain the final decree, even though most plaintiffs had return tickets in their pockets or purses. That this was institutionalized perjury has been remarked upon numerous times, but the practice was nevertheless staunchly defended.

The day (or five minutes, which is what it really was) in court involved an appearance in the judge's chambers, the administration of the oath, and testimony by the plaintiff and resident witness(es). Residency was established and corroborated, and details of the case were described. If everything was found to be in order, the judge issued a final decree, the bonds of matrimony dis-



Las Vegas benefited from the major media event of the Clark Gable-Ria Langham divorce in 1939 *(Nevada Historical Society).*

solved, and the parties returned to the status of unmarried persons. This was generally followed by a rapid departure from Reno.[65] During the initial divorce rush of 1931, it was reported that Reno divorce judges disposed of one case every ten minutes during the seven hours that the court was in session. With at least two divorce judges seated at any one time, the volume of cases handled in Reno was staggering.[66]

The demand for goods and services generated by the divorce trade helped insulate a segment of Reno's population from the intense ravages of the Great Depression. By the late 1930s, however, the residual effects of the depression, threats of another world war, and America's changing habits began to dampen Reno's divorce trade. There was a variety of causes for the slowdown. One was believed to be the depression itself. As it dragged on into the mid 1930s, fewer people could afford to break up their households and support themselves away from home.[67] The portents of war on the horizon tended to change the focus of America's citizens, resulting in an increase in the number of marriages as compared to divorces.[68]

And a new player in the Nevada divorce game was beginning to make its mark by the end of the 1930s. Las Vegas benefited from the major media event of the Clark Gable-Ria Langham divorce in 1939. The soon-to-be ex-Mrs. Gable made the most of her Las Vegas stay by hosting parties with big-name Hollywood types and generally boosting Las Vegas to the press. Following the Gables' divorce "all the world began to show up to get their own divorces where Ria and Clark got theirs."[69] During and increasingly after World War II, Las Vegas began to usurp Reno's role as the divorce mecca.

Divorces, it seems, increase once wars end, when prewar newlyweds are thrown together again.[70] After the war, however, other forces came to bear on the Nevada divorce trade. Other states were beginning to relax their own divorce laws, which reduced the necessity for migratory divorce. New York had long been a holdout in the liberalization of divorce laws, by limiting the grounds for divorce to adultery, and by refusing to accept foreign decrees. In 1965, however, the New York Court of Appeals recognized the validity of "quickie" Mexican divorces, and the New York legislature changed the law to allow other grounds for divorce. According to Harold Taber, former Nevada district court judge, these actions by the New York court and legislature resulted in a crash in the divorce trade that finally put an end to Nevada's premier position.[71]

During the 1930s, however, Reno had an international reputation. Divorce-seekers came here from every state in the Union and many foreign countries. Every Renoite knew someone who was participating in the divorce trade. The Reno entry in *A Guide to the Silver State* offers a summary of the phenomenon:

> A second Reno, also not representative and to some extent overlapping the gambling-drinking Reno, is the divorce circle, composed of newcomers, the divorce lawyers, and also the lawyers' wives, who endeavor to keep their husbands' clients from growing too homesick. The divorce circle has various subdivisions, economic as well as

mental. Women with money—and most of the newcomers are female—live in the smarter hotels, expensive furnished apartments or on nearby ranches, and the rest live as well as their pocketbooks permit; a few even do housework or clerk in stores to maintain themselves during the necessary period. How these divorce-seekers spend their time depends in part on their state of mind. To the majority the breaking up of their homes is a heart-breaking business and they react according to their natures; some grow reckless, gamble and drink wildly, invite attentions from any man they happen to meet, while others live quietly and are rarely seen in cocktail rooms and night clubs. It is the former who provide a disturbing element greatly resented by Renoites, in spite of their determined tolerance for human frailty and their appreciation of the revenue brought in.[72]

In Reno, during the 1930s, the divorce trade was embraced by a broad cross-section of the population, and many benefited from it. It involved far more than the few divorce ranches that have become the popular images of the time.

NOTES

[1]Dorothy Walworth Carman, *Reno Fever* (New York: Ray Long and Richard R. Smith, 1932), 9.

[2]Mella Rothwell Harmon, "Divorce and Economic Opportunity in Reno, Nevada, during the Great Depression" (M.A. thesis, University of Nevada, Reno, 1998), 75.

[3]*Ibid*, 42. In order to satisfy the six-week residency requirement, divorce-seekers were asked during their court appearance to identify their residence location. Several of the records from the summer of 1931 indicated that the plaintiffs had camped out when they first arrived because accommodations were hard to come by. For examples, see case numbers 34,917; 35,719; 35,889; 35,925; 36, 376; and 36,621. These records are on file in the microfilm room at the Washoe County Courthouse, Reno.

[4]Works Progress Administration, Federal Writers' Project, *A Guide to the Silver State* (Portland: Binford and Morts, 1940), 139.

[5]Research for "Divorce and Economic Opportunity in Reno, Nevada during the Great Depression" involved viewing a sample of the divorce records from the period, for a total of 3,007 records.

[6]Harmon, "Divorce and Economic Opportunity in Reno," 75.

[7]*Nevada State Journal*, 1 January 1933.

[8]Richard G. Lillard, *Desert Challenge: An Interpretation of Nevada* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), 351.

[9]*Fortune Magazine* (April 1934), 101.

[10]Harmon, "Divorce and Economic Opportunity in Reno," 24-25.

[11]Works Progress Administration, *Guide to the Silver State*, 139.

[12]*Nevada State Journal*, 30 March 1932.

[13]Anita J. Watson, "Tarnished Silver: Popular Image and Business Reality of Divorce in Nevada, 1900-1939" (M.A. Thesis, University of Nevada, Reno, 1989), 23.

[14]*Ibid*, 25.

[15]Mary Pickford was divorcing Owen Moore in order to marry dashing actor Douglas Fairbanks.

[16]Russell R. Elliott and William Rowley, *History of Nevada*, 2nd edition (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 285.

[17]The 1931 law required that plaintiffs produce witnesses to testify that they had lived in the state of Nevada for the full six weeks prior to filing for divorce. The witnesses referred to this practice as "goin' a courtin." See Harmon, "Divorce and Economic Opportunity in Reno."

[18]*Fortune Magazine* (April 1934), 131-132.

[19]*Ibid*.

[20]Lawyer Clel Georgetta, 9 February 1934, disagrees with this statement, noting in his diary that prices were going up. "The better class of boarding houses ask $50, $60, and as high as $75 - wow!" Clel Georgetta, *Personal Diaries*, Manuscript Collection G295, Volume 19, 1934. On file at Washoe County Special Collections Library, Reno.

[21]*Fortune Magazine* (April 1934), 128.

[22]During the 1930s, about 120 lawyers operated in Reno. Several came from New York and operated in both states. This was a lucrative practice since the majority of divorce-seekers came from the East.

[23]Georgetta, *Personal Diaries*, Volume 20, 1935.

[24]George Bartlett, *Papers*, Manuscript Collection 1253, Special Collections Library, University of Nevada, Reno, Library.

[25]Georgetta, *Personal Diaries*, Volume 19 (1934) and Volume 20 (1935).

[26]*Ibid*.

[27]For a more detailed discussion of divorce housing during the 1930s, see Harmon, "Divorce and Economic Opportunity in Reno."

[28]Washoe County Divorce Records, 1931.

[29]*Nevada State Journal*, 17 May 1931, 1.

[30]The Chamber of Commerce operated a Hotel and Housing Bureau that supplied housing information to tourists, conventioneers, and divorce-seekers. Reno's private homeowners have accommodated all types of visitors and other temporary residents since at least the turn of the

century. See Harmon, "Divorce and Economic Opportunity in Reno."

[31]Philip Siggers, *The Truth about Reno: A Guide Book to Reno, Nevada and the Surrounding Country, Useful to the Prospective Visitor and Newcomer* (Reno: private publication, 1934), 13-14.

[32]R.L. Polk, *Reno City Directory* (San Francisco: R.L. Polk and Company, 1933, 1937).

[33]Siggers, *Truth about Reno,* 12-13.

[34]Joseph Mosconi, *An Interview with Joseph Mosconi* (Reno: Oral History Program, University of Nevada, 1985), 222.

[28]*Ibid.*

[36]Siggers, *Truth about Reno,* 13-14.

[37]Polk, *Reno City Directory,* 1935.

[38]Siggers, *Truth about Reno,* 14.

[39]*Ibid,*12.

[40]Beatrice Mishkin, *Time of My Life, A Memoir* (n.p.: private publication, 1986), 17.

[41]*Nevada State Journal* (4 October 1931), 14.

[42]*Ibid.*

[43]Nevada Historical Society, Manuscript Collection MS/NC 278/30/5.

[44]Georgetta, *Personal Diaries,* Volume 19, 1934.

[45]For more information on the Lincoln Highway through Reno, see Christine Fey, "A Preservation Plan for the Lincoln Highway in Nevada." (M.A. thesis, University of Nevada, Reno, 1991).

[46]Anonymous, "A Woman Writes from Reno: Notes on the Divorce Racket by an Exwife." *The Chicago Daily News* (March 19, 1930), 23.

[47]Max Miller, *Reno* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1941), 35.

[48]*Ibid.*

[49]Washoe County Civil Records, 1931-1934.

[50]Georgetta, *Personal Diaries,* Volume 19, 13 November 1934.

[51]Washoe County Civil Records, 1931-1934; Polk, *Reno City Directory,* 1930, 1932, 1933, 1935, 1937.

[52]Postcard Collection, Special Collections Library, University of Nevada, Reno.

[53]Harmon, "Divorce and Economic Opportunity in Reno," 61.

[54]Harold S. Smith, Sr., *I Want to Quit Winners* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1961), 83-84.

[55]Faith Baldwin, *Temporary Address: Reno* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1941), 180.

[56]Mosconi, *An Interview with Joseph Mosconi,* 222.

[57]Carrnan, *Reno Fever, 85.*

[58]*Nevada State Journal* (1913). Located in Box 43 of George Bartlett, *Papers,* Manuscript Collection 1253, Special Collections Library, University of Nevada, Reno.

[59]Robert Wernick, "Where You Went When You Really Had to Get Unhitched," *Smithsonian,* 27:3 (June 1996), 66. It should be noted that although a lot of hanky-panky seemed to be going on, many more marriages than divorces occurred in Reno, and, in its own right, revenue from the marriage trade made its own significant contribution to Reno's economy. See Harmon, "Divorce and Economic Opportunity in Reno."

[60]Basil Woon, *None of the Comforts of Home—But Oh, Those Cowboys* (Reno: Federated Features, 1967), 12.

[61]Wernick, "Where You Went," 70.

[62]Miller, *Reno,* 56-57.

[63]Siggers, *The Truth about Reno,* 16.

[64]Frank W. Ingram and G.A. Ballard, "The Business of Migratory Divorce in Nevada," *Law and Contemporary Problems,* 11(3) (Durham: Duke University Press, 1935), 307-308.

[65]Anonymous, "A Woman Writes from Reno"(23 April 1930), 10.

[66]*Nevada State Journal* (4 May 1931), 1.

[67]John Sanford, *Printer's Ink in My Blood* (Reno: University of Nevada, Oral History Program, 1971), 18; Miller, *Reno,* 260.

[68]Miller, *Reno,* 260.

[69]Eugene P. Moehring, *Resort City in the Sunbelt: Las Vegas 1930-1970* (Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 1995), 29-30.

[70]Miller, *Reno*, 260.
[71]*Reno Evening Gazette* 22 April 1968, 8.
[72]Works Progress Administration, *Guide to the Silver State*, 145.

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

FLEISCHMANN ATMOSPHERIUM-PLANETARIUM JOINS NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Harold Housley

The National Register of Historic Places has recently listed the Fleischmann Atmospherium-Planetarium, located on the campus of the University of Nevada, Reno. The planetarium, completed in 1963, has long been one of Reno's most architecturally striking buildings, and the National Register has recognized its special significance based on its design. The National Register has, in addition, recognized the historical importance of the building as the world's first atmospherium, the daytime counterpart of the traditional planetarium.

The Adler Planetarium in Chicago opened in 1930 as the first planetarium in the United States. For the next two decades planetaria were located almost exclusively in large cities. Widespread public interest in space exploration and science, coupled with improved technology, resulted in the opening of planetaria in mid-size United States cities in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1960 the Max C. Fleischmann Foundation of Nevada proposed construction of a planetarium on the University of Nevada campus to serve as the home of the recently-established Desert Research Institute, a division of the university designed to conduct and encourage research.

Atmospheric physicist Wendell Mordy came from California to head the Desert Research Institute, and wanted to build a strong program in the atmospheric sciences. Upon learning of the proposed planetarium, Mordy wrote a detailed letter to the Fleischmann Foundation outlining his plan for the building, which called for a facility capable of simulating weather patterns and the daytime sky through time-lapse photography. Mordy coined the word atmo-

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spherium to describe the proposed building. The Fleischmann Foundation was receptive to Mordy's proposal, but also wanted a conventional planetarium, so plans were finalized for a building that would combine the normal features of a planetarium with the added capability of simulating daytime conditions and atmospheric events.[1]

Once the ambitious plan for the building had been conceived, the immediate problem confronting Mordy was finding the technology that would make the atmospherium possible. Spitz Laboratories custom-built a 180-degree motion picture projector, and the Jam Handy Organization, a Detroit-based optical firm, designed an $8,000 lens. These instruments had the capability to project a single circular picture around the building's dome. With the technology secured, Mordy searched for an architect with an imagination equal to the design challenge posed by the unique equipment.[2]

Mordy was meticulous in choosing an architect for the building, as he recalled in 1983: "I interviewed every major architect in Reno. I was interested in architecture—particularly modern architecture—and I talked with all of them."[3] Mordy selected architect Raymond Hellmann of Reno, who described the planetarium as "the most complicated building I ever did or ever will do."[4] Hellmann enlisted the services of structural engineer H.V. Lamberti, who had worked with him on other projects. Hellmann noted that "Mordy had ambitious plans. He wanted the building to be a museum, as well as the world's first atmospherium/planetarium. He wanted to do a lot of things that had never been done before—like projecting pictures outside the dome as well as inside. It wasn't going to be easy."[5] Together, Hellmann and Lamberti designed a building that satisfied Mordy's demands, and remained true to his vision.

The centerpiece of the building's design is the hyperbolic paraboloid roof, a concrete-shell structure that weighs 180 tons and is supported at only two points. In order to meet Mordy's requirement for a large amount of interior space, Hellmann wanted to avoid using columns, which would take up room. The hyperbolic paraboloid, a curve made up of intersections of straight lines, was an ideal choice for the roof. Straight concrete pieces served as a framework for the poured-concrete shell, making the roof virtually self-supporting. Aside from the technical considerations, the hyperbolic paraboloid design also creates the planetarium's unique butterfly shape. The 40-foot glass windows facing Virginia Street further enhance the building's appearance.

The building initially featured an experimental solar heating and cooling system. The system consisted of nineteen louvers, black on one side and white on the other, capable of being rotated to reflect or absorb light, and an 18,000-gallon water tank that served as a heat exchange unit.

Local newspapers closely followed the construction of the Fleischmann Atmospherium-Planetarium. Mordy's article for the *Nevada State Journal*, "Space Age Shape of New Building Heralds Its Use," includes a photograph of the work in progress, and begins:

The newly-built Fleischmann Atmospherium-Planetarium, 1964 (*Greater Reno Chamber of Commerce*).

Those of you who have been traveling up North Virginia Street recently have had a chance to see the beginnings of the new Charles and Henriette Fleischmann Atmospherium-Planetarium now scheduled for completion about April 15. The building is taking shape rapidly as the attached photograph shows. It promises to be, in my opinion, a very dramatic building. Its design is by Raymond Hellmann, AIA, of Reno. Hellmann has used a nearly unique design to exactly fit the requirements of the building and at the same time used a style of architecture which suggests the age in which we live and the purpose of the building, which is to stimulate and educate young people in space-age scientific subjects.[6]

The Fleischmann Atmospherium-Planetarium is an excellent embodiment of a distinctive style of the 1950s and 1960s that remained relatively unexamined, and unnamed, until recent years. Words such as ultramodern or futuristic, while descriptive, fail to relate architecture to broader cultural themes. The Fleischmann Planetarium is an excellent example of Populuxe a style described by Thomas Hine. In his book *Populuxe*, Hine examines this style, which is characterized by space-age designs that depict motion, such as boomerangs, flying saucers, parabolas and atoms. The Populuxe style reflects the optimism, affluence, and mobility that characterized American society in the 1950s and 1960s, and was expressed in objects such as household appliances and automobile tailfins.[7]

Architecturally, the Populuxe style is found in a variety of structures, both in small commercial establishments like gas stations and motels, and in monumental structures like the Gateway Arch in Saint Louis and the Space Needle in Seattle. In Reno, four monumental public buildings constructed during the 1960s are excellent examples of the Populuxe style—the Fleischmann Atmospherium-Planetarium, the Pioneer Theater, the Washoe County Library, and the Getchell Library. Collectively, the construction of these buildings is an important part of the development of Reno beyond a tourist-oriented gambling mecca toward a bona-fide cultural center. Local government officials looked forward to Reno's future with unbounded optimism in the 1960s, an attitude which was expressed in the imaginative architecture of these buildings.

The Fleischmann Atmospherium-Planetarium was formally dedicated on November 15, 1963, exactly one week before the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Nevada's Governor Grant Sawyer expressed the importance of the building to the state's present and future: "The dedication of the world's first atmospherium is a fitting symbol of the progress Nevada has made during its first 100 years, and it is an appropriate symbol of Nevada's hopes for the future."[8]

Now known by its abbreviated title, the Fleischmann Planetarium continues to provide scientific education and entertainment to the public. The planetarium celebrated thirty years of operation in 1993. By that year, it had presented more than 30,000 shows to 750,000 people. The addition of an observatory in 1991 provides the opportunity for the public to view the heavens. The building's architecture continues to attract attention, as a 1988 newspaper

article noted:

> Funded by the Max C. Fleischmann Foundation, Reno's atmospherium was the first of its kind. The building, on North Virginia Street at the University of Nevada-Reno, reflects that: An attention-getter today, it was downright dramatic in 1963.[9]

Even though its current director, Arthur Johnson, dropped the word atmospherium from the building's name in 1982, the concept that Wendell Mordy pioneered in Reno has been influential. Of the Fleischmann Atmospherium-Planetarium, he noted, "It was absolutely the first public institution to use motion pictures on a dome to show weather conditions and the daytime sky. Since then, it has been imitated around the world. "[10]

Any building reflects the cultural climate of its time of construction. Rarely, however, does a structure unite form and function in a way that so clearly embodies the zeitgeist, the prevailing ambience, of a particular era. The Fleischmann Atmospherium-Planetarium is a dramatic physical representation of the New Frontier envisioned by President Kennedy. Its form suggests a bold, confident nation, moving forward in its understanding of the natural world. Its original function as an atmospherium demonstrates the belief that technology could provide understanding of atmospheric phenomena, and that these events could be accurately simulated for a public that wanted scientifically oriented entertainment. The listing on the National Register provides recognition that this unique building deserves.

Notes

1 O. Richard Norton, *The Planetarium and Atmospherium: An Indoor Universe,* (Heraldsburg, Calif.: Naturegraph Publishers, 1968), 131.

2 *Reno Gazette-Journal* (20 November 1983).

3 *Ibid.*

4 *Ibid.*

5 *Ibid.*

6 *Nevada State Journal* (13 January 1963).

7 Thomas Hine, *Populuxe* (New York: Knopf,1987).

8 *Nevada State Journal* (16 November 1963).

9 *Reno Gazette-Journal* (26 November 1988).

10 *Ibid.* (20 November 1983).

BOOK REVIEWS

Bad Bet: The Inside Story of the Glamour, Glitz, and Danger of America's Gambling Industry. By Timothy L. O'Brien. (New York: Times Books, 1998, 339 pages, end notes, bibliography, index).

A former reporter with *The Wall Street Journal,* now with *The New York Times,* Timothy L. O'Brien has written a critical book about the gambling industry in America. The book is jammed full of facts, anecdotes, and specks of interesting information. While the words and passages do not always seem to be connected to a purpose, or even a general theme, they do make interesting reading, and at times they provide good insights into gambling today.

That being said, the book leaves this reader feeling that it falls way short of accomplishing the implicit goal set forth in its title: *Bad Bet: The Inside Story of the Glamour, Glitz, and Danger of America's Gambling Industry.* The bad is simply not established with any definitive degree of conclusiveness. Quite the opposite, as a matter of fact. The book ends with the statement that the "social and human costs [are] not yet fully understood." There is simply no inside story. Rather, the book is a collection—albeit an articulate collection—of old material previously published, or at least discussed publicly, and supplemented with some good personal interviews, which does not reveal anything shocking or even unusual.

The material simply does not speak about anything that sounds very glamorous—at least not anything today. To be sure, it mentions Las Vegas casino opening parties in the 1960s. But today—internet gaming, simulcasting, compulsive gamblers, lottery tickets, mass-marketed Las Vegas Strip casinos, the Donald. Glamorous? Are you kidding? And if the industry is dangerous, the danger does not come out in the pages. Of course, vignettes about compulsive gamblers reveal that they get depressed, but there are no contemporary stories of bodies in the Las Vegas desert. References to the 1997 abduction and murder of a child, Sherrice Iverson, in a casino fifty miles from Las Vegas are not appropriately assigned to the irresponsible actions of a casino. Untold in these pages is the fact that security officers at the casino repeatedly found the child wandering alone and returned her to her father, who was eventually thrown out of the casino for neglecting to watch his child. Unfortunately, he chose to sneak back to the tables and left her to wander alone again. The other murders mentioned are from past years, and O'Brien never establishes any relevance to gambling today.

There is material the book could have drawn upon to make the case it sets out to make, but instead the author chose to recite old stories and to add interview observations from an array of quite respectable authorities. Still, the book did not seek to make an analytical assessment of the subject of gambling. The book could have relied upon many academic studies and treatments of gambling, but instead seemed to use the approaches taken by Ed Reid and Ovid Demaris in *The Green Felt Jungle*, Demaris in *The Boardwalk Jungle*, and more recently John L. Smith in *Running Scared*. Like the authors of these books, O'Brien writes well, but in the final stages can only point to smoke, and he leaves the reader with no fire.

At the onset of the book, O'Brien indicates that the opposition to gambling is mounting, but then adds that the most potent opponents are Christian activists. If such is the case, it is a triple whammy that condemns the opposition to likely failure. The views of the Christian activists who oppose gambling—that all gambling is a vice and therefore all gambling is bad—are accepted by fewer than twenty percent of the population in survey after survey. (Annual surveys of gaming by Harrah's Inc.; National Survey of Gambling, Mississippi State University, 1995.) Further, these Christian activist opponents lack the resources to make their case politically viable in any way that can turn the public against the gambling that already has been legalized.

The third whammy is that there is another moral view of gambling, which accepts that some gambling is permissible. In judging whether O'Brien makes his case that gambling is a bad bet, it is appropriate to set forth the structure of this other moral approach to gambling. The religious view that gambling is always a sin and hence must be condemned at all times in all its forms is called the "deontological" view (Deo = God, ergo God says it is "bad"; end of argument). The other religious view is the "teleological" view (Teleo = world, ergo God knows man interacts with the world, and morality may be reconciled with the world). Many religious organizations (e.g., Catholics and Episcopalians) approach gambling in a teleological manner. They generally agree that gambling is bad in the abstract, and in application may be bad most of the time. However, IF. If certain conditions are present, gambling may be acceptable, that is, gambling may not be bad. Basically, the if's are these: 1) If the gambling is honest, 2) If the gambling is operated by honorable people, 3) If the players are not habitual, but rather are only occasional recreational players, 4) If the players can afford to engage in the activity, they are not using other people's money in order to gamble, and they are meeting all of their social obligations (providing milk for their children, paying their taxes, and supporting their church), and finally, 5) If the bottom line result of the gambling activity is positive for society. (See this writer's *Legalized Gambling: A Reference Handbook*, 2nd ed., [Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 1997], 38-41.)

The case of a church bingo game shows how the assessment might work—the game is honest and run by the clergy; players spend $20 twice a month and

socialize with friends and neighbors in the process; and as a result of the game, a church school or hospital pays its bills and remains open to help the public.

O'Brien does not make a strong case that the preponderance of other gambling does not also successfully meet all of the factors set forth. Nowhere in the book is there a suggestion that the games of the gambling industry today are dishonest. Remarkably, he neglects to mention the rigged lottery game in Pennsylvania in 1979. But even if he does, he would be hard-pressed to say there is a role for cheating by operators in games today. His references to how the gaming industry uses modern marketing and advertising to capture players could be applied to almost any active retail business. Vance Packard told us about hidden persuaders a long time before there were legal, state-operated lotteries, and long before the mega-resorts dominated Las Vegas.

O'Brien does play the game of pointing out the organized crime connections of many gaming operators. However, most of his stories—and they are just that, stories—are from the past, or they refer only to very small operations today—e.g., the Shooting Star casino at Mahommen, Minnesota. He even concludes that if there are bad people working in Las Vegas today, they are on the fringes of the industry. They do not run the casinos.

O'Brien does not dwell on problem gamblers in his book, although he makes many references to these people. He does not review the literature of compulsive gambling, and he does not cite the most authoritative prevalence studies (i.e., those of Rachel Volberg), on cost analyses, but rather just throws around numbers that are not tied to strong research projects. He does not dispute that Las Vegas gamblers are mainly vacation tourists. His vignette of the compulsive gambler is illustrative of the existence of problems, but it does not tell us of the extent of the problems. Much of his text indicates that people want to gamble and see it as recreation. This writer thinks a case possibly can be made against gambling in this area by using strong research studies, but O'Brien does not make the case. Similarly, others can make the case that with reforms, the number of compulsive gambling cases can be reduced quite considerably.

The last criterion for "good" gambling is the impact the gambling has on the community. Does gambling build schools, take care of the poor and elderly, help build economies? Here again, although the author offers broad generalizations about how gambling can harm society, he does not make a solid case that gambling cannot have positive effects. Thus, he cannot balance positives and negatives in order to assess net results. He points to past and even contemporary cases of corruption and crime attached to gambling. But he never establishes that these anti-social activities are endemic to gambling. He points out that it is illusive to believe that all gambling can help economies, and this writer agrees. But he offers no solid economic studies in making such a case. This writer has published studies of gambling in three states; and in some of these cases, it had the effect of drawing money away from local communities, hence retarding opportunities for economic growth. But such was not the case every-

where. In some locations, gambling was found to be a force for economic growth, as it certainly is in Las Vegas.

This writer thinks the author could not possibly use the teleological criteria and establish that all gambling is bad all the time. Nonetheless, he did not seek to make the effort. While he could have strengthened the case against gambling, I am still unpersuaded that all gambling is a bad bet. I think that authors who wish to analyze gambling would be more persuasive if they accepted that some gambling is not so good as other gambling, or even worse, and then concentrate on policies that would have the effect of discouraging—or improving—the bad gambling.

The book's conclusions also are bothersome. There are none. The author does not tell us what we should do about the bad situations he reveals in his book. His epilogue discusses the National Gambling Impact Study Commission, but offers no suggestions as to how to improve the situation that, he suggests, exists—that we are all succumbing to this "most dangerous of games," gambling. Some directional pointers would have been nice to have.

Certain aspects of the book are troublesome to this reader, at least in a mechanical sense. The author has chosen to name most of his chapters after cities. "Las Vegas" and "Atlantic City" are appropriate, but then he uses "San Francisco" as the title of the chapter on sports betting. He uses "Albany" for the title of his chapter on lotteries.

Albany? And "Chicago" somehow is appropriate for charity gambling. "Louisville" means horse racing, and "New York" means stock market gambling; these are more reasonable, but still, no justification for using these city names is offered. The author also chooses to start with a chapter on Internet gambling. He admits that it is a small, inconsequential part of the gambling industry. He suggests that Internet gambling does not merit the hand-wringing it is receiving from policy makers and implies that it is going nowhere. But he still thinks it deserves a front and center showcase position in a book on the gambling industry.

O'Brien has decided to tell three case study stories of gamblers. One he calls "The Poker Player," a second, "The Veteran," and the third, "The Compulsive." While readable and interesting, the stories add little to his text, but, worse than that, they are presented confusingly. Each is chopped into three parts. At the end of each of the nine chapters, he includes one of the parts of one of the case studies. The part has absolutely no relationship to the chapter preceding it. He could have placed the cases anywhere else, and at least kept them intact, and he would have had better results for the reader.

A final, bothersome editorial mechanic is that he does not provide source citations in the text in the form of footnotes or endnotes. At the end of the book he lists page numbers and phrases, followed by references to sources. As I was reading the book, I kept wondering if there was a source. I would then have to break my train of thought, go to the back of the book, and go through a mind

distracting process of trying to interpret his references. And unfortunately, many pages that are filled with factual statements lacked any references. Many of the sources referred to others that were also evaluative assessments of gambling. Too few were to analytical academic studies.

The Nevada reader should know that O'Brien has made a reasonably adept restatement of the development of the casino industry in the state. Although there is nothing really new, it is a good recapitulation. He highlights the role of Moe Dalitz more strongly than many other authors do.

Bad Bet seeks to be a joumalist's exposé of an industry that already has had more than its share of exposés. He adds little to the literature except a well-written book reviewing the work of others. He could have written as persuasive a book exposing wrongdoing in about almost any other big industry in America. In the final analysis, O'Brien throws a reasonable punch as he tries to score against the gambling industry, but I am not sure that any boxing judge (even a legitimate one) could give him a victory in the match. Certainly, he comes nowhere near making a knockout punch.

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Lige Langston. Sweet Iron. By Linda Hussa. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999, xii + 322 pages, illustrations).

Linda Hussa has written a fine account of a cowboy and rope braider that depicts a way of life that has all but vanished. The book fuses oral history with lyrical digressions into narrative nonfiction and captures the remnants of a West that still exists, though barely, in her adopted home at the foothills of the Warner Mountains in Cedarville, California. The text focuses less on the facts of the matter or social implications and more on the actual experiences of working land and horses and cattle and captures the character of the people who work the desert range on the border of northern Nevada and California.

The tale of Lige Langston's life, in his words and those of his friends, describes a Nevada cowboy and his love affair with horses and the lifestyle of a buckaroo. He came of age in the early modern era of the West, lived up to the contemporary age, and was a living link to frontier Nevada. But the book is more than an oral history that documents one life. To complement Langston's tale, Hussa turns to her own experience, adding lyrical prose and the sensibilities of a ranch wife to enlarge the reader's sense of place and purpose. Her

artful descriptions of scenes from her own life and her imagination add intimacy and authenticity to the book and serves to underscore her themes, especially those depicting the immediacy of life and the necessity of coming to terms with the environment. A good example is in the first paragraph of the chapter devoted to birthing calves:

> In the bottom of midnight the heifer began her lowing. She and the north wind moaned together. A stranger might have happened on us, drawn by the light at the barn door feathering out on the snow, cattle, horse resting in their shallow sleep, and thought it a refuge from the storm that wrangled the bare limbs of the cottonwoods and willows. But what they were doing inside was a butchery. The heifer's body clutched at the calf and would not give at the pelvis.

In developing the narrative of Langston's early years in Nevada, Hussa links the twentieth-century West with the late nineteenth-century era through the bigger than life character Dad Hicks, who was both outlaw and lawman. Langston knew Hicks from his years as a wrangler in Nevada. Hicks, a defiant holdover from the untamed West, is for several reasons the most interesting person depicted in the book, especially because he is determined not to change. He reaches his final end while prospecting in Mexico during the revolution. The photographs of a grizzled Dad Hicks say as much as words. Langston underscores his sense of loss over an unsuccessful attempt to send money to Hicks: "I don't know if I got the address wrong or what. I wrote again but never heard another word. I always felt bad about that. He was countin' on me and I let him down."

Another important character in the narrative is O.D. Van Norman, ranch foreman and member of the posse that tracked down Shoshone Mike near Golconda, Nevada. Now considered a massacre, the killing of the Shoshone Mike's band followed the murder of four sheepherders in Modoc County. Hussa confesses that she was searching for some revelation on the event when she interviewed O. D. Van Norman. Instead, Van Norman repeated the tale as it is usually told. Van Norman had employed Langston on his ranch when Lige began his career as a wrangler, and the two of them worked on divorce ranches.

Ultimately the book is about Langston, whose rope braiding is now on display in the Smithsonian Institution and other museums. Hussa speaks of Langston's deep sense of ethics, of his continued kindness to his first wife, of the failure of that marriage, of his life on a divorce ranch, of Langston's second marriage to an older woman that lasted thirty years, and of the melancholy of his last years when he could no longer live the life of a wrangler. Hussa's book enriches our knowledge of both Nevada and the West by showing us the character of some of the people who chose the tough but rewarding life of ranching in the high desert.

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European Immigrants in the American West: Community Histories. Edited by Frederick C. Luebke. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998, xix + 193 pages, index).

The purpose of this book is to resurrect interest in "the forgotten people of the American West" (vii). Having noted that Patricia Nelson Limerick's influential work, *The Legacy of Conquest* (1987), ignores discrimination against Europeans and the splendid *Oxford History of the American West* (1994) includes no special treatment of European immigrants, Frederick Luebke brings together summaries of scholarly studies on the European immigrant experience in the West. With the exception of Luebke's introduction, all the essays are excerpts or revisions of previously published articles or monographs.

The lead essay is from Henry Warner Bowden's classic 1981 study, *American Indians and Christian Missions: Studies in Cultural Conflict*. Inclusion of this somewhat dated piece helps establish the clear distinction between conquering European colonizers and later accommodating immigrants. Four essays focus on patterns of settlement. Robert C. Ostergren's 1980 study of Swedes on the Dakota frontier reveals the direct effect of old world origins and mid-journey acquaintanceships on later neighborhood clustering. Unlike the Swedes, English Mormons who settled in Alpine, Utah, had never met before their emigration. This second essay from Dean May's *Three Frontiers: Family, Land, and Society in the American West, 1850-1900* (1994) crisply demonstrates that religious belief was more influential than physical environment or ethnicity in determining behavior patterns. Dino Cinel, author of *From Italy to San Francisco: The Immigrant Experience* (1982), focuses on migration and settlement patterns. Another excerpt from his book is used in a later chapter to demonstrate how inter-generational conflicts and differing value systems led second generation Italians to flee the city.

Using a variety of sources, David Emmons assembles the circumstances of economic hardship in Ireland along with the failed work opportunities in America, which lured thousands of Irish to the copper mines of Butte, Montana. The town soon had a reputation for gambling and drinking, prompting more than one observer to urge that it be civilized by Protestant missionaries. Emmons traces chain migration patterns and is attentive to the effect of friendship networks on wages and living conditions. Editor Luebke uses an excerpt from Emmons's, *The Butte Irish* (1989) in a later chapter to exemplify the discriminatory effects of ethnic solidarity. Irish dominance of the copper mining industry assured sons of Erin steady jobs for which no English need apply. "Butte, in its heyday, was the antithesis of rural and Protestant America" (55). It was also the scene of extremely hazardous working conditions, which Emmons describes most vividly.

Three more chapters explore factors contributing to the maintenance of ethnic identity in urban and rural settings. William Toll describes how the Jews of

Portland developed middle class institutions based on the local Gentile model. He also reveals strategies Jewish women employed to exercise more independence from the patriarchal family structure. Anna Zellick's 1994 study of Slavs in the mining towns of Red Lodge and Bearcreek, Montana, is based entirely on interviews of the immigrants' children. This essay has the virtue of first-hand reflections on ethnic rivalries, poverty and untimely deaths, which characterized many frontier communities. Carol Coburn provides a fresh interdisciplinary study of the interaction of gender, ethnicity and religious isolation among the women of Block, Kansas. Among its many insights are descriptions of how women became acculturated faster than men and how the rural environment buffered inter-generational conflicts. The final two essays are comparative studies. One effectively illustrates why Czechs and Mexicans chose "to be *Czech* farmers and *Mexican* laborers, and not just farmers and laborers" in South Texas. The last is a study of two Mennonite communities in Manitoba and Nebraska, which retained their religious conservatism through strikingly different adaptations to the urban development that threatened traditional values.

Each of the essays is linked to the previous chapter with an excellent introduction, which minimizes the discontinuity found in many anthologies. Most selections include quite helpful endnotes. The essays by Cinel, Zellick and Barton are without notes and therefore of less value to the researcher. The result, however, is a richly diverse collection of community histories which capture the excitement, the pressures, and the tragedies associated with European western settlement. One common theme found throughout is that religion, gender roles and kinship ties were essential determinants for maintaining community solidarity. This modestly priced paperback edition includes an excellent index and select bibliography. It would be a useful companion reading for many courses in Western history.

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Of Time and Change. By Frank Waters. Foreword by Rudolfo Anaya. (Denver: MacMurray & Beck, 1998, 263 pages).

(Reprinted by permission of *Western American Literature.*)

During the last decade of his life, through his eighties and into his nineties, Frank Waters produced a prodigious amount of work: a novel, *Flight From Fiesta;* a major revision of a novel, *The Woman at Otowi Crossing* (Revised Edi-

tion); an extended essay, *The Eternal Desert* (illustrated by David Muench); and a volume of mini-biographies, *Brave Are My People: Indian Heroes Not Forgotten.* When he died accidentally on June 3, 1995, at his home in Arroyo Seco, New Mexico, a few weeks shy of his ninety-third birthday, Waters also left behind a completed volume of unpublished essays. MacMurray and Beck of Denver has now published that volume. All Waters fans will want to add this final work to their Waters collection.

In this book, Waters recalls and reflects upon many experiences of his early life, both around his home in Taos and many thousands of miles from it. Because of his long residency above Taos, we are inclined to think of Frank Waters as living in isolation in the Sangre de Christo mountains above the Taos Indian reservation, meditating and gazing out at the Sacred Mountain. The picture is accurate, but it is incomplete unless it includes other experiences, such as the many adventures he had as a young man traveling with Mabel and Tony Lujan.

With Mable and Tony, Waters visited her friends in New York City, in other major Eastern cities, in various areas of the South, and in Mexico. Through Mabel, Waters met such people as

> Alfred Stieglitz and Georgia O'Keefe; Roy Howard of the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain; Eve and John Young-Hunter, the portrait painter; the anthropologist Elsie Clews Parsons; and the Freudian psychologist Dr. [A. A.] Brill. Others came to visit: Thornton Wilder, Wyndham Lewis, John Collier, a host of famous persons. It was a great privilege for me to meet all of them.

But *Of Time and Change* does not reflect the image of an old man gazing nostalgically back over his youth. Rather, it reveals an exuberant Frank Waters who still has the ability to present vigorous anecdotes of his younger days and fresh stories of his adventures with his many friends. Here are tales to surprise even his most knowledgeable readers.

Can you imagine, for example, a Frank Waters being deliberately rude to Leopold Stokowski? Or having dinner in the home of the noted psychologist Dr. A. A. Brill? Or knowing intimately Owen Wister's daughter? How about Frank with an unnamed countess, jumping horseback at Bryn Mawr, the Wister estate near Philadelphia? We see Frank and Tony Lujan bar-hopping in Greenwich Village and getting thrown out because they want to buy drinks by the bottle, not by the glass.

Pre-publication publicity seemed to promote the idea that *Of Time and Change* is primarily a memoir about Taos. In part, it certainly is that, dealing as it does with Frank's many friends living there in the early days of that fascinating and mysterious town. Indeed, a chapter entitled "The Taos Charisma" is one of my favorites. But *Of Time and Change* is more than Waters's memoirs of famous Taos residents and a history of Taos's early years. Frank was a talented raconteur, a marvelous conversationalist, and a great story teller. And in typical Frank

Waters manner, he always held some things back, always keeping some things for "the next book." The result is a lively, ever-widening set of tales about his adventures with his many friends and associates. We hear not only about Mabel and Tony but about Leon Gaspard, the famous Russian painter, who secretly treasured the Jewish heritage he hid and who wanted Frank to write his biography but fed him fiction as fact to make it more interesting. It is a perfect illustration of Frank Waters's humanity and tolerance that he continued to value the friendship of this man who so deceived him. There is a chapter on Dorothy Brett, an artist of great vision and a dear friend of D. H. Lawrence. Waters writes of other great painters—of Nicolai Fechin and his many domestic and professional problems, and of Andrew Dasburg, who exhibited three paintings and one sculpture in the famous Armory show and who once won third prize in an exhibition when Matisse won the first. This is more than just the inevitable, ever-present "Taos gossip." Waters extends his scope even wider in his concluding two essays, leaving no doubt for this reader that the subject of this book is not Taos memories alone but, rather, his on-going thoughts on time and change.

Just as Waters's earlier *Mountain Dialogues* (1981) moves from an incident with a neighbor child in Arroyo Seco in its first essay, "The Living Land," to a transcendent overview of Western civilization in its last chapter, "America: A Footnote," so *Of Time and Change* moves from an opening biographical sketch, "A Mirror View," to contemporary problems on the Mexico-Guatemala border in "The Last of the Mayas" and his final comments on the Navajo-Hopi land disputes in "The Four Corners." One is reminded of the technique used in 1942 in the *The Man Who Killed the Deer,* in which quite early in the story, Waters introduces a very simple image, a dot enclosed in a circle, a petroglyph viewed by Palemon as he rides to find Martiniano. The reader does not initially realize that Waters has adopted this image as a kind of blueprint for the entire story. Soon the image reappears as a pebble cast into a pond with its ever expanding ripples. The image is repeated several more times and is related to the ripple effects of Martiniano's legal problems, to a star in the sky, and to "the vibrating drum" of the circular kiva. It appears finally in the novel's last few lines as ripples reaching the unguessed shores of the timeless skies of night. This technique of leading the reader steadily to increasing awareness is a favorite one of Waters and is, I think, employed well in *Of Time and Change.*

Thus, as a demonstration of Waters' ever-expanding scope and vision, we see in this book a lively companion piece to the earlier *Mountain Dialogues.* It is a book filled with charming, delightful, entertaining stories and with Waters' wise and thought-provoking commentary. *Of Time and Change* is a very welcome final volume. It is good to hear his voice again.

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How the Canyon Became Grand: A Short History. By Stephen Pyne. (New York: Viking Press, 1998, 199 pages).

At fifteen, I saw the Grand Canyon for the first time. It was the immenseness of the vista, the way the setting sun played on the rocks and strata, that brought an overwhelming sense of my small place in the grand scheme of things. Since then, I have seen the canyon many times, from rim to river, in different seasons, and each has been a unique experience.

Anyone who has ever stood gazing at the vastness of the Grand Canyon will appreciate Stephen Pyne's *How the Canyon Became Grand.* Anyone who wishes to understand how the Canyon became part of the national ethos will want to read this book.

Pyne's engaging narrative explores the canyon on two levels, as a geologic feature, and as a cultural canyon. He argues that the Grand Canyon was created because of the interaction between landscape and an educated elite. Without that act of imagination, according to Pyne, the canyon would likely have joined the throngs of forgotten and dismissed landscapes that litter the surfaces of the earth, a geographic freak, a landscape curiosity rather than a cultural oracle (xiv). Pyne's work is, in many ways, an exploration of the canyon explorers in which geology and culture play a role in revealing the canyon as grand.

Pyne does not begin with the geology of the canyon, explaining how it was formed, but rather takes the reader from the early Spanish exploration of the Southwest to the great expeditions of the nineteenth-century. Early Spanish explorers of the region had no prior preparation for this canyon, as they had for mountains and waterfalls. As well, the Spanish were interested in mapping navigable rivers, not arroyos. Therefore, the Spanish quickly found the canyon, and quickly forgot it. It would take a second wave of exploration, influenced by the Enlightenment and the settlement of the Western frontier of the United States, for the canyon to receive greater attention.

Pyne's main focus throughout this relatively short book is on the major explorers, geologists, and artists who made the canyon an unforgettable part of the American landscape. Especially detailed are the sections discussing John Wesley Powell, Clarence Edward Dutton, and Thomas Moran. Correspondingly, these are also the most engaging parts of the book. These three men understood, according to Pyne, the uniqueness of the canyon and the difficulties in perspective. John Wesley Powell's full-length journey down the Colorado River and the publication of his book, *The Exploration of the Colorado River of the West* in 1875 made the canyon part of America. The Colorado River and its gorges had found their poet laureate, and an American bard, in Powell and the saga he would sing for his career (62). Dutton's *The Tertiary History of the Grand Canon District* in 1882 brought together science and aesthetics and revealed the

sum-total effect of the canyon was greater than its parts. Thomas Moran understood that the canyon offered special technical and aesthetic problems. He invented his own perspective and "fit the canyon into conventions of landscape art and in part to celebrate nature on a grand and unexpected scale" (91). Moran traveled to the canyon several times and Pyne argues that Moran's paintings and influence may have had something to do with the Grand Canyon becoming a national park. Despite this, Pyne recognized that Moran so idealized the canyon that the real canyon was lost.

The final portion of the book focuses on the move from appreciation to utilization, how the canyon was assimilated into American society. According to Pyne, revelation, appreciation, comprehension— all had derived from the cosmopolitan culture of a mobile elite, not from long residence or out of folk tradition (102). As time went on, the canyon, while forgotten for a time by the cultural elite, became a recognized part of America, a symbol of the wilderness and saving the environment as well as a tourist destination.

Pyne's strongest analysis comes in the sections on exploration, literary discussion of the canyon, and artistic developments. The weakest sections explore geology; Pyne does not offer much explanation of some of the fundamental geological concepts. However, the book does offer a lot way of cultural understanding of one of the most visited of America's national parks.

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Intimate Frontiers: Sex, Gender and Culture in Old California. By Albert L. Hurtado. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999, 173 pages, 23 illustrations, 12 tables).

This is a slim, but provocative volume. Its author, Albert Hurtado, the Travis Professor of Modern History at the University of Oklahoma, examines a topic that renowned western historian Ray Allen Billington would never have thought of when he first thought of the Histories of the American Frontier Series, of which this book is the most recent addition. With energy and insight, Hurtado explores sexual behavior in early California, beginning in 1769 with the arrival of Spanish conquerors. He casts his net wide, including everything from rape and incest to intermarriage and divorce.

Rather than stating a specific thesis to be demonstrated throughout the chap-

ters, Hurtado offers six essays arranged chronologically. They deal with the clash between indigenous peoples and Spanish invaders; intermarriage, especially between Indians and Hispanics; sexual mores and their violation on the overland trail to California; mining camps, with a focus on prostitution; and the sexual vulnerability of women, notably white women. In what the series editors aptly term "sparkling vignettes," (xiii) Hurtado demonstrates that the good old days were not so good after all, notably for women and people of color, and that, even after this century's sexual revolution, not much is new in human behavior.

Throughout, the book's perspective is largely that of the conquerors. Although Native Americans receive a good deal of attention, their attitudes are only partially revealed. As Hurtado rightly notes, Indian culture was based upon oral tradition and is thus difficult to reconstruct. Hispanics appear almost as frequently, especially in the early pages, and Asians turn up occasionally, but African Americans get no coverage, except for one mention of white perceptions of black sexuality.

Also, references to much of the germane secondary literature are absent. Because there is no bibliography, it is difficult to determine how much secondary literature was utilized. The brief endnotes suggest that many excellent historical studies in such areas as marital abuse, intermarriage, and divorce were overlooked. This lack may result from the series editors' desire to reach the general reader. Yet the editors' wish also to inform the "specialized student" (xv) leads a reader to expect more inclusion of the secondary literature, as well as bibliographical data.

Despite these quibbles, Hurtado's contributions are many. One of the greatest is letting historians and others know how much information can be retrieved regarding the personal side of people's existence in the early West and how important such knowledge is to understanding the dynamics of their lives. For example, the readers of this journal would come away from Hurtado's book with a huge thirst to know more about intimate matters in early Nevada, whether it be among Indians, in mining camps, or between conquerors and the conquered.

Another of Hurtado's important achievements is demonstrating how such seemingly personal issues influence causes and effects in more public realms. Throughout, Hurtado reveals a subtle contest, one that has usually gone unremarked by historians. As well as imposing their political and economic systems on others, conquerors attempted to enforce sexual beliefs and practices. For the early Spanish, this covert warfare, according to Hurtado, "actually threatened Spain's weak hold on California" (15) by further angering and insulting Native Americans who were already resistant to the newcomers. White Americans were not much better, for they, too, tried to convert everyone to their belief systems. Not only did conversion often fail, but white settlers frequently found themselves changed by California's strange and often libertine

ways.

Moreover, the book's many illustrations and tables add immeasurably to its interest and usefulness. Altogether, this is an exciting treatise, full of stimulating ideas and inspirations for further research.

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