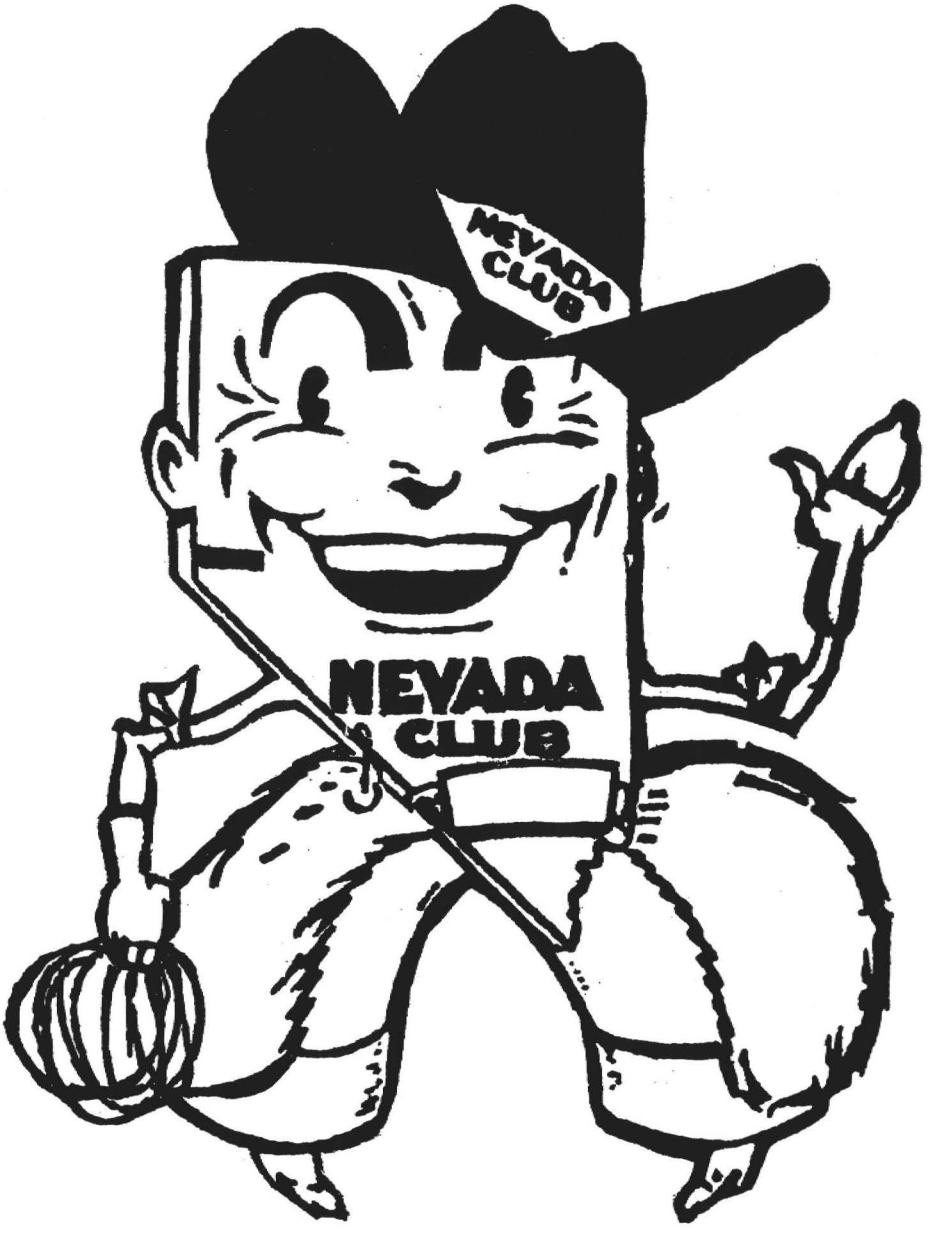
Nevada

Historical Society Quarterly



SUMMER 1999

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.

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

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

Nevada
Historical Society Quarterly

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Volume 42 | Summer 1999 | Number 2

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Front Cover: Illustration by Lew Hymers *(Nevada Historical Society).*

Book Reviews

"PROMOTING THE VARIED INTERESTS OF THE NEW AND RISING COMMUNITY[1]" The Booster Press on Nevada's Mining Frontier, 1859-1885

Eugene P. Moehring

In his respected study, *Nevada's Twentieth-Century Mining Boom*, published more than thirty years ago, Russell Elliott characterized the newspapers of Tonopah, Goldfield, and Ely as "vigorous, descriptive, and boasting" when chronicling the rise of their districts. In effect, he confirmed the persistence of a popular western tradition into the twentieth century. Indeed, newspapers had played a crucial role in the region's urban development since the early national period. In his pioneering work on the cities of the trans-Mississippi West between 1790 and 1830, Richard Wade declared that "the most important unifying element of urban culture . . . was the newspaper." He observed that, along with schools and churches, "a paper was the first outward sign of civilization in frontier settlements." In an age before electronic media and on a frontier where publishers and printing presses were relatively scarce, local newspapers were the only continuous source of information about a new community and its hinterland. For that reason, Wade explained, even though they were not very profitable, "newspapers were very well received both in the towns and the surrounding country." In his later research on Rocky Mountain mining camps, Duane Smith agreed with Wade, asserting that "the urban nature of the frontier needed a paper as much as it did a church or a school. The newspaper was the spokesman of the community, its gadfly, and its advocate." Finally, in her authoritative study of the frontier press, Barbara Cloud quoted one Gold Hill woman who lauded newspapers for being "the best of all civilizing processes in use."[2]

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Newspapers appeared simultaneously with town formation on Nevada's mining frontier. In fact, the *Territorial Enterprise* even antedated the discovery of gold and silver on Mount Davidson in June 1859. The Comstock Lode itself not only spawned the creation of more than fifty towns and villages to support its operations, but also inspired the prospecting of the entire territory.[3] Until the depression of the 1880s and 1890s, mining powered the state's economy and created urban places across the once desolate wilderness. By 1875, Nevada contained well over two hundred mining communities, as well as numerous railroad centers and agricultural hamlets. Newspapers provided current information about these places, just as they informed Russell Elliott's history of Nevada's twentieth-century mining towns. A number of scholars have published exhaustive studies of Nevada's newspapers and their editors.[4] Other researchers have used newspapers to explore Comstock society or a few select districts, or to engage in statewide examinations of gender, ethnicity, emigration, and racism. But there has been no statewide survey of the role played by newspapers in shaping the development of Nevada's young silver and gold towns, including the problems they faced in coping with the boom-bust nature of a dynamic mining frontier.[5]

A broad sampling of this press reveals a variety of concerns. Certainly, there was a strong booster dimension reminiscent of that in Tonopah, Goldfield, and Ely. But, unlike Professor Elliott's cities, which emerged after a prolonged depression and were, at least for a time, the state's leading metal producers, most of the Nevada towns that arose between 1859 and 1885 (after which the effects of demonetization and new discoveries discouraged silver production) found themselves locked in a continuous struggle for population, capital, and survival. With Idaho, Montana, Arizona, Utah, and eastern Oregon all hosting gold and silver booms in the two decades after 1860, Nevada's mining towns competed for attention with these places and with each other.[6]

From the beginning, the Comstock inspired a sense of territorial pride. As late as 1873, one editor from the Humboldt District, one hundred miles northeast of the Comstock, remarked that "travelers clog the wayside hostelries and look anxiously forward to the promised land. California is making a grand exodus." He rejoiced over travelers' comments that "the towns of California are being quite disturbed in business on account of the great tendency of all minds toward Washoe." And similar stories of thousands leaving California for the desert filled the pages of dailies and weeklies.[7]

Despite its success, Virginia City faced its share of problems. On a frontier of shifting fortunes, pride could quickly turn to scorn. Residents had only to look a mile or so westward to the visibly smaller city of Gold Hill to find a jealous rival. The tension between the two communities was considerable. Gold Hill's resentment of its neighbor's prosperity was always apparent. Take, for instance, a lengthy editorial in the 1863 *Gold Hill Daily News* whose anger was directed at "those who suppose Gold Hill to be a sort of one-horse suburban appendage of

Gold Hill Daily News office, Gold Hill, Nevada, c.1870s *(Nevada Historical Society).*

Virginia City." What followed was a list of cleverly worded excuses for the lag in Gold Hill's fortunes compared to those of its rival: mining companies waiting for good weather to import mills to crush as yet un-mined ore, and mining companies "reticent" to publish production figures because their "works are [still] in an incomplete but advancing state"—all this four years after the rush to Washoe had begun. Another column voiced an opinion no doubt held by many a Gold Hill resident: "Let the truth be known . . . that much of the riches of the flourishing city of Virginia comes from *this* District. The Virginia District has had the advantage of an industrious and successful press."[8]

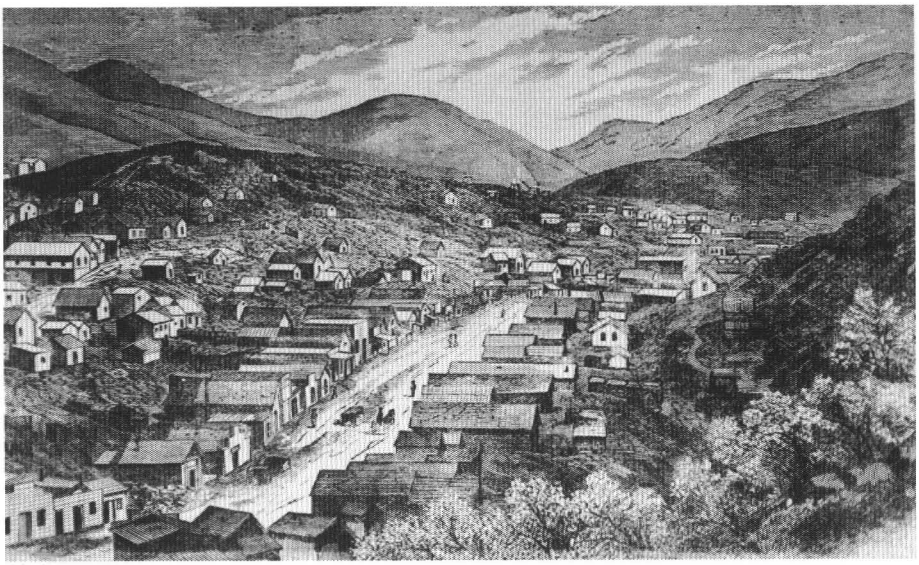
Of course, the Comstock itself became a target for criticism from distant new camps that resented the lack of attention. Within a year of the lode's discovery, the new boom town of Aurora appeared ninety miles to the south in the hills just east of Mono Lake. In November 1863, its local newspaper quoted a Comstock refugee's view that, as more Chinese moved in, the Washoe country was becoming "a miserable abode for white men." On the other hand, positive news about Comstock rivals was emphasized. In the same issue, the *Aurora Daily Times* reported that earlier scientific reports emanating from Virginia City that Reese River veins were "too small to work or were not to be depended upon in depth, [are] now pretty well exploded."[9] Comstock efforts to retain

interest in its mines drew venomous responses from newly formed competitors. Thus, when Austin and the Reese River Mining District began to boom in 1862, a drain of prospectors and investors from the Comstock led some Virginia City promoters to begin denigrating their adversary. As was often the case, local promoters reacted swiftly and angrily to propagandists in rival towns who disparaged their district. In 1863 the *Reese River Reveille* blasted those "gamblers in wildcat—ten cent [stock] brokers" in Virginia City, who had been insulting Reese River to divert investors back toward Comstock shares. Then, adopting a conciliatory tone, which reflected the district's dependency upon Virginia City for supplies and capital, the newspaper carefully distinguished between this group and the "legitimate businessmen of Virginia City [who] are glad of our prosperity [which] aids them wonderfully in extending a permanent trade" to the east. The editor then concluded that "no man who has the heart of the [Nevada] territory at heart can do otherwise." Whether one preferred the Humboldt mines, Reese River, Esmeralda, or the Comstock "to speak disparagingly of one of these places is equivalent to casting a suspicion on all."[10]

Of course, negative rhetoric was not limited to the Comstock and its competitors. New boom towns often shed no tears over the decline of older rivals. In 1869, the *White Pine News* gleefully reported that Austin was fading. "We do not glory in its downfall," the editor snickered, "but are happy to know that the *Reveille* has found something else to do besides running down White Pine." He explained that Austin was "once the center for supplies for the mining districts that surround it," but now, "unfortunately, for the future capital of Nevada, a railroad [the Central Pacific] came and Austin was the depot for supplies no more."[11]

Sometimes, however, there was genuine concern over the decline of a valued community, and local newspapers expressed hope for a mining renaissance. While the *White Pine News* resented its rival in Austin, it was more sympathetic to trouble in Belmont. The editor reassured readers that Belmont would rebound, because eastern Nevada was being liberated from its earlier disadvantages of "expensive transportation, scarcity and cost of labor, delays and inconvenience in every transaction." Indeed, "the discovery of the vast riches of Treasure Hill with the consequent attention given to it by capitalists and the migration hither from all parts of the world will remove [these] many disadvantages." He then predicted that capital infusions into White Pine could bring roads and attract population to the whole county. Increased prospecting and agricultural development would uncover new riches and trigger additional rounds of prosperity in all of the older mining zones.[12]

In contrast, Belmont's jealous rivals, such as Austin and Eureka, along with their network of communities, hoped that the district would not recover and hardly shed a tear when Treasure City, Hamilton, and the entire White Pine Mining District declined later in the century. Throughout the 1870s these areas



Panorama of early Austin, Nevada, 1873, lithograph *(Nevada Historical Society).*

The *White Pine News* of Treasury City in 1869 was sympathetic to Belmont's declining fortunes, pictured here in the 1870's *(Nevada Historical Society).*

battled each other for migrants, investors, and publicity. Some boosters grasped at any straw to discourage businessmen from settling in a rival town. In 1871, the *Eureka Daily Sentinel* observed that nearby Hamilton was not "blessed [with] a plentiful supply of pure wholesome water" because it came four miles through pipes at a cost of almost half a million dollars. Eureka, on the other hand, was a better place to locate one's business since it had "more than double the water and the springs are in town." An abundant and inexpensive supply thus made Eureka "the best watered city in the state."[13]

Towns in particularly remote sections, far from convenient railroad connections, struggled against established centers like Virginia City-Gold Hill, Austin, Eureka, and Treasure Hill. Pioche in southern Nevada faced this problem, and its newspaper responded by printing a barrage of columns aimed at diverting attention away from the north. In typically breathless prose, the *Ely Daily Record* proclaimed in 1872 that "the bullion keeps leaving every week at a rate sufficient to astonish the outside world at the immense mineral wealth of Pioche." Moreover, "the stages arrive crowded and daily strangers who have come to purchase may be seen in the company with some hardy prospector intent on viewing his mine." As miners excavated the new 1,000-foot-long "Pacific Tunnel" into the mountain, the paper reported that it was "intersecting silver mines at intervals." Even though only $15,000 had been expended so far in its construction, the *Record* boasted that "to mining operators throughout the entire coast, . . . the Pacific Tunnel stands in prospect next to the great Sutro." Similarly when Star City, one hundred miles north of the Comstock in the Humboldt District, boomed in the early 1860s, *The Humboldt Register* added to the sense of excitement by declaring that the town was so crowded that "wagons and white tents stand on almost every level spot from one end of the canyon to the other."[14]

In the Great Basin these network rivalries were hardly mere intrastate activities. Any threat, no matter how distant, brought a swift response from boosters. Take the case of Idaho, whose success evoked ambivalent feelings. While places like Star City in the Humboldt District clearly benefited from the immense stage traffic flowing between southern Idaho and San Francisco, the territory was close enough to divert population and capital from the silver state. It was not unusual for Nevada newspapers to downplay mining booms north of the border. In 1881, the *Carson Morning Appeal* printed a story about how these "Carsonites who caught the Wood River fever" have returned to the capital city disgruntled with Idaho.[15]

Although competition often encouraged the disparagement of rivals, there was also a sense of pride in Nevada's success, which often led to praise for other towns. This was especially true for the small towns nearby that posed no threat to a larger place. While the *Gold Hill Daily News* had little good to say about its next-door neighbor, Virginia City, it boosted less threatening towns in the area. In 1864, for example, it lauded the success of Como to the southeast.

Treasure City, Nevada, 1869 *(Nevada Historical Society)*.

Hamilton, Nevada, 1869 *(Nevada Historical Society)*.

The "richness of its mines . . . the cheapness of the fuel and inexhaustible supplies of water," the paper declared, "render[ed] the expense of working it much less than in most other districts in the [Nevada] territory." In 1864 the same paper reported that nearby American Flat continued to grow with "cozy homes" and mills springing up "as if by magic." In addition, there was not "a foot of ground for many miles but what has been located either as mines or for some other purpose connected with mining."[16]

Although mineral activity immediately adjacent to a town drew the most attention from local media, many central places exhibited what could be called the "imperial tendency." Every camp dreamed of becoming a great city that would serve as a funnel for a large "tributary hinterland." To that end, newspapers promoted any potentially lucrative strike in their nearby or distant hinterlands. Austin, which John J. Powell characterized as "the mother of the mining towns of Eastern Nevada," dreamed of integrating a large portion of central Nevada into its back country—until the ore ran out and the Central Pacific built its line to the north along the Humboldt.[17] But in 1863 Austin was booming, and its newspaper publicized any mineral discovery that might spawn a tributary district. In that year, the *Reveille* heralded the nearby Summit Mining District. Already, a San Francisco-based mining company, having received favorable results from ore assays, had begun planning roads to the mines, including one artery over the mountains to shorten by forty miles the trip to the Comstock. Even before the proposed town of Jackson had been platted, the editor reported that "water rights, wood privileges and arable soil of Pleasant Valley had all been located."[18]

Optimism mixed with fantasy to produce all kinds of grand predictions about how the sagebrush desert would be transformed by the power of gold and urbanization. New boom towns like Aurora bubbled with enthusiasm about their prospects, assuming that their bonanzas would be permanent. The local newspaper in 1863 predicted that Aurora was "destined to grow rapidly into a big city." Not only was it located "in the midst of a rich and extensive mining country," but it was a transshipment point for more distant districts. As the editor reasoned, the "Bodie and Excelsior Districts must look to us for supplies." Moreover, he prophesied that "the day is not far distant that will see it [Aurora] as large, if not larger than Virginia City is at this time." Obviously, the imagination of some local newspapers was unbounded. One Treasure City editor, in his zeal to portray the potential development of two outlying towns that were located in close proximity to each other, remarked that he "looked forward to the time at no great distance in the future when . . . Silver Spring and Swansea will be connected by a continuous street well lined with houses, the whole forming a large and populous mining town."[19]

The sheer excitement over settling a vast new land with unknown riches was infectious. In virtually every mining district, aggressive predictions emanated from editors convinced that their areas would become major economic

centers. In 1863, the *Reese River Reveille* printed unsubstantiated claims that from Austin to the Santa Fe District near Guadalajara was "one continuous mineral-bearing country." These exaggerations resulted from an optimism that pervaded the territory. Nevadans, like other westerners, seemed convinced that their state would host new bonanzas well into the next century. Typical was an 1875 Reno column, which, after reporting that the Dun Glen District was beginning to boom, concluded that "thorough prospecting every day adds new testimony to the truth . . . that there are more extensive hidden resources in Nevada than those thus far brought to light. There are more Comstocks and Eurekas."[20]

And there were, but linking these boom towns to Virginia City, Reno, and other transshipment points was essential to development. Indeed, roads were crucial to Virginia City's success as they were to that of Austin, Eureka, and other central places anchoring a system of mining towns and camps. As David Beito has recently demonstrated, more than one hundred turnpikes connected Nevada's towns, but stage and county roads as well as trails were also important in linking smaller points of activity.[21] Residents understood that the boom-bust cycle of mining made Nevada's urban frontier dynamic in the sense that substantial networks of mining towns could form almost overnight. Multiple districts and whole new counties often developed from a small group of mines, and they had to be connected quickly. In 1861, for instance, Humboldt City was the nucleus of what quickly became a system of numerous communities. As the local editor recounted two years later, "diverging from [that] point, we can now boast of having prospected the country for forty miles or more in all directions and settled several other towns and established permanently at least thirty other mining districts," encompassing an area of sixty miles along eastern and western boundaries. The outward thrust from the nucleus of a rush was necessarily rapid because additional ore deposits were usually found in nearby ranges.[22]

Roads were especially important to new boom camps anxious to establish transportation links with the Comstock and its feeder routes to California markets. In the early 1860s, towns serving the Humboldt mines a hundred miles northeast of Mount Davidson struggled to extend a toll road down to the Comstock. Thus in 1863, *The Humboldt Register* applauded the work of crews building a toll road connecting Peavine "and other mining regions in Washoe with Unionville." Local newspapers played a crucial role in encouraging tax-conscious residents to invest in the community's welfare. In 1863, the *Reese River Reveille*, anxious to see that the crucial new "emigrant road" reached Austin from the east, urged "the citizens of Austin who are interested in real estate to come forward and contribute toward the completion of the new road," reasoning that the townsite company had invested most of its money in building the grade to Jacobsville. It was now time, the editor declared, for residents, and especially lot owners who had earlier received their land as a donation, to re-

pay the company by making their contribution to the community's future.[23]

Repairs were as important as the original road construction. Frequently, local citizens had to pay some of the cost for subsequent maintenance. Everyone recognized that in a state largely devoid of navigable rivers, roads were vital to the movement of goods and people through urban networks. Thus, when a highway fell into disrepair, it immediately drew the attention of civic elites in affected towns. In 1868, the *White Pine News* urged the restoration of a toll road serving Treasure City. The amount would be only a few hundred dollars, the editor counseled, "a sum which in the shape of extra freights our merchants, millmen and mine owners will be obliged to pay many times over in the course of a few weeks" if the repairs were not made soon.[24]

Whether it was Treasure Hill and Hamilton or bigger centers like Reno, roads were crucial to the imperial goal of extending the city's hinterland as far as possible to provide optimal access for all points in the zone. In 1876, the *Reno Evening Gazette* reported that ranchers trying to transport herds to town had complained about impassable roads on both sides of the Truckee River during winter. Addressing his remarks openly to county commissioners, the editor insisted that "we want to exchange goods with everybody and must have roads." The community needed links to "all parts of the county." If the commissioners would simply build and repair the necessary roads and make the town "easy of access, then the prosperity of Reno, so often predicted, will become assured."[25]

Aside from using roads to improve connections to immediate hinterlands, urban leaders also saw them as an imperial tool to extend their town's control over larger areas. Young Reno with its convenient railroad connections was anxious to become the new hub for western Nevada, replacing Carson City and the Comstock towns as the major shipping center. Therefore, it was not surprising in 1876 when the local editor bemoaned the county commission's failure to repair the road to Susanville, California. Given this, he complained, "let us not wonder that Reno does not supply all the northern roads"; for this reason, "one hundred tons of freight have lain here waiting shipment." A fiscal conservative in the best western tradition, the editor agreed that "economy is a good thing for the county," but pointed out that "good roads are equally beneficial to trade."[26]

Closely related to improved roads was the desire for better mail service. Throughout the nineteenth century, urban communities in the West agitated for faster mail deliveries, and used that cause to buttress demands for more roads. In 1874, the *Belmont Courier* urged construction of a wagon road over the summit to Jefferson Valley because of the potential for mines there, but also because the route would shorten the distance between that city and Austin by eight miles. This improvement, the paper argued, would afford convenient "mail facilities for the ranchers living in Smoky Valley." Reinforcing this point was the newspaper's earlier castigation of the local stage company for consistently

delivering mail between Battle Mountain and Reveille late into the night. Clearly, local residents had leaked the news hoping that the bad press might embarrass the firm into keeping to its schedule.[27]

Along with demands for better roads and mail delivery were those for telegraphic communication. By 1861, the Overland Telegraph had crossed the territory near the old emigrant trail along the Humboldt River to connect Salt Lake with Virginia City-Gold Hill and eventually with San Francisco. By 1866, crews strung wires farther south to Austin and its satellites before proceeding on to Eureka and eventually White Pine, as the company raced to extend its wires to new, significant towns and their districts. In remote areas where discoveries of treasure could mean millions of dollars to western and eastern investors, the speedy communication of business news was important. As one columnist observed, Eureka received a railroad as well as a connection to the Atlantic and Pacific Telegraph in 1876, which enabled local businessmen and those in outlying camps to use the city as a center for sending messages to "all points on the Pacific Coast and the Eastern States."[28]

Connection to the nation's communications network was a sign of urban maturity and importance, and towns lacking the wires struggled frantically to get them. Occasionally, local editors made a personal effort to secure this asset for their communities. In 1874, the *Belmont Courier*'s editor spoke with the general superintendent of the Western Union Company in San Francisco about extending a line to Belmont from the Overland Telegraph to Austin, along stage roads. He even used his column to boost a local subscription drive for Belmont's share of the cost. The newspaper also proposed that a Western Union representative come to Belmont for negotiations in the hope that some local businessman or reader might invest capital to finance the project. The editor insisted on Western Union because, as he explained, small private telegraph companies such as Utah's Deseret Telegraph paid much higher interest rates to banks.[29]

Along with better roads, mail service, and communications, virtually every Nevada community wanted a railroad. The arrival of the iron horse not only meant easier access to distant markets for miners, farmers, and ranchers, but also a greater variety of goods on store shelves. In a typical advertisement, *The Elko Independent* reported in 1871 that, thanks to the nearby Central Pacific station, tinware could be sold in the city at "wholesale" and even lower "San Francisco" prices, and residents could buy oysters from the Atlantic or Pacific oceans.[30]

Even towns miles away from the Central Pacific's path reacted with excitement at the prospect of the rails approaching. As one Treasure City editor reported to his readers in 1869, along the whole "city front [of San Francisco] from Beale Street to North Point the wharves contain more or less iron awaiting shipment to Sacramento, en route for the far interior." His readers knew that construction of a fast transportation corridor connecting the East and West would reorient stage lines in Nevada, Utah, and Idaho. The editor asserted

that this east-west rail line soon would allow the cancellation of many east-west stage routes in northern Nevada and Utah, and permit equipment to be transferred to new north-south valley routes plugging into the Central Pacific communities of Lovelock, Carlin, Elko, and other points. As the *White Pine News* recognized, "the transfer of the stages from the old route via Jacob's Well, Fort Ruby, and Salt Lake to the short distance between the railroad termini, releases a large amount of stage stock and material . . . to be transferred by Wells Fargo & Co. to the route between the railroad and this city."[31]

Once towns actually obtained a station on the transcontinental line, their dreams of empire knew no bounds. Many watched with envy as Reno became the junction for the Bank of California's short line to Carson City and Virginia City, and listened to plans extending another railroad, the Carson and Colorado, in phases from the capital down the west side of the state to the Colorado River—a move that potentially could have diverted millions of dollars in future harvests, silver, and gold to Reno.

Boosters along the Central Pacific proposed similar schemes to stretch the power and influence of their own towns. To this end, their imagination knew no bounds. In 1881, a Battle Mountain editor predicted that his community "seemed destined during the next year to press itself into a preeminent position among the leading centers of the state." This prophesy rested upon the dubious assumption that the small Nevada Central Railroad, a short line from Battle Mountain to Austin, would be extended "during the next year" south to connect with the Southern Pacific near the Mexican border and with the Northern Pacific near the Canadian line. The traffic to justify this absurdity lay along the desert route, which, according to the editor, encompassed "the best and richest portions of Nevada which for stock, mineral, and agricultural pursuits cannot be excelled." Several years in the future he envisioned "great trunk branch railroads" running east and west through this north-south route to serve all portions of the intermountain West. Following these events, "the great western country lying between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean [would become] a resort for the railroad capitalists and adventurers."[32]

With the arrival of the Central Pacific at Elko in eastern Nevada, townsmen in the booming White Pine District to the south immediately saw the value of a fast-rail gateway to their area. The later effort to build a railroad between Elko and White Pine had its seeds in Treasure Hill's recognition of Elko's potential importance. As one White Pine column noted in 1869, "the new city [Elko] with a meaningless name, is rapidly rising in importance." Its function as the "present depot of the railroad for the White Pine trade" was supplemented by its role as "the resting place of thousands of travelers and the point of transshipment of a vast amount of freight."[33]

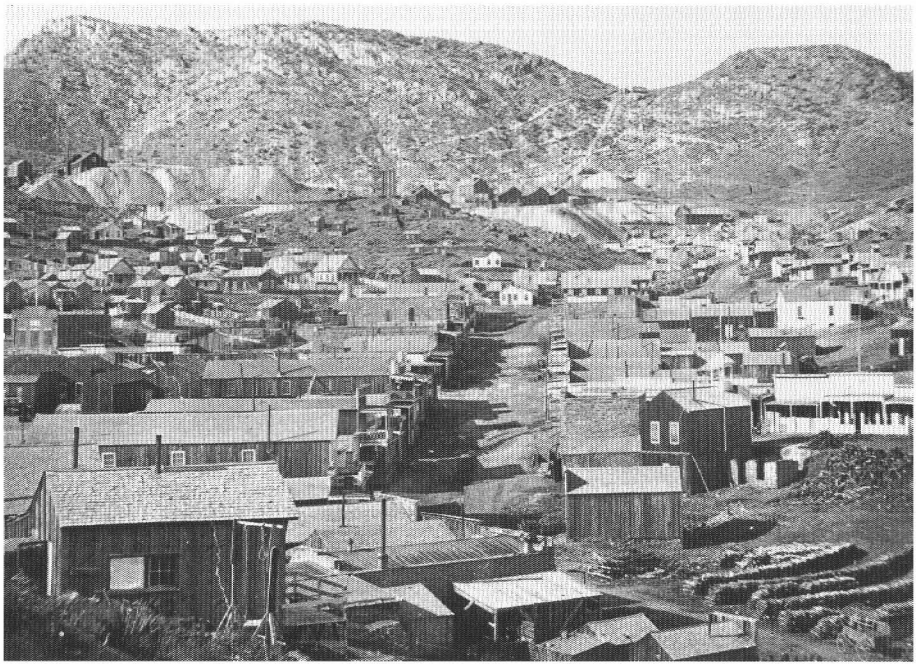
In Elko, plans to build a railroad south to tap eastern Nevada's rich supply of ore went first from the editorial stage to the next level in which town leaders held public meetings to discuss feasibility and strategy. In 1871, *The Elko Inde-*

pendent argued for a line from the town's Central Pacific station down to Hamilton and then Pioche to tap the treasures of eastern Nevada's mining regions. The editor observed that the area was in the midst of one of those "paroxysms" in which "each mining camp and cattle ranch . . . would have a railroad for the special accommodation of itself and its friends [and that] from Unionville on the west to Pioche on the east, railroads are projected in numbers that would appeal and terrify the stout-hearted capitalists in the nation." Having said that, the editor then suggested building just one line from—of all places—Elko to Pioche, arguing that Elko voters, using their "plainest instincts of self preservation," needed to support a bond issue and other financing to make their city the terminus.[34]

He warned of dangerous rivals acting first. Already promoters elsewhere had proposed a railroad to Pioche from Battle Mountain, Toano, and Gravelly Ford. But an Elko road would handle 80 percent of eastern Nevada's population. With one main line from Elko to Pioche, service to Palisade, Eureka, and Austin could be offered through branch connections, thereby making Eureka "and a dozen other districts . . . tributary to [the] main trunk" out of Elko. Not surprisingly, there was opposition from farmers in Elko's hinterland who opposed a bond issue to help lay the track. But, as one speaker noted at a public meeting on the issue, the railroad would raise county revenues by making now valueless land available. The trains would also "produce a demand for teaming that will far exceed the present business." There were also sophisticated arguments that touched on the relationships between cities and mines. As one man asked, "what would be the condition of San Francisco if it were not [for] the mines of this coast? . . . San Francisco benefited from being the great central point of the whole coast." Therefore, he reasoned, "placing ourselves relatively to San Francisco as to the mines [of White Pine] we are the commercial mart of eastern Nevada." Thus, if Elko outwitted its rivals and supported the railroad south to Pioche, "it would be the great central point of a vast mining country." Such a central point, he insisted, would encourage business to "center here all the manufacturing establishments that now supply us from the East and the West." But in the end, geography awarded Battle Mountain and Eureka the short lines, making Elko a big loser in the nineteenth-century race to tap distant boom towns with feeder roads.[35]

The railroads, like all imperial powers, also posed threats to local economies. Railroad towns like Battle Mountain were especially vulnerable to wholesale merchants based in San Francisco and Sacramento who cooperated with Nevada wholesalers in town to undersell local retailers. These discount prices threatened to bankrupt the small store owners that every town needed. In response, one Battle Mountain editor counseled wholesalers to "protect" retailers by refusing to sell directly to consumers at wholesale prices.[36]

While the Central Pacific helped Nevada by inducing some emigration, building new towns and speeding the movement of supplies, food, and raw materi-



Pioche, Nevada, prior to the time the "Million Dollar Courthouse" was built, c. 1870s *(Nevada Historical Society).*

Eureka Opera House, Eureka, Nevada, c. 1880s *(Nevada Historical Society).*

als, it also needlessly restricted the territory's growth. As in other western states and territories, railroad freight charges were a constant source of tension in Nevada. The Central Pacific literally blocked the development of big commercial cities by forcing merchants to pay freight charges to Sacramento and back. Reno's ambitions were particularly stifled by these policies. In 1875, the *Daily Nevada Democrat* protested that "merchants in Sacramento and San Francisco receive freight from the east for less money than those in Nevada, and the latter find it impossible to compete with the former in the wholesaling business." California merchants seemingly invaded Nevada, selling directly to townsmen or local retailers, often charging higher prices than in their own state. Worse still, the delay in receiving goods created unnecessary shortages across urban networks. The paper charged that "merchants in Reno, Carson, Gold Hill and Virginia are forced to wait—for weeks sometimes—for freight which has passed Reno and gone to Sacramento, until it is returned over the mountains and delivered to our local road."[37]

But complaints were not limited to the Comstock or even to towns along the Central Pacific line. Places such as Belmont, almost a hundred miles from its tracks, objected to the abuses that restricted northern Nevada's development. In 1874 the local editor denounced the Central Pacific, whose surcharges had grandfathered Sacramento in for a piece of all Nevada railroad commerce. In this case, he complained about how the company even exploited wool growers in the Humboldt Valley, forcing them to pay a phantom charge to Sacramento by sending their cargo west to that town when they were trying to ship their goods east to Chicago or New York.[38]

In addition to pushing for external improvements such as modern and reasonably priced transportation and communication with the outside world, urban newspapers also emphasized the need for improvements within their communities such as water systems, fire hydrants, and street grades. Columns championed these less spectacular reforms to help fashion a progressive image that would appeal to emigrants and investors. Because young mining towns often envisioned their prosperity as lasting forever, local editors promoted major projects with long-term benefits. Thus, in an 1869 column the *White Pine News* called for a modern water system, more fireproofed buildings, and properly graded "broad" streets to accommodate Treasure City's dense building patterns and heavy traffic. The assumption was that this community was no provisional city recently born and ready to die. As the editor warned, "Let none work on the suspicion that our prosperity is but temporary and therefore permit things to remain in the disordered manner of the present." Physical anarchy was anathema to "Treasure Hill [which] is, as its name implies, a storehouse of treasure and generations will pass away ere it is exhausted."[39]

On a desert mining frontier where surface water was relatively scarce, everyone recognized the importance of securing a pure and abundant supply. Town newspapers therefore boosted public works projects designed to tap dis-

tant aquifers and attract industry. In 1868, Treasure Hill laid plans to build a new water works from a distant creek up to the hillside town. The local editor predicted that, once finished, the new water works would "greatly add to the value and security of property in this town, besides reducing the cost of living, while it increases largely the health and comfort of the inhabitants."[40]

Some towns went a step further and emphasized not only the obvious advantages of health, consumption, and steam power capacity for running mines, mills, and locomotives, but also the increased opportunity to grow food. This was especially important in railroad towns like Reno, Carlin, and Battle Mountain, where abundant water teamed with a substantial Asian population to allow the planting of "Chinese gardens" that reduced the unwanted dependency on California produce. In 1881, one Battle Mountain column spoke of the "overplus" of water which was "being extensively used in the suburbs for irrigating purposes by which vegetables are raised to supply home consumption." Obviously, the town's proximity to the Humboldt River benefited the ranching industry with hay and water. This was crucial to hinterland development. As the local newspaper reported, "the ranges are being rapidly taken up and partially fenced where convenient"—an event which prompted the editor to boast that "better grazing for cattle and sheep cannot be found on the coast."[41]

In addition to these concerns, a reliable water supply was essential to fire protection. As the Sanborn maps of Nevada's nineteenth-century towns clearly illustrate, blocks upon blocks of wooden and canvas structures created a matchbox effect similar to the heavily-timbered forests of the Sierra, where flames, fanned by Nevada's persistent winds, could wipe out a community in minutes.[42] Boosters in every camp recognized the need to minimize the fire peril in order to attract new emigrants. Editorials touted fire hydrants, cisterns, wagons, and engines as signs of urban maturity. In 1877, the *Tybo Sun* trumpeted the installation of new fire hydrants and an extended water supply in town "to better accommodate their custom."[43]

Of course, the spectacular conflagrations in San Francisco, Sacramento, and other major cities in the years after the gold rush only heightened western concerns for safety. This was especially true after the great Chicago fire of 1871. Just days after the blaze, one Eureka editor called for the appointment of a fire commissioner "from among our leading men" to inspect stove pipes, stoves, and "everything that . . . might be the cause of fire." He also urged the erection of cisterns to supplement the town's new waterworks paid for by a subscription "to be circulated among our businessmen and others." All of this followed a fire in a shoe store above the town's main hotel that had resulted from a defective flue.[44]

Obviously, reliable water systems, good roads, and nearby railroads were all important to promoting continued urban development, but so were streets and street grades. During the Gilded Age, when wagons and horses still predominated on Nevada's frontier, paved thoroughfares were not a priority.

Street grades, however, were an issue, especially in mining towns like Silver City and Virginia City, where precipitous mountainside locations required a measure of planning for suburban extensions. Newspapers recognized that coordinated thoroughfares which allowed for relatively level building lots were essential to filling new real estate additions. In an 1863 column demanding that Virginia City authorities establish official street grades, one editor observed that he expected "a far greater suburban growth" than last year. He added that new buildings were "by no means confined to our principal streets [but] were nearly as important . . . on the outskirts as in the central portion of . . . town." For that reason, the establishment of grades in peripheral areas was important to save owners the unnecessary expense of moving their buildings later to conform with adjusted street levels.[45]

Like the Comstock towns, Treasure City sat near its mines on a steep, rocky slope that made street grading a nightmare. But landowners faced another, even more dangerous threat that pervaded new camps and often provoked violence. "Lot jumping" was the urban version of "claim jumping," and quickly became a popular pastime in Treasure City. In 1868, the local newspaper warned that the practice was "driving newcomers to Hamilton or Silver Spring where such acts are not permitted." The situation reached almost crisis proportions, as numerous squatters fenced off land they did not own, subdivided it, and began selling lots. Such actions, the editor insisted, clouded land titles, which could only inhibit urban development.[46]

While lot jumping plagued many Nevada communities, rowdiness afflicted them all. Although robbery and murder were rampant on the frontier, it was assault and battery that often drew the most comment. The barroom brawls and street fights which increasingly marred Nevada's reputation in the region were attributed to single male transplants from the golden state. In 1873 the *Gold Hill Daily News*, in a rare expression of disgust, bemoaned the "disgraceful record of Nevada crime," and charged that "most of those who are bringing this infamy upon Washoe and Esmeralda settlements are Californians." Nevada society, it suggested, needed "the conservative influence of pure, good women." The columnist lamented further that "males are far in excess here . . . the family is still wanting. Men live in restaurants and sleep in bunks. They feed on whiskey and that diet causes rowdyism."[47]

In addition, he blamed some of the social problems on a transplant population that felt no loyalty to the territory. He also charged that emigrants abhorred "a land which has no shadows but such as the mountains cast—a land whose stock vegetation is sagebrush: whose water is surcharged with alkalis [and] whose climate is a series of rushes from torrid to frigid." The people loved Nevada only "for its feet" of lodes and wealth. Other Washoe publications targeted poor emigrants from the East who flooded the Comstock looking for work. In 1876, one Reno newspaper bemoaned the migration of "tramps" from the East. In a typically biased vein, a column noted that "if the Celestial is

lawless and secretive, the white emigrant is without energy and pride." Conceding that just last winter "we were rejoicing at the tide of emigration . . . and saying that now at last this western slope would be settled and worked," it announced that the euphoria was over; too many sluggards had arrived. The same writer later suggested that the federal government should publish warnings about the region so that "eastern men are disabused of their absurd ideas" about the West. The "greener classes" need to know "that silver does not grow on the sagebrush and that bread is not given away in San Francisco."[48]

The growing number of people in the established cities, fledgling camps, and especially the boom towns caused a serious supply problem. While shortages of mining equipment, capital, and many consumer goods plagued the early stages of any mining community, food was a continuing major problem. Unlike California, early Nevada lacked the farmers and arable lands to feed its people. As Dean May has demonstrated, Nevada ultimately hosted a large number of agricultural hamlets, but not until the 1870s.[49] The problem was intensified by Nevada's distance from San Francisco, Sacramento, and Salt Lake City. New bonanza towns in particular faced the constant threat of shortages, which only drove up the cost of living. As one Austin editor noted in 1863, "the only universal want [here] is more supplies—more of everything, so prices will not eat us up." True, wagons poured into town daily from California and the Comstock, but he complained that deliveries "only keep pace with the actual necessities, leaving no margin for abundance." In their efforts to lower the cost of living, vigilant editors often published prices and compared them with other major districts. This was especially true of new towns that were concerned about inflation deflecting prospective residents elsewhere. Thus in 1868, the *White Pine News* reported that drygoods, fuse, powder, and other items sold locally "at but a moderate advance on Austin prices."[50]

With food in such short supply across the early Great Basin, major towns struggled to divert to their districts the flow of vegetables and other crops. One strategy encouraged California farmers to sell in Nevada. In the Reese River Mining District, Austin (and its surrounding towns and their districts) were growing so fast in 1863 that food shortages were becoming a serious problem. The *Reese River Reveille* actually listed the prices of goods in town and then urged California farmers, "who are almost giving away their produce at home for want of a market," to sell in Nevada. Several weeks later, the editor again appealed to golden state farmers, knowing that copies of his newspaper regularly circulated across the Sierra to California's central valley towns. A few days earlier, he reported that a wagonload of vegetables and onions from Sacramento had finally arrived and quickly brought between 18 and 37 cents per pound. His conclusion was obvious: certainly, this was a freight that paid well since the vegetables "could not have cost over 3 cents per pound in California."[51]

There were also efforts to convince farmers to leave the golden state for Ne-

vada to be closer to more profitable markets. In 1868, one Treasure City editor actually praised nearby Clover Valley, where many of the current farmers were former California Civil War volunteers under General Patrick Connor. The valley's location along the new Central Pacific line would award it "direct communication with the great cities of both the Atlantic and Pacific" coasts, providing its inhabitants with "a choice of markets in which to purchase their supplies." Moreover, the rich gold and silver mines hugging the mountains all around, "gives [Clover Valley farmers] the best markets for the sale of their produce." As a result, he predicted that Clover Valley "will soon be thickly settled and become the garden of the state." Without a doubt, he concluded, "few valleys in California offer greater inducements to settlers than Clover Valley."[52]

Along with food, the shortage of capital was a serious cause for concern, as several hundred mining camps competed for loan money in the 1860s and 1870s. Mining stocks were often the barometer by which investors judged districts. When prices were high, local columnists cited them as proof that earlier booster claims were merely statements of fact. In 1872, the *Ely Record* observed that the recent rise of local stocks was "not due to the talked-up wildcat, but to the actual merit of the rock." Similarly, the *Tuscarora Times and Mining Review* reported in 1883 that local gold stocks continued to "hold their own," and that one of the town's "former solid men" had returned and was "scanning the business horizon."[53]

But there were also many financial problems. As early as the Civil War, widespread investor losses on Comstock mining shares in San Francisco's stock market had to be addressed and if possible discounted. Overspeculation was the great bane of the Comstock, and the town editors spared no effort in denouncing its destructive effects upon their district's development. In January 1864, the *Gold Hill Daily News* reported how the San Francisco papers have long bemoaned "the mania with which the people of that deluded city have been afflicted by buying wildcat stock in the mines of this country." He then noted that "Montgomery Street miners" have struck water and abandoned their claims. But before they did, "wildcat had taken possession of the pocket and brains of thousands, . . . each expecting that he had a thing a little better than the Gould & Curry."[54]

The problem in Nevada was not limited to the Comstock. One hundred miles to the south, the former boomtown of Aurora was in the doldrums in 1863 after "sharpers" sold many worthless mining stocks to naïve investors. As one writer put it, "the cry of 'wildcat' was raised and timid men of capital became frightened." But three years later he could report that "the ghost of swindled capitalists has been at last exorcised [from Aurora]—banished to Reese River or somewhere else." Across Nevada the sale of worthless mining stocks continued to damage the territory's reputation in financial circles. One Ruby Hill editor complained: "To place a valueless mine in the East is not only a damage to the

investor, but it is a lasting black mark against the district." And, he warned, "some very good camps have been injured by the sale of a single mine of little value."[55]

Even small fluctuations or temporary declines in stock could divert capital elsewhere and doom a camp. So when markets fell, rather than concede a lack of valuable local ore, newspapers blamed the spirit of wildcat. In 1860, one Virginia City editor blasted the "wildcatters," who sold valueless mines to claim buyers and then "return to California and curse the [Washoe] county and spend their ill-gotten gains on riotous living." Some urban editors blamed not only speculation but the stock markets themselves. To be sure, not every district wanted a mining stock exchange. One Treasure Hill editor voiced the concerns of many when he insisted that "the experience at Virginia . . . and other mining towns has clearly proven the baneful effects of stock boards upon the mining interests." The wildcat pressure, he warned, tends to create a bull market forcing many sales. Too often the end was not to earn a tidy profit for the owner, but rather a good commission for the broker. Not only did this flurry of unnecessary speculative sales hurt legitimate brokers, but also "destroys the value of mines by glutting the market." He concluded that San Francisco and New York had stock boards "where our White Pine stocks will be gambled." Since they were "at a distance . . . we may possibly survive the consequences." But an exchange "established directly under our noses" would bring the "destruction of our mining interests with railroad speed."[56]

Everyone knew the rate of return was crucial. In 1881, one Battle Mountain editor proclaimed that "what we want are more capital and energy—men who are not afraid of a dollar to locate with us." He then predicted that whether they invested in Battle Mountain mining "or any other branch of industry," they would make "at least 20 percent on the capital invested." Local town newspapers did everything to boost surrounding mines and always portrayed capital as the panacea for development. After predicting a promising future for the new Jenny Lynch Mine in 1871, the *Eureka Daily Sentinel* boldly asserted that if the district got "more prospectors, more work, more furnaces, and mills [its] product [would] be doubled in a short time."[57]

At times the media in central places blamed complacency within the district for sluggish growth. At the Humboldt mines, for instance, despite the initial success of these shafts, residents were impatient for development. The local newspaper complained in 1863: "many ledges are found but only a few are prospected." The editor preferred to see tons of ore and not just high grade specimens. He dreamed of increased population and capital infusions, rather than a lot of six-foot caves with prospectors sitting outside waiting for a buyer.[58]

Smaller towns continued to suffer from inadequate milling facilities. The same Humboldt editor lamented, "lack of mills is keeping back a great deal more work than people think . . . . We all know of a great deal of work that should be done . . . if there were mills here to work the rock." Local men "own-

ing in the best ledges have not the money for the erection of a mill," so they could not easily mine their ledges. But outside capitalists with the resources would not invest in mills until they saw more output—a common dilemma that beset mining districts across the West.[59]

Sometimes opinion makers in the larger towns promoted local efforts to jumpstart production to a level that eventually would prove an area's value to distant investors. In 1863, for instance, *The Humboldt Register* reported that a company intending to build a mill in nearby Buena Vista Canyon could not raise the funds. The editor conceded that "it is useless to depend entirely upon foreign capital. We must help ourselves." "It is true," he admitted, that "we are poor in money, but we have property which represents value." He then suggested a scheme by which, in return for stock, one local person might donate a building site and the prospectors could contribute a portion of their mine claims to a milling company. He concluded that all of these moves would prove their worth once the mill was built and the ore crushed.[60] But financing proved to be a formidable hurdle for many districts in Nevada, especially after the many speculative frauds on the Comstock had cost so many investors their money.

Of course, this problem was not limited to the Humboldt mines. Lack of mills also plagued the nascent White Pine District. In 1868, one writer reported that dumps on nearby Chloride Flat were "nearly all so piled up with ore as to interfere with the successful working of those mines." This resulted from "the fact that no sufficient means of reducing ores can be obtained within a reasonable distance." To promote their towns and industries, local newspapers were quick to identify problems, suggest solutions, and report progress on key issues or initiatives. Milling was no exception. In 1871, *The Elko Independent* encouraged Chicago capitalists to proceed with construction plans for a giant separating mill. The editor noted that Nevada's smelting business was "in a crude state" with capital only available to build furnaces. Since large capitalists had not yet "engaged in the separating business," the result was that "our smelters are obliged to ship their bullion for separation and wait 60 to 90 days for returns, their furnaces standing idle meanwhile." The editor then predicted that if Chicago capitalists implemented plans to build a large separator for eastern Nevada ores, it would "secure to Chicago not only a large trade in those articles but also an extensive trade in the way of supplies."[61]

The greatest danger of all was exhaustion of deposits. No amount of migration or capital infusions could save a camp from this peril. While former California gold towns like Placerville and Marysville could survive by diversifying their economies with farming, ranching, and even fruit growing, this was not possible for many places in the arid Great Basin. Urban editors sought to combat the problem by encouraging residents to ease their dependency upon gold and silver by locating other metals of value. In 1863, the *Reese River Reveille* trumpeted the discovery of lime deposits, which kilns could convert into valuable supplies for nearby Canyon City and Jacobsville as well as for Vir-

ginia City and Dayton. Since the lime's quality appeared to be "considerably superior to anything . . . in the region," Austin, with additional kilns, could ship to markets as far away as the Sierra Nevada. The *Reveille* and other papers often portrayed the West as a region whose diverse resources held the potential seeds for a dizzying variety of new products just waiting to be developed.[62]

In the 1860s, Nevada's wide range of metals included a number for which there was as yet no practical industrial application. Magnesium, titanium, and compounds such as barite and perlite lined the state's hills but were not ordinarily the subject of demand sufficient to finance their extraction. Still, the ongoing industrial revolution, along with pathbreaking research in applied chemistry, inspired hope that Nevada's other minerals would someday become valuable as raw materials. Progress in the field of electrical power buoyed these hopes. Following development of the direct current and alternate current generators by Thomas Edison, George Westinghouse, and Nicoli Tesla in 1879-80, copper became an important raw material for the manufacture of insulated wire.

But even before this breakthrough, Nevada town editors combed scientific treatises and especially the *Mining and Scientific Press* seeking new industrial uses for local minerals with abundant nearby deposits. In 1876, the *Reno Evening Gazette* urged the mining of antimony because it was now in demand for electroplating and as a coating and hardening agent in many industries. A few editors went to great lengths in their quest for a wonder metal or compound. Some even looked to the clay surface of the Great Basin itself, and dreamed of someday mining the state's endless supply of alkali for hefty profits. If only the desert could be made to pay, Nevada would possess a resource as great as the fertile floors that transformed California into America's Eden. Typical of this thinking was an 1881 column that touted alkali mining. An exuberant Battle Mountain editor in 1881 reported that carloads were headed east because industry had developed new applications for lime, salt, borax, potassium, and other minerals abundant in central Nevada's deserts. He announced that potassium compounds were now valuable because "the objectionable compounds can be changed by chemical process into that which is available for plant life." He further predicted that these and other scientific discoveries would soon enrich the entire state. But this optimism proved to be excessive. Nevertheless, he declared that the "alkali beds of Nevada [are] among her most valuable possessions."[63]

Of course, investors and local residents became anxious once their ore began to peter out. Nothing damaged a new mining district's vulnerable reputation more than news of abandoned mines. Editors had to react quickly to shore up a town's image. In 1863, after several mine owners deserted their empty shafts, the *Reese River Reveille* reassured everyone that while some mines may have failed, most were still producing. The editor reminded his readers that "we [in Austin] are now like the original owners of the Comstock were—have

no idea how rich our mines may be." He followed this up with a barrage of boasts and predictions glorifying the wealth of Reese River's mines. The mines' productivity would spawn more urbanization at the district's center and especially on the periphery. For "the metropolis of all these discoveries is Austin. Here travel to and from them centers, and each of them [the mining districts] depend upon this market for their goods and other supplies."[64]

On a related front, when some distant corporation threatened to close a local mine prematurely or even worse threatened to defraud its miners as well, editorial rancor knew no bounds. Thus in 1883, when Wells Fargo sent an agent to Tuscarora to shut down its newly purchased mine that had many miners' liens against it, the local editor warned that if the agent's "mission is of a warlike nature . . . [he should know] that the bottom of the Star shaft is 600 feet from the surface and the bottom very hard."[65]

Even in still productive districts, any event that tarnished a locale's public status, drew the wrath of the local press. In 1869, Treasure City's *White Pine News* berated Senator William Stewart for securing a postal contract to deliver mail from Reese River to nearby Hamilton rather than Treasure City. The outraged editor charged that "this is a very stupid way of letting a contract . . . in not extending service to this city by far the largest and most important place in this section of the state." And, he angrily predicted, "the rapid rise of our city . . . with its six thousand inhabitants, immense business and rapid increase will no longer be ignored."[66]

The scolding of Senator Stewart illustrates the curious place of politics in mining camp newspapers. Aside from the obvious importance of local elections, political coverage largely revolved around issues dealing with the mines. Duane Smith documented this phenomenon years ago, quoting the words of one Colorado editor: "we don't believe that our mission is to make or unmake nations, hence [we] shall not dabble in politics." In Nevada there were certainly exceptions to this rule, but, for the most part, columns mostly reflected the nonpolitical interests of a mining community. However, when politics threatened mining profits, it drew emotional responses in the mining camps. In addition to biennial legislative and gubernatorial elections, certain statewide issues captured the public's attention. Perhaps the most controversial question in Nevada's early political history was whether to tax the mines as real estate or the gross or net proceeds of the mines. This debate, which swirled around ratification of the first and second Nevada constitutions, pitted the mining interests against farmers and other groups. The issue also arose later during 1875-78 when L. R. Bradley, a rancher, and his coalition of nonmining groups tried to force a tax on gross profits.[67]

The mining towns favored taxing only the net profits of mines. In 1863, the *Aurora Daily Times* argued against a constitutional provision to tax the gross proceeds, declaring that it would "cripple the resources of the country." It then reminded voters that taxing the mines in California would have allowed the

legislators "to plunge the state into all sorts of extravagance [because] the burden of taxation would not fall on the shoulders of their [rancher and farmer] constituents." In particular, the editor denounced the San Francisco newspapers that were "getting rich by the way of Nevada mining notices supporting a gross proceeds tax in this territory." Contending that California's indebtedness resulted not from lack of mine taxation but rather from "extravagant legislation . . . thieving local bills, rotten bulkhead schemes, and . . . rascally franchises," he bemoaned the danger of overtaxing the mines. If Nevada passed a mining tax filling the state coffers with gold, the editor declared, then every year a "vast crowd of hungry, office-seeking, money-making politicians, called members of the Legislature, would assemble at the capital to pull and draw upon the money bags until the last dollar had been extracted." The lesson was clear: low taxes would impose fiscal responsibility upon officeholders.[68]

Editors responded angrily to San Francisco newspapers that had the temerity to recommend higher taxation of mines because many Nevadans nursed bitter feelings about the state's dependency upon California investors and the substantial flow of wealth out of the Comstock and other districts and into the pockets of Californians. In 1877, one Reno editor opposed efforts to repeal the current bullion tax, claiming that "the mines of this state are its poorest possession," because the only money that stayed in Nevada was miners' wages. In an obvious reference to the flow of mining profits to California, he suggested somewhat sarcastically that "if there are palaces to build in San Francisco, our net proceeds will build them."[69]

County politics also raised the colors in more than one community. Aside from the usual debates over taxes and favoritism in spending, most conflict centered around the designation of county seats. In mining regions where boom-bust fluctuations could enthrone or vanquish a town virtually overnight, the contest to obtain or usurp a county seat was often a heated affair. After all, a lot was at stake: aside from the status of hosting the county commissioners, the government itself and the accompanying courts, attorneys' offices, fees, and supply orders were valuable ancillaries for one-industry towns.

Lander County was an especially volatile place because its original size was very large and thus encompassed many valuable districts. In 1863, after endorsing a vote for statehood, the *Reese River Reveille* reminded Austin residents of their duty to decide if the Lander County seat should remain at Jacobsville or be removed to Austin. The latter won the seat, much to the *Reveille*'s delight. But trouble began anew when prospectors hit a major lode at Treasure Hill. In Carson City, Austin supporters quietly opposed efforts to create a new county, hoping to milk the hill for tax revenues while also retaining the seat at Austin. This drew the wrath of the nascent *White Pine News*. In 1869, the newspaper charged that Austin wanted the five thousand White Pine residents then living in the extreme eastern section of Lander County to help pay off an indebtedness largely incurred by the western towns. Why, the editor asked, should "five

thousand people . . . in White Pine be inconvenienced because a few others oppose the measure [for the new county] or because they sign petitions twice over?" Let us, he suggested, circulate our own petition for county division "to counteract the spurious one got up" in Austin and other older towns in western Lander County.[70]

On a frontier where whites were busy decoding the Indian wilderness by creating arbitrary political units and recoding each place with an American designation, names themselves became the subject of controversy. Thus in 1868, in a debate reminiscent of the earlier, protracted struggle over whether to name the state Nevada, Treasure City opposed calling the new eastern Nevada county "Ruby" in honor of Ruby Valley, because it and other cities did not want the county named for a rival. Moreover, as one local editor noted with some sarcasm, if Ruby Valley really was a treasure trove, it might obtain its own county someday, and then would be glad to have the name "Ruby" still available. Treasure City wanted to dub the county "White Pine," because, as one local writer boasted, "it is already familiarized to the ears of millions of people [and] is talked of in financial and commercial circles of New York, London, Paris, and St. Petersburg and will soon be associated with, if it does not overshadow . . . Washoe . . . and other famous mining localities."[71]

National politics sometimes intersected mining interests, too. Aside from the usual partisanship that political organs displayed for or against a particular party during congressional and presidential campaigns, there were some issues of transcendent concern. Nevada's newspapers, for the most part, opposed what they considered the antisilver policies of the federal government. In the mid-1870s, with the Comstock about to begin its slow decline, local editors began to express increased concern about federal monetary policy. It was not so much the Panic of 1873 that engaged interest but rather the Crime of '73, which demonetized silver. One Reno columnist warned in 1876 that if silver's "former commercial value be not restored, silver mining on the Comstock itself will be totally suspended." Not wanting to see Reno left with a hinterland full of ghost towns, he predicted that "property in Virginia City will be as valueless as four years ago . . . at American Flat." Other editors—at least in the 1870s—were more conciliatory. The *Eureka Daily Sentinel*, for instance, cautioned against an early panic over slumping silver prices but blistered the "fossilized Democratic politicians" who opposed the Resumption Act and supported greenbacks that would only "drive gold from our shores." However, by 1886, with the state in the midst of a staggering depression, there was hardly an editor who did not support the Silver Party. Some urban newspapers, including the *Sentinel*, were so concerned about the need to remonetize silver that they published daily columns on the issue in the mid-1880s.[72] To be sure, by 1896, the uproar continued in crescendo until William McKinley defeated William Jennings Bryan and then won the Spanish-American War so quickly that there was no chance to re-mint silver.[73]

Newspapers were more than mere promoters of new towns. They were a new community's window on the world, providing readers with vital information about national news, markets, industry trends, and the fortunes of rival districts. These daily, weekly, and tri-weekly journals also served their home communities by identifying local needs, anticipating future problems, and then employing their agenda-setting powers to initiate action. Newspapers used their circulation beyond the home district to seek workers, wives for workers, investors, turnpikes, railroads, and even food to nurture development of their communities. When appropriate, newspapers also educated their readers about political developments by placing issues in the context of mining interests. But most of all, for the towns and districts on Nevada's nineteenth-century mining frontier as well as for Russell Elliott's twentieth-century cities, newspapers reassured townspeople that the community they were devoting a part of their lives to building was worth the effort. This was the real value of promoting the assets, accomplishments, and potential of mining camps. As *White Pine News* editors W. H. Pitchford and Robert Simpson pointed out in their first edition, published at Treasure City in December 1868, "in the colonizing of a new and remote district," a newspaper must be "aware of the efficient it renders in the diffusion of practical ideas and in promoting the varied interests of the new and rising community."[74]

NOTES

[1]The quotation in the title is from *White Pine News*, 26 December 1868.

[2]Russell Elliott, *Nevada's Twentieth-Century Mining Boom: Tonopah, Goldfield, Ely* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1966), 79; for the Goldfield labor wars, see also Sally Zanjani and Guy Louis Rocha, *The Ignoble Conspiracy: Radicalism on Trial in Nevada* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1986), *passim*; Richard C. Wade, *The Urban Frontier: Pioneer Life in Early Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Lexington, Louisville, and St. Louis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964 ed.), 130; Duane A. Smith, *Rocky Mountain Mining Camps, The Urban Frontier* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967), 68; Barbara Cloud, *The Business of Newspapers on the Western Frontier* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1992), 3.

[3]Eugene P. Moehring, "The Comstock Urban Network," *Pacific Historical Review*, 66 (August 1997), 337-62.

[4]For an authoritative history of Nevada's newspapers, see Richard E. Lingenfelter and Karen Rix Gash, *The Newspapers of Nevada, A History and Bibliography, 1854-1879* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1984), and Jake Highton, *Nevada Newspaper Days: A History of Journalism in the Silver State* (Stockton: Heritage West Books, 1990).

[5]See, for instance, Ronald M. James, *The Roar and the Silence: A History of Virginia City and the Comstock Lode* (Reno and Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 1998); Donald Abbe, *Austin and the Reese River Mining District: Nevada's Forgotten Frontier* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1985); James Hulse, *Lincoln County, Nevada: The History of a Mining Region* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1971); Barbara Cloud, "Images of Women in the Mining-Camp Press," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 36 (Fall 1993), 194-207; Wilbur S. Shepperson, *Restless Strangers: Nevada's Immigrants and Their Interpreters* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1970); Michael S. Coray, "'Democracy' on the Frontier: A Case Study of Nevada Editorial Attitudes on the Issue of Nonwhite Equality," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 21 (Fall 1978), 189-204; Russell M. Magnaghi, "Virginia City's Chinese Community, 1860-1880," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 24 (Summer 1981), 130-57.

[6]Eugene P. Moehring, "The Civil War and Town Founding in the Intermountain West", *Western Historical Quarterly*, 28 (Autumn 1997), 334-39.

[7]*The Humboldt Register*, 16 May 1863.

[8]*Gold Hill Daily News*, 2 January 1864, 12 October 1863.

[9]*Aurora Daily Times*, 28 November 1863.

[10]*Reese River Reveille*, 30 May 1863.

[11]*White Pine News*, 13 February 1869.

[12]*Ibid.*, 27 March 1869.

[13]*Eureka Daily Sentinel*, 23 May 1871.

[14]*The Ely Record* [Pioche], 1 September 1872; *The Humboldt Register*, 23 May 1863.

[15]*The Grantsville Bonanza*, 7 May 1881, excerpted from the *Carson Morning Appeal*.

[16]*Gold Hill Daily News*, 8 January 1864, 6 January 1864.

[17]John J. Powell, *Nevada: The Land of Silver* (San Francisco: Bacon & Company, Printers, 1876), 244. Even Carson City hoped to secure rich adjacent mines; see *Nevada State Journal*, 16 May 1866.

[18]*Reese River Reveille*, 1 July 1863; 4 July 1863.

[19]*Aurora Daily Times*, 9 December 1863; *White Pine News*, 30 January 1869.

[20]*Reese River Reveille*, 15 July 1863; *The Daily Nevada Democrat* [Reno], 30 June 1875.

[21]David Beito and Linda Royster Beito, "Rival Road Builders: Private Toll Roads in Nevada, 1852-1880," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 41 (Summer 1998), 71-91.

[22]*The Humboldt Register*, 2 May 1863.

[23]*Ibid.*, 23 May 1863; *Reese River Reveille*, 11 July 1863.

[24]*White Pine News*, 26 December 1868.

[25]*Reno Evening Gazette*, 26 March 1876.

[26]*Ibid.*, 6 April 1876.

[27]*Belmont Courier*, 14 March 1874.

[28]*Nevada State Journal*, 15 May 1866; *Eureka Daily Sentinel*, 5 February 1876.

[29]*Belmont Courier*, 21 February 1874.

[30]*The Elko Independent*, 7 January 1871.
[31]*White Pine News*, 5 April 1869.
[32]*Battle Mountain Weekly Messenger*, 25 June 1881.
[33]*White Pine News*, 3 April 1869.
[34]*The Elko Independent*, 14 January 1871.
[35]*Ibid.*
[36]*Battle Mountain Weekly Messenger*, 27 July 1881.
[37]*Daily Nevada Democrat* [Reno], 8 July 1875.
[38]*Belmont Courier*, 14 March 1874.
[39]*Ibid.*, 21 February 1874.
[40]*White Pine News*, 26 December 1868.
[41]*Battle Mountain Weekly Messenger*, 25 June 1881.
[42]Sanborn Map Company, *Nevada Maps: Cities & Towns, 1885-1906* (San Pablo, California: Vlad Shkurkin, 1979); for Reno, see pp. 1-5.
[43]*Tybo Sun*, 22 September 1877.
[44]*Eureka Daily Sentinel*, 13 October 1871.
[45]*Daily Territorial Enterprise* [Virginia City], 31 March 1863.
[46]*White Pine News*, 23 January 1869.
[47]*Gold Hill Daily News*, 14 October 1863.
[48]*Ibid.*; *Reno Evening Gazette*, 15 April 1876.
[49]Dean May, *Three Frontiers: Family, Land, and Society in the American West, 1850-1900* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 85, 90-97.
[50]*Reese River Reveille*, 9 September 1863; *White Pine News*, 26 December 1868.
[51]*Reese River Reveille*, 30 May 1863, 15 July 1863. Mormon wagons laden with food traveled from Salt Lake City to Austin; see *Virginia Daily Union*, 6 July 1864.
[52]*White Pine News*, 16 January 1869.
[53]*Ely Record* [Pioche], 6 September 1872; *Tuscarora Times and Mining Review*, 7 March 1883.
[54]*Gold Hill Daily News*, 5 January 1864.
[55]*Aurora Daily Times*, 11 December 1863; *Mining News* [Ruby Hill], 30 October 1880.
[56]*Territorial Enterprise* [Carson City], 28 April 1860; *White Pine News*, 16 January 1869.
[57]*Battle Mountain Weekly Messenger*, 25 June 1881; *Eureka Daily Sentinel*, 23 May 1871.
[58]*The Humboldt Register*, 2 May 1863.
[59]*Ibid.*, 12 September 1863; 23 August 1863.
[60]*Ibid.*, 12 September 1863.
[61]*White Pine News*, 30 January 1869; *The Elko Independent*, 7 January 1871.
[62]*Reese River Reveille*, 27 June 1863.
[63]*Reno Evening Gazette*, 29 May 1876; *Battle Mountain Weekly Messenger*, 3 August 1881.
[64]*Reese River Reveille*, 12 August 1863.
[65]*Tuscarora Times and Mining Review*, 5 March 1883.
[66]*White Pine News*, 27 March 1869.
[67]Smith, *Rocky Mountain Mining Camps*, 66.
[68]*Aurora Daily Times*, 30 November 1863.
[69]*Reno Evening Gazette*, 2 January 1877.
[70]*Reese River Reveille*, 18 July 1863; *White Pine News*, 30 January 1869.
[71]*White Pine News*, 26 December 1868.
[72]*Reno Evening Gazette*, 8 April 1876; *Eureka Daily Sentinel*, 3 March 1876; see the *Sentinel* for the two weeks prior to the November 1886 presidential election.
[73]Mary Ellen Glass, *Silver and Politics in Nevada, 1892-1902* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1969); Joseph A. Fry, "Silver and Sentiment: The Nevada Press and the Coming of the Spanish-American War," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 20 (Winter 1977), 234.
[74]Lingenfelter and Gash, *Newspapers of Nevada*, 246.

BILL STEWART'S LAST HURRAH
Bullfrog County, 1906-1909

Phillip I. Earl

Although the lore and legend of the American West is replete with stagecoach robberies, bank heists, train jobs, Indian troubles, and bloody exchanges between rancher and settler, the bitter rivalries over the location of state capitals, state institutions, and county seats also created formidable squabbles.[1]

A state capital meant construction of buildings, employment for residents, supplies and services from local merchants, customers for saloons and hotels, and, above all, an annual or biennial meeting of the state legislature that would bring hordes of lawmakers, lobbyists and other free-spending hangers-on. Since there could be only one state capital and a limited number of state agencies, county seats acquired a status that was perceived to benefit a community as much as the state seat of government might boost the prospects of a town. There was also a significant element of local patriotism and boosterism in county seat fights, as well as a realization that success might well compensate for possible economic decay in the future.[2]

In most states, the location of county seats was left to the voters, but Nevada was an exception. The legislative act of November 29, 1861 which established the first counties of Nevada Territory also designated the seats of county government.[3] The law was written and pushed through the legislature by William Morris Stewart, mining attorney, a member of the Legislative Council and a resident of Carson City. According to his memoirs, Stewart consulted with representatives of various electoral districts and set up county boundaries and county seats as they wished in exchange for their votes designating Carson City as the state capital. He later had some regrets: "The four counties of Ormsby, Storey, Lyon and Douglas are so near together that a horse and buggy can be driven to each of the four county seats in half a day," he reminisced, "and the expense of carrying on so many county governments is a great burden upon

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the people and upon the State. It is hoped that the time may come when the people themselves will arrange the counties and the county boundaries in spite of the official cliques that live about the court-houses."[4]

As mining, agricultural, ranching, and transportation frontiers expanded in subsequent years, the original nine counties were subdivided and new county seats designated by legislative act. Substantial internal economic developments within the various counties led to movements to relocate county seats and realign boundaries. Of the seventeen Nevada communities presently maintaining a county seat, all but four—Elko, Eureka, Carson City, and Virginia City—gained the distinction only after a struggle with citizens of the original county seat or a contest with other towns. Only two original seats have never faced a challenge to their status, Carson City and Virginia City. Thirty of Nevada's communities are present or past county seats, and there have been sixteen county seat shifts and eight new counties created since 1861.[5]

Among the many county seat and county division campaigns which failed was an attempt to create a new political entity, Bullfrog County, out of that portion of Nye County lying south of the Mt. Diablo Baseline. Nye County was created by legislative act on February 16, 1864 from a portion of Esmeralda County and the county seat was established at Ione. On March 9, 1865, half a degree of longitude was ceded back to Esmeralda County and Lincoln County was carved out of Nye County on February 26, 1866. On March 1, 1866, Governor Henry G. Blasdel signed an act extending the boundaries of Nye and Lincoln counties into an area soon to be added to the State of Nevada from the Utah and Arizona Territories. The act was signed by President Andrew Johnson on May 5, 1866 and was accepted by legislative resolution in Carson City on January 18, 1867, although Nevada's constitution was not amended at that time to reflect the new state boundaries. Because of this omission, officials of the Arizona Territory did not recognize the cession until 1871 when the County of Pah-Ute was formally dissolved. Due to changes in the location of major mining activities in Nye County, the legislature moved the county seat from Ione to Belmont on February 6, 1867. A legislative act signed into law on March 5, 1869 made some minor adjustments in the boundaries of Nye County with respect to Churchill and Esmeralda counties and the boundary was altered again in 1875 when Governor Lewis Rice Bradley signed a legislative act annexing a portion of Nye County to Lincoln County on February 20. Six days later, the boundaries between Nye, Esmeralda and Churchill counties were once again redefined and another portion of Nye County was annexed to White Pine County. These boundaries remained intact thereafter, but the county seat of Nye County was moved from Belmont to Tonopah by legislative act on February 5, 1905.[6]

Tonopah had been established on the west flank of the San Antonio Range following the initial mineral discoveries in the area by James Logan Butler in May 1900. Two years later, Harry Stimler and William Marsh opened up a sec-

ond rich mining area at Columbia Mountain, twenty miles south of Tonopah, and the community of Goldfield was platted in September 1903. The Goldfield boom was hardly under way when a third major strike, on the edge of Death Valley in southern Nye County, was made by Frank "Shorty" Harris and Ernest Cross in August 1904. This strike was to become the nucleus of the Bullfrog Mining District.[7]

The Bullfrog District was established in September 1904, with W.G. Ladd elected recorder. Among the first big locators in the area was H.H. Clark of Goldfield, who acquired twenty-three claims in September and October. Clark and other Goldfield capitalists incorporated the Bullfrog Mining Company a few days later and established the camp of Amargosa. Thirty-five lots had been sold by the last week in October and two saloons and a general store established. The Bullfrog Mining Company had sixteen men doing location work and surveying properties by the first week of November and the total population of the district was estimated at about three hundred by that time. Amargosa continued to boom and seemed well on the way to becoming the district's leading camp until Sam Lindsay, George Welch, and Joe Nethberry established the townsite of Bullfrog three miles to the east in December.[8]

Some two thousand men were prospecting and working on locations in the Bullfrog District by January 1905 and a third community, Rhyolite, had been laid out. Although Amargosa and Bullfrog continued to boom, Rhyolite soon became the district's most populous and prosperous camp because of its location nearer to the more productive mines. A correspondent for the *Tonopah Bonanza* reported on March 11 that Rhyolite had a population of four hundred. Corner lots were going for $1,000, he wrote, and three frame buildings were already up. The principal businessmen of the camp were requesting mail service, he reported, and making application to the Nye County Board of Commissioners for appointment of a Justice of the Peace and a Constable. There was also talk of launching a telephone and telegraph system, the newsman was told, and several men were organizing a stageline to Goldfield.[9]

Rhyolite's only drawback was a shortage of water, but extravagant promotional articles in both California and Nevada newspapers soon enabled the camp to outstrip its rivals. Pipe for a water system was ordered in March and there were reports that residents of Bullfrog and Amargosa were beginning to relocate to the upstart new community.[10]

The Montgomery-Shoshone Mining Company, destined to become the Bullfrog District's largest operation, was incorporated in April and an eighty-eight mile auto road from Goldfield was completed by the end of the month. On April 28, 1905, Earle R. Clemens arrived in Rhyolite to begin publication of *The Rhyolite Herald*, the camp's first newspaper. With his partner, Guy Keene, Clemens became an eloquent spokesman for the interests of Rhyolite and his section of Nye County. In the second issue of the *Herald*, May 12, 1905, the enterprising editor criticized the Nye County Board of Commissioners for

making no provision for law enforcement in the district, although a township consisting of Beatty and the Bullfrog District had been established on December 5, 1904 and Charles W. Sexton appointed Justice of the Peace and John R. McDonald named as Constable. Their bonds were submitted that evening, but rejected as insufficient at a February 6, 1905 meeting, however. A township which was to include Amargosa, Rhyolite, Bullfrog and Beatty was created on March 6 and the bonds of Sexton and McDonald were approved. On May 1, new township boundaries were established and Ezra Norris, former Justice of the Peace of the Amargosa Township, was appointed Justice of the Peace in place of Sexton. In his May 12 editorial, Clemens called for the appointment of a deputy sheriff, stating that the citizens of Rhyolite would pay the salary if the commissioners felt that the county treasury could not stand the expense.[11]

The legislative act transferring Nye's county seat from Belmont to Tonopah had gone into effect on May 1, and the commissioners held the first meeting in the new location that same evening. Among those present was H.H. Clark as a representative of the Bullfrog Townsite, Water and Ice Company. On behalf of the enterprise, he offered a lot site for a jail in Bullfrog and the commissioners accepted, but made no commitment as to the construction of a building or the appointment of any law enforcement personnel other than Ezra Norris.[12]

The proceedings of the meeting were carried in the *Tonopah Bonanza* of May 6, six days before Clemens's editorial on the need for better law enforcement in the Bullfrog District, but editor William W. Booth had no editorial comment. On May 19, he noted that a subscription was being taken up to build a hospital in Rhyolite. The women of the camp were actively involved in the effort, he reported, and had the support of officials of the local miners' union. That same evening, a public meeting was held to discuss community affairs in Rhyolite and a petition was circulated requesting the commissioners to set up a school district and a board of trustees. Lorin O. Ray chaired the meeting and several leading citizens were suggested as candidates for the proposed offices.[13]

The bond of Ezra Norris as justice of the peace was accepted by the commissioners on June 5, but the petition of Dr. Edward S. Grigsby to be appointed Health Officer for the Bullfrog District was held over to the July meeting. Judge Ray, John Zwerfil, and N. W. Willis appeared before the commissioners to speak for the interests of Rhyolite, but attorney Key Pittman, representing the Bullfrog Townsite Company, testified in opposition to the expenditure of any county funds for the benefit of the citizens of the southern end of the county. Other county officials were also present to speak in opposition and the commissioners decided to have Sheriff James Logan, Recorder Puddy Grimes and County Physician J. Lucius Garner visit the camp and submit a recommendation on what county services should be provided.[14]

Judge Ray had also brought up the matter of establishing a separate Rhyolite township when he was in Tonopah. At their next meeting, on July 5, the commissioners established the new township and appointed J.W. Donnelly and

Zeb Ray to the offices of Justice of the Peace and Constable. They also ordered that a jail be constructed in Rhyolite and approved the organization of a school district. Clemens and other community leaders were not satisfied. On August 3, another public meeting convened to discuss schools, a town water supply, and sanitary improvements. Lorin Ray chaired the meeting, reporting that a local merchant, Walter Smith, had gone ahead and ordered books, desks and school supplies. Other businessmen had taken care of the freight charges from San Francisco, he said, and school could start as soon as a building could be secured and a teacher hired. The matter of appointing a health officer was deferred in favor of naming a citizens' committee to oversee cleaning up the streets and informing property owners of state laws regarding maintenance of their properties in a sanitary condition. The question of a town government also came up at the meeting and a resolution was passed requesting the board of commissioners to establish a Town Board Government for Rhyolite under the Town Board Act of 1881. At the election held on August 12, nine town trustees were selected: Lorin Ray, Sam Lindsay, James McEntee, William Parker, John Z. Wiefel, N. Simon, T.A. Flemming, Frank J. Busch and Peter A. Busch.[15]

At their next meeting on August 7, the Board of Commissioners established the same boundaries for the Rhyolite School District and the Rhyolite Township. They also authorized a warrant to be issued to C.A. O'Brien in the amount of $800 for the remainder of the money owed for construction of the Rhyolite jail. Nye County Superintendent of Schools selected school trustees. Jack Longstreet was hired to place signs along public roads south and east of Tonopah to guide automobile travelers to the nearest water places and stations. The Board of Commissioners also appointed Zeb Ray, who was not a physician, ex-officio health officer. Lorin Ray, now president of the Rhyolite Board of Trustees, was assured that the Board of Commissioners would soon recognize his town's informal government and give its trustees the authority to transact business. Over the next two months, the Rhyolite Board of Trustees enacted a number of town ordinances, levied an occupancy tax on hotels, organized a volunteer fire department and started a subscription fund to install fire plugs, purchase hoses, and secure fire equipment. The hospital opened in September and plans for further community improvements were being discussed.[16]

In late September, however, the Board of Commissioners discussed the matter of the Rhyolite Board of Trustees with attorney William B. Pittman and decided that they were not obligated either to recognize the political initiative taken in Rhyolite or to validate the election. Informed of this decision at the October 6 meeting in Tonopah, Judge Ray asked for the reason and was told that the commissioners believed that it would be impossible to govern a town as remote as Rhyolite from Tonopah. The ordinances enacted by officials of the Board of Trustees were thus invalid.[17] The board members seemed to be at an impass over the governance of remote Rhyolite.

Disheartened at this turn of events, the citizens of Rhyolite met on Novem-

ber 8 to consider their next move. The trustees paid for the fire plugs, scheduled a dance to raise funds for the school, and discussed the action of the commissioners in Tonopah. Community leaders decided to form a Board of Trade to replace the Board of Trustees. Judge Ray declared that the time would soon be at hand when all citizens of southern Nye County must forget their petty differences and stand together. By-laws for the Rhyolite Board of Trade were discussed at a meeting held on November 28 and were adopted on December 6. Officers were elected in mid-December, and the new board included all the former trustees of the now-defunct Rhyolite Town Board.[18]

With the dawning of 1906, it was increasingly evident that the citizens of southern Nye County were going to have to solve their own problems without assistance from county officials. At the year's first meeting of the Nye County Commissioners, on January 1, township petitions from the citizens of Johnnie and Gold Center were submitted and the County Clerk was directed to contact the petitioners about a definition of boundaries. As to schools, District Attorney Pittman told the commissioners that there could be no appropriations for education in the southern district until the completion of a school census sometime in May. The citizens of Rhyolite and Bullfrog had expected nothing less and were going ahead on their own. The owners of the Rhyolite Lumber Company had offered to furnish building materials for a school, and a subscription was being taken up to raise money to cover labor costs. In early February, officials of the Rhyolite Board of Trade began to deal with sanitation, transportation, local government, publicity, and trade and commerce. Ordinances were proposed, presented, and enacted and attorney Clay Tallman was appointed to request that the Nye County commissioners allocate a portion of the poll taxes collected in the Bullfrog District for road work.[19]

As might be expected, many citizens of southern Nye County were now considering other solutions to their problems, namely a division of the county and the establishment of a new political entity with the county seat at Rhyolite. Among those seriously entertaining such notions was former United States Senator William Morris Stewart, who had moved to the Bullfrog District in May of 1905, following his retirement. Stewart had looked into opportunities in the area while still in Washington, D.C. and was already giving some consideration to the future of the district. On December 10, 1904, he had written to George Nixon of a plan to alter the boundaries of both Nye and Esmeralda counties and organize a new county out of the southern sections of both. Nixon, a candidate to succeed Stewart in the Senate, was favorably disposed toward the idea, but believed that he should not come out publicly until the legislature had acted on his election. "I can say to you, however," he wrote back to Stewart, "that I feel as you do, that a new county should be established in that territory, and will give the matter my attention before going East."[20]

Stewart had established law offices in Bullfrog and Goldfield and had begun to invest in the mines of the Bullfrog District, but his only involvement in

public affairs in 1905 was as a school trustee in Bullfrog. The aging lawmaker had not forgotten his previous county-division plan, however, and in an interview with Frank Mannix of *The Bullfrog Miner* on March 9, 1906, he set forth his scheme in some detail. Stating flatly that county seats should be located as near to population centers as possible, he suggested that the citizens of Rhyolite and Bullfrog might soon begin a movement to establish a more central seat of county government. He then outlined a plan to annex the central portion of Esmeralda County to Nye County and the northern section of Esmeralda to Lyon County. A new county consisting of the southern section of Nye and Esmeralda could then be created, he told Mannix, with a new county seat at Bullfrog.[21]

Commenting upon the interview, editor Mannix asserted that the development of new mining areas and population centers "are bound to jar some of the timbers of the governmental structure that have grown weak from dry rot and mold, and newer timber must be put in their stead to meet the demands of progress." W.W. Booth of the *Tonopah Bonanza* did not see the plan that way, however. His report, carried on March 17, commented that the plan was "unworkable." Sam Dunham of *The Tonopah Miner* expressed a belief that the realignment of county boundaries and shuffling of county seats "should commend itself to those interested," but he was otherwise noncommittal. With the exception of T.D. Vandervort of *The Goldfield Review*, Goldfield editors ignored the interview. Calling Goldfield "the natural center of one of the greatest mining sections extant" and "the magnet of trade and commerce," Vandervort implied that the camps of the Bullfrog District should properly be within his community's sphere of influence. As to the camps of northern Nye County, he suggested that they could be taken in by Churchill County or Douglas County.[22]

The community of Beatty, four miles east of Rhyolite, was also entering upon a boom phase at this time and was being promoted as "Beatty the Beautiful" by T.G. Nicklin, editor of the *Beatty Bullfrog Miner*. A booster of the first water, Nicklin also had an interest in the Beatty Townsite Company and was among the organizers of the Bullfrog Promotion Committee established two days after Mannix's interview with Stewart. Beatty, like Bullfrog and Rhyolite, was without an official town government and its citizenry was equally aggrieved at their treatment by Nye County officials, but Nicklin had no comment at that time on Stewart's plan, even though Bullfrog was proposed as the seat of the new county.[23]

Nicklin was also the editor and publisher of the *Las Vegas Age*. On April 14, he carried a part of the Stewart interview in the *Age* and pointed out that the same conditions facing Rhyolite and Bullfrog were also troubling the citizens of Las Vegas, located an equal distance from Pioche, county seat of Lincoln County. As he had done on previous occasions, Nicklin suggested that the only solution was the division of Lincoln County or removal of the county seat to Las Vegas. E.E. Frudenthal of Pioche's *Lincoln County Record*, an otherwise cham-

pion of Pioche and staunch supporter of the status quo with respect to the territorial integrity of Lincoln County, ignored Stewart's remarks and Nicklin's editorial commentary.[24]

With the exception of F.W. Fairbanks of Yerington's *Lyon County Times*, editors in the surrounding counties to the north ignored Stewart's proposed realignment of their boundaries. Fairbanks carried the interview on page one of his edition of March 24, but had no editorial reaction. Carson City editors also failed to pick up on the story, but the editor of the *Nevada State Journal* of Reno suggested that the former Senator might have a financial or political interest in the creation of a new county.[25]

At the time of the Stewart interview, the members of the Right-of-Way Committee of the Rhyolite Board of Trade were winding up negotiations with Senator William A. Clark to make Rhyolite the northern terminus of the proposed Las Vegas & Tonopah Railroad. Scarcely three weeks later, it was reported that Francis M. "Borax" Smith had announced his intention to build a railroad north through Death Valley, which would give Rhyolite a second rail connection to outside markets and supply centers. The operators of the Tonopah & Goldfield Railroad were considering an extension south to the Bullfrog District. Thus the prospect that Rhyolite might become a major rail center was emerging, and the Nye County Board of Commissioners began to take a more sympathetic attitude toward the needs and problems of the southern section of the county. Johnnie was granted township status on March 5 and the petition for a franchise to erect and maintain an electric light plant for the towns of Bullfrog, Rhyolite and Beatty was read and approved. The commissioners' offer to build a jail in Rhyolite, however, was rebuffed by the members of the Rhyolite Board of Trade who declared that citizens of their community would rather remain "jailless" than accept the "penny-ante affair" proposed by the commissioners.[26]

On July 4, several members of the Nye County Board of County Commissioners arrived in Rhyolite to look over the area. They drove to Indian Springs the next morning, but were back in Bullfrog by late afternoon. That evening, they approved a contract for a new hospital to be located in Rhyolite. They also authorized construction of a new road from Rhyolite to Crystal Springs, but decided to defer a decision on a new jail for the community.[27]

Stewart meanwhile had refined his county division proposal and was preparing a bill for introduction in the 1907 legislative session. On August 3, editor Keene of the *Rhyolite Herald* editorially asked the citizens of the Bullfrog District to submit their opinions on the question. The response was overwhelming. Many complaints involved the collection of property taxes and the insignificant sums which Tonopah returned in the form of services. Other readers called for better law enforcement and Keene suggested that the Bullfrog District needed direct representation in the legislature.[28]

By this time, Nicklin had taken a closer look at Stewart's plan, and what he saw disturbed him. An editorial in the *Las Vegas Age* on August 18 informed

readers that the proposed realignment of county boundaries would put Las Vegas and Searchlight "on the tail end of a new county, as far from the seat of government as they are at present." Once again asserting his belief in the necessity of a county seat shift or a new county with Las Vegas as the seat of government, he urged his readers to "stand together for the protection of these greater interests, even to the sacrifice of pet candidates for petty offices." Editor Frudenthal of the *Pioche Record* also took note of Stewart's plan at this time. He calculated that the proposed new county would include 5,536 square miles of southern Lincoln County, but had no editorial comment otherwise.[29]

In defense of Stewart, Keene suggested that Rhyolite would be easier to reach than Pioche because of the new rail connections. He also asserted that the mines of the Bullfrog District had boosted the fortunes of Las Vegas in the past and would bear the largest share of the new county's taxes in the future. As an additional lure to the citizenry of Las Vegas, he pointed out that Rhyolite did not necessarily have a "lock" on county seat status.[30]

On August 24, Frank Mannix reported a movement afoot to place a representative of the Bullfrog District on the Board of County Commissioners. Noting the growth in population and the increasing prosperity of the district's mines, he suggested that neither party could any longer afford to ignore the southern section of the county. Mannix's editorial struck a responsive chord among Nye County party leaders and Lorin O. Ray was nominated for the Nevada State Assembly by the Democrats in September and Sam Lindsay was put on the ticket for a seat on the Nye County Commission. Mannix himself, also a Democrat, was nominated for Secretary of State. The Republicans also responded, nominating Edgar Jackson of Beatty for the Assembly, Charles E. Sexton of the same community for County Commission, and Charles L. Gardner of Rhyolite for Nye County Clerk. Nye County's Socialist Party nominated J.D. White and M.L. Clark of Rhyolite for the offices of County Clerk and County Commissioner respectively.[31]

Stewart's county-division proposal was not a feature of the ensuing campaign and Ray and Lindsay, the only successful candidates from the south, spoke out on party issues rather than sectional concerns. The grand scheme reemerged two weeks after the election, however, when Stewart spoke to the Rhyolite Board of Trade on November 19 and presented a proposed legislative memorial to be submitted to the upcoming legislative session. The new political entity would be called Bullfrog County, he said, and would consist of the area below the first parallel south of the Mt. Diablo Baseline and west of the Lincoln County line. White Pine County was to give up a section on its southern boundary to Lincoln County, but gain the northeast corner of Nye County. Eureka, Lander and Churchill Counties were to gain portions of northern Nye County and Esmeralda County was to cede a piece of territory on the south to Nye County and the new county of Bullfrog. Stewart had apparently heeded the separationist sentiment in Las Vegas as his legislative memorial also envi-

sioned a new unnamed county south of the Mt. Diablo Baseline. Rhyolite was designated as the county seat of Bullfrog County and Las Vegas as that of the second new county. Stewart's memorial also provided for a commission, appointed by the Governor to oversee copying and transfer of records for the new counties and to apportion the relative indebtedness to counties created or affected by the act.[32]

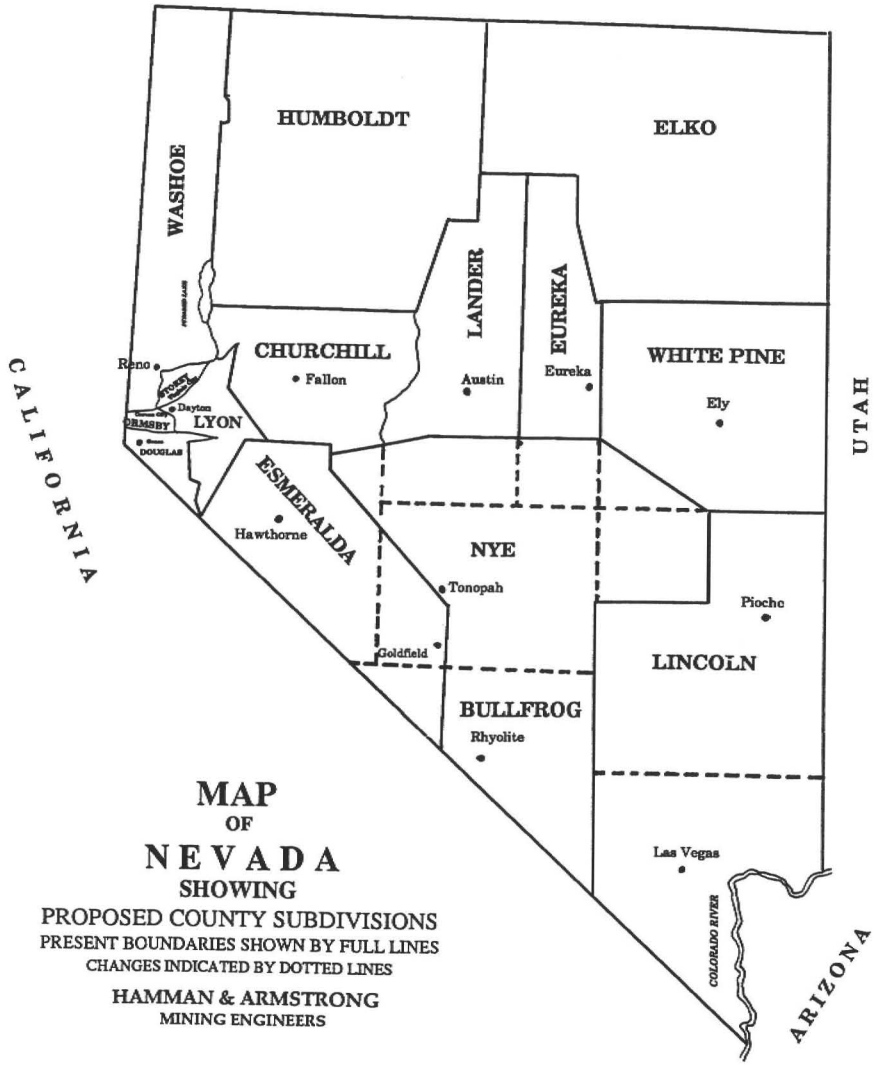
Rhyolite Board of Trade officials appointed a committee to further refine Stewart's plan, and it appeared in final form in *The Rhyolite Herald* on December 14. The proposal was accompanied by a map drawn up by the mining engineering firm of Hamman & Armstrong that showed the existing county boundaries as well as the proposed realignments. The complexity of the proposal became evident to even the most casual reader. Charles C. Corkhill, managing editor of the *Las Vegas Age* was entranced by the plan for the southern section of Lincoln County and a separate political entity with Las Vegas as the seat of county government. He had commented favorably in November and had urged those who believed that county division was premature to reconsider carefully. He was even more enthusiastic when the map was published. "Such division could not be improved upon," he wrote on December 2, "and will meet with the favor of the people of Southern Lincoln."[33]

Other editors in the surrounding counties paid little attention to Stewart's legislative memorial. In Goldfield, where a move was afoot to wrest the county seat of Esmeralda County from Hawthorne, the proposal was ignored, even though it would have placed the community within Nye County. Frudenthal's *Pioche Record* was editorially silent, but the editor of the *Caliente Lode-Express* noted that the next legislature would probably create two counties. Tonopah editors were studiously silent, as were those in Manhattan, a camp located some distance to the north in Nye County. The *Reese River Reveille* of Austin had carried a story on the realignment in August, but ignored later developments. In White Pine, Eureka and Churchill Counties, all of which would be affected, other issues and concerns dominated the news.[34]

Assemblyman-elect Ray had meanwhile pledged himself to work for a new county for his constituents, but was noncommittal on other aspects of Stewart's plan. In an interview published in the *Tonopah Bonanza* on December 1, he denied that he intended to seek the Speakership in Carson City, but mentioned his interest in a new incorporation law to make it easier for communities to form their own municipal governments rather than remain under the control of county commissioners.[35]

A contract for construction of a new county hospital in Rhyolite had been let in July, but the school situation remained unresolved that fall. District Attorney Pittman completed a school census which showed forty-seven children of school age in Rhyolite and Bullfrog. Still, the Board of Commissioners ignored requests to appoint school trustees or to appropriate funds for equipment, a building, or pay a teacher. Pittman claimed that the school count was insuffi-

County Division Plan Submitted for Consideration of People of Nevada



Senator William M. Stewart's boundary proposal, December 1906, from *The Rhyolite Herald*, December 14, 1906 *(Computer graphics work by Diann Laing, University of Nevada, Reno).*

cient, but the Nevada State Superintendent of Public Instruction informed Board of Trade officials that a state appropriation would soon be forthcoming. No monies were put up, however, and the members contributed $500 to start a school fund. Another $125 was added in December and there was talk of asking the legislature for an act allowing citizens of the district to bond themselves for educational purposes.[36]

By this time, Sam Lindsay had taken his seat on the Board of County Commissioners. Among the proposals he carried to Tonopah January 7 was the demand for the return of half of the license fees and property taxes collected in the southern section of the county, but he did not raise this issue at the meeting. He was, however, successful in wrangling a $5,000 appropriation for a jail in Rhyolite, as well as $495 for an addition to the hospital and an authorization for two deputy sheriffs for his district.[37]

Assemblyman Ray left for Carson City on January 17. He was successful in getting several good committee assignments, but his primary objective, enactment of Stewart's legislative memorial, was beyond the power of the first-term lawmaker. In a letter to the members of the Board of Trade in late February, he informed his constituents that all was not well with the proposal and that he was working on an amendment to a bill to split the Third Judicial District and establish Nye County as a separate entity. His amendment would require annual court sessions in Rhyolite, Manhattan, and Round Mountain, thus making long trips to Tonopah for court sessions unnecessary. Although the bill became law, Ray's amendment went down to defeat because of a statute requiring that district court sessions be held in the county seat. Ray also supported the new municipal incorporation act, a labor arbitration bill designed to prevent strikes and lockouts, a reapportionment act that increased Nye County's Assembly delegation from three members to seven and its Senate membership from one to two, and a school bonding measure that empowered Bullfrog's citizens to raise the money to start a school.[38]

Assemblyman Ray arrived back in Rhyolite on March 27. In an interview with the *Rhyolite Herald*, he said that he was "up against a losing game" in his efforts to formulate and introduce a bill to effect the boundary realignments envisioned in Stewart's legislative memorial. The members of the Lincoln County delegation were adamantly opposed, he said, as were legislators and spokesmen from Tonopah. Goldfield's representatives, having seized the county seat of Esmeralda County from Hawthorne during the session, were not about to cede any territory or go along with proposals which might lessen their influence or cloud their community's pre-eminent role in county affairs it had so recently assumed. He also said that spokesmen for Manhattan had asserted a claim to the north end of Nye County when they learned that he was trying to create a new political entity to the south.[39]

Community leaders in Rhyolite expressed no great disappointment in the failure to create a new county, and there was no reaction from county divisionists

in Las Vegas. Although Dan V. Noland, a Las Vegas attorney, had written to Stewart on January 28 expressing support for the division of Nye County and offering to "do anything . . . in the way of petition, agitation, letters, telegrams, or otherwise . . . , " no such support materialized from any quarter during the legislative session. Editor Corkhill of the *Las Vegas Age* noted on March 23 that the members of Lincoln County's delegation were "too busy" to pay attention to their southern constituents, but he had been editorially silent on the matter during the session. The *Pioche Record* had a change of editors in February, but no comment on the proposal to create a new county. Booth of the *Tonopah Bonanza* took no interest in the controversy and Lindley Branson' s only commentary in the *Tonopah Daily Sun* had been Arthur Buel's cartoon of February 6 that depicted Assemblyman Ray washing out a boundary bill in a large washtub.[40]

Shortly after Ray's return from Carson City, movement to organize a government for Rhyolite began. Editor Mannix of the *Bullfrog Miner* came out in favor of incorporation under the new municipal incorporation law, but Clemens and Keene of the *Rhyolite Herald* preferred a town board form of government which would place the community under the control of the members of the Board of County Commissioners. On April 21, a community meeting was held under the auspices of the Board of Trade to consider the matter. Among those attending was District Attorney Patrick A. McCarran, who spoke in favor of the town board option. Other community leaders agreed that Rhyolite did not need the type of complete community government provided for in the recent legislation and members of the Board of Trade voted unanimously in favor of the old form of government.[41]

In order to initiate action under the Town Board Act of 1881, it was necessary for a community to submit a petition signed by two thirds of its property owners. Attorney Clay Tallman was selected to head the petition committee and a completed petition was forwarded to Tonopah in May. County surveyors arrived in June to plot the Rhyolite Township and on July 1 the commissioners in Tonopah granted a Town Board Government to the community.[42]

Attorney Tallman subsequently chaired a committee assigned to draft town ordinances dealing with law enforcement, fire protection, sanitation, annual business licenses, regulation of houses of prostitution and other matters, all duly approved by the Board of Commissioners. Lindsay, who had served on the committee, submitted the ordinances to his colleagues and they were approved at the August 7 meeting. The commissioners also appointed a police chief and fire warden, and they created a new school district, enabling the citizens of Rhyolite to proceed with a school bond election.[43]

Rhyolite's school had closed on April 22 when the teacher, Louise Presser, abruptly quit. She reportedly had ninety students and said that she was simply worn out and could continue no longer. The citizens decided to bond Rhyolite for $20,000 to build at that time, an amount which was overwhelmingly approved at a bond election held on September 23. A circular offering the bonds

went out the next week, and the issue was purchased by John Nuveen & Company of Chicago, but a national financial panic had disrupted the bond market by that time and the Rhyolite School Trustees did not get their money for another seven months.[44]

The railroad had meanwhile come to town. Las Vegas & Tonopah Construction crews had reached Beatty on October 22, 1906 and the first through train to Rhyolite arrived on December 14. Some four months later, April 25, 1907, the citizens of Beatty celebrated Railroad Day to welcome the Bullfrog & Goldfield to their community. Graders were meanwhile working their way west toward the Bullfrog District and regular service through to Rhyolite began on June 18. The Tonopah & Tidewater Railroad reached Beatty on October 30, 1907 and arrangements were made for the line to use the tracks of the Bullfrog & Goldfield on into the Bullfrog District.[45]

Rhyolite's long-awaited jail was completed in May 1907, and a volunteer fire company was organized in July, although hose, a fire cart and other equipment were not secured until November. Crews from the Nevada-California Power Company were completing electrical lines into Rhyolite and service began on September 21. On December 6, the Nye County Board of Commissioners created a new sixteen square mile school district for Rhyolite, Bullfrog and adjacent areas, enough additional territory to significantly increase the district's valuation and assure the Chicago financeers that their bonds would be paid off.[46]

On September 23, 1907, the district added its third newspaper, the *Rhyolite Daily Bulletin*, which began publication under the editorship of John App and Richard Carr. Their first editorial statement was not an introduction of themselves and their new publication, but rather a complaint about unfair and unequal tax assessments levied upon the Bullfrog District. They thus endeared themselves to their prospective readership and soon became fervent advocates of county division, an issue which, despite the year's improvements in Rhyolite's political status in 1907, had not died out.[47]

Rhyolite's achievement of town board status prompted the citizens of Beatty to attempt a similiar move in 1907. A group of merchants established an informal committee to consider the matter in August and a town meeting on September 10 brought their proposal before the citizens. Although the merchants favored a town board, as did editor Nicklin, a majority of voters and taxpayers present were opposed. In the course of presenting arguments in favor of a town board, Nicklin castigated commissioner Lindsay, who was also present, charging that he was looking out for the interests of Rhyolite to the exclusion of other communities in the southern section. Lindsay stood to deny the charge, but spoke out against a town board for Beatty. Noting that the community lacked the tax base necessary to justify such a move, he said that Beatty would have to await the growth of gambling license revenues before he and his fellow commissioners would consider any new governmental arrangements.[48]

Senator Clay Tallman, Rhyolite, Nevada *(Arthur Buel Political Cartoon, Reno Evening Gazette, January 22, 1909).*

Nicklin's blast at Commissioner Lindsay was further indication of an estrangement just beginning to develop between the citizens of Beatty and those of Rhyolite. On August 24, Nicklin had editorially criticized Rhyolite spokesmen for opposing a decision by Tonopah & Tidewater to establish depot and terminal facilities in Beatty rather than Rhyolite. "Our sister objects to this," he wrote, "as she does everything that would push Beatty a little forward. She wants the terminus, and hands out the ultimatum that if it is not forthcoming she will not become a customer."[49]

Nicklin returned to the fray on October 26 when the commissioners in Tonopah were debating the salary for Beatty's lone deputy. He noted that Rhyolite had three deputies and informed his readers that officials of the Beatty Boosters Club were investigating the matter of having a portion of the Beatty county license fees and property taxes returned to finance civic improvements.[50]

By this time Senator Stewart had moved his office and place of residence to Goldfield and his grandiose scheme to create two new counties and realign the boundaries of several others had given way to a plan to create a new county in the southern section of Nye County. In January 1908, the editors of the Bullfrog District began a concerted editorial campaign to build public sentiment in favor of county division, even though the political season was some nine months away and the next legislative session a year in the future. Editor App of the *Rhyolite Daily Bulletin* fired the first editorial salvo on January 9 — a commentary on the upcoming trial of Fred Skinner, a miner who had murdered his paramour, Mona Bell, in Rhyolite's red-light district on January 3. Skinner had been jailed in Tonopah awaiting action by the Nye County Grand Jury, and App expressed the opinion that previous talk of lynching Skinner before he could be taken north was predictable, given that several men who had committed crimes in the southern section of the county had gone free upon reaching the county seat. Frank Mannix of the *Bullfrog Miner* also raised this issue, but District Attorney McCarran wrote back to App denying the charge. He told the editor that the criticism was unfounded and that there were as many convictions from the south as from the north.[51]

App and the other editors let the issue lie for a time and moved on to other matters. On January 21, he noted the increase in the size of Nye County's legislative delegation authorized by the 1907 legislature, adding several Rhyolite men were interested in filling the position. His fellow editors did not pick up on the theme at that time, so he turned his attention to the scandal surrounding the recently shuttered State Bank & Trust Company. On February 10, he recommended that the Nye County Grand Jury investigate the bank's officers and indict those responsible for the condition of the institution. Such an inquiry would presumably include a hearing into the activities of Nye County officials since the bank was the principal depository for county funds. Four days later, App charged those same officials with negligence in not collecting a $9,600 shortage from the bondsmen of Sheriff James Logan who had been murdered

in a Manhattan saloon on April 7, 1906. In his editorial, App implied that "certain people," presumably the bondsmen themselves, had influenced county officials to defer action on the matter.[52]

On February 15, App turned his attention to the new tax rate adopted by the commissioners two days earlier. Tonopah's rate was $3.60 per $100 of assessed valuation, he figured, fifteen cents higher than that for 1907, but the rate for Rhyolite was $3.55, an increase of $1.45 over the 1907 rate. He maintained that most of the proceeds would go for the new courthouse at Tonopah, an expense he felt that other sections of the county should not bear. He also charged that the $40,000 budgeted for criminal prosecution was inflated because of the inefficiency of personnel in the District Attorney's office.[53]

Mannix of the *Bullfrog Miner* took issue with App on the taxation matter, although he was an equally ardent supporter of the creation of a new county. He pointed out that fifty cents of each dollar of Rhyolite's increased levy came back to the community as a special fund for fire protection and street and alley improvements. He also claimed that the Bullfrog District was faring much better at the hands of county officials since Sam Lindsay had joined the Board of County Commissioners.[54]

Grand Jury members Charles J. Richards and William K. Wise accompanied District Attorney McCarran to Rhyolite on February 8 to look into town affairs. They found the sanitary conditions adequate, but were told by the men of the volunteer fire department that an extra hose cart and another thousand feet of hose were needed. In Beatty the next day, they heard complaints that commissioners discriminated in favor of Rhyolite in the matter of public office. The subsequent report, issued February 18, reflected these complaints, and the Grand Jury recommended that a deputy sheriff and a road commissioner be appointed for Beatty. They also urged construction of a new jail to replace the old one which Wise and Richards had found to be in deplorable condition.

Fred Skinner's indictment for murder on February 17 elicited no comment from either App or Mannix in spite of the fact that both had made an issue of judicial laxity on the part of county officials. App's only reaction to the Grand Jury report concerned an item which indicated that Nye County had $74,000 on hand as of February 1, a figure which might, in his estimation, make taxpayers believe that the recent tax increase was unnecessary.

Earle Clemens of the *Herald* took a more direct tack, openly advocating the creation of a new political entity in an editorial which appeared on February 21. He asserted that the economy of the southern section of the county was strong enough to support a separate county government and claimed that there was popular support for independence from Nye County.

Commissioner Lindsay was also talking up the idea of separation. In an interview in Tonopah on March 3, he said that the matter of a new county would be an issue in the fall political campaigns. "We have the population and the area for a new county," he was quoted as saying, "and the lower part of the

county intends to fight for it next fall." In reply to a question about the size of the projected county, he said that the line was to be drawn east and west from Goldfield.[58]

Clyde Terrell, who had taken over the editorship of the *Beatty Bullfrog Miner* on February 24, took note of the Lindsay interview in his column of March 7. Asserting Beatty's claim to the seat of a new county should one be created, he charged that commissioner Lindsay was working to get the honor for Rhyolite. County division, no matter what the final designation of the county seat might be, was acceptable, however, and he complained in print about unfair officials who were witholding road funds and forcing the citizens of outlying camps to construct their own.[59]

John App of the *Rhyolite Daily Bulletin* continued to harp on the Logan matter. On February 26, he claimed that the shortages in the deceased sheriff's accounts were enough to pay the salary of the District Attorney and his office expenses for the entire year, as well as fund the Criminal Division for three months, fix Nye County's roads, and pay all of Rhyolite's expenses for two years. Neither Mannix nor Clemens and Keene challenged this exaggerated claim, and App subsequently asked how many businesses would allow an employee to embezzle such a sum. Asserting that the county offices should be handled with "at least a semblance of business judgement," he charged Nye County officials with engaging in "a campaign of silence."[60]

During the first week of March, Nye County Democratic Party officials held a series of meetings in Rhyolite. App used the occasion to push the interests of his community, claiming in a March 2 editorial that Rhyolite was the strongest Democratic precinct in the county. Its voters had provided the margin of victory for several candidates, he asserted, and were entitled to one of the six delegates alloted to Nevada for the Democratic National Convention scheduled to convene in Denver in July. The editors of the *Rhyolite Herald* were in substantial agreement, suggesting that two of Nye County's seven Assemblymen should come from their community. They also claimed that voters of Bullfrog District deserved at least one county official—either the County Clerk or the County Treasurer. The district had both good Democrats and good Republicans, they concluded, and the placing of a few "locals" in office was "a matter of community pride."[61]

App's taxation editorials appeared to have struck a responsive chord as a number of southern Nye County readers wrote to commend him for his stand. In an editorial comment on March 2, he suggested that unless changes were made before fall, Tonopah politicians "may as well prepare to hunt the tallest of sagebrush to be found in the desert." He also took another editorial shot at District Attorney McCarran that day. Noting that McCarran was rumored to be thinking of running for Congress, he broached the matter of collecting the Logan bond money before asking for another office. When Logan's bondsmen were hauled before the Board of County Commissioners, App was editorially

silent. The bondsmen said that the recent financial panic had left them short of funds and their request for a six-month extension was granted.[62]

The biases of Rhyolite's journalistic fraternity were further demonstrated in their handling of the Skinner murder case. Skinner went on trial in Tonopah on March 23. Prosecuted by District Attorney McCarran, who asked for the death penalty, he was found guilty on March 28 and sentenced to life imprisonment. Neither App nor Clemens and Keene covered the story and only Frank Mannix of the *Bullfrog Miner* bestirred himself to offer editorial congratulations to county law enforcement officials.[63]

Democrats and Republicans of Bullfrog District organized local party caucuses in April, but the editorial campaign to promote county division tapered off. Guy Keene of the *Rhyolite Herald* retired on May 1 and the *Rhyolite Daily Bulletin* suspended publication on May 16 when editor App was called to Denver by the illness of his mother. Frank Mannix let the issue lie for the summer, as did Earle Clemens.[64]

The Bullfrog District was represented at the state conventions of both parties that summer and there appeared to be no political animosities among representatives of the various sections of Nye County, but the issue of county division was just below the surface and the editorial campaign to promote it resumed in late summer. On August 15, editor Mannix noted that the "microbe of County Division" was abroad in Lincoln and Esmeralda counties as well as Nye and would be "pushed" in the upcoming legislative session. That day's editorial contended that Nye County was an "unwieldy" political entity, the distance from Pahrump Valley in the southern end to Tonopah being 250 miles, and that from Rhyolite more than 100. He also complained of the hardship and inconvenience imposed on the citizens of outlying districts who had to journey to Tonopah to attend sessions of the district court or transact county business.

Editor Terrell of the *Beatty Bullfrog Miner* also got in some editorial licks. "More money for roads and less spent to grease the political machine would help Nye County," he wrote on August 29. "High taxes saddled on us by the Tonopah gang is an excellent reason for county division. We are only used by the politicians to pay bills without benefits." Terrell was particularly upset by the failure of the commissioners, failure to act upon the recommendation of the grand jury concerning a jail for Beatty and a deputy sheriff. "Beatty will now be careful about voting for commissioners . . . ," he promised. "In county business, our voters will be independent and vote to protect local interests against the machine." Commissioner Lindsay was a particular object of Terrell's ire and he charged that all the talk of county division was merely a ploy to further the interests of Rhyolite. "Was it a scheme to trade us off for more political patronage," he asked. "Have they dropped division after getting political patronage? Was it only a threat? Lincoln and other counties are making a fight for division, and Nye should vote for men to the Legislature who will favor division of the county."[66]

The matter of county division was being considered that very day at a Democratic Party gathering in Rhyolite and those seeking endorsement for office were strong in support of separation. Among them were Clay Tallman, a Rhyolite attorney who was interested in a seat in the Nevada State Senate, Lorin O. Ray, who was hoping to move up to the Senate, and Charles Kane, who was being promoted for the Assembly by his fellow Rhyolite merchants. The only outsider seeking office was George Probasco of Beatty, seeking an Assembly nod.[67]

Richard Carr, who had taken over as editor of the *Rhyolite Daily Bulletin* when publication resumed on September 7, predicted that Tonopah's "Political bosses" would dominate the convention scheduled for later in the month, but the Democrats endorsed three party candidates from the south, Tallman, Kane and Probasco. The Republicans backed Phillip M. Chandler of Rhyolite and Julius Lemle of Beatty for the lower house of the legislature. Republicans of Bullfrog District were satisfied, but the Democrats had expected to do better and there were later charges that Tonopah had "hogged" all the county offices. Charles F. Ryan was expected to get the nomination for County Treasurer and Thomas Kalaher, also of Rhyolite, had hopes of becoming Sheriff, but neither was successful. In the interest of party harmony, some Democrats were non-committal, but others spoke their minds openly. Amongst them was Dr. J.D. Jewett of Rhyolite. In his statement published in the *Rhyolite Daily Bulletin* on September 21, he denied that he was "satisfied" with the outcome of the convention. "I stand for a square deal at all times," he was quoted as saying, "but we will never get it while we are a part of the county of Nye. Another strong argument in favor of county division, which we must have at the earliest possible date."[68]

On October 6, Nye County Democrats gathered in Rhyolite with all party candidates in attendance. At the "big love feast," as editor Carr termed it, Tonopah attorney Walter Cole, the county chairman, spoke in the interest of party unity and urged support of the party in the upcoming election. Cole's speech struck a responsive chord among the party faithful and the gathering closed on a note of good fellowship. In the ensuing campaign, Bullfrog candidates campaigned countywide on party issues, making no mention of sectional disputes or such divisive matters as county division, but editor Carr was as forthright in his efforts to achieve a political separation as App had been. On October 13, he called attention to the recent move by officials of the Patrick Water Company and the Indian Springs Water Company to enter into a combination to keep Rhyolite's water rates high. In an off-handed criticism of the commissioners the next day, he suggested that they either invoke whatever laws were applicable to the situation or pass an ordinance to prevent collusion by corporations entrusted with public utility franchises. Carr also had some comments on taxation, noting that the citizens of his section had been assessed $1,982,170, while those of Tonopah shouldered a levy of $1,834,855. Manhattan's tally came to $270,000, he pointed out, and the total for the remainder of the

county was $618,765. He also returned to the Logan bond defalcation, asking how long a sensitive businessman would allow such an account to stand on his books before he made an effort to collect.

On October 16, Carr condemned both parties at length for writing platform planks calling for economical government, while renominating candidates who were directly responsible for the supposed fiscal extravagance which had plagued Nye County for some time. This editorial barb was apparently aimed at James J. McQuillan, Democrat, and William T. Cuddy, Republican. Both were endorsed for re-election to the Board by their respective parties.

Although Beatty had finally been promised a deputy sheriff in September, editor Terrell's *Beatty Bullfrog Miner* was still pushing for a new jail and an increase in road funds for his section of the county. He was also moved to comment on the Logan matter and the high salaries paid to county officials, noting that the platform of the Independent Party was the only one to come out in favor of a reduction but he saved most of his editorial invective for Commissioner Lindsay. Reiterating his contention that Lindsay had only the interests of Rhyolite at heart, he suggested in a September 19 editorial that Beatty would be better off governed by a Town Board under the auspices of the entire Board of County Commissioners than Lindsay alone. Lindsay was a holdover and not up for re-election in 1908, but Terrell urged the voters of Beatty to take a close look at the replacement choices and consider the interests of their community and southern camps rather than follow their parties when they went to the polls. On September 26, he noted that Tonopah candidates had gotten most of the endorsements of both parties, other sections of the county being thrown "a few crumbs." Despite his seeming non-partisan stand, Terrell endorsed the candidates of the Democratic Party on the basis of the reform planks in their platform. In his editorial of October 24, however, he urged his readers to vote for candidates from the outlying camps.[71]

Frank Mannix of the *Bullfrog Miner* left for Reno on September 20 to obtain medical treatment for a stomach ailment. He was operated on three weeks later and was not able to take an active part in the fall campaign. Thomas G, Gwynne and David Patton, who took over his editorial chores, were were not strong partisans, however, and stepped aside. Although Earle Clemens's *Rhyolite Herald* supported the Republican ticket and strongly denounced the alleged extravagance of the current county government, the issue of county division was carefully avoided. Clay Tallman was mentioned favorably on several occasions, but Clemens's endorsement for the Senate went to Republican George Summerfield of Tonopah.[72]

Editor Carr had attended the October 6 rally in Rhyolite and was favorably impressed. As it happened, incumbent Commissioner Cuddy was in Rhyolite campaigning at that time and Carr put him on the spot in an October 28 editorial inquiring as to why the Logan bondsmen had not been forced to make good on their obligations. He directed the same question to James McQuillan,

a Democrat seeking reelection to the Nye County Commission, but neither responded.[74]

Nye County's Independent Party held a second rally in Rhyolite on October 30, and editor Carr editorially endorsed the party and its candidates the next day. Democratic Party officials discussed the matter with him the next day and he backed off in a November 2 editorial supporting Democrats Clay Tallman for the Senate, Democrat Charles Kane for the Assembly, and Daniel H. McNeil, the Democrats' candidate for County Treasurer. He also endorsed Dr. Fred Bowen of Rhyolite, Republican, for the Senate.[75]

Tallman and Kane were elected on November 3, and both Cuddy and McQuillan were successful in their re-election campaigns for the Nye County Commission. Editor Carr's initial comment was a one-liner on November 5 to the effect that straight party votes "were as scarce as hen's teeth and did not average one out of a hundred." The next day, he took another tack, telling his readers that they should not complain when taxes went up in the future since they had returned Cuddy to office. He also reminded them of the defaulted Logan bond collection due the people.[76]

John App returned from Colorado shortly after the election to resume his editorial position at the *Rhyolite Daily Bulletin*. His November 12 editorial argued the case for county division and proposed that a line be drawn at the Mt. Diablo Baseline a few miles south of Tonopah. According to his figuring, this would give the new county sufficient property to support a county government at a tax rate lower than that then imposed. Citing the long journeys required to travel to conduct county business, he advanced Rhyolite as the logical choice for the seat of county government. He also urged officials of the recently organized Bullfrog Chamber of Commerce to support separation and questioned imposition of an additional thirty cents per $100 of assessed value to the announced tax rate for Rhyolite. When informed by County Treasurer Robert F. Gilbert that the addition was for a sinking fund to pay off the school bond, he feigned incredulity and wrote that neither he nor any of his readers had heard of such an increment until they received their tax bills on November 11.[77]

App continued to editorialize on the matter of county division for the next month, every edition of the *Bulletin* featuring some comment on current events slanted so as to promote it. "County division should be the slogan before the coming session of the legislature," he wrote on November 18. The next day, he reported that those Rhyoliters who had "chased the fickle gold goddess" all summer were returning, with most affirming that the community was superior to any in the state. In an editorial of November 20, he boosted Rhyolite as the terminal rate point for southern Nevada since it was served by three railroads. He also commented upon the community's "fine Italian climate" and argued that the division of Nye County would lower tax rates in both political entities. The December 7 edition of the *Bulletin* carried an editorial prediction

that Rhyolite's business community would benefit from county division. The next day, he called for legislation requiring the Board of County Commissioners to expend poll tax collections for road purposes in the district from which they were collected.[78]

Frank Mannix had returned to Rhyolite on November 2, but was not well enough to resume active direction of the operation of his newspaper until mid-December. On December 19, he published the results of an informal survey he had taken on the question of county division. He had talked to several citizens who expressed a desire to keep taxes at home for local purposes. Others said that their community received few benefits for their money. One man who was more conversant than most with the details of county taxation told him that officials of the Tonopah & Tidewater Railroad paid $50,000 into county coffers every year, the largest part of which might well be paid into the treasury of a new county, should one be created. One Rhyoliter who owned properties in Beatty said that the citizens there would support division regardless of the final location of the county seat. Rhyolite's Postmaster N.J. Moore cited the need for closer county offices, and many believed that a divided Nye County would enable the people of the Bullfrog District to elect officials better acquainted with local needs and problems. On the question of taxes and expenditures, Rhyolite citizens to a man believed that they could support a government and provide county services more economically than the present regime in Tonopah. They also talked of the savings in time and money occasioned by having county offices nearby and of the commercial benefits to be derived from diverting tax savings into new channels of trade. Both Commissioner Lindsay, a long time supporter of county division, and Senator-elect Clay Tallman publicly favored political independence, even though they had not made an issue of it during the campaign. Phillip Chandler, defeated candidate for the Assembly from Rhyolite also favored division, as did John J. Kelly, secretary of the Rhyolite Miners' Union. Among the few locals who expressed doubt as to the wisdom of creating a new county was mining entrepreneur Ed Bevis, who believed that the attorneys of the new political entity would be the only citizens who would benefit from the proposed political separation. A.A. McKnight, another mining man, told Mannix that the new county could not be self-sustaining without an increase in taxes.[79]

Clay Tallman had meanwhile begun to collect data on the specifics of county division. At a meeting of the Bullfrog Chamber of Commerce on January 5, 1909, he presented taxation and expenditure figures from 1907, the only year for which he had complete information. He figured that Nye County officials expended $160,000 that year, $75,000 of which came from assessments of properties lying south of the Mt. Diablo Baseline. According to his figures, a new county incorporating this section could be admininstered at a cost of $50,000. He pointed out that the estimated $10,000 needed to copy the records of the southern section would be offset by savings in transportation and lodging costs

to taxpayers and others who would have county offices on their doorsteps. The new county would also get a full share of the Bullion Tax revenue, he believed, as well as all the railroad right-of-way taxes for the three lines which traversed the southern section. He mentioned increased future revenues for the railroads and additional taxes from mining operations as they developed and expanded. The problem of capital formation also came up that evening and a local banker pointed out that the region's monies would no longer have to be deposited in Tonopah banks, and could thus be kept in community financial institutions and loaned out to local mining enterprises, merchants and others seeking to build up the new county.[80]

A committee of leading citizens was named to gather more current data to be reported at a second public meeting the next week. They found the 1908 assessment for Nye County to be about $5,000,000, approximately half of which was apportioned to properties within the boundaries of the proposed new county. Railroad tax assessments alone totaled $1,800,000, it was reported, of which only $100,000 was the sum apportioned to Tonopah and the northern section of Nye County. Allowing for costs of copying records, the committee members estimated that the expenditure for county government for the first year would be $65,000, but would fall to $50,000 annually thereafter. Those present that evening expressed the opinion that ninety-five percent of the citizens of the southern camps favored a split from Nye County and a committee was appointed to draw up and circulate a petition to the legislature.[81]

Editor Mannix had not completely recovered from his surgery, but he was full in the fight for county division. Unlike his fellow editors who pursued the cause with rancor, his January 2 *Bullfrog Miner* embarked upon the final stage of the campaign with poetry:

> To do the will,
> That is the chief end and
> the glory of man.
> Let us attend to this business
> with earnestness.
> Let us put our hands to the task,
> be strong.
> It matters not how deep entrenched
> the wrong,
> How hard the battle goes, the day
> how long.
> Faint not, fight on!
> Tomorrow comes the song.[82]

On December 19, 1908, editor Booth of the *Bonanza* had devoted a column to the prospects for division of Lincoln County, but he ignored the movement in Rhyolite until January 13, a week before the 1909 legislature was to convene. In an editorial on upcoming political matters that day, he noted that a "petition for amputation" was in circulation in the southern part of Nye County. His

initial reaction was one of understanding and he conceded that a division of the county might be feasible in the future, but not until there was sufficient growth in both sections to justify such a move.[83]

Booth's tone changed quickly when the lawmakers went into session in Carson City on January 20. Two days into the meeting, he claimed that the residents of Tonopah were surprised by word that Senator Tallman and Assemblyman Kane had a division bill ready for introduction. He also asserted that the citizens of the southern section were similiarly unaware of the bill and noted that it had not been an issue in the recent campaign. Had Tallman brought it up, he wrote, he would not have been elected. Nye County Democrats were roundly condemning the legislative initiative, he wrote, and letters and telegrams from many important state and county leaders were being forwarded to the lawmakers.[84]

Lindley Branson of the *Tonopah Daily Sun* expressed equal surprise and alarm. On January 21, he reported that Senator Tallman and Assemblyman Kane had amassed a large compilation of facts to support their case, while those in opposition had only unsupported oratory. He claimed that the southern section had neither the population nor the revenue base to support a new county and that any such entity would have to rely chiefly upon railroad revenue. He also feared that the northern section would be saddled with the entire county debt, originally incurred for the benefit of all sections of Nye County.[85]

James Morris of the *Tonopah Miner* charged that the division plan had been "born in secrecy and nursed in silence" by a few "plotting politicians" who had no citizen support, but he took no other role in the heated editorial debate which was to take place over the next two months.[86]

James M. Griffin of Manhattan had in the interim been elected Speaker of the House. When committees were established on the first day of the session, he named Rhyolite's Charles Kane to chair the Committee on Counties and County Boundaries. Griffin had mining interests in the Bullfrog District, and Frank Mannix expected him to see that the division bill would get a fair hearing in the lower house. Senator George D. Pyne of Goldfield, President Pro Tempore of the Senate, was also well known in the district and was believed to be sympathetic to the creation of a new county. There had been some talk of an effort in the legislature to move the state capital to Goldfield and the Nye County delegation had been sounded out for support. However, it is highly unlikely that Pyne would have traded support of a county-division bill in exchange for favorable votes by Kane and Tallman, the only two Nye county representatives openly in favor of division. Indeed, his support would have gone to the majority who were opposed to switching the location of the seat of state government. John C. Martin, editor of the *Goldfield Tribune*, made little mention of the proposed shift, but he was a backer of county division in both Nye and Lincoln counties. Pointing out that both Rhyolite and Las Vegas were cut off from their respective county seats, he expressed the opinion that business and commer-

cial growth were thus retarded. But he would support division of either county only if the lawmakers could show that the new unit could function without raising taxes, and he recommended that any bill for division which came before the legislature should contain provisions to protect the taxpayers. Although, the *Reno Evening Gazette* reprinted Martin's editorial on January 30, bringing the issue to a wider audience, the matter remained a local concern and was greatly overshadowed in the north by other political controversies. Charles F. Squires of the *Las Vegas Age* also carried Martin's editorial, but his interest was in the division of Lincoln County and he never made an issue of the analogous situation of the two communities.[87]

On January 23, Richard Carr took the editorial chair of the *Rhyloite Daily Bulletin* to comment on the opposition to the Nye County division bill being mounted by Booth and Branson. He reminded them that they had "howled for home rule" in 1905 when Tonopah was seeking to move the county seat government from Belmont, bemoaning the inconvenience and expense caused by the hundred miles to the courthouse. "Be consistent, gentlemen," he wrote, "Aren't the people of southern Nye entitled to as much consideration as those of Tonopah? When you objected to Belmont, why do you insist on Rhyolite people traveling still further?"[88]

Assemblyman Fred L. Berry of Tonopah had by then enlisted the expertise and influence of his fellow attorneys in the Nye County Bar Association and Tonopah's merchants, working through their organization, the Tonopah Promotion Association, were beginning to take an interest in protecting the territorial integrity of their county. Berry believed that division would not lessen county expenditures in the remaining portion of Nye County, but rather would lead to an increase in taxes, most of which would fall upon the ranching and agricultural sector. Taxes were also of some concern to the businessmen, but the prospect of a new trade center in Rhyolite was even more unsettling. Other citizens of the northern section worried about funding the county debt, and current officeholders and employees faced the prospect of diminished salaries, a portion of which came from licenses and fees collected throughout the county. They did not, however, make a public issue of their concerns.[89]

The first public meeting called on January 25 to devise a strategy to oppose county division was poorly attended and Lindley Branson of the *Tonopah Sun* expressed some editorial fears that the legislature would interpret the showing as an indication that the citizens of Tonopah did not care if the county were split. A meeting two days later drew a larger crowd and officials of the merchants' association presented facts and figures to justify the status quo. According to attorney Charles McIntosh, property assessments north of the Mt. Diablo Baseline totaled $2,360,978 in 1908 and those for the areas to the south amounted to $749,678. These figures excluded railroad valuation which McIntosh calculated at $611,161 for the north and $1,871,233 for the south. The new county would thus have to rely heavily upon railroad taxes, and would itself

generate costs which would have to be passed along to shippers, merchants and, ultimately, consumers. A committee was appointed to draw up a set of resolutions in objection to county division, and those present were urged to write to Nye County's delegation in Carson City as well as to bring to bear whatever other political influence they might have at their disposal.[90]

Editor Booth had meanwhile taken a new tack; on January 26 the *Bonanza* published a cartoon showing Tallman with a knife threatening to carve up Nye County as Senator Zeb Kendall, Nye County's other senator, strode to the rescue with a shotgun. The next day, both responded to an Arthur Buel cartoon which had appeared in the *Reno Evening Gazette* of January 25. The cartoon depicted Tallman sawing up Nye County while Kendall, armed with a pot of glue, stuck it back together. Booth commented that the cartoon was "a true likeness of the hopelessness of any division of Nye County—at least for the present. Zeb's glue pot won't stand for it—not for a minute." In his editorial that day, he claimed that the citizens of Beatty and Pioneer were opposed to county division and that the proponents of a new county had neither demonstrated the benefits to the taxpayers nor satisfactorily explained how the county debt was to be divided up. He also touched on the matter of the railroads. According to his calculations, division would leave the northern section with only one and seven-eighths miles of taxable right-of-way, while the southern part would have several hundred miles. This disparity would throw the tax burden upon the stockmen and large property owners of his section, he maintained, and would decrease the value of all taxable property.[91]

In Rhyolite, editors App and Carr of the *Daily Bulletin* had consistently maintained that it was Tonopah's businessmen who were behind the opposition to county division and pointed to their recent prominence in the activities of the Tonopah Promotion Association as confirmation. This argument would not wash in Tonopah, however. On January 18, editor Booth referred to one of App's recent editorials as appearing to have emanated "from the brain of a devotee of the poppy juice." Booth claimed that the merchants were not concerned about losing whatever small amount of southern trade they were getting, but rather were acting in the interests of nine-tenths of the citizens of the county who were opposed. His editorial also brought up the matter of the county debt and indicated that division might be considered when the encumbrance was cleared up two years hence. App had anticipated this argument, however, predicting in his own column that same day that county officials would have doubled the debt to $220,000 by the time of the next legislative session.[92]

The set of resolutions opposing county division had by now been forwarded to Carson City. Charles McIntosh and James Cook, who chaired the committee and wrote the final version, denied that county expenses would be reduced by division. Such a move could only add to the burden on northern taxpayers, they reasoned, possibly crippling the mining industry. Their figures purported to show that additional railroad taxation would injure northern mining inter-

ests, the biggest shippers in the county. The statement also claimed that ninety-nine percent of the electors and taxpayers of Nye County opposed division, and added that the question had never been raised in the recent campaign, an omission which, in their view, somehow made the division proposal illegitimate in their view.[93]

Frank Mannix had again fallen ill and returned to Reno for further medical treatment, but C.G. Cole, who replaced him in the editorial chair of the *Bullfrog Miner* in January, was an equally fervent divisionist. In his editorial debut on January 30, he addressed himself to the problem of the county debt. "Give us half the debt before it gets any larger, and let us go," he pleaded. "We will guarantee to stand forth a worthy neighbor and a most prosperous one." In another column that day, he gave a standard breakdown on property tax assessments, license fee collections and bullion tax payments which demonstrated that the residents, businessmen, mine owners and railroad operators of the southern section had paid more than their share of the county's taxes in 1908. He also opened that day's columns to Frank H. Stickney, cashier of the First National Bank of Rhyolite. Beginning his letter with a phrase familiar to all Americans, "When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for a people . . . ," he went on to enumerate the grievances which had led to the desire for division. In conclusion, he suggested that had circumstances led to a mining boom in the south first and had Rhyolite become the county seat, the citizens of that community would have been fair to their fellows to the north and have allowed them to have their own "political fiefdom." Addressing himself to the citizens of Tonopah, he asked them to put themselves in the place of his fellow southerners and consider the matter from their point of view.[94]

Unlike Cole, Richard Carr of the *Rhyolite Daily Bulletin* made no appeal to patriotism or fair play. On January 29, he suggested that editor Booth change the name of his paper to *The Office Holders' Lament*. Earle Clemens of the *Rhyolite Herald* took an equally hard line, asserting on February 3 that the authors of the opposition resolution had not made a single "sensible or reasonable" argument. It was clear to him, he wrote, that the southern section had paid the greater part of the actual tax burden and would pay even more in the future when the mines and camps of Pioneer and Springdale began to produce.[95]

County division petitions had already been placed in circulation in Rhyolite, Beatty, Pioneer, Springdale, Gold Center and other camps, but editor Branson of the *Tonopah Miner* was taking a new tack. On February 2, he noted that a writer in the *Pioche Record* had made a case for putting the division of Lincoln County to a vote. He believed that this was a particularly appropriate solution for Nye County also, given the fact that the question had not come up in the recent campaigns. Commenting at Pioneer two days later, he predicted that Rhyolite and this new camp might get into a "tussle" over location of the county seat should division occur. Two days later, he predicted a possible bid from Beatty. "With all the frogs scrapping," he concluded, "the puddle will

William W. "Billy" Booth, Editor, *Tonopah Bonanza*, opponent of those seeking to create Bullfrog County *(Arthur Buel Caricature)*.

become very turbid and the way the mud will fly will be caution."[96]

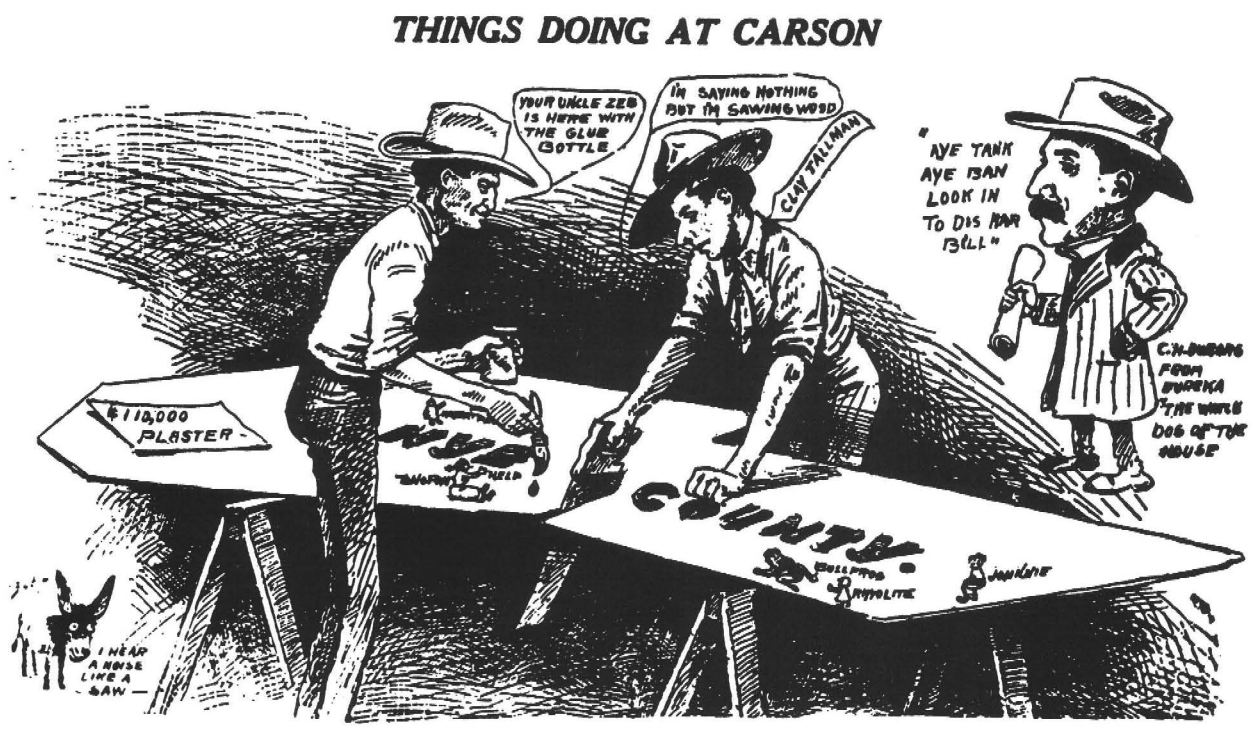
The citizens of Silver Bow were less concerned with making a bid for the county seat than with keeping the town and its mines in the same county since the proposed dividing line would leave the town in the new county and the major mines in Nye County. Some locators in the district were talking of having the Mt. Diablo Baseline resurveyed and others were reported to be consulting their attorneys.[97]

The divison movement was getting little support from editors in the outlying areas of northern Nye County. On January 9, Henry J. Bartlett of the *Round Mountain Nugget* had charged that those involved in the division effort were seeking personal gains and advantages. Rather than splitting the county, he favored election of better officials. On January 30, he carried some of the division arguments to their logical extremes to demonstrate the fallacious nature of their premise. The state of Nevada was itself too large, he wrote, and should perhaps be divided into more manageable segments. Observing that Carson City was located on the western edge of the state, he asked why the capital should not be moved to Eureka or Austin. Rhyolite might also be considered, he wrote, or Goldfield. Tongue in cheek, he proposed that the State Insane Asylum be moved to Goldfield, with the capital to follow later if the move proved to be "prudent and advisable." Lester W. Haworth of *The Manhattan Mail* jumped on Tallman and Kane on February 3 for failing to bring up the division question during the campaign, charging that there was no valid reason for division since the people of the south had good rail connections to the north.[98]

Assemblyman Kane and Senator Tallman had meanwhile completed work on a division bill to be introduced in the Assembly, but the probability of its passage was a matter of considerable difference of opinion. Assemblyman Arthur J. Aylsworth of Eureka County passed through Tonopah on January 29 and was asked about the chances by a reporter from the *Bonanza*. He expressed some doubt that the bill would be introduced since virtually every member of both houses of the legislature was opposed, including those of his own county's delegation, but Assemblyman Kane, who was perhaps closer to the situation, predicted victory in a letter read at a citizens' meeting in Beatty on February 1.[99]

Editor Booth continued to personalize the division campaign in the *Bonanza*. Commenting on his editorial cartoon on January 29, he wrote that Tallman "is about to do a somersault stunt that will hold him for some time to come. It is a case of 'going, went, gone' with this politician's aspirations." The next day's cartoon depicted Tallman as dead, laid out in the street and covered by a blanket. Attached was a note reading "Bill introduced for division of Nye Co. by C. Tallman." The caption read "Can this be another political suicide?"[100]

The question of popular support for a new county was also a matter of heated debate. Reports from outlying southern camps indicated that the division petitions were meeting with enthusiastic responses and those citizens attending



Arthur Buel's take on the dispute over the cartoon of Bullfrog County; Zeb Kendall, left; Clay Tallman, center *(Reno Evening Gazette, January 25, 1909).*

Assemblyman Lorin O. Ray, *Rhyolite Booster (Tonopah Sun, February 9, 1907).*

mass meetings in Beatty on February 1 and 2 voted unanimously in favor of a division resolution to be forwarded to Carson City. When Booth charged that the Rhyolite petitions were being circulated among the passengers on trains passing through town, editor App of the *Bulletin* wrote that Booth's editorial reminded him of a small boy whistling in the woods to keep up his courage.[101]

The bill to divide Lincoln County had cleared the final legislative hurdle on February 1 and was signed by Governor Denver Dickerson on February 5. The ease with which that bill had coursed the legislative channels was encouraging to those who sought a new county cut from southern Nye County. Noting in his editorial of February 6 that Tonopah editors had favored division of Lincoln County, App jibbed them for condemning Rhyolite's aspirations. "Poor

old Tonopah," he wrote. "The bare thought of a divorce almost brings on heart failure, although only a short time ago this territory was considered only a worthless desert."[102]

Joseph A. Small of the Bullfrog Chamber of Commerce had meanwhile forwarded the set of division resolutions to the various legislative delegations and Charles Kane introduced Assembly Bill 77 on February 8. As introduced, the bill to create Bullfrog County embraced only that part of Nye County lying south of the first standard parallel south of the Mt. Diablo Baseline, Senator Stewart's more expansive plan for redrawing several other counties having been dropped in the interest of attracting support from representatives of those areas. Rhyolite was to be the county seat unless the voters of the new county petitioned the Board of County Commissioners within sixty days to call a special election to designate some other community. Nye County officials residing within the new county were to hold the same offices in the new county until successors could be elected. The governor was to appoint the remaining members of the Board of County Commissioners who in turn would name other county officials. The new county was to remain within the Fifth Judicial District, but all cases arising within the new county or pending in Tonopah were to be transferred to Rhyolite. The bill also apportioned bonded indebtedness of Nye County and provided for the return to Bullfrog County of all taxes collected in 1908 on properties lying within its boundaries. All questions of property, indebtedness and revenue were to be resolved by a special Board of Assessors and a Joint Board of Commissioners representing both Nye and Bullfrog Counties. Problems which confounded both boards would be settled by the Governor who was to appoint some disinterested person to decide upon a just settlement. Bids for transcribing records were authorized, and the bill further stipulated that Bullfrog County be allotted one Senator and two Assemblymen in 1910 and that Nye County have one Senator and five Assemblymen.[103]

The bill was sent to the Committee on Counties and County Boundaries, but Chairman Kane was not able to get the support of the other members of his committee and the measure was reported out without recommendation the next morning. On second reading it was made a special order of business for 11:30 a.m., February 11, on motion of Assemblyman J.E. McNamara of Tonopah.[104]

County Commissioner Sam Lindsay and a delegation of southern supporters arrived that evening, February 9, and were on hand in the halls of the Assembly the next morning to buttonhole legislators and lobby for the division bill. Since Assemblyman Kane had previously promised that there would be no lobbying effort on behalf of the bill, the other members of the Nye County delegation were surprised and somewhat dismayed at the intensive effort being made that morning since they themselves had decided to forego a personal campaign. Although a freshman legislator, Kane knew many of his colleagues

personally and was well thought of by the ruling faction of the Democratic Party whom he had impressed when he did not complain about being deprived of his share of the attaché patronage when the legislative session opened. Observers believed that these relationships would not necessarily ensure the passage of the division bill, but would be a factor if the Assembly appeared evenly divided on the issue.[105]

T.G. Nicklin had meanwhile resumed the editorship of the *Beatty Bullfrog Miner* and was soon back into the county division fight. On February 11, the day the bill was to come up in the Assembly for a vote, he recommended that it be killed. He charged that the bill represented a "plot on the part of Rhyoliters to get the countyseat before the community lost all its population to Pioneer and Springdale." Particularly galled by the provision which would leave Commissioner Lindsay in office, he feared that Lindsay and his cohort would influence Governor Dickerson to appoint others of their ilk to the two remaining seats on the Board. He reasoned that this would give them control of the remainder of the county offices, and ensure that Rhyolite would forever remain the seat of government. Nicklin also complained about the diminuitive size of the proposed new county, "the triangular tail cut from Mother Nye," and about the proposed salaries which he asserted were twice as high as those in the bill which carved Clark County out of Lincoln County. He included some caustic comments on the costs of copying county records, implying that the bidding procedures provided opportunity for graft and fraud. The enterprising scribe then added some long thoughts on taxes, stating that unless the boundary line were pushed twenty-five miles north of the line contemplated in Kane's bill, taxes would drive property owners out and put an end to further investment in the mines.[106]

When the Assembly convened on February 11, Assemblyman Kane presented a petition in favor of his bill. Committee reports were then heard and a recess was called until 2:00 p.m. Assemblyman Fred Berry of Tonopah took the floor when the afternoon session convened and introduced an amendment to the division bill which would place the issue before the voters on the 1911 general election ballot. Kane then rose to defend the amendment and in favor of the bill as originally introduced. With Senator Tallman at his side and other Senators observing in the galleries, he spoke for two hours, touching upon virtually every argument that had been adduced to justify separation from Nye County over the past three years. Assemblyman Berry stood to support his amendment and argue against Kane's bill. Countering his colleague's arguments point by point, he was successful in attaching the amendment to the bill. The vote, 28 to 21 with four members absent, did not seem to be along party lines, but there were some obvious sectional divisions. With the exception of Assemblyman Kane, Nye County's delegation voted solidly in favor of the amendment. Two of Goldfield's representatives voted in favor and one was opposed and the three Lincoln County Assemblymen also voted in the negative. The vote on the

amended bill was then taken and passed 36 to 8, with only C.H. DuBorg of Beowawe and L.A. Ellis of Mina voting with the six Tonopah and Manhattan legislators who registered negative votes. Duborg had previously cast his vote in favor of the amendment and Ellis against.[107]

Editor Booth of the *Bonanza* believed that the passage of Berry's amendment was the equivalent of a defeat for the division bill should it pass in the Senate and be signed by Governor Dickerson, unlikely prospects according to his intelligence from Carson City. He reiterated his contention that the measure lacked popular support and predicted that Nicklin's opposition would carry some weight when the measure was called up in the Senate. Editor Bartlett of the *Round Mountain Nugget* was equally confident that the citizens of Nye County would turn thumbs down on division if it ever came to a vote. He suggested that "Frog-Legs" would be a more appropriate appellation for the proposed new political entity since it was little more than an "appendage" from which a few "would-be politicians" were seeking to "hop" into office.[108]

John App and Richard Carr of the *Rhyolite Daily Bulletin* believed that, despite the amendment, county division was still a possibility if the southern section grew and developed sufficiently before the next election. But Clemens of the *Rhyolite Herald* was bitter. "No fairness or justice seems to influence the Tonopahn," he wrote on February 11. "It is only their selfishness and greed that controls them and then denies a community its rights. Such sentiments and practices may succeed for a time, but finally justice will prevail." Among those Rhyoliters on hand at the time of the vote was Frank Mannix. His talks with legislators and political hangers-on had convinced him that the Senate would knock out the amendment and that the Assembly would concur. He had also talked to Governor Dickerson and had come to believe that the chief executive recognized the justice of the division effort and would sign a division bill if it came before him, but would do nothing to ensure its passage. Mannix also informed his readers that Senator Kendall was only "lukewarm" in his opposition and that he was working against the bill only because he knew that he could not return to Tonopah otherwise. Manhattan's three Assemblymen, Matt Kane, William G. Merton and J.B. Griffen, were also unenthusiastic. According to Mannix, Merton said that he understood the problem in the southern district, but could not see how a division could help his own constituents, who had similar problems. Matt Kane favored any division that included Round Mountain and Manhattan, but not a division of the south, which he believed would leave his voters completely at the mercy of Tonopah officeholders. Speaker Griffen had similar feelings, telling Mannix that division would cut the size of Nye County's legislative delegation and might well leave his community, Manhattan, without any representation at all.[109]

The intensity of the ongoing controversy over dividing Nye County not only drew students of declamation to the Assembly chambers on the day of the debate, but inspired at least one poet, Binker of the *Carson City News*, who

penned the following ode on February 12:

> The Bullfrog's Lament
>
> Said Bullfrog Kane
> To his running mate:
> "You and I will change
> The Map of the State."
> And the Tallman from the Senate Hall
> Came scurring in at his comrade's call.
> They battled and fought on the losing field,
> Tried every way not a point to yield.
> But Berry was there with an amending note
> That seemed to win every straggling vote
> And the measure killed to be forgotten quite
> And Nye won out by "the might of right."
> The poor Bullfrogs must croak alone
> For they asked for bread and got a stone.[110]

The division bill was sent up to the Senate and introduced by Senator Tallman on February 15. At his request, the rules were suspended and the measure went to the Committee on Counties and County Boundaries, whose chairman, Senator Kendall, bottled it up. The bill did not again see light of day until March 1. Nye County editors meanwhile continued the war of words. On February 23, Richard Carr attacked Walter D. Cole, Nye County Democratic Chairman, in his column in the *Daily Bulletin*. "He may be a candidate for office again," Carr wrote, "and his work against the interests of Southern Nye should be remembered." Editor Booth of the *Bonanza* came to Cole's defense three days later, contending that party officials commanded support from all segments of the party and would have fought as hard for county division as against it if it had been a party issue. C.G. Cole, nearing the end of his tenure in Frank Mannix' s editorial chair, scribbed an editorial on February 13 in which he speculated on the possibility of taking the county seat away from Tonopah if division failed. In the course of this discussion, he wrote that the southern citizens would "never be content in the same state with Tonopah." Although obviously a typographical error or a slip of the mind, the use of the word "state" in place of "county" amused Booth who took the statement as a "threat of seccession." His own column responded with a parody of a young man going off to war—the gray haired mother, aged father and beautiful sweetheart, tears flowing down her pale cheeks as she embraces him one last time and gives him a parting kiss. "Think of it! Oh, cruel war, you must not come. God forbid!" he wrote.[111]

Booth had taken to referring to the *Daily Bulletin* as the "Rhyolite Postage Stamp," a reference to the paper's tabloid size as well as to his perception of App and Carr's narrowness of mind, and he began to answer the arguments coming out of the south one by one as they were published. Noting that Clemens of the *Daily Herald* had recently written of the "inattentiveness" of Tonopah investors to the development of the mines of the southern section, he coun-

tered that much Tonopah money had gone into the Montgomery-Shoshone, the Bullfrog District's leading producer, and into the mines of the camp of Pioneer. Noting that Clemens had recently referred to Rhyolite as a "metropolis," Booth voiced his agreement on February 20. "It beats hell in two ways," he wrote, "having a couple of degrees less temperature with just a trifle more water, but anything goes in Nevada so long as it beats hell."[112]

Frank Mannix had returned from Reno on February 17 and was soon back in the fight. Taking exception to Booth's assertion that Rhyolite was being depopulated by the rush to Pioneer, he wrote that the Pioneer boom was helping his community by bringing in new investors, helping the merchants and inducing them to open branches in the new camp. He also had some choice comments on T.G. Nicklin, revealing for the first time that the Beatty editor had written to members of the legislature in opposition to the division bill. Calling him an "irresponsible, pusillanimous nincompoop," Mannix claimed that he was not speaking for the citizenry. "As a fellow craftsman, we would ask you to fade away somewhere," he wrote on February 27. "Find a slimy sinkhole away from your fellow men and drown yourself. This is for the dignity of the profession. In Nevada, they ride men on rails, and we would dislike to assist at such a function with a man who was ever classed as an editor astride the bar.[113]

Carr of the *Daily Bulletin* castigated Nicklin as a "gloomy brained misfit" in a February 15 editorial, an "evil eye grouch," declaring that had "cast a pall" over Beatty since the day he arrived in camp. Two days later, the Rhyolite newsman reported that Nicklin had been circulating an anti-division petition in Pioneer. "People born on the dark side of the moon, with the gloomy side of life in their vision, are really to be pitied," he concluded. "They neither want to prosper nor allow anyone else to do so. Poor old grouch."[114]

Carr was also critical of editor Bartlett of the *Round Mountain Nugget*, whom he charged with opposing division "on the principal that misery loves company and wants to keep us all in the same old rut." Rather than "prostituting himself" on behalf of Tonopah officeholders and devoting his columns to "spurious comments" on those seeking to divide Nye County, Carr advised him to examine the issues. "Queer how some newspapers love the taxeater and hate the taxpayer," he commented. In turn, Bartlett replied on February 27 that the division issue had been thoroughly discussed in Round Mountain and that his editorial position was reasonable and well-considered.[115]

The amended version of Assembly Bill 77 meanwhile remained in the Senate Committee on Counties and County Boundaries. The measure had received the endorsement of editor P.L. Bryant of the influential *Nevada State Journal* on February 17, and legislative observers were of the opinion that the bill had a good chance of passage if it got out of committee, but questions were soon being raised about the constitutionality of the referendum feature which Assemblyman Berry's amendment had incorporated into the bill. Opponents of an anti-gambling measure had tried to incorporate a similar feature into a bill

outlawing legalized gambling, but had been told that past Nevada Supreme Court decisions prevented the legislature from delegating its authority to the voters. Such an amendment, constitutional experts claimed, would render a law unconstitutional on its face even though it might be passed and signed by the Governor. The opponents of the anti-gambling measure apparently knew this, and had tried to include the popular vote feature as a veiled alternative to openly supporting legalized gambling, but the same question soon surfaced in regard to the county division bill as passed by the Assembly. Editor Booth consulted an attorney and was told that a referendum feature incorporated in a legislative act would invalidate a law only if its application were statewide and would require the approval of the voters of the entire state, but that such a measure would be constitutional if it applied only to a county or a municipality.[116]

Mannix of the *Bullfrog Miner* believed that the Senate would reject the referendum feature because of its questionable constitutionality, but his fellow editors ignored the issue. Richard Carr was trying to whip up sentiment in favor of removing the county seat from Tonopah to Rhyolite in case the division bill failed of passage and Clemens was continuing to pursue arguments for division, even though every newspaper reader in the county was well-versed on the justifications for creating a new political entity by that time. In responding to a story coming out of Carson City to the effect that angry Tonopah residents were threatening to cut off all political representation for southern Nye County, he commented that the report "well illustrates the fairness of Tonopah and those who oppose home rule among neighbors." Turning to other arguments for division, he pointed out that the proposed railroad from Ely south to Tonopah might make up for the revenue Nye County would lose from the southern lines which would be in the new county. He also charged that Tonopah officials had been remiss in their collection of Bullion Tax proceeds, thus depriving the state of needed revenues. "Justice, home rule and good business are the foundations for the demand for county division," he concluded.[117]

T.G. Nicklin had meanwhile taken to heart the criticism from Rhyolite editors and was considering suspending his Beatty publication. Advertisements for the sale of the journal appeared in Carson City papers on February 20 and the last issue of the *Beatty Bullfrog Miner* came out on February 28. He had lost subscribers and advertising as a consequence of his stand against county division and had apparently alienated the citizens of his community. Those favoring county division had called for a public meeting to be held on March 1, but rumors that actions against Nicklin by a mysterious "Beatty Committee of Fourteen " might include a coat of tar and feathers induced the recalcitrant editor to pack up and leave town. Among those editors who welcomed the news that he had thrown in the towel was Carr. Congratulating the citizens of Beatty, he commented that the next community Nicklin settled in "should either get out an injunction or apply for insurance papers against being hoodooed."[118]

The nearby camp of Pioneer had a population of about a thousand souls by that time and a recent strike by the Pioneer Leasing Company at the 210-foot level was attracting the attention of investors, promoters and journalists. On February 17, Clemens of the *Rhyolite Herald* announced that he intended to commence publication of the *Pioneer Press* at Rhyolite, but Theodore Lowe beat him to the punch and got out the first issue of the *Pioneer Topics* that same day. The first issue of Clemens's paper appeared in early March and the two editors were soon involved in a lively journalistic skirmish, but events in Pioneer remained only an interesting sidelight to the division fight being waged that spring.[119]

The amended version of Assembly Bill 77 had made its way through committee and was scheduled for introduction in the Senate on March 2. The previous day, division opponents met in the basement of the Tonopah Club to hear reports from Carson City, plan strategy and communicate the sentiments of those present to their representatives, among whom were attorneys Hugh Brown and William B. Pittman. Carr, reporting on the meeting two days later, referred to the Tonopah anti-divisionists as "The Office Holders Taxeating Association" whose members had been "feeding at the public crib so long that the bare thought of anyone else getting a bite turns them sick and sore." He also reported that few taxpayers had attended the gathering since most ordinary citizens realized that division would reduce taxes in both the old county and the proposed, new one. "Poor old Tonopah," he concluded. "When getting old and senile, its h—l to be divorced and lose your husky young meal ticket."[120]

The division bill came to the Senate floor without recommendation on the afternoon of March 2 and Senator Tallman moved that it be made a special order for Thursday, March 4. Legislative observers believed that the bill had a chance, but parliamentary maneuvering by Senator Kendall prevented the taking of a straight vote. Senator Tallman took the floor first, introducing six amendments, all of which carried. In Section 12 of the bill, a change in the wording adding "all moneys due Nye County" to a line referring to funds in the treasury of Nye County and Section 14 was amended to specify the "County Treasurer of the County of Bullfrog" rather than *County Treasurer of Bullfrog*. In Section 16, the salary of the Clerk of the Board of Commissioner, who was also to serve as ex-officio District Court Clerk, was reduced from $2,400 to $1,800 per annum, as were the salaries of the County Recorder and ex-officio County Auditor and the District Attorney. The salary of the Sheriff was reduced to $2,400, but he was allowed a commission of three percent on all license fees paid to him and all personal property taxes he collected. In Section 18, an amendment made an exception for the fees and commissions of the Sheriff to exempt him from the requirement to pay such monies to the County Treasurer on a monthly basis. In the fifth change in the bill, Section 23 was stricken and replaced with a provision, assigned transcription of the Nye County records pertaining to properties in Bullfrog County to the new County Recorder of the

new county rather than having the job bid out. In the final amendment, Section 27 was changed to eliminate Assemblyman Berry's referendum feature and replace it with Kane's original wording which made the act effective upon being signed by the Governor.[121]

The first five amendments passed without comment, but the sixth was the subject of intense floor debate. Senators James T. Boyd of Washoe County, H.H. Coryell of Wells and Levi Syphus of St. Thomas, Lincoln County, argued that the amendment providing for a vote of the people would render the bill unconstitutional if passed by the Senate, but Senator Kendall spoke out strongly for its retention. The lawmakers then voted to retain the referendum feature and Tallman again rose from his seat to speak in favor of the bill with the amendments as adopted that day. Kendall then stood in opposition, asking the clerk to read a paper he had prepared on the subject. His colleagues anticipated a statistical analysis of some sort, but it proved merely another speech against dividing Nye County. When Tallman interupted the reading to offer an objection, Kendall obliged him and the reading was thus terminated at that point. Several Senators offered objections to the language of the bill and Kendall moved to lay it on the table. Two members of the upper house were absent that day and only Senator Syphus supported Tallman in voting to oppose the motion to table.[122]

Senator Kendall left Carson City the next day to attend the annual meeting of the Rawhide Bluff Mining Company in Tonopah. In an interview at the Tonopah depot on the morning of March 6, he told reporters from the *Tonopah Sun* and the *Tonopah Bonanza* that the division bill was dead for the session. Lindley Branson of the *Sun* had lost interest in the controversy, but Sam Dunham of the *Tonopah Miner* felt called upon to rub it in. His editorial of March 6, recounted the supposed opposition to Rhyolite's county seat pretentions by the citizens of Beatty and other southern camps. "It is now in order for Pioneer to make demands," he wrote. "Why not amend the present bill and create several counties out of the southern portion of Nye? Then every camp with a handful of men would have the distinction of being a county seat and there would be offices to go all around." He also launched an editorial barb at those citizens of Rhyolite who had recently become embroiled in an internecine dispute which had closed their school. "What a battle would be on," he mused, "if they had a whole county administration to take care of."[123]

The tabling of the division bill did not cause its proponents to lose heart, and editor Carr had word from Carson City that the measure would be up again very soon. Intelligence had meanwhile reached Rhyolite that officials of the Tonopah & Tidewater Railroad had withdrawn their support for the new county in exchange for a favorable vote by Tonopah legislators on a measure designed to provide a three-year tax exemption on the right-of-way for a proposed rail line from Ely to Goldfield or Tonopah. Both Carr and Clemens opposed the bill and railroad officials maintained that they had been neutral all along in regard

to the creation of a new county and expected to remain so. Carr vowed to investigate the source of the story, but Clemens felt that it had originated with Tonopah representation in Carson City who were trying their best to "befog" the members of the Senate in order to keep the division bill under wraps. Clemens maintained that this was also the case with a measure designed to reduce salaries of Nye County officials. Editor Booth took the salary bill seriously, however, asserting that the salaries proposed were so low that county officials might resign if it were passed. Carr found this threat preposterous. "When any of that Tonopah bunch let go of the public teat," he wrote on March 8, "the world will come to a sudden stop and the sun will be covered with blue spots."[124]

Neither the railroad bill nor the salary act got out of committee, but the county division controversy was revived on March 11 when Senator Tallman made a motion to take Assembly Bill 77 from the table and refer it to the Judiciary Committee. Kendall objected, but the motion passed. Clemens ignored Tallman's new legislative initiative, as did Frank Mannix, who was preparing to leave for Santa Rosa, California, in search of further medical attention and a more healthful climate, but Richard Carr was inspired to comment upon a recent $10,000 loan negotiated by Nye County officials because the county's $16,000 treasury surplus was tied up in litigation surrounding the recent failure of the Nye & Ormsby County Bank. He condemned county officials for their ineptness in handling public funds and asserted that the loan was a powerful argument for county division. On March 15, he brought up the Logan tax defalcation matter again, but admitted editorially that he personally would be glad to see the legislative session end, whatever the outcome of the county division controversy.[125]

The division bill remained in the Judiciary Committee and Senator Tallman introduced a substitute for the measure on March 15. The rules were suspended to allow the bill to be read by title only and it was referred to the Nye County delegation, but a new element in the controversy had surfaced by that time, a rumor that legislators from White Pine County, Lander and the newly-created County of Clark were considering an effort to take adjacent areas of Nye County. This was apparently nothing more than talk as no realignment legislation to effect such a boundary was introduced, but the county division controversy was distinctly on the back burner by this time and was overshadowed by debate over other heated issues—the anti-gambling bill, an effort to secure the Stewart Indian School for use as a new prison, a measure to abolish the Nevada State Police, a plan to create the Office of State Mine Inspector, a bill to pay the widow of the late Governor John Sparks the remainder of his salary and an appropriation for the Nevada State Mental Hospital. Senator Tallman had apparently made his peace with the other members of the Nye County delegation over the matter of the referendum on county division, but he believed that he did not have the votes on the floor of the Senate to get the mea-

sure passed in any form. On March 16, he and Senator Kendall reported to the President of the Senate that the Senate Substitute for Assembly Bill 77 was reported out without recommendation after consideration by the Nye County delegation. Later that afternoon, Kendall requested that the measure be indefinitely postponed. The remainder of the Senate concurred and the effort to create Bullfrog County thus came to an end.[126]

Word of the final resolution of the county division controversy was wired to Tonopah and Rhyolite within the hour and editor Booth was in print with an editorial reaction the next day. The division measure was not only "dead," he wrote, "but has been buried with all proper obsequies." He reported that Assemblyman Kane was a good loser and had joined his colleagues in their victory jubilations but he had no comment on Senator Tallman. Forest, the *Bonanza's* cartoonist, had something to say, however. In a cartoon captioned "The Way of the Transgressor Is Hard," which appeared on March 19, he depicted the return of the Nye County delegation to Tonopah. Kendall, riding on the rear platform of a railroad car, was saying, "We are home, boys," but Kane and Tallman were walking along behind. Carrying a large portfolio labeled "Dreams About Bullfrog County," the cartoonist had Tallman saying "My feet are getting awfully sore. We know we have made fools of ourselves, think of them fellows riding." Kane was shown bringing up the rear carrying a large scroll tagged "Nye County Division Bill."[127]

Lindley Branson reported Kendall's final motion on March 19, but had no comment otherwise. Sam Dunham of the *Tonopah Miner* was also silent and outlying editors in Manhattan and Round Mountain let the controversy die without further agitation. The Third House, meeting in the legislative chambers when the clerks finally finished work on March 21, lampooned other measures considered or passed during the session, but the division bill did not figure in their proceedings.[128]

Clemens of the *Rhyolite Herald* made no further mention of the failure of the division bill, devoting his column of March 24 to a pat on the back for Kane and Tallman for their efforts to get the bill through the legislative mill and for their support of other beneficial legislation. Tallman, interviewed in the *Rhyolite Herald* that day, spoke of other legislative matters, but Kane told the reporter that the division bill might have had a better chance had it been introduced during the first week of the session when county division sentiment was more favorable.[129]

Richard Carr took a harder line in the *Daily Bulletin* of March 18. Noting the failure of the division movement, he commented that there would thus be no tax relief for the citizens of southern Nye County, their only hope being the removal of the county seat to Rhyolite. Thoroughly disgusted, he asserted that the measure to adjourn was the legislature's most positive achievement and concluded that it would be better for the people of Nevada if lawmakers met only once every twenty years. This editorial was Carr's last in the chair at the

Bulletin. He and App had dissolved their partnership the previous day and he was making plans to leave the state. In his column of March 20, he took his last shot. "I wish all the good people of Nevada a prosperous future and the multitude of enemies I have I hope will live to a ripe old age and learn better sense."[130]

Frank Mannix penned his final editorial on March 16 and departed for California the next day. His missive, which appeared on March 20, rather acidly suggested that the people of the southern section had not given Kane and Tallman enough support. He believed that the division cause was still a just one, however, and promised to work for it in the future. H.F. Kane, who had taken Carr's place as editor of the *Daily Bulletin*, took offense at Mannix's comment. He saw it as a reflection upon the intelligence of the citizens and their representatives and as a suggestion that the people of Rhyolite should have raised a "slush fund" to get the division bill through the legislature. "The individual who openly advocates the bribing of others is himself susceptible to bribery," he concluded. Mannix was not able to defend himself, however. He had gotten only as far as Reno before he had to be taken off the train and hospitalized.[131]

Booth of the *Bonanza* also refused to let the issue drop. On March 20, he asserted that his fellow citizens would never let the county seat go because it would require them "to make long, tedious and expensive trips to Rhyolite." A week later, he noted a glowing tribute to Assemblyman F. E. Woolcock of Lander County that had appeared in the *Virginia Evening Chronicle*. According to the Comstock paper, Woolcock's friends were planning to put him up for higher state office in the future. Booth mused that the people of Nye County would remember those who had voted for division, Woolcock included, and would keep their names for future reference.[132]

Editor Kane, although new in the chair at the *Bulletin*, seemed determined to have the last word. "The divorce must come in the near future," he wrote on March 23. " Whether we shall obtain it upon the grounds of failure to provide or of incompatability or natural depravity, the northern part of this alledged happy family will be forced to act as defendant."[133]

In spite of Kane's hopeful declaration, the "divorce" was never to be. The Bullfrog District was by then in the early stages of a decline in productivity, and it was soon evident that the fabled borasca phase had begun. Production from the district's mines had never matched their publicity and promotion and a team of geologists from the U.S. Geological Survey who visited during the summer of 1908 saw beyond the boosterism and accurately gauged the future. "Whatever the expectations excited from time to time by the finding of superficial bunches of rich ore," one of them wrote, "there can be no doubt that the veins as a whole are to be classed as low grade when the conditions under which they must be exploited are taken into consideration. They are in no way comparable with the remarkable bonanzas that have brought fame to Gold-

field and cannot be successfully worked by the same methods."[134]

Production in the district peaked at $608,031 in 1908, but fell to $442,894 in 1909, a decline of 27.16 percent. In 1910, production dropped another 12.06 percent to $371,903. The production figure for 1911 was $46,051, down 87.62 percent from the previous year. Rhyolite's population was estimated at 8,000 in 1908, but within two years fell to only 675 souls, a decrease of 91.65 percent. Statisticians might well find an interesting analogy here since the decline in the value of mineral production was 92.113 percent from 1908 to 1911.[135]

The Bullfrog District's leading citizens were also seeking greener pastures. C.G. Noble, Frank Mannix's right-hand man on the *Bullfrog Miner*, left for Las Vegas in late March of 1909 and William Morris Stewart, First Citizen of the Bullfrog District and progenitor of the abortive Bullfrog County scheme, died in Washington D.C. on April 23, 1909. Others who had fought the good fight returned to their normal pursuits. Earle Clemens of the *Daily Herald* remained a community booster and if words alone could have saved the district, his would have done it. "We are not discouraged here in Bullfrog," he wrote on April 28, 1909 "We are hopeful, for the output of the mines is greater today than ever before. Production is what counts, and we are producing a little more every month. As long as progress continues, we will continue to hope . . . ." A few weeks later, he made manifest his faith in the area by purchasing the subscription list and shop equipment of the defunct *Beatty Bullfrog Miner*. T.G. Nicklin had sold the *Las Vegas Age* to Charles Squires in 1908 and was later said to be considering relocating to Kamschatka, Alaska. In December, 1909, word reached Rhyolite that he was in Needles, California looking into new business opportunities. In 1931 he was reported to be living in Barstow, California where he was engaged in the real estate business.[136]

Lorin C. Ray, Rhyolite's first Assemblyman, left Nevada on August 25, 1909 for Salt Lake City where he intended to visit relatives before going on to Spokane, Washington to take up residence. Charles Kane, who had followed Ray in the Assembly seat, had sold his painting and decorating business earlier in the summer and had departed for California by that time. Only Clay Tallman remained in Rhyolite. He served as President Pro Tempore of the Nevada State Senate during the 1911 session and held the same position in the special session called in February, 1912. On April 15, 1912, an item in the "Personals" column of the *Rhyolite Herald* apprised readers that Tallman and his family were planning to move to Tonopah. They left in late May and he had established a law office at the State Bank Building by the first week in June. In 1910, he chaired the Democratic State Convention and was elected Democratic State Chairman. Two years later, he won the party's nomination for Nevada's seat in Congress, but lost to E.E. Roberts in November. President Woodrow Wilson appointed him as counsel to the United States Reclamation Service in May, 1913, and he became Commissioner of the United States General Land Office a few months later, a position he held until 1921. He later became chief counsel

Earle R. Clemens, editor of *The Rhyolite Herald*, proponent of Bullfrog County *(Photo courtesy of Alan Hencher).*

Frank "Shorty" Harris, original locator of the Bullfrog Mining District, 1909 *(Nevada Historical Society).*

for the Western Oil Producers Company, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Clay Tallman died of a heart attack on August 25, 1949 while on vacation in Montrose, Colorado.[137]

Although Frank Mannix had been appointed Nye County Treasurer on May 10, 1909, replacing Robert F Gilbert, he retained editorial control of the *Bullfrog Miner* until selling out to Earle Clemens and moving to Tonopah that fall. He was elected Treasurer in 1910 and again in 1912, but his health did not improve and he died of stomach cancer in Tonopah on June 15, 1914. The rival *Rhyolite Daily Bulletin* had suspended publication on June 8, 1909 and Theodore Lowe of the *Pioneer Topics* ran his last edition on July 24. The *Bulletin* went under because of depressed business conditions, but for the *Topics*, the end came when a fire destroyed the community's business district on May 7. Lowe was a poor businessman as well and left a number of creditors unpaid when he departed for Los Angeles in August. Earle Clemens was not discouraged by the conflagration, however, and stayed on to boost Pioneer's mines. The time and money required to keep the *Pioneer Press* in operation soon became an unbearable burden, and he shut it down in December, 1909.[138]

Suspension of the *Rhyolite Daily Bulletin* cost the community two more citizens, John App, the publisher, and H.P. Kane, the last editor. App left for Missoula, Montana on July 16 to try his luck in the land lottery, but he did not get the property he sought, and was back in town by late September. He took up promoting and prospecting and occasionally worked as a printer over the next two years, but took no part in public affairs. In April 1911, he left Rhyolite to join his father in business in San Francisco. H. F. Kane had moved to the camp of Blair where he leased the *Blair Press*, becoming editor and publisher.[139]

The Montgomery-Shoshone, the Bullfrog District's leading producer, remained in operation until March of 1911. Ore from the mine averaged $7.96 a ton in 1909, but dropped to $11.83 in 1910. In January, 1911, a loss of fifty-four cents a ton was sustained. The loss increased another five cents a ton in February and returns were no better during the first week in March. On March 14, the management decided to close down. The operation had been employing sixty to a hundred men and the payroll averaged about $12,500 a month. Within a week of the announced closure, the mine force was reduced to a small clean-up crew and even Earle Clemens seemed to give up hope. "Presumably, it is all over," he wrote on March 25, "and with the passing of the Shoshone from the list of live ones is rung down the curtain on one of the most interesting chapters in Nevada's mining history."[140]

On April 8, two weeks after his lament on the Montgomery-Shoshone, Earle Clemens said his own farewell to Rhyolite. Expressing regret at his retirement from journalism in Bullfrog District, he penned an epitaph which could apply to many another boomed-out Nevada camp. "The boom came and the boom went," he reflected. "Fortunes were made and spent, towns were built and torn down again. And nothing occured to stem the fatal tide." For his fellow Rhyoliters, he hoped that the future would bring better times. "May prosperity

follow you everywhere, and catch up with you too, and may prosperity again reign in Rhyolite, the prettiest, cosiest mining town in the Great American Desert, a town blessed with ambitious, hopeful, courageous people and with a climate second to none on earth. Goodbye, dear ol' Rhyolite." Clemens and his wife left for Terra Bella, California on May 2 and he was back in the newspaper business within a month as proprietor of the *Terra Bella News*, which he published for thirty years. He died on January 10, 1943. During his years in Terra Bella, he returned to Rhyolite only once, a trip his wife persuaded him to make in the fall of 1939. A.B. Gibson, who took over the *Rhyolite Herald*, turned the paper into a mining journal. He was not a crusader and few public issues were raised in the fifteen months he kept the publication going. The last issue appeared on June 22, 1912. According to Gibson, the paper had been a losing proposition for several months and he had other business plans. The subscriptions were transferred to the *Goldfield News* and *Weekly Tribune*. Although Gibson assured his readers that the Goldfield paper would serve their interests, the demise of the *Herald* was more than just the failure of another newspaper. It was a watershed in the life of the Bullfrog District, now itself teetering on the brink of collapse.[141]

Others involved in the Bullfrog County controversy continued in public life. W.W. Booth edited the *Tonopah Bonanza* for another two decades, finally suspending publication on November 16, 1929, selling the plant to Frank Garside of the *Tonopah Times* who combined the two papers to publish the *Tonopah Times-Bonanza*. Booth had established the *Hawthorne News* on August 29, 1928, printing the paper in Tonopah. On October 3, 1934, he sold out to Joe Keno and retired to southern California, where he died of a heart attack in Bird Rock, California on October 18, 1938. Lindley C. Branson sold the *Tonopah Sun* on February 13, 1910, moving to Arizona. He later returned to Nevada, settling in Ely. Elected to the Nevada State Assembly, he represented White Pine County in the 1929 session, and again in the 1931 session. He then moved up to the Nevada State Senate, serving in the next two sessions, 1933 and 1935. In 1934, he ran for Governor as an independent, but was defeated. Branson served as Ely's Justice of the Peace, 1936-38. In 1940, he and his family moved to Seattle, where he died on April 26, 1946.[142]

Zeb Kendall represented Nye County in the Nevada State Senate in the 1911, 1913, and 1915 sessions. In 1919, he acquired the Consolidated Virginia Mining Company, Virginia City, running the operation from his office in San Francisco. In 1932, he returned to Nevada permanently, settling in Virginia City where he died on February 24, 1954.[143]

Many Bullfrog District residents were later to blame promoters for driving down the market in Rhyolite stocks so they could pick up bargains and make a killing. Values remained low, however, they claim, and holders of Bullfrog District stocks finally refused to pay additional assessments. Some residents remained only until they could afford to move, but others left carrying only what

possessions could fit into the family car. George L. Detomre, a mining engineer, described Rhyolite as "practically a deserted village" at the time he happened through town in the summer of 1913. "There are hundreds of houses," he later told a newsman, "some of them magnificent, standing idle with smashed windows, battered down doors and scarred walls. An elegant brick bank building equipped with costly furniture stands in the heart of the former business section, open to the public with big steel vault doors ajar and the floor strewn with books, checks and worthless stock certificates. Expensive fixtures remain in business houses, and in some of the houses good looking furniture remains which was left when the people found the boom had exploded."[144]

The Montgomery-Shoshone was sold for scrap and dismantled in May 1914. At that time, the Las Vegas & Tonopah Railroad and the Bullfrog & Goldfield line both faced declining freight and passenger revenues. The two enterprises merged on July 1, 1914, abandoning some trackage and sharing the right-of-way on other sections, but maintaining service into the Bullfrog District. At a hearing before Henry Thurtell, examiner for the Interstate Commerce Commission, in Reno on February 10, 1915, C.E. Redman, the traffic manager for the Las Vegas & Tonopah Railroad, testified on the problems of keeping the lines operating. Only one mine, the Tramps Consolidated, remained in production, he said, and the population of Beatty had declined to 150, Rhyolite stood at 100 and Amargosa at zero. On January 21, 1916, Bullfrog & Goldfield officials petitioned the Railroad Commission of Nevada for permission to end service to the Rhyolite branch and remove the trackage. A hearing was held in Rhyolite on October 25 and an order authorizing discontinuance of service between Beatty and Rhyolite was authorized in December. The tracks were taken up in the spring of 1917 and the right-of-way became a county road.[145]

Officials of the Nevada-California Power Company had ended service to Rhyolite in December 1916, and telephone service provided by the Bullfrog District Telephone Company came to an end by order of the Railroad Commission on October 7, 1918. At the time, the company had four subscribers.[146]

On May 7, 1918, an article in the *Reno Evening Gazette* on a Liberty Loan drive indicated that Rhyolite had a total population of forty-three souls. Just a year later, April 1919, most of the remaining frame and metal buildings were torn down for building materials and shipped to the Divide District south of Tonopah. Rhyolite's post office discontinued service on September 15, 1919 and the census taker in the summer of 1920 recorded only fourteen residents. Two years later, tourists on a *Los Angeles Times* motor tour found only one inhabitant, J.S. Lorraine, a ninety-two-year-old Frenchman. He died a few weeks later, October 22, 1922. When the newspaper tour returned in the fall of 1924, a reporter observed that "In the whole town there are a few buildings now intact because a few former residents are still paying taxes. In the last year or two, several have given up all hope and torn down their buildings The bank building was stripped of all woodwork, including floors, last year and now it is the

turn of the Overbury Building." Another visitor told of selecting his eating utensils at lunchtime from an abandoned restaurant. A favorite story of those who appreciate such humor concerns a mumified cow supposedly found in the old Las Vegas & Tonopah depot which had missed the last train out.[147]

In February 1923, a Mrs. Foss purchased the depot at a tax sale with a bid of $205. Two years later, officials of the Paramount Pictures Corporation leased the structure as a headquarters for the filming of *Wanderers of the Wasteland*. In June 1936, Norman C. Westmorland purchased the depot and several acres of the old townsite from Corbett Shipp of Beatty for $600 and announced his intention to convert the property into a casino which would cater to wealthy sojourners who frequented nearby Death Valley during the winter season. He put in a new dance floor and a bar, installed a roulette wheel and a dozen slot machines and opened his "Ghost Casino" on October 1. An overflow crowd was on hand for the New Year's celebration three months later and he brought in Las Vegas musicians for Saturday night dances. Westmorland also got a share of the divorce business over the years, prospective divorcées staying the required six weeks at a boardinghouse he built nearby. The casino became even more popular when a new highway from Death Valley over Daylight Pass opened in the spring of 1938 and Westmorland prospered, even through the difficult days of World War II when shortages of tires and gasoline cut tourist travel. Westmorland's health broke down in April 1947 and he died in May. His sister, Fredrica Heisler, and her husband took over, operating the casino for the next four years before redoing the facility and turning it into a museum and gift shop which they operated until her death in March, 1982.[148]

A 1980 inventory of Rhyolite's historic resources listed twenty-three structures sufficiently intact to be considered "significant properties" within a proposed historic district. A preservation group, Friends of Rhyolite, has been organized in recent years and the fact that much of the townsite is actually located on land administered by officials of the Bureau of Land Management bodes well for the future, but the community today appears to have changed little from this writer's first visit some forty years ago. Creosote bush is reclaiming the land and the deteriorated buildings serve as ghostly reminders of the flush years and a long—forgotten dream, the creation of Bullfrog County.[149]

NOTES

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[138]*Lingenfelter, op.cit.*, pp.149,165-66; *The Rhyolite Herald*, 12 May 1909, 1:3-4, 3:3-4; 7 August 1909, 4:6; 14 August 1909, 4:5; 2 October 1909, 1:2, 3, 5, and 2:1-2; 9 October 1909, 4:5; 8 December 1909, 1:7; 18 December 1909, 1:7; *Las Vegas Age*, 12 June 1909, 1:2; *Goldfield Daily Tribune*, 8 May 1909, 1:5-7; 10 May 1909, 1:1-2; 12 May 1909, 1:1-3; *Reno Evening Gazette*, 16 June 1914, 8:5.

[139]*The Rhyolite Herald*, 14 July 1909, 2:1; 24 July 1909, 4:3; 11 September 1909, 4:4; 2 October 2 1909, 4:4; 15 April 1911, 4:3.

[140]*Ibid.*, 25 March 1909, 1:1-6.

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144Ruth Ayers, "Rhyolite-Where Bullfrog Colored Ore Brought 12,000 People and a Dandy Depot," *Nevada State Journal*, 6 November 1949, 16. *Carson City News*, 30 September 1913, 1:5-6.

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146*Lovelock Review-Miner*, 13 December 1916, 3:3. *Biennial Report of the Railroad Commission of Nevada*, 1917-18, Cases No. 455, 481; 31, 44.

147*Reno Evening Gazette*, 7 May 1918, 5:3. *Carson City News*, 24 April 1919, 4:2. Helen L. Carlson, *Nevada Place Names: A Geographical Dictionary*, (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1974, 202. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1920, I:520. Weight and Weight, *Rhyolite*, 32-34. *Ely Daily Times*, 22 October 1922, 3:2

148Phillip I. Earl, "Rhyolite Mining Camp Has Some Visible Remains," *Nevada Appeal*, 21 July 1996, C6; See also Nell Murbarger, "Ghost Town Dwellers," *Desert Magazine*, 22:2; (February 1959), 4-8. Kari Coughlin, "Rhyolite: State of the Ruins Address," *Proceedings of the Fourth Death Valley Conference on History and Prehistory*, 2-5 February 1995, Death Valley, Calif. (Death Valley Natural History Association, 1995), 183-92.

149Phillip I. Earl, "Rhyolite Scares Off the Ghosts," *Reno Gazette-Journal*, 19 January 1992, 13C. See also John Latschar, *Historic Resources Study – A History of Mining in Death Valley National Monument*, Vol.11, Denver Service Center, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1981, 19; Janus Associates, *Nye County Historic Survey*, September 1980, Las Vegas and Tonopah Railroad Depot (U.S. Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of the Interior).

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

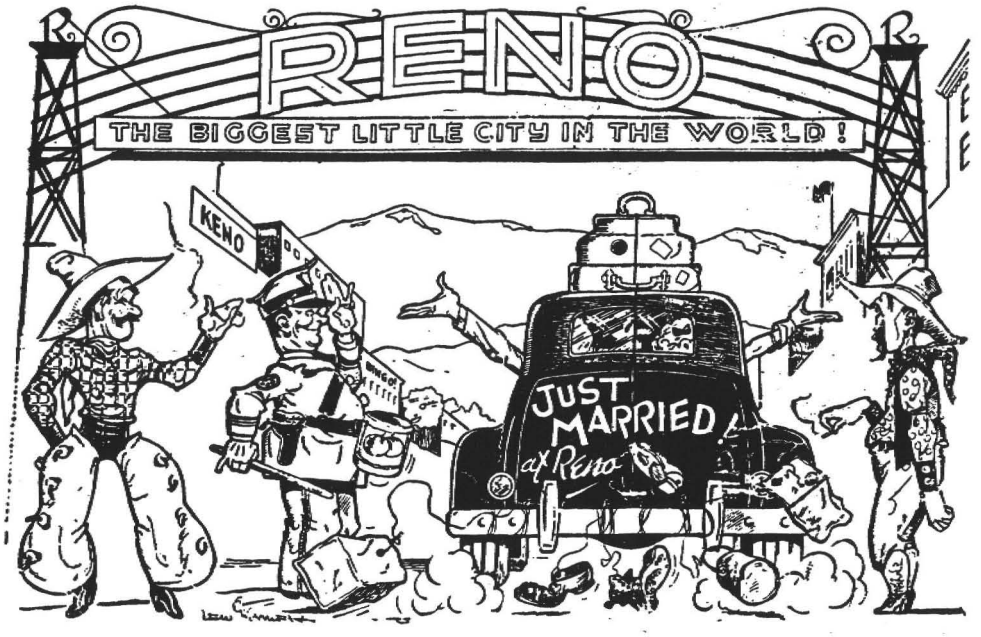
In Search of Lew Hymers

Jim McCormick

"Do you know anything about Lew Hymers?" my student asked as she placed a rather worn copy of a book titled *Seen About Town* before me. My drawing class was about to begin; I had time only to ask if I could take the volume home to examine it. That evening I pored over the three hundred or so pages in *Seen About Town*, each containing Hymers's pen-and-ink caricatures of persons I recognized as movers and shakers in northern Nevada during the 1930s and 1940s. Many of the portraits depicted fathers and grandfathers of my students enrolled at the University of Nevada, Reno, during the mid-1980s. Even though, at the time, I had been in Reno and on the art faculty for more than twenty-five years, I had to admit that I had never seen any of Lew Hymers's drawings. *Seen About Town* was returned to my student, and I didn't think about the artist for several years.

In 1990, knowing of my interest in Nevada artists, Cheryl Fox, assistant director of the Nevada Historical Society, enlisted me to serve as co-editor of the summer *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly.* We assembled an issue devoted to visual artists who had been active in Nevada prior to 1945. It was an unusual number that featured eighteen essays (with accompanying color reproductions) written by an impressive array of artists, gallery and museum administrators, writers and scholars. Working on the *Quarterly* also served to heighten my interest in creating a central repository for data on Nevada artists, an idea which later that year received the support of and a permanent home from Peter Bandurraga, Director of the Historical Society. The Nevada Art Research Project (NARP) was initiated as a resource for persons seeking information about individual artists; long-range plans included the publication of a directory docu-

Jim McCormick is a University of Nevada, Reno Professor of Art Emeritus and a visual artist. He is also the founder and director of the Nevada Art Research Project, which is archived at the Nevada Historical Society. The exhibition, "Seen About Town: The Art of Lew Hymers," is scheduled for the changing gallery at the Nevada Historical Society from April 27 through September 30, 1999.



menting Nevada artists from the mid-1800s to the present.

With Bandurraga's consent, NARP was immediately provided with a work station and a few cardboard file boxes. Shortly thereafter, I became aware that the society had a number of items by Lew Hymers in its collection, large original drawings stored in map cabinets and examples of his commercial art scattered in file drawers around the research room. The society's librarian, Lee Mortensen, seemed especially enthusiastic about my curiosity regarding Hymers and brought forth more materials from shelves deep in the society's archives. Over the next few years, my interest in the artist increased, and I began to think about a Hymers exhibition with an accompanying catalog and a video to be broadcast on the local public broadcasting television station.

It is my understanding that *Quarterly* readers can be fairly characterized as generalists, folks who appreciate the work of the society and who receive the publication as a dividend that acknowledges their financial support; fewer among the readership, according to Bandurraga, are professional historians, scholars, or researchers.

With this demography in mind, I thought it might be helpful to retrace the process I employed in the preparation of the Hymers project. While I can't

represent myself as a professionally trained researcher, certain instincts for detail that kicked in when I dealt with the many facets of Hymers's life and an eye disciplined by decades of working over a drawing table seemed to hold me in good stead. Of equal importance, the collective expertise of the staff of the Nevada Historical Society carried me over some rough spots. My constant requests for advice and materials were always met in a timely manner—and in good spirits I might add.

A fair question to ask at this point might be "Why Hymers?" What was there about this artist that justified spending the better part of two years researching his art and life? Initially I found Hymers's caricatures in *Seen About Town* intriguing. The surety of his drawing with pen, brush, and ink was exceptional, rivaling staff artists on other newspapers across the United States during the early part of this century, a period that might be called the golden age of pen-and-ink illustration. I was also overwhelmed with the artist's staggering output; it became evident that I was dealing with a genuine workaholic. As a member of a pioneer Reno family (his grandfather had been one of the founders of Reno in 1868 and had served on the county commission for twenty-eight years, many as its chair), Hymers seemed to have a solid grasp of the factors that made Reno tick, and this was reflected in the wide range of citizens who populated his "Seen About Town" columns in the *Reno Evening Gazette* between 1938 and 1945. These studies of movers and shakers had a significant impact on the social, business, and political life of northern Nevada; his subjects were the topics of lively conversations around the region after they appeared each Saturday evening. The portraits were not only about likeness; they helped shape the way people perceived their community. It was more than a matter of prestige to appear in *Seen About Town*. It also meant being recognized as a vital strand in the over-all fabric of the community. For this researcher, Hymers created a pictorial encyclopedia which summarized the character of Reno in the years around World War II.

The search for Lew Hymers was a start-from-scratch project. Initially, I asked a rather wide range of people if they know anything about my subject. Since Hymers had worked for the *Evening Gazette*, I inquired as to whether the current editor of the *Reno Gazette Journal* was familiar with the artist. I drew a blank expression, a response that was repeated as I asked others the same question. Gradually I began to realize that the people I was speaking with were too young, far removed from Hymers's generation. It wasn't disinterest I was encountering. Rather, it was the fact that the recollections of Lew Hymers were lodged in the memories of those living in their seventh decade. Based on this understanding, I began to look in other places.

Matters improved once I enlisted the local media in my research. I approached Connie McMullen, the editor of *Senior Spectrum*, who wrote a lengthy article about Hymers and included several illustrations that helped jog readers' memories. Guy Rocha, Nevada state archivist, invited me to be a guest on his noon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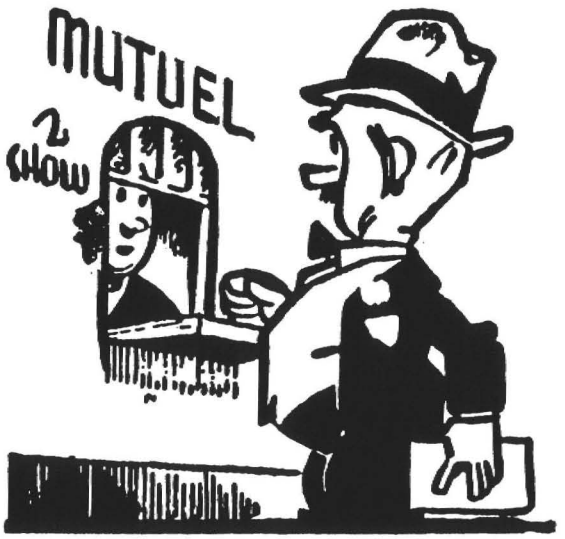
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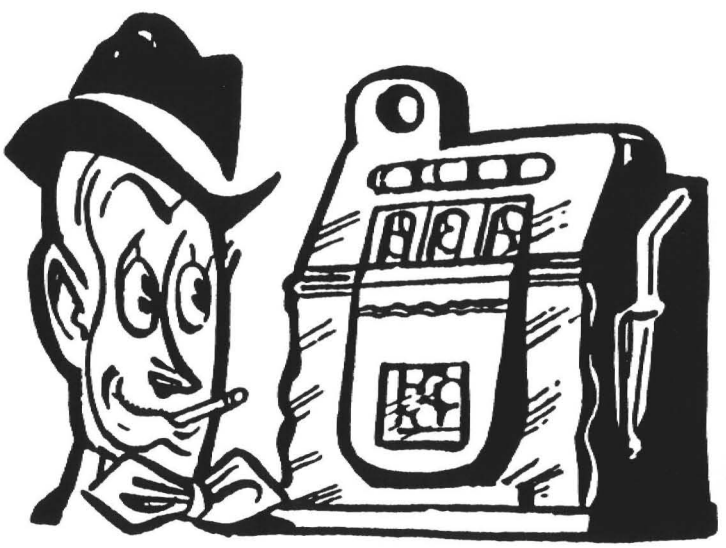


radio program over KPTL in Carson City. Agnes Nelson wrote an article for the University of Nevada, Reno, alumni magazine, *Silver and Blue*, and, most effective of all, Rollan Melton issued a plea in his widely read *Reno Gazette-Journal* column. The appearance of these items prompted some very helpful telephone calls; a few led directly to personal interviews, while others were from folks who knew someone whose portrait had been drawn by Hymers. In a few cases, these respondents developed second thoughts after contacting me, backing away when they began to question just how well they actually knew Lew Hymers. I would attempt to say that I didn't expect them to know everything about the artist. In some cases, this caveat worked. With others, I was simply turned down. In the final analysis, the interview process was like assembling a large mosaic. No one interview provided Hymers's entire story. Taken altogether, however, the interviews produced a relatively complete picture of the artist. Along the way, I had the honor of speaking with a number of persons I consider to be Reno icons.

I spent one afternoon with the former Reno justice of the peace, William Beemer. He had been a "Seen About Town" subject back in the 1930s, later a neighbor of Lew and Lola Hymers on Plumb Lane when it was still a dirt road. Beemer related several stories about Hymers and his chickens. In 1950, just as Hymers was planning to move back to southern California, he paid Beemer a visit and offered to give the judge several of his prized hens, encouraging him to go into a modest poultry business. My visit, almost fifty years later, came on a day when the last of Hymers's line of chickens had been killed, the victim, Beemer judged, of some kind of rodent that broke into the cage.

Chet Piazzo, who, with his brother Link, owned the popular Sportsman in downtown Reno, granted a lively interview. He recalled his friendship with

Hymers, one that was cemented not only because Hymers created all of the Sportsman's ads, but also because they shared an abiding interest in the out-of-doors, especially fishing. Chet had a radio show and Hymers would reprimand him for announcing choice fishing holes on the program, fearful that listeners would show up in large numbers and destroy his private angling grounds. Hymers's drawings of Chet and Link appear on the Sportsman logo to this day.

Roy Powers granted me one of the most informative interviews. As a young man coming to Reno shortly after World War II, Powers served a kind of apprenticeship in Hymers's second-floor studio on East First Street, next door to the recently constructed Mapes Hotel. Powers and other newcomers in Reno advertising circles marked the beginning of the modern era of Reno's commercial history and were part of the process that gradually made the pen-and-ink drawings of Lew Hymers obsolete. Powers recognized the importance of Hymers's contributions to advertising in the City of Trembling Leaves, but acknowledged with some regret his own role in easing the longtime commercial artist out as "the only act in town."

Neal Cobb, son of Jerry and Mildred Cobb, owners of Modern Photo in downtown Reno during the 1940s, recalled climbing a flight of stairs to Hymers's First Street studio with youthful buddies, often stopping there on their way to see a movie at the Majestic Theater. Usually they would watch Hymers at his drawing board through the open door and then, when noticed, abruptly run away. Cobb described numerous details about the office: lots of drawings on tabletops and walls, a small stick steadying the artist's hand as he drew, and various stools near the artist stacked with art materials.

Lola Jepsen, originally from Gardnerville and a family that had been active in Douglas County politics for many years, married Lew in 1917. Their long marriage produced no offspring. Several of the most useful interviews were given by descendants in the Jepsen line.

Bob Jepsen of Carson City, Lew and Lola's nephew, offered perspectives on their family life, especially during the period between 1934 and 1944 when they lived in Genoa. The Jepsens had valuable newspaper clippings to lend and a video featuring Lew shoveling snow, footage that had recently been transferred from 8-mm motion-picture film to videotape in preparation for an upcoming program to be aired over KNPB/Channel 5.

Tom Jepsen, another nephew, from Brentwood, California, contributed copies of a number of documents: the Jepsen family tree and letters written by Lola from Washington, D. C., to relatives in Nevada during World War I. In addition, he donated a copy of Hymers's self-published book, *Statesmen and Near Statesmen: Nevada Legislature 1917*, to the Nevada Historical Society.

Bill Clark lived with the Hymers's in their Genoa home for a year during his teens.Bill often accompanied his Uncle Lew on his twice-weekly drives to Reno, and remembered Hymers as a heavy chain smoker. He recalled with consider-

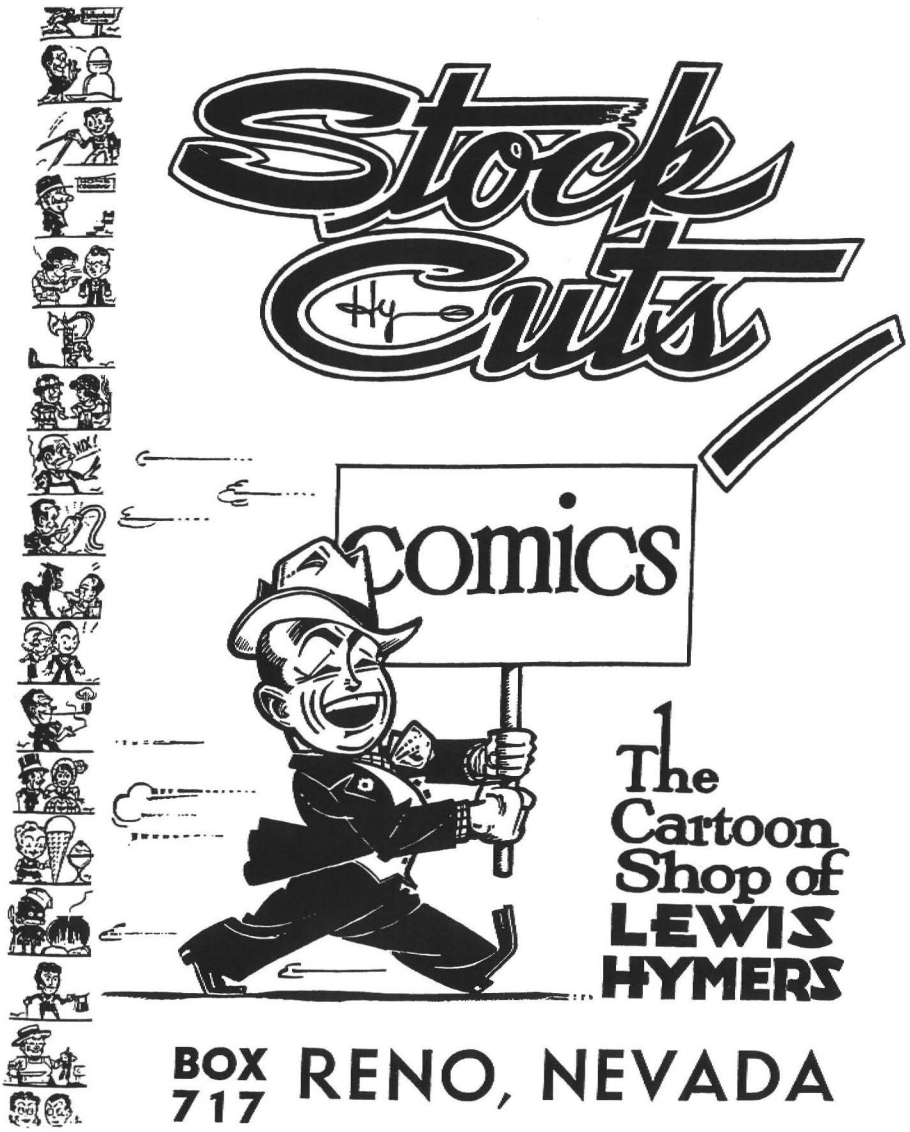

NEVADA FATS & GREASE QUOTA— 16,000 LBS. PER MONTH... LET'S DOUBLE IT!
RAGS & OLD CLOTHES WILL BE CONSTANTLY NEEDED IN OUR WAR EFFORT
NEV. INDUSTRY NEEDS EVERY TIN CAN USED BY THE HOUSEWIVES
NEVADA INDUSTRIES & FARMS MUST CONTRIBUTE 5000 TONS OF SCRAP METAL PER MONTH
NEVADA MUST MOVE 10 CARLOADS OF WASTE PAPER PER MONTH

able detail the many stops Hymers made on his rounds of Reno: the Wigwam in downtown Reno to sell fresh eggs and chickens from the Hymerses' ranch; Brundidges, where he picked up art supplies, pens, ink, and card stock for his drawings; and the offices of the businessmen who were to be his subjects for next week's "Seen About Town." Occasionally young Bill was dropped off at Woolworth's Five and Dime to have a soda. Bill regretfully admitted during our interview that a substantial collection of memorabilia from his uncle's estate had been discarded a number of years before; the family never anticipated that their artist-relative who passed away so long ago would ever again receive serious consideration.

Modern technology played an important role in the search for Lew Hymers. The great deal of the hard work preparing the Hymers project took place at the Nevada Historical Society's microfilm console, hours spent staring at a screen on which photographic copies of newspapers dating back to the turn of the century rolled by, issue after issue, month after month, the eyes and minds of researchers fatigued from picking out Hymers's drawings and articles about the artist's career. The historical society copier also turned out to be an invaluable tool. Not only was it employed to duplicate articles from newspapers and periodicals, but it was also used to magnify the caricatures in *Seen About Town* several times, large enough to become exceptionally clear mounted illustrations in the Hymers exhibition.

At times, matters of research took an unexpected turn. The historical society's collection includes several copies of Hymers's self-published stock-cut catalogs. First printed in 1933 and republished in 1947, these books contain hundreds of reproductions of Hymers's pen-and-ink cartoons, a veritable encyclopedia of human activity. Using the catalog, publishers and fellow commercial artists would contact Hymers and order electrotype blocks, relief images on copper mounted on type-high blocks of wood, to be inserted into the text of any given advertisement. Even though there were undoubtedly thousands of these stock-cut blocks in existence during Hymers's time, none seemed to be around for the upcoming exhibition, at least, not until this writer was rummaging through a box of junk in his own garage one day and discovered two of the Hymers blocks, cast off years before by the University of Nevada, Reno, undoubtedly from the office of A. L. Higginbothem, founder of the university's journalism department. Then, another discovery related to the stock cuts emerged. A catalog from Dover Publications, Inc., a publishing house in New York specializing in reprints, arrived in the mail. During my initial pass through the catalog, I noticed a book titled *Cartoon Advertising Cuts of the Thirties* (1996), and below, in smaller type, a credit to Lew Hymers for the 772 drawings in the book. The editors had taken the liberty of removing the *HY* below each of the now-copyright-free drawings. I wondered if Gary Barsch, the person credited with selecting and arranging the cartoons, knew anything about the artist.

Jac Francovich is one of several individuals who came forward and offered


Stock Cuts
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comics
The Cartoon Shop of LEWIS HYMERS
BOX 717 RENO, NEVADA


Commercial
ART
DRAWINGS FOR BUSINESS PURPOSES
comics
LEW HYMERS
42 E. 1st. St. Phone 3663
Reno, Nevada

to loan drawings to the exhibition. He had spied one of my pleas for Hymers's work in the local press. During our interview, Jac offered a number of fresh insights into Hymers. His father and mother had attended Reno High School with Lew and the friendship endured. Thus when Jac was about nine years old and had started drawing, Hymers would come by the Francovich house on occasion and "correct" Jac's drawings. Some years later, Jac's talent had developed more fully, enough for Hymers to ask the teenager to "work with him" in his First Street studio. Francovich recalls that at the time he was making six dollars a day at the Wine House Cafe and figured he couldn't afford to hang around Hymers for free, a decision he was later to regret. In addition to lending several drawings, Jac located one of Hymers's lengthy paint brushes stashed in his studio and graciously permitted me to include it in the show.

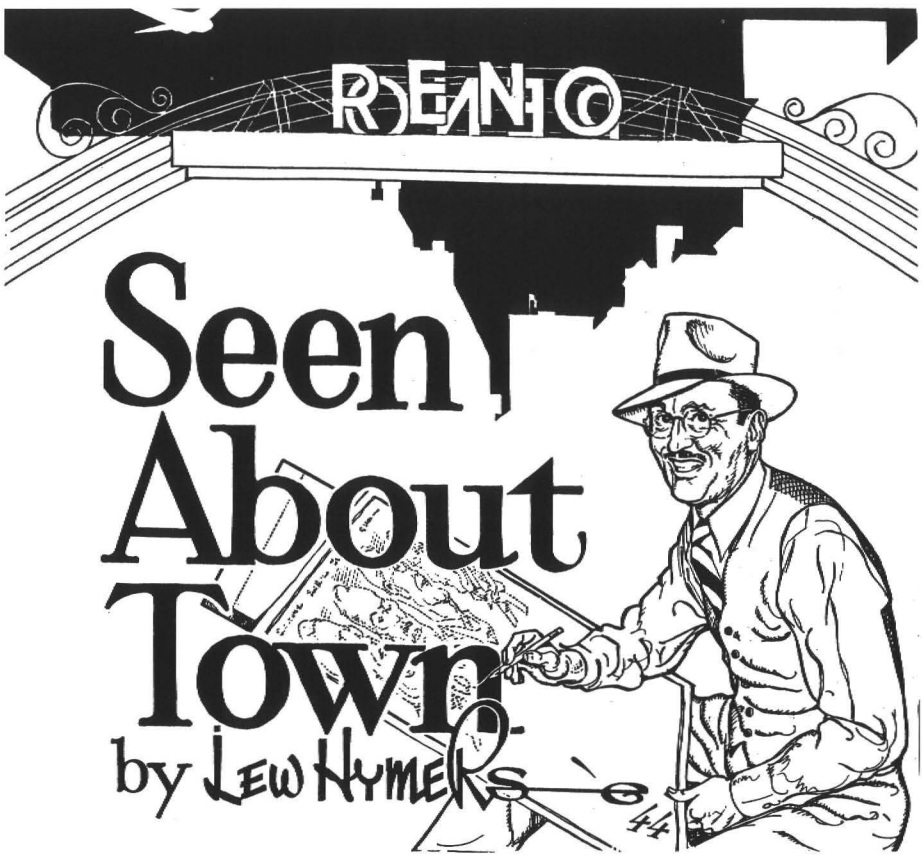
Over the several years the Hymers project was in preparation, I was fortunate to have several excellent research assistants on the staff of NARP. Colleen Nielsen became a master retouch artist, capable of enlarging tiny Hymers drawings on the copier while at the same time cleaning up countless blemishes and unwanted portions of adjacent drawings. Jeanne Doan and Chris Peltier sharpened their skills at identifying the artist's drawings. Jeanne went through thousands of pieces of commercial art, locating Hymers's ads and illustrations. Chris mentioned one day that his grandfather had been a Hymers subject, which led to a very informative conversation with his grandmother, who still lives in Gardnerville. It was during that interview that I learned that Hymers had helped to illustrate the 1940 edition of the Douglas County High School yearbook, *Garminada*. Three pages featured Hymers's drawings of individual members of the senior class, each drawn to age them a decade or two, and accompanied with a prediction of the occupation each was expected to pursue.

On a number of occasions, my research hit a dead end. Several interviews turned up clues regarding Hymers's life that I could not verify. It was suggested that Hymers had attended the University of Nevada at some point between 1910 and 1920. A careful examination of issues of the yearbook, *Artemisia*, failed to turn up Hymers, either in class photographs or fraternity groups. The university registrar's office checked and could find no record of a Lewis Hymers being enrolled during the period in question. I found this very peculiar since Hymers's pen-and-ink cartoons had been a regular feature in the yearbooks of 1913 and 1914. Another story surfaced that Hymers had been involved in a tragic automobile accident while living in Reno, an occurrence it was suggested had affected his emotional life in later years. Again, this lead could not be substantiated and eventually it was relegated to the back of my research files. Resolution of these, and like issues, sometimes has a way of emerging when current research has been completed or after the book has been published. Perhaps these items will be visited by another scholar at another time.

The exhibition, "Seen About Town," opened at the Nevada Historical Society on April 29, 1999. The gathering, estimated at five hundred people, looked

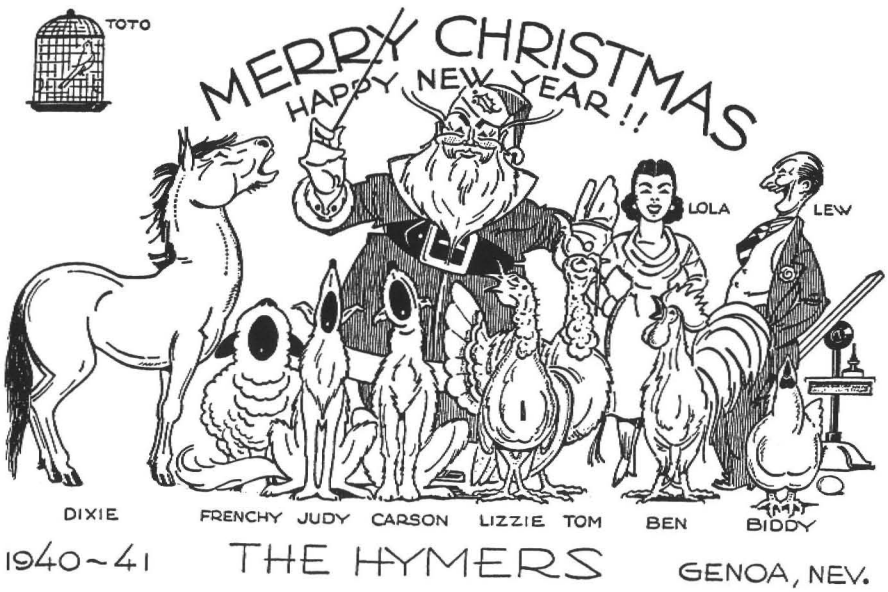
more like a class reunion; a number in attendance had been subjects of Lew Hymers. The exhibition catalog, co-published by the historical society and the Black Rock Press and titled *Seen About Town*, contains a foreword by Rollan Melton and features a fair representation of drawings from across Hymers's prolific career. KNPB/Channel 5 is producing a twenty-minute documentary to be aired in December of 1999. A slightly scaled-down version of the exhibition will be installed in the Douglas County Museum late in 1999.

For me, the search for Lew Hymers turned out to be more than a steadfast exercise in scholarship. True, there were periods when isolation and intense concentration were an absolute necessity. On the other hand, I found the public side of the project exhilarating, meeting with Hymers's associates and subjects, locating drawings and artifacts when least expected and, in the final analysis, observing the reactions of witnesses to the revival of Lew Hymers, a bonus not anticipated.




NOBLE GETCHELL
REPUBLICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEEMAN
HEINIE AMIGO OF THE KEYSTONE & COMSTOCK MINING CO. VIRGINIA CITY
DR. CLAUDE E. PIERSALL
FRANK SCOTT - IN RENO FROM LOVELOCK
ATTORNEY BRUCE THOMPSON
LIBBY C. BOOTH
RETIRED GRADE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL
CHRIS CHRISTOFFERSEN
MINDEN DRY GOODS MERCHANT
DAVE FINCH
"RENO HIGH" ENGLISH TEACHER
HENRY ELGES
CARSON VALLEY RANCHER


ON A CLEAR DAY YOU CAN SEE THE CAPITOL DOME AT SACRAMENTO
JOHN CHISM
OF THE CRESCENT CREAMERY
"MONK" FERRIS
CITY BUILDING INSPECTOR
FALL STYLES
CRESCENT
CHARLIE PATERSON
ALBERT J. AYRES
ATTORNEY AND ARDENT FOOTBALL FAN
CHARLIE SADLEIR
ADVOCATE OF GOOD ROADS AND A HIGHWAY TO THE TOP OF MOUNT ROSE
MY PAL!
DR. LOUIS LOMBARDI
NEWTON H. CRUMLEY Jr.
ELKO HOTELMAN IN RENO OVER THE WEEK-END
BILL CANN
FORMER DRUGGIST NOW IDLEWILD PARK HORTICULTURIST
FRED PIERSON
THE MILL MAN


TOTO
MERRY CHRISTMAS
HAPPY NEW YEAR !!
LOLA
LEW
DIXIE
FRENCHY JUDY CARSON LIZZIE TOM BEN
BIDDY
1940~41
THE HYMERS
GENOA, NEV.

BOOK REVIEWS

The New Western Frontier: An Illustrated History of Las Vegas. By Gary E. Elliott. (Carlsbad: Heritage Media Corp., 1999, 232 pages, illustrations, maps, bibliography, index).

Normally, the illustrated histories of cities with rear sections showcasing local businesses are often dismissed as "coffee table books." For the most part, the photographs are the stars of these volumes, while the text merely rehashes familiar events from the past, gleaned from secondary sources. But this is not the case with the late Gary Elliott's history of Las Vegas. He begins with a skillfully crafted prologue that relates Las Vegas to its larger historiographic context, including the works of John Findlay, Ralph Roske, Alan Balboni, and others. The author then presents one of the best, brief overviews of the Spanish, Mexican, and Native American periods that I have read. Of special value is his coverage of the town's early years. Elliott is one of the first scholars to use Bob Coffin's Union Pacific Railroad Collection at the Special Collections Department at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Library. As a result, the book contains much new material concerning the relationship between the community and Senator William Clark's railroad, especially its subsidiary, the Las Vegas Land and Water Company.

Given the author's scholarly interests, it is no surprise that this volume provides a useful guide to water issues confronting the city throughout its history. From research used for his acclaimed biography of Senator Alan Bible, Elliott offers details about Lyndon Johnson, the Southern Nevada Water Project, and other subjects that nonspecialists will find new. In addition, there is an insightful section on the history of gaming control, drawn partly from the author's interviews with Grant Sawyer, Tony Cabot, Bob Faiss, and others, who contributed to Elliott's fine oral history of the governor, *Hang Tough.*

Newcomers as well as longtime Nevadans will enjoy the readable accounts of how the major hotels began, supplemented by colorful pen portraits of their founders, who together comprise the pantheon of Las Vegas resort makers. They are all here: J. Kell Houssels, Guy McAfee, Sam Boyd, Benny Binion, Jackie Gaughan, Howard Hughes, Kirk Kerkorian, as well as more recent figures such as William Bennett and Steve Wynn. Also emphasized are the non-gaming figures who also shaped the city's history, including Peter Buol, Helen Stewart, Maude Frazier, Hank Greenspun, Jerry Tarkanian, and the oft-neglected Thomas Carroll, a visionary land developer who saw Phil Tobin's gambling bill as

the key to making Las Vegas a tourist destination. In addition to these prominent figures, there is also good coverage of ethnic and racial minorities, whose labor and growing population have fueled the community's urbanization.

Complementing the text are several hundred photographs, many of which are in color. A few, such as those capturing the dramatic implosion of the Sands and Landmark hotels, are especially striking. With the exception of a few curious selections, all of the pictures relate meaningfully to the city' s development.

For the past decade, this former police officer-turned historian has contributed mightily to the writing of our state's history with books and articles on a wide range of topics. Gary Elliott's scholarship will be missed, but there could be no more fitting farewell to the readers of Nevada history, especially those in his adopted home town, than this informative volume on Las Vegas.

Eugene P. Moehring
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Adventures of a Church Historian. By Leonard J. Arrington. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998, 249 pages, photographs, sources, index).

Can the profession of history be an adventure? For Leonard J. Arrington, long-time official historian for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, it was. From his graduate school days Arrington believed that his life as a scholar was a divine calling and that belief gave him a sense of purpose and underlying meaning that made his scholarship a spiritual, as well as an intellectual, journey.

Best known as a historian of the American West, Arrington was born and raised in a Mormon home and grew up on a farm in Idaho. After attending the University of Idaho, he began graduate studies in economics at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. There he was immersed in Southern culture and the continuing debate between the Regionalists and Agrarians (based in Chapel Hill and Nashville, respectively) over "Southern" identity. He admired much of their anti-industrial views and found their deep religious convictions and championing of the rural values of small farmers much to his liking. The experience also exposed him to a wide variety of disciplines: economics, history, sociology, and literary studies. These influences helped shape his own work as a Western, Mormon, economic historian.

In the early 1940s, Arrington was teaching at North Carolina State College while he continued to work on his doctorate in economics. His scholarly stud-

ies were interrupted by the outbreak of World War II. He worked as an economist for the North Carolina Office of Price Administration, then was drafted into the United States Army. He served as a desk officer in the military economic offices in Italy. Following the war, he began writing his dissertation on the economics of Mormonism and took a position at Utah State Agricultural College. By this time, he had married and soon had two children. He split time between Utah and North Carolina, teaching, researching in the church archives, and writing.

It was in this period that he believed God called him to be a historian. According to Arrington, one day early in 1950 in Chapel Hill, while "sitting in a quiet alcove of the university library, I had what might be called a 'peak experience'. . . an exhilaration that transported me to a higher level of consciousness." (28) This occurred while he was going over his research notes and recalling the diaries and letters of past Mormon leaders. Although he had been a practicing Mormon since his baptism and confirmation at age eight, Arrington believed that he was now being "absorbed into the universe of the Holy Spirit. (Mormons would say that I was receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost.) A meaningful moment of insight and connectedness had come to me that helped me to see that my research efforts were compatible with the divine restoration of the church." That emotional experience in a university library convinced Arrington that his career was the divine plan of God.

From the height of emotional religious experience, Arrington returned to the mundane tedium of the scholar's life. He taught at the college in Utah, continued to research in the church archives in Salt Lake City, and wrote a number of articles for economics, sociology, and history journals. His first book was, perhaps, his most important contribution to the historiography. Based on his doctoral dissertation, Arrington's *Great Basin Kingdom* argued that while the rest of the country pursued a more "individualistic and freewheeling capitalism" during the antebellum period, the Mormons in the West consistently upheld a communal capitalism aimed at fulfilling religious duties in preparation for the coming millennium. Yet Mormon economics often adumbrated twentieth-century capitalism with strategies for mobilizing capital and administrative structures that resembled later corporations.

The book opened many doors for Arrington, as he was invited to lecture at various universities and conferences across the country, and its warm reception thrust him to the forefront of Mormon scholarship. His wide base of research also fed other publication projects. He also received the Fulbright Professorship of American Economics at the University of Genova in 1958-59. This opportunity to teach and study in Italy brought valuable scholarly insights to his career and furthered his devotion to the work of the Mormon church. His publication of *The Price of Prejudice,* a study of the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II, placed him among the leading historians of the American West and brought further opportunities. By the end of his career,

he had authored or co-authored dozens of books (being directly involved in a total of eighty-seven) and countless articles.

Arrington rose to great heights in the historical profession and he also rose within the church. He served in various leadership positions in the local Mormon community and soon became a leading member of the loosely-organized band of Mormon scholars. He and others decided to organize a Mormon historical society and in 1965, the Mormon History Association was formed. In 1972, the Church formed the Historical Department and Arrington was chosen to head it. He served as Church Historian for a number of years, overseeing the archives, supervising the work of other historians, and continuing to make contributions of his own. Among the projects he supported were new official histories of the church, biographies of past church leaders, and studies of various aspects of the Mormon church and community.

In this capacity as Church Historian, Arrington encountered many more adventures, most of them dealing with issues of academic integrity, meddling administrators and church leaders, and the on-going tension between scholarly objectivity and devout faith. Arrington was among the leaders of his generation in recognizing that objectivity was only an ideal, a standard that could not quite be reached. He knew he was biased in his interpretations. Yet he strove to counter that bias with historical evidence, criticism, and professional standards. The problem with being official Church Historian was that he also had to satisfy the leaders of the church in order to get anything done. While some leaders urged an honest accounting of the past and were willing to accept insightful criticism, others insisted on white-washing the history of the church in the name of protecting the faith. This led to heated arguments, devious censorship, and the eventual dismantling of the Historical Department. Throughout all of this and the rest of his life and career, Arrington stood tall as a man of faith and a scholar of the highest caliber.

Adventures of a Church Historian is a must read for historians of religion. It illustrates the problems facing scholars who believe and those who study belief. The book is an odyssey of a man who carefully built a fine career, steadily moving from the lowly status of graduate student to the top of his profession. Arrington delves into questions of interpretation, use of evidence, literary style, administrative structures, budget problems, and a myriad of other areas of interest to professional historians. The book has limitations. It is a memoir and the reader is always left wondering what the other side had to say about a particular encounter. Further, a non-Mormon reader will be bewildered by the author's casual references to people and agencies and terms that may well be common knowledge to an insider, but left this reader wondering who particular people were and scrambling to somehow comprehend levels of bureaucracy that make the inefficient systems of the Soviet Union seem simple! Arrington's writing style is somewhat belabored here. His constant reference to himself in the plural ("we") is annoying and his self-deprecating modesty is

sometimes overdone. He also refuses to level his criticisms at church leaders in a direct way, although they are often deserved. Instead, Arrington's kind gentility leads to deferential soft-peddling and obtuse speculations. But, then, that was the style he had been forced to develop in his official capacity and it had worked well most of the time. In the final analysis, the reader will put down Arrington's memoirs convinced that for this one scholar, at least, history was an adventure.

A. James Fuller
University of Indianapolis

Termination Revisited: American Indians On the Trail to Self-Determination, 1933-1953. By Kenneth R. Philp. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999, xv + 247 pages, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index).

In 1977 Kenneth Philp published what remains the best study we have of John Collier and his role as Commissioner of Indian Affairs: *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform, 1920-1954.* Over the next decade Philp turned his attention to the matter of termination: the effort to end federal trust responsibilities for American Indians. This movement, born in the 1940s, peaked in the 1950s with the passage of congressional legislation to implement this notion. In the 1960s Native communities such as the Menominees in Wisconsin and the Klamaths in Oregon suffered from the aftershocks of the imposed end of trust status. Termination became a code word for federal insensitivity, rapacious non-Indian land interests, and powerless Indians. By 1988 Philp had published three articles in the *Western Historical Quarterly* and an article in the *Pacific Historical Review* that clearly signaled he was well on his way to providing a significant reinterpretation of this crucial era in Indian life.

Then Philp became the chair of his department at the University of Texas at Arlington. Such service may be admirable but it never expedites the publication of one's research, and it surely did not hasten the appearance of this particular book. However, now that *Termination Revisited* has finally emerged it is evident that it was worth the wait.

Readers generally familiar with the history of federal Indian policy will note immediately that the book does not extend as far in time as they might have anticipated. We have usually portrayed termination as a story that begins in the early 1950s and unfolds to disastrous effect in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Philp concludes his account in 1953 because he is interested in telling another story: different in time, and even more critically, different in interpretation.

Termination Revisited is the most recent example of a major trend in the writing of Indian history, one that moves from an almost complete emphasis on victimization to a more complicated analysis where Indians still deal with ill-advised policies and ill-intended individuals and corporations, yet now appear as actors in their own story. Although considerations of Indian policy still may be prominent in many of these narratives, there is much greater attention paid to Native motivations and actions. In this way, even when historians are considering eras noteworthy for their difficulties, they are likely to portray Indian individuals and communities in a much less passive manner. They are also more likely to find examples of success rather than an unremitting pattern of failure.

In order to obtain Indian perspectives historians are having to utilize new methods. They are relying less exclusively on traditional archival materials. They are spending more time in Indian country, talking with and listening to people. They are employing oral history, scrutinizing tribal newspapers, and in general gaining a much stronger sense of context, including a first hand sense of place. Although Philp does not take full advantage of such possibilities, *Termination Revisited* is informed by very thorough archival research (including work done in the Suitland branch of the National Archives), a careful reading of a great deal of the current literature, and effective use of some recent dissertations that exemplify innovative approaches to their subjects.

As a result, this book is able to portray termination in a different and more complicated way. For example, Philp furnishes a revisionist view of termination's origins and evolution. He sees it as an almost inevitable result of responses to the Indian New Deal. Philp ties Collier much more directly to termination than have most historians. He even gives Collier, rather than one of his successors, the dubious distinction of singling out tribes as possible candidates for withdrawal of federal protection. And, most significant, Philp argues that there was far more support for change from the Indians themselves than historians have previously contended.

Of course what Native communities wanted was freedom from bureaucracy and freedom to make more decisions for themselves. The form that termination ultimately took, as embodied in H.R. 108, proved to be quite different from what most Native individuals had in mind—just as the idea of the Indian Claims Commission turned out to be far less attractive than its reality. Even so, the desire on the part of Indian communities to gain more control over their own affairs did not develop instantaneously in the 1960s. Rather, as Philp persuasively suggests, the "trail to self-determination" began at an earlier point in time. Philp is not the first person to make this argument, but he makes this case more comprehensively. He furnishes a series of case studies, ranging from Alaska to Blackfeet to Navajo and including such issues as the right to employ legal counsel. Here such organizations as the National Congress of American Indians and such individuals as Ruth Muskrat Bronson and Napoleon Bonaparte

Johnson start to get the attention they have long deserved. Here we obtain a better appreciation for Native communities who confronted varying situations and yet shared a common determination to gain greater control over their lives and lands.

This is a relatively brief analysis and any one volume cannot tell the full story of these crucial years. Nevertheless *Termination Revisited* is, without question, an important book. It will be required reading for any serious student of modern Indian history.

Peter Iverson
Arizona State University

A Sense of the the American West: An Anthology of Environmental History. Edited by James Sherow. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998).

James E. Sherow's edited volume, *A Sense of the American West: An Anthology of Environmental History,* is, as advertised, a collection of fourteen essays on various topics in western environmental history. Sherow seeks to showcase the "greater dynamism" of the field, beyond the work of core scholars William Cronon, Richard White, and Donald Worster, work that often focuses on encounters between capitalism and nature writ large. He succeeds in capturing this dynamism, and revealing work on new topics, but the strengths and weaknesses of the collection follow the strengths and weaknesses of the anthology form itself. The book makes available interesting and detailed scholarship in short essays showcasing the wide range of topics and approaches that make up the burgeoning field of western environmental history. Given the nature of an anthology, though, there is no overarching plot or theme to make for dynamic reading. In addition, fourteen essays cannot cover enough territory to make a comprehensive text, so huge spans of time and space had to be left out. Sherow defines the West as the arid West and most (but not all) of the essays are about the Great Plains and the arid Southwest. It thus would be most useful for readers interested in those sub-regions.

Such anthologies are useful on many fronts, but this one is most appropriate to graduate reading seminars, or as a resource for scholars lecturing in environmental or western history courses. Sherow opens the book with an interesting, complex discussion of the historiographic battles at the heart of western environmental history these days, including the "place vs. process" fight. His discussion clearly presents a quite high level of historiographical debate, coming down firmly on the side of western regionalism and a place-based history

of humans in their environments. Dan Flores follows with his own eloquent argument for western history based on a "sense of place," which convincingly shows that this is a real and historical entity, rather than a vague idea.

Given these theoretical discussions, the book would be a great addition to a graduate-level introduction to the field, but would leave students who had not been exposed to the works of Cronon, Worster, and White, in the proverbial dust. Robert MacCameron, writing on colonial New Mexico, takes on the idea of subsistence economies as more attuned to environmental limits than market economies. This is a great argument, but would hold more meaning for students who had already read some of Cronon's or White's work on subsistence economies in the settlement period, a period barely addressed here.

In seeking breadth within the field, Sherow includes essays that venture into the difficult territories of race, gender, and environmental justice, but these essays, one by F. Lee Brown and Helen M. Ingram on water development and the rural poor, and another by Mary Pardo on environmental justice and the Mothers of East L.A., tend toward sociology and policy. They are great sources for including these topics in lectures or discussions, but lack the narrative punch that undergraduates respond to in history classes. Others, like E. Gregory McPherson and Renee A. Haip's discussion of landscape vegetation in Tucson, and Richard West Sellars's treatment of Stephen Mather's era of National Park Service Administration, are solid historical stories, but probably too detailed for undergraduate discussion. Some of the essays would be appropriate for undergraduate reading, particularly Thomas Dunlap's "Wildlife, Science, and the National Parks," and Mark Harvey's "Battle for Wilderness" about Echo Park, both of which condense book-length studies of those topics with great clarity. The nice pairing of Flores's "Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy" and Sherow's own research on High Plains Indians' horse management in the nineteenth century would set up a great lecture or classroom discussion (at any level) of Native Americans, environmental adaptation and stewardship, and the Columbian Exchange.

Overall, this is an eclectic, interesting mix of essays on a wide variety of topics in the field. No one browsing through will fail to find something compelling to hold onto and share with colleagues and students.

Kathryn Morse
Middlebury College

Copper for America: The United States Copper Industry from Colonial Times to the 1990s. By Charles K. Hyde. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998, xvii + 267 pages, maps, tables).

Copper! Billions of dollars of it have been mined in the United States. It has underwritten economic development in Michigan, Montana, Arizona, and Utah, and to a lesser degree in other states, both east and west. Some of copper's mines and towns have become world famous—or infamous. American copper companies have in the twentieth century developed into major players on the world scene.

Yet, for all this, copper has never captured the fancy of the American public like gold and silver mining and mining communities. Only recently, in the past generation, has it gained the serious attention of scholars. One of these individuals is Charles Hyde, professor of history at Wayne State University. Hyde set for himself the daunting task of tracing the industry from colonial times to the present in 211 pages.

He focuses on the development of the three principal American copper districts, Michigan, Montana, and Arizona, by examining the economic and business histories of the producing companies. Hyde compares and contrasts the three and integrates developments "at the regional level with changes in the national and global copper industries (xvii)."

An amazing amount of history is covered in this volume. While there was not much copper mining, or other developments, before the opening of the northern Michigan mines, Hyde has done research that would make Sherlock Holmes proud in uncovering what happened in those earlier years. Particularly interesting is the role that the Ducktown, Tennessee mines played, both before and during the Civil War. It is fascinating to know that these earlier years foreshadowed what would happen in the major copper districts.

With the opening of the Michigan mines and post-Civil War industrialization, copper mining became a major player on the American economic scene. As might be imagined, much of what happened paralleled the precious metals' development. Promoters boomed mines and districts, often far more than justified. Need for financial support brought in outside investors with their expectations and hopes. Transportation had to be improved, with the railroad being the obvious answer. Technology changed and modernized to answer the demands of mining and smelting. Large corporations came to own the best mines and dominate districts. Consolidation of properties generally followed this development.

Corporations played politics to their advantage and became major players, particularly in the cases of Montana and Arizona. Soon unions came on the scene, and the labor versus management struggles broke out. Certain individuals eventually represented the best and worst of the industry and have left an intriguing legacy.

There were differences as well as similarities between precious metals and copper mining. American copper found itself involved in international financial "games" as early as the 1880s. The world market had a much greater impact on copper than on the precious metals. The expansion of American copper companies into foreign countries in the twentieth century appeared much more quickly. That, in turn, led to many problems that the industry faces today.

All this is discussed in *Copper for America*. Obviously, many subjects have to be only touched upon as the story moves vigorously forward. This is an extremely well researched book; the reader should not overlook the footnotes as an annotated bibliographical essay. They are also the starting point for further investigation. For those unfamiliar with copper mining, the glossary, based on a 1904 book, will prove interesting and invaluable.

This volume provides a well-organized overview. Hyde's comparison of the three major districts is especially inciteful. His capsule observations on special topics, such as the war of the Butte copper kings, adds life to the otherwise business and economics focused study. That is what the author set out to accomplish, and that is what he has done. This is an excellent book to gain an understanding of the industry.

It will take some patience, however. The book starts slowly and reads slowly. *Copper for America* is not an account of the colorful people and events that grab the public's attention. It will take some determination to mine out the entire vein, so to speak. The maps and tables help the reader, but photographs and drawings would have been an immeasurable contribution. All told, Hyde has produced a valuable study, one that needs to be read for an understanding of the business and economic side of the copper industry.

Duane A. Smith
Fort Lewis College

Empowering the West: Electrical Politics before FDR. By Jay Brigham. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998, vii + 211 pages).

The advent of electricity made life bearable in even the remotest western outposts of the United States, thus augmenting the ranks of settlers—hitherto limited to the visionary, the desperate, and the driven—by a vast contingent of the merely ambitious. But, Jay Brigham argues, it was not until electrical modernization permitted cheap and widespread use of modern conveniences that life in the West could become as comfortable, and even as spectacular, as it is today. Mere electrification of cities often meant only the presence of power too costly for anyone but the rich and the industrial. Electrical modernization meant

power cheap enough and wires heavy and plentiful enough to run middle-class homes full of domestic machinery and cities full of neon. And it was a grass-roots desire for modernity that drove midwestern and western cities toward public power in the 1920s, which Brigham sees as the critical decade for electrical politics.

Empowering the West uses vote-count analyses, a collection of small-town case studies, and separate chapters on the campaigns for public power in Seattle and Los Angeles to make its argument that ordinary westerners wanted public power because they wanted modern comforts. Campaigns for public power centered on the "yardstick principle"—in some nearby city, they were getting their kilowatts for less because the people owned the power plant. It was not, Brigham points out, a question of capacity. Private plants clearly could have served whole communities, because quite often public-power advocates proposed that a city ought simply to buy an existing private plant. Nor was it a question of technology, which had long made possible both the transmission of power over great distances and the accurate measurement of its use. The important issue, therefore, was affordability. As Brigham says, every "monthly electrical bill served as a constant reminder of the power of private utility companies." (95) It was a spur, too, to demands for municipal ownership.

So long as he sticks to this theme, Brigham's work is persuasive, and its narrative sections are often quite readable, though there are swathes of prose explaining methodological points that really belong in an appendix. But the argument thins whenever Brigham asserts a connection between the politics of public electricity and a generalized conviction "that government could be a positive influence in everyday life." (93) This assertion supports a larger claim, that this decade of electrical politics forms a "tie" or a "bridge" between Progressivism and the New Deal. (147) This claim is not proven in the text. Brigham's politicians are not social democrats, trustbusters, planners, moral crusaders, or regulators. They are at most consumer advocates. More important, the argument is most original and persuasive at the local and the grass-roots level, and here the evidence is even less favorable to a reformist spirit. Brigham shows that ordinary Americans supported public power not out of enthusiasm for social reform or for government action per se but out of enthusiasm for cheaper washing machines, or (in the case of city boosters) a wish to make the desert bloom with light at night. One suspects there is little difference between the notion that the government could best accomplish this feat than the notion that the government could best build and maintain roads. To establish this impulse as a species of Progressivism or New Dealism would require establishing that ordinary Americans had similarly limited motives for those reforms (which though not implausible is well beyond the scope of the argument) or else that they had higher-minded motives for supporting public power. But the basic argument does not depend on this claim, and it has its own importance and intrinsic interest. Brigham paints a West using politics

and consumer culture to give meaning to technology. His westerners sought self-improvement by any means necessary, including even using the federal government. This ambition transcended party, ideology, and basic geography focusing only on the quickest route to the attainable goal. It is a familiar West, characterized anew by yet another form of will to power.

Eric Rauchway
University of Oxford

NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Founded in 1904, the Nevada Historical Society seeks to advance the study of the heritage of Nevada. The Society publishes scholarly studies, indexes, guidebooks, bibliographies, and the *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly;* it collects manuscripts, rare books, artifacts, historical photographs and maps, and makes its collections available for research; it maintains a museum at its Reno facility; and it is engaged in the development and publication of educational materials for use in the public schools.