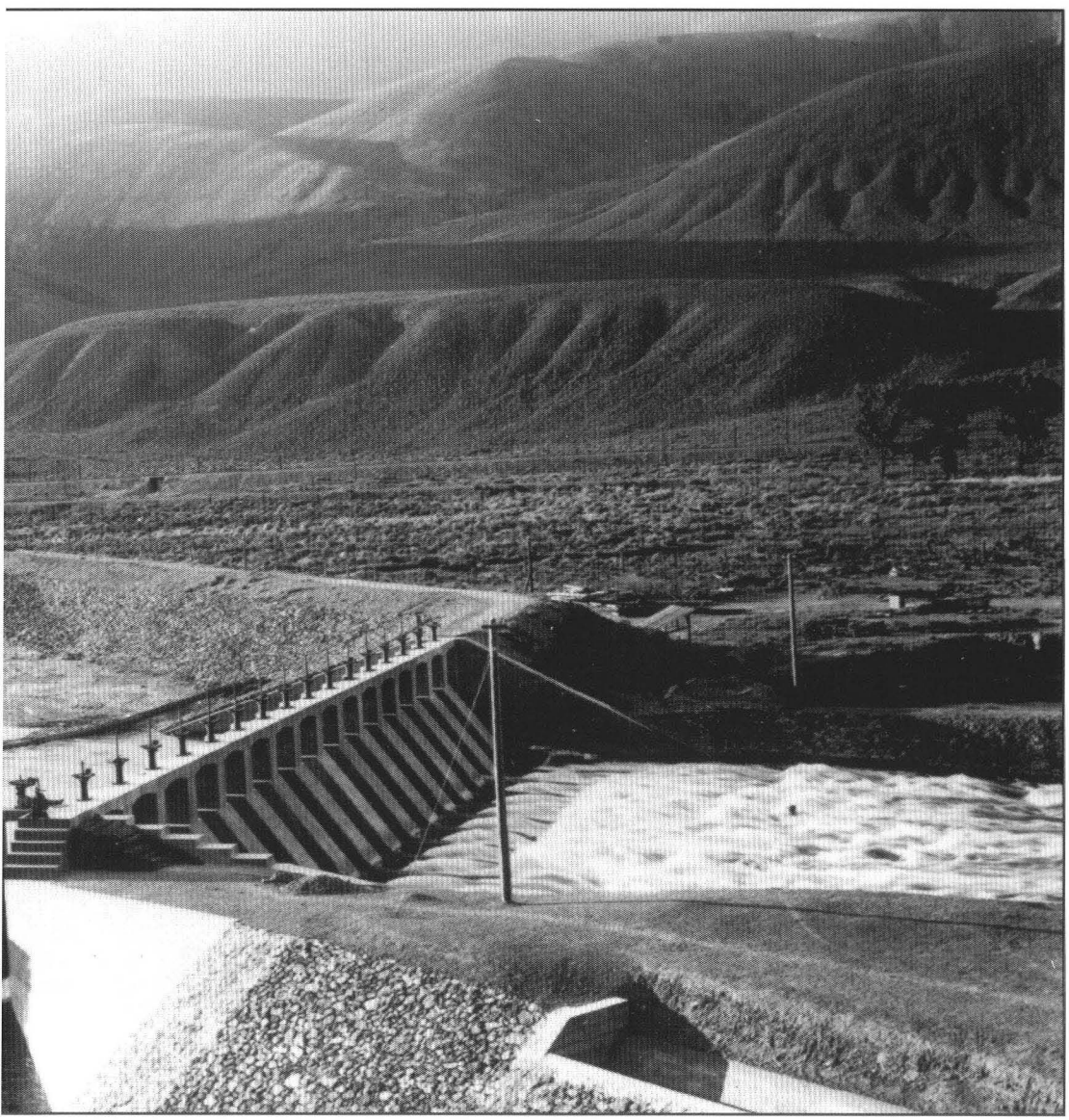
Nevada

Historical Society Quarterly



WINTER 2000

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, along with a copy on disk (in MAC© or IBM© compatible form-WordPerfect© 5.1, 6.0, or Microsoft Word©). 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. Submission guidelines are available on request. 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

William D. Rowley
Editor-in-Chief

Michael Green
Book Review Editor

Jacqueline L. Clay
Managing Editor

Juliet S. Pierson
Manuscript Editor

Volume 43 Winter 2000 Number 4

Contents

Front Cover: Derby Dam. *(Nevada Historical Society)*

Book Reviews

Autocrat on the Hill
The Short Unhappy Reign of Minard W. Stout

J. DEE KILLE

"I guess you're all wondering what kind of S.O.B. I am."[1] This was exactly the statement with which Minard W. Stout opened his very first faculty meeting on September 12, 1952. In retrospect, the new president's clumsy effort at humor set the tone for a six-year period of turmoil and conflict on the University of Nevada campus. Within six months after his arrival, the normally placid campus had been convulsed over a series of events that divided the faculty, created a statewide political crisis, and ultimately thrust the university into the national spotlight. The tumultuous six-year tenure of Minard Stout, stressful and divisive, ultimately proved to be the pivotal years in the history of the institution, providing under extreme duress the raison d'être for widespread change and reform that set the stage for the emergence of a superior land-grant university during the latter decades of the twentieth century.

The crisis in higher education experienced at the University of Nevada during the 1950s was not unique to the Silver State. To a degree it merely represented what was happening throughout the United States in the growing shadow of the Cold War. Escalating technology in weaponry (nuclear bombs, long-range bombers, and missiles) destroyed America's confidence in its security and insularity. Also it appeared that alien, and therefore dangerous, political, religious, and social philosophies threatened the fabric of American society. The situation in the view of many demanded a crusade to regain a sense of pride, uniqueness, and invulnerability that had existed in the United States before the trials of the Great Depression in the 1930s and World War II in the 1940s. In some ways the career of Minard W. Stout in Nevada exemplified a conservative resurgence that took advantage of America's longing to recapture its security, and its exceptionalism by embracing the authoritarian management style of business that traditionally had brought prosperity and assurance.

J. Dee Kille is currently a Ph.D. applicant in the Department of History at the University of Nevada, Reno. The research and writing of this article emerged from her master's thesis in history at the university.

University of Nevada, Reno President Minard Stout, 1952-1958 *(Artemesia, 1953)*

Stout came to the university with a background formed in the conventional Midwest. He had been the principal of the University of Iowa laboratory high school, as well as a professor of education and educational administration. His military experience during the war was that of a commander of marines aboard troop ships. In other words, he was used to giving orders and having those orders unquestioningly obeyed. As such a personality, he was purposely selected by the university's conservative Board of Regents. The Board was composed of Silas Ross, the state's most successful undertaker; Roy Hardy, a prominent mining magnate; Newton Crumley, an eminent hotel-casino owner from Elko, the state's third largest city; Archie Grant, a prosperous automobile dealer from burgeoning Las Vegas; and Louis Lombardi, a well-known Reno physician. All of these gentlemen looked back on successful vocations which were rooted in the traditional, rural, and small-town culture of the state. Because the past had created success for them and their state, they saw no evidence of a need for change. In the 1950s, with the federal government willing to invest large sums of money in Nevada for atomic research and military bases, the successful business-as-usual ideology of the past would again bode well for the state's future. However, when the faculty at the small university "up on the hill" began to chip away at the edges of that ideology by demanding a role in the governance of their institution, the old guard within the state saw it as a challenge to their basic assumptions of how business and for that matter public institutions should work.

The ensuing drama occurred, not surprisingly, during a period of rapid change not just at the university but in the entire state. The old guard supporters of Stout's heavy-handed administration failed to recognize that the Nevada they wished to preserve had already been altered so much that it was beyond recapture.

Between 1940 and 1950, Nevada's population increased from 110,000 to 160,000, and that growth continued as the new decade wore on.[2] By 1955, the population stood at 245,000, and as the 1950s closed, Nevada with a population of 285,000 (most of whom lived in Reno and Las Vegas) had become the fastest-growing state in the nation.[3] Many who came to Nevada during the 1950s were responding to the economic opportunities offered by the growing gaming industry and the state's increased emphasis on tourism.[4] In addition, the increased presence of military facilities, especially in southern Nevada, brought a culture of semipermanent residents, many of whom remained in the Silver State after their tours of duty. This huge influx of people was soon actively participating in a variety of ways in the economic, political, and social decision-making processes at all levels in their communities and throughout the state.

By 1959, Washoe and Clark counties together accounted for 75 percent of all inhabitants and Las Vegas had replaced Reno as the state's largest city. The new citizens were mostly young people who hoped to incorporate their own

postwar ideologies into the social and political structure of the state. By the middle of the decade, 75 percent of Nevada's residents were under forty-five years of age,[5] and the educational level of Nevadans in general was the third highest in the western region.[6] Nevada's only university was naturally caught up in the swiftly changing personality of the state.

By the late 1940s, the nature of faculty and students at the university had entered a period of rapid change, the frequently liberal nature of which was disconcerting for a small state and for the community of Reno. The war against totalitarianism in Europe had reinforced the ideas of democracy here at home. Many of the younger faculty, who had come to Nevada from prestigious liberal arts schools located in more cosmopolitan areas, brought with them their own ideas of democracy and shared faculty governance. The influx into the student ranks of World War II veterans under the G.I. Bill created a demand for personal accountability and student participation in the running of their campus. Both of these factors were diametrically opposed to the administration's efforts to return the campus to its prewar status as an institution under the thumb of a management hierarchy.

President Stout's first act in his attempt to restore the status quo ante was to bring what might in business parlance be called more student customers to the university. To achieve this he lowered entrance requirements, a move that was rubber-stamped by the Board of Regents. He believed this would halt the decline in enrollment caused by the graduation of veterans. The postwar flood of men taking advantage of the G.I. Bill had decreased appreciably, and enrollment had fallen from a high of 1,974 in 1947 to 1,279.[7] As a firm advocate of the democracy of education, Stout declared his intention to lower entrance requirements so that all Nevada high school graduates would be allowed to enroll at the university regardless of their course work or their grades. He believed he could solve two problems with one move: Give all high school graduates their proper chance to acquire a higher education and increase the university's enrollment. The blatant lowering of standards, however, did not go unchallenged.

Some of the faculty saw it as detrimental both to the students' self-esteem if they failed at the university and to the quality of education in general. In response, biology professor Frank Richardson distributed an article written by University of Illinois history professor Arthur E. Bestor, Jr., entitled "Aimlessness in Education." The article argued against lowering entrance standards, but of more concern to Stout was that Bestor's main argument was focused against "educationists" in general. An educationist in the 1950s was anyone who taught the art of teaching rather than taught an academic discipline. Stout personified this profile. His own educational training, as well as his goals for the university's growing School of Education, caused him to take Richardson's move personally. With the unwavering support of the Board of Regents, Stout took action against Richardson and the four other tenured faculty members he deemed to be the chief troublemakers attacking his ideas.[8]

It is ironic that while Stout believed in the democracy of educational opportunity, he also believed in a rigid chain-of-command structure of institutional governance—from the top down. Because these five professors had refused to restrict their activities to their own scholastic milieus and teaching duties, they had arbitrarily challenged their boss and had thus violated that chain of command. The distribution of Bestor's article was the only piece of solid evidence that the administration had on which to base its charges against what it considered to be a total of five dissidents. But because that article could be tied directly to only Professor Richardson, the charges against English professors Robert Gorrell, Robert Hume, and Charlton Laird and biology professor Thomas Little were withdrawn. The regents, in early June 1953, after a three-day public hearing, fired Frank Richardson on the grounds that he was insubordinate and uncooperative.

The two charges, insubordination and uncooperativeness, had long been accepted as unquestioned causes for termination in the traditional authoritarian management structures of mining and ranching, as well as in hotel-casinos, auto agencies, and other businesses in Nevada. Management in these organizations brooked no challenge from the hired hands. Stout and the regents were determined to ensure that the same scenario was maintained in the state's only institution of higher education. After all, in order to teach the state's future leaders proper management techniques, the university had to be operated as

English Department: Row 1 - Paul Edridge, Jeane Lawson; Row 2 - Robert Griffin, William Miller, Charles Laird; Row 3 - Robert Gorrell, John Morrison, Robert Hume. Robert Gorrell, Robert Hume, and Charlton Laird were three of the five faculty members that Stout believed to be the chief troublemakers in attacking his ideas. *(Artemesia, 1954)*

the prime example. But given Nevada's new demographic makeup, Stout's action not only did not return the university to its traditional status quo, it exacerbated the entire situation. His pro-management, anti-faculty tactics, while roundly applauded by the state's old guard, were strongly denounced by much of the new, more progressive citizenry, as well as by the majority of the faculty and students. Indeed, labor issues were an extremely tumultuous topic throughout America during the 1950s, and especially in Nevada, where they were reflected, sometimes violently, in the confrontations between right-to-work proponents and labor union advocates then raging within the state.[9]

Professor Richardson appealed his dismissal to the Nevada Supreme Court, and, after lengthy arguments by attorneys for both sides, he was reinstated in 1954. Richardson's attorneys, Bruce Thompson, Leslie Gray, Ralph Wittenberg, and Bert Goldwater, based their successful case on the Board's breach of its own rules of tenure. The Board's counsel, Attorney General W. T. Matthews and Special Assistant Attorneys General Harlan Heward and Lester Summerfield, focused their arguments around labor-management issues and specifically the inviolability of management decisions, but they lost their case. Nonetheless, Stout and the regents, with strong support from the state's traditionalist old guard, were sure they had taken the proper action to demonstrate to the faculty that the university would operate in the traditional authoritarian manner. Regardless of the decision in the state's supreme court, Regent Archie Grant firmly believed that "A university professor is no different than a Ford mechanic; he has to obey the boss."[10]

With such powerful backing, President Stout moved to further solidify his position as the chief administrator of the university. On the grounds that "you can't pool ignorance and come up with knowledge,"[11] Stout discontinued all of the democratically elected faculty committees and, where necessary, instituted committees of his own choosing. He, with the blessing of the regents, created new schools and colleges and brought in his own lieutenants to head them. Adding fuel to the flames he had created with his authoritarian style, he instituted, at the insistence of the Board of Regents, an anticommunist statement to be signed by all faculty and staff. Given the extensive legal battles being waged at the University of California and the University of Washington over anticommunist loyalty oaths, Stout and the regents decided to call their document merely a statement. While the signing of the statement was to be voluntary, Stout made it clear that failure to do so would result in a personnel review before the next yearly contract was issued. Thus, the voluntary nature of the signature was operative only in the faculty member's choice between conscience and livelihood. No matter how it was interpreted, the choice voluntarily to sign Nevada's anticommunist statement resulted in the same "comply or leave" situation then being challenged at the University of Washington, the University of California, and other institutions where signing oaths was made mandatory.

Silas E. Ross, Chairman

Dr. Louis Lombardi

Newton B. Crumley

Roy Hardy

Archie Grant

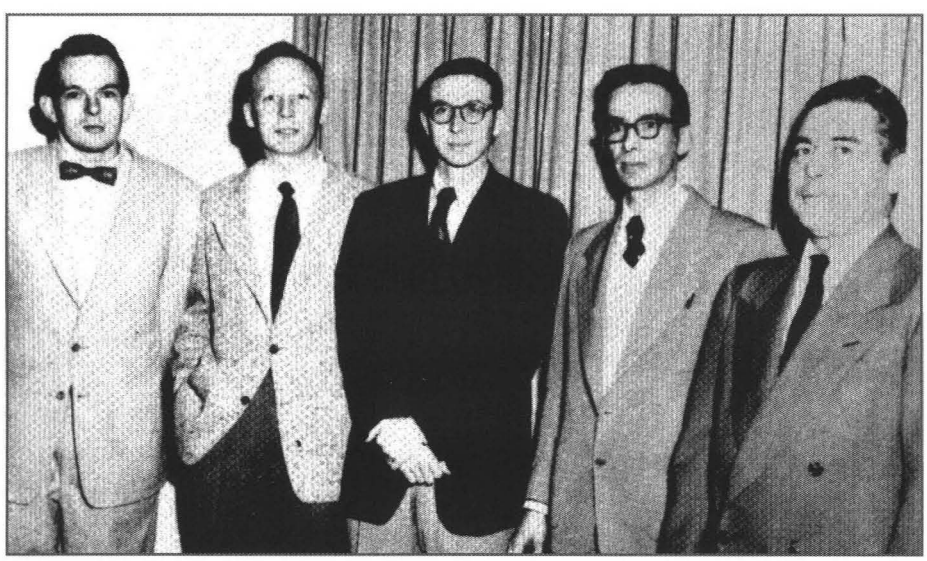
Board of Regents. *(Artemesia, 1953)*

In the meantime, the development of a less conservative attitude among the citizenry of metropolitan Nevada emerged. A coterie of young, prominent, well-educated individuals banded together calling themselves Friends of the University to support the beleaguered faculty and to draw national attention to the despotic nature of the university's administration. The Friends passed along information about the Nevada situation to faculty in other universities and to national publications such as the *New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, and *Time* magazine. By appealing to the hot-button issue of denial of academic freedom, they gained much national attention, brought torrents of criticism down upon President Stout, and caused letters and telegrams from campuses all over the country to be sent to the Board of Regents. In addition to the efforts of these progressive-minded citizens, several faculty members also made public their reactions to the administration's attempts to mold the university into a business enterprise.

Walter Van Tilburg Clark, nationally known Nevada novelist, son of a former president of the University of Nevada, and a current member of the English

department faculty, was no longer able to cope with the deteriorating situation on campus. In May of 1953 he issued a letter of resignation in which he accused President Stout of denying academic free speech by firing Frank Richardson. Furthermore, by suppressing faculty input into university governance and discouraging faculty research, Stout was attempting to create a university staffed by what Clark termed a manageable mediocrity.[12] If successful, Stout's efforts would keep the university mired in that "intellectual backwater" to which the rest of the nation had consigned Nevada.

Later that year, biology professor Thomas Little, one of the original five dissidents, also resigned, taking with him a huge Atomic Energy Commission grant for the study of radioactivity on plant life. In his letter of resignation, Little decried the fact that the president and the Board of Regents felt compelled to prove that they were dictatorial bosses instead of democratic leaders.[13] In May of 1954, economics professor Arthur Grey, Jr., resigned, and noted that because of Stout's authoritarianism, "the university is in full retreat from the observance of the fundamentals of democratic behavior."[14] The next year, 1955, brought another widely publicized faculty resignation. Sociology professor Allvar Jacobson wrote scathingly in his letter that because of the "inhuman and capricious treatment [of faculty] which seems to be Dr. Stout's stock in trade," his "continuance as president would be disastrous to the university."[15] During his public testimony before the Board of Regents, Jacobson condemned



Business, Economics, and Sociology Departments: Jim Hoyt, Arthur Grey, Robert James, John Reed, Alden Plumley. Arthur Grey resigned in May 1954 due to Stout's authoratarianism. *(Artemesia, 1954)*

the president's autocratic style of management in even harsher terms when he compared Stout to Hitler and Stalin.[16]

The resignations of Clark, Little, Grey and Jacobson received wide coverage in the national media through the auspices of the Friends of the University and sympathetic local correspondents. All were presented as liberal, progressive, democratic, and modern educators who were focused on the best interests of their students and the advancement of the university, whereas the administration was painted as a regressive, archaic, and dictatorial organization bent on maintaining its own authoritarian power instead of preparing the university to fight totalitarianism elsewhere in the world. Consequently, as these articles spread throughout the country, the calcification of old guard attitudes strengthened that backwater image which many in the state were trying to shed.

The students, as would be expected, also became actively involved in what they saw as the cause of liberation for themselves and their university. In March of 1956, approximately three hundred students left the campus and marched down Virginia Street carrying banners and shouting slogans. Amid the clamor of "Out with Stout" and "Treat us like adults," several students climbed the Reno Arch and hanged effigies of President Stout and the two deans of students.[17] Nine students were taken "downtown" by police van where they were roundly chastised and sent home. Stout, however, was not so lenient. He, through the mechanisms of his Student Affairs Committee, expelled six students. Of the nine students taken to the police station, two gave false names and addresses and one was not a university student, so only six could be disciplined by the president. But once again, his arbitrary acts backfired. Because they were expelled without being able to confront their accusers, the students had been denied due process. State Attorney General Harvey Dickerson strongly recommended that they be reinstated rather than have the university face a court challenge over the expulsions.[18] Stout was forced to back down.

As the 1950s progressed and Stout attempted to solidify his authority, his efforts faced more and more challenges from within a state bent on pulling itself out of the backwater and becoming part of mainstream America. As a result, his power, as well as that of his old guard supporters, began to weaken. Nowhere was this more evident than in the changing structure of the Board of Regents. Until 1954, Stout exerted a strong influence over the board. He was able to accomplish this, according to his own admission, by taking his proposals to each regent individually before submitting them to the group as a whole. By doing so, he was able personally to convince each man of the merits of his proposal as well as make any adjustments necessary to maintain the regent's support. As a result, very few, if any, of his proposals ever failed to receive unanimous approval by the board. In 1954, with the decision of Newton Crumley to leave the Board and run for the Nevada State Senate, Stout's assurance of unanimous board support began to fade. Also at stake in the 1954 election was Regent Louis Lombardi's seat. Even though Dr. Lombardi was

popular and was seeking re-election, the recent clamor about Stout and his administrative practices created some anxiety about the race.

The results of the 1954 election for seats on the Board of Regents displayed the persistent but weakening hold of conservatism within the state and at the same time verified that Nevada was, indeed, liberalizing. Because candidates for the Board of Regents campaigned at large, voters cast their ballots for all open positions. The fact that Lombardi triumphed over eight other candidates to retain his seat is indicative that change in Nevada is a slow process. However, the person elected to fill Crumley's seat was none other than Bruce Thompson, triumphant attorney for Professor Richardson and one of the most persistent anti-Stout candidates. Therefore, the voters sent a message to the regents that while generally satisfied with their performance, they wanted the board to take back its power from the "Autocrat on the Hill." The outcome of the election seemed to Stout to be merely an irritant; instead of having unanimous support, he would now have to contend with a rogue regent who publicly challenged his arbitrary decisions. Consequently, between the elections of 1954 and 1956 many of the president's actions received only four-to-one approval. While this situation did not overly affect Stout's agenda, it was slowly chipping away at his public support.

In addition to the public scrutiny focused on Minard Stout's administration through Regent Thompson's criticism, in late May 1955, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) conducted an on-campus investigation of the administration's behavior during the Richardson affair. Indeed, during the 1954 Richardson crisis, the local University of Nevada chapter, the Stanford University chapter and several other chapters of the AAUP had requested an investigation, but the national headquarters, even though Richardson was the local chapter president, sent only observers. A year later, after continued charges about attacks on academic freedom and a renewed request by University of Nevada chapter president, Lowell Jones, two professors from the Oregon chapter were sent to investigate. The investigating team held private hearings between May 31 and June 3 at which many faculty members, several members of the administration, some of the regents and even President Stout testified.[19] The president, however, maintained that the investigators interviewed only a very limited number of faculty, all of whom had a specific agenda: to get Stout.[20] Consequently, according to Stout, the report that led in late 1956 to the censure of the administration and the Board of Regents contained many errors of fact.[21] The AAUP censure hung over the university until April 25, 1958. It was lifted only when Professor Charlton Laird, then president of the local chapter and one of the original five dissidents, assured the national headquarters that, under the new President Charles J. Armstrong, conditions on campus had improved.[22]

The censure of the university's administration was virtually ignored by the Board of Regents as well as by President Stout; only Regent Thompson be-

lieved that the AAUP's verdict was detrimental. He and many on the faculty were concerned that censure would discourage qualified professors from seeking positions at the university. In addition, many were also concerned that censure would drive away potential students. While both of these fears were well founded, in the final analysis censure did not have the drastic effect so many had anticipated. Beginning in the middle 1950s, there were many young people graduating from colleges and universities who were looking for teaching positions, and the supply was greater than the demand. The loss of student enrollment was only minimal, from 2,240 in 1956 down to 2,230 in 1957, then back up to 2,936 in 1958, the year that censure was removed.[23]

Stout's arbitrary acts and the public's reaction to them culminated in the 1956 McHenry Report of an investigation into the university's administration. This probe was authorized and funded by the 1955 Nevada Legislature in response to numerous complaints about Stout's authoritarian regime, including denial of academic freedom, salary manipulation and importing his own lieutenants instead of promoting from within. The members of the 1955 legislature were not the first to demand that the university's administration be investigated. On March 10, 1953, the speaker of the assembly, M.E. McCuistion, after hearing complaints from unidentified citizens, had appointed a three-man investigating committee, headed by Assemblyman G. William Coulthard of Las Vegas, to identify the nature of the problems and get the university back on track.[24] The committee was given one week to "probe reports of dissension between students and faculty, faculty and department heads and between the faculty and the president and the regents."[25] At the end of the week's investigation, the Coulthard Committee reported that the problems stemmed from a "small dissident group" of faculty, and it recommended that the president and regents handle this personnel matter expeditiously so that no serious harm or discredit would befall the university.[26] An investigation of the university was again called for just prior to the close of the 1954 special legislative session, but that resolution was killed because of the constitutionally mandated time limit for special sessions.[27]

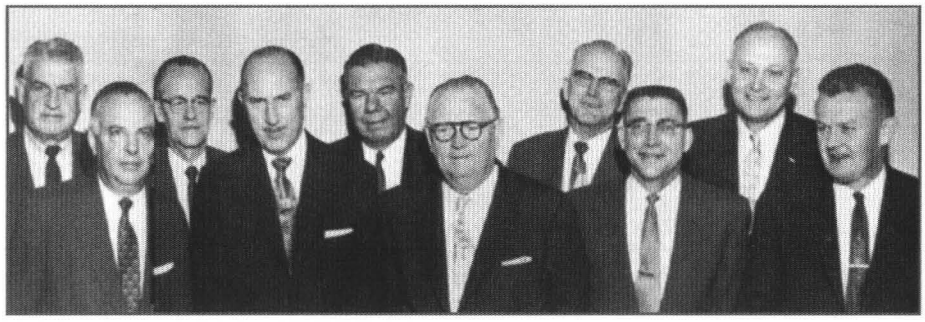
The issue, however, refused to go away despite the hope of the editor of the *Reno Evening Gazette* on New Year's Day 1955: "Perhaps those who pressed for the investigation have gained in stature and wisdom and will be content to allow the university and its board of regents to work out its own affairs."[28] It seemed obvious to the editor, and probably to many others, that those who were demanding that the university be investigated had a specific agenda. Whether that agenda was to gain personal aggrandizement, to "get Stout," or to attempt to increase legislative power over the university was never clarified. It was probably a combination of all three. But because the state constitution mandates that the duties of the Board of Regents shall be prescribed by law (and the legislature is the law-making body), it is not inconceivable that some in the legislature believed they could gain more power over the university by

changing the laws governing the Board of Regents. The rising popular dissatisfaction with Stout's administration was an excellent starting point for such a legislative move.

The attempt to create for the state, legal controls that would take power away from the monopolistic and personalized old-boy networks that had always operated in Nevada was also evident in Governor Charles Russell's admonition to the 1955 legislature to create a Gaming Control Board to act as the enforcement and investigative arm of the tax commission to regulate gambling.[29] The legislature passed the measure, which ensured that the state would have a strong hand in controlling the gaming industry. Furthermore, the fact that the only McHenry Commission recommendation that the 1957 legislature acted upon was the increase in the number of members of the Board of Regents also lends credence to the theory of an attempted legislative power consolidation. The change in the Board of Regents, like the creation of the Gaming Control Board came not without challenge. But in the long run, the Board of Regents became more representative of the people, and the Gaming Control Board helped bring respectability to Nevada's gaming industry.

Consequently, even though the 1955 assembly was dubbed the New Faces of 1955 because there were so many freshmen, the over-all party affiliation did not change from that of the 1953 assembly;[30] nor, evidently, did the desire for an investigation of President Stout and the university administration. The probe the assembly authorized was conducted under the direction of Dean McHenry, a political science professor from the University of California at Los Angeles. McHenry compiled a team of six highly respected consultants to investigate specialized areas of the university, including student-administration relations, faculty-administration relations, finance, and so forth. The McHenry Report, completed in October 1956, contained approximately three hundred pages and cost the taxpayers $25,000. While the report included many suggestions for improvements in the operation of the university and its administration, its single most-cited conclusion was that the discontent and unrest at the University of Nevada were the direct result of President Stout's quasi-military style of administration. Indeed, most all other problems seemed traceable to that one single cause.

The 1956 McHenry Report was the final defeat for the old guard's attempt to return the university to its traditional past. During the course of the investigation, but well before the report's release, the chairman of the Board of Regents, Silas Ross, announced his plans to retire at the end of his 1956 term. He had been on the Board since 1932 and had been the chairman continuously since 1934, and he said that twenty-five years of service to the university was an admirable milestone. How much of Ross's decision to step down was based on that milestone and how much was the result of facing the challenges and contentions caused by the Stout administration, as well as the potential findings of the McHenry Report, no one will ever know. But with Ross leaving the



Board of Regents. *(Artemesia, 1958)*

board, the strongest, single guiding philosophy was also going. Indeed, many had characterized the Board as a personification of Ross.[31] Consequently, the new Board would be vulnerable to the capricious new demographics then reshaping the Silver State.

The 1956 election for Board of Regents was again for two open seats. By then, however, the politicized nature of the situation had created a natural attraction for candidates who had strong opinions about the situation on the hill. In addition to Ross's retirement, Archie Grant's term was expiring. Grant, however, was running for re-election. New contenders included Las Vegas hotel owner William Elwell, Reno attorney Albert Hilliard, Elko County District Attorney Grant Sawyer, and Reno physician, alumni member, and faculty advocate Fred Anderson. Proof of the tenacity of Nevada's fundamentalist heritage can be seen in the results of the primary election. The voters, by their wide margin for Anderson, showed that they believed that change in the governing structure at the university was necessary. But by the same token, that incumbent Regent Archie Grant came in second in the balloting indicates that the people did not want radical change. The voters' complete rejection of Hilliard, the most radical anti-Stout candidate, demonstrates that extremism was viewed as detrimental. In the general election, even after the release of the McHenry Report, the voters reaffirmed their earlier stance by electing Anderson and returning Grant. Therefore, while Stout's position with the Board remained reasonably secure, many of his proposals now received only three-to-two support as Regents Thompson and Anderson both actively challenged what they believed to be his arbitrary and detrimental positions. The disagreements among the regents on Stout's proposals continued to gain public attention and to further weaken the president's initially strong support throughout the state.[32] One of the first changes implemented at the recommendation of the McHenry Report was aimed at weakening that support even further.

Of the thirty-six recommendations, three state constitutional changes, and twenty "major statutory changes" contained in the McHenry Report's ten-page chapter on recommendations,[33] the only one to be implemented by the

legislature was the restructuring of the Board of Regents. Until 1957, the Board had consisted of five members elected at large throughout the state. The McHenry Report recommended that the Board be increased to nine members, that it include the governor and state superintendent of schools, and that the other seven members should be appointed by the governor. The legislature moved immediately to increase the Board to nine members, but did not include either the governor or the head of the schools. Nor did the legislature agree with the McHenry Report's recommendation that the positions should be appointive. But it did, in April 1957, appoint on an interim basis four new members to the Board pending the 1958 elections. Upon appeal by Attorney General Harvey Dickerson, the Nevada State Supreme Court found that because appointive power belonged to the governor, the legislature's appointments were unconstitutional, and the four interim regents were removed. Governor Russell, however, immediately reappointed the same four men to serve on the Board. From that point on, Minard Stout's reign was doomed. Of these four—Elko County District Attorney Grant Sawyer, Caliente rancher and former speaker of the assembly Cyril Bastian, Las Vegas hotel owner William Elwell, and Ely druggist N. E. Broadbent—the first three had public records of challenging Stout's administrative practices. President Stout and his supporters soon realized that the deck had been stacked against them.

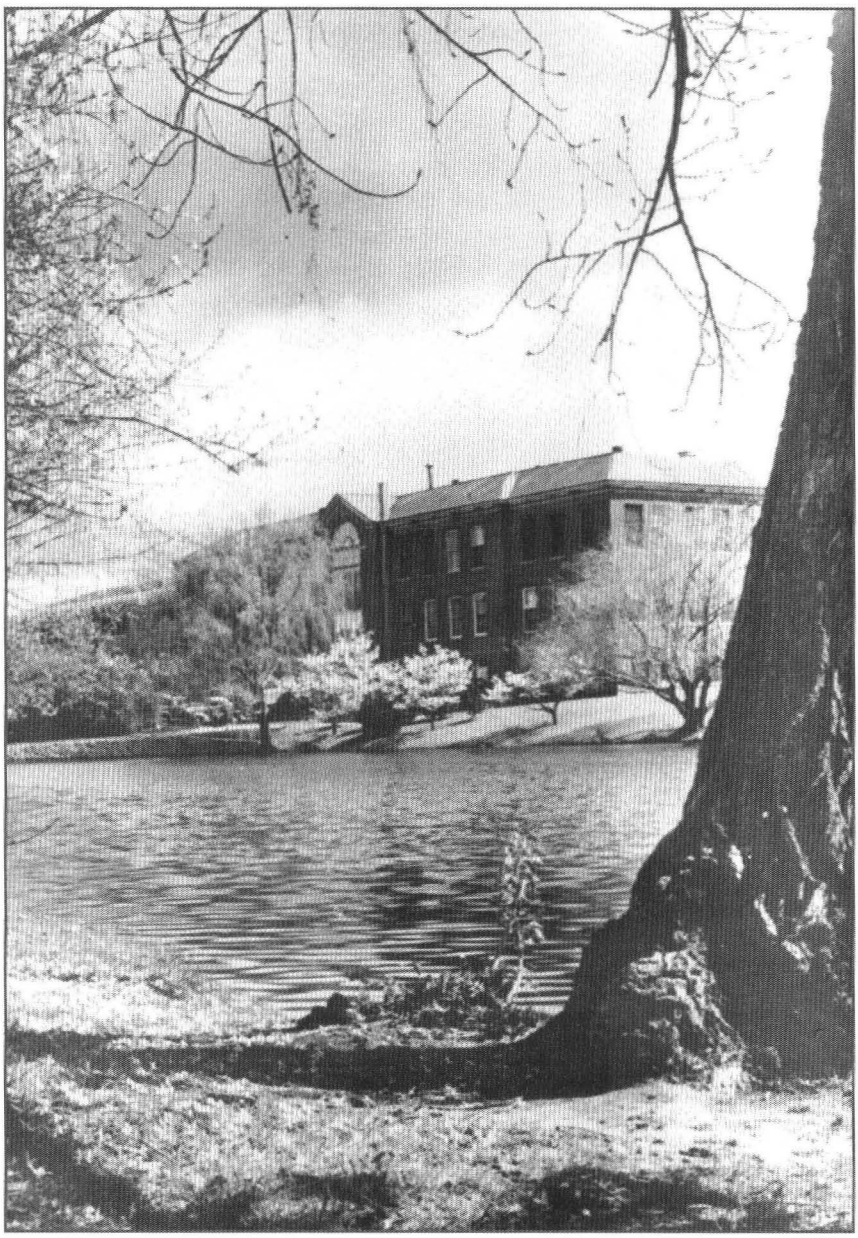
On October 5, 1957, only seven months after the expansion of the Board, President Stout submitted his resignation, effective July 1, 1958. After it became known that Stout had been asked to resign, accusations and denials flew back and forth between the factions as to whether or not the four new interim board members had been given "secret orders" to "get Stout." As it turned out, however, even the July 1958 resignation date proved to be more distant than either the old or new members of the Board of Regents were willing to endure. After a November 1957 interview with the *Minneapolis Tribune* in which Stout abused the Board of Regents, lambasted the legislature, and further damaged the state's image, the regents, in their shortest meeting on record, voted to buy him out of the rest of his contract and of his tenure as a professor of education effective December 31, 1957. The cost was $12,500 and a continuation until April 1, 1958, of his occupancy of residence in the presidential mansion. Shortly thereafter the search for a new, less authoritarian president was begun. And the process for the first time in the history of the university included faculty participation.

The demise of Minard Stout's style of autocratic administration was the natural result of the modernizing, liberalizing attitudes that were developing within the state and particularly on the campus itself during the late 1940s and the 1950s. Forces for democratic involvement in the governing of the university, as well as in society in general, were making themselves felt; and through their continued application of pressure, they were breaking down the old, narrow, autocratic men's-club structure which had ruled the Silver State for almost one

hundred years. For the University of Nevada, the process of recovering from the bruising of the Stout years began immediately after his departure and slowly gained momentum through the 1960s and 1970s. The active participation of the faculty in selecting Stout's successor, Charles J. Armstrong, as president was evidence of some of the immediate ramifications of the Stout administration. Upon taking the president's chair, Armstrong reinstated the practice of faculty participation in governance through democratically elected committees, and he established a faculty senate to replace the dysfunctional, Stout-controlled Faculty Forum.

With growing cohesiveness of faculty interaction and increasing student and faculty participation in its governance, the University of Nevada became, eventually, according to Professor Robert Gorrell, "much more democratized as a university than most institutions" in the country.[34] Later consequences of the Stout years included a dramatic turn away from the narrow definition of teaching as the sole purpose of professors to include an increased emphasis on academic research.

Minard Stout went on to other career opportunities, including those of vice president of defense planning for the Curtiss-Wright Corporation, vice president for development at the University of Miami, several posts in the United States Department of Education, and, finally, professor of education and director of the Center for the Study of Higher Education at Arizona State University.[35] While Stout, claiming that he never modified his ideology about how educational institutions should operate,[36] eventually settled into his long-dreamed-of role as professor of education, the University of Nevada was busily throwing off that antiquated ideology. In response to the increasing demand for democratic empowerment that began in the late 1940s and was sweeping the country by the 1960s, the university rejected Stout's repressive style. Succeeding administrations, beginning with Armstrong and continuing until the present day, have accepted the modernizing values and methods that have brought the university out of that intellectual backwater in which it was mired for so many years. While Minard W. Stout fades slowly from memory, the University of Nevada, Reno, continues to advance and take on an ever larger reputation as a progressive and productive university.



University of Nevada, Reno campus - Clark Administration Builing behind Manzanita Lake. *(Artemesia, 1953)*

Notes

[1]Frederick M. Anderson, *Surgeon, Regent and Dabbler in Politics*, R.T. King, ed. (Reno: University of Nevada, Oral History Program, 1985), 185-86; Everett White Harris, *My Years in Nevada: Life in Reno, A Career at the University of Nevada, Exploring the West* (Reno: University of Nevada, Oral History Program, 1969), 70.

[2]For comprehensive population figures, see Russell R. Elliot, *History of Nevada* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1973), 396.

[3]For population growth and distribution see *ibid.* 325-26; Mary Ellen Glass, *Nevada's Turbulent '50s: Decade of Political and Economic Change*, Nevada Studies in History and Political Science, 15 (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1981), 39-40.

[4]For economic basis of the state since 1950, see Elliot, *History of Nevada*, 325-37, and Glass, *Nevada's Turbulent '50s*, 39-47.

[5]For age statistics and educational levels, see Glass, *Nevada's Turbulent '50s*, 39-40.

[6]*Ibid.*

[7]All enrollment statistics are taken from a comprehensive study at the University of Nevada and the University and Community College System of Nevada for enrollments from 1886 to 1999, compiled by James W. Hulse.

[8]For a discussion of Stout's educational philosophy, see James W. Hulse, *The University of Nevada: A Centennial History* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1974), 52-53; *Phoenix Gazette*, 13 May 1970, supplied courtesy of Robert Spindler, archivist at the Arizona State University.

[9]For a discussion of the issues of labor unions and right-to-work advocates, see Glass, *Nevada's Turbulent '50s*, 73-85. Also see Russell R. Elliot and William D. Rowley, *History of Nevada* (2d ed., rev.; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 351, 354-55. According to William D. Rowley, professor of history at the University of Nevada, Reno, the right-to- work struggle in Nevada was a hard-fought campaign. In response to labor's efforts to organize and mandate closed shops, the Nevada Legislature in 1951 passed right-to-work legislation to be approved by voter referendum in 1952. After much bitter campaigning by both sides, the law passed by only a thousand votes statewide.

[10]Edward A. Olsen, *My Careers as a Journalist in Oregon, Idaho, and Nevada; in Nevada Gaming Control and at the University of Nevada* (Reno: University of Nevada, Oral History Program 1972), 176.

[11]Harris, *My Years in Nevada*, 70.

[12]*Reno Evening Gazette* (5 June 1953); *Nevada State Journal* (5 June 1953); unidentified letter titled "FACTS" in the Hulse Papers, AC143, folder 73, University of Nevada Archives, Reno. Also see Anderson, *Surgeon, Regent and Dabbler*, 196, and Rollan Melton, *Sonny's Story: A Journalist's Memoir* (Reno: University of Nevada, Oral History Program, 1999), 68.

[13]*New York Times* (12 July 1953), *Nevada State News* (16 July 1953); *Reno Evening Gazette* (1 August 1953).

[14]*Reno Evening Gazette* (25 May 1954); letter titled "FACTS" (Hulse Papers); Russell Kirk, *Academic Freedom: An Essay in Definition* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1955), 70.

[15]Allvar H. Jacobson, Letter to The Honorable Silas E. Ross, Chairman, Governor's records, Governor Charles H. Russell, GOV0295, (15 February 1955), University of Nevada, 1955, Nevada State Archives, Carson City.

[16]*New York Times* (6 March 1955); *Reno Evening Gazette* (7 March 1955).

[17]For comprehensive information on the "student riot," see *Reno Evening Gazette* (20 March 1956); *Nevada State Journal* (20 March 1956).

[18]*Reno Evening Gazette* (28 March 1956).

[19]*Nevada State Journal* (1 June 1955, 3 June 1955).

[20]Minard W. Stout, interview conducted by James Hulse, 19 January 1972, audio tapes, AC62, tape 2 of 3, University of Nevada Archives, Reno.

[21]*Ibid.*

[22]James W. Hulse, interview by author, 7 April 2000.

[23]Enrollment figures are from the Hulse study cited in note 7 above.

[24]*Reno Evening Gazette* (11 March 1953).

[25]*Ibid.*

[26]*Nevada State Journal* (29 March 1953). The entire text of the Coulthard Committee Report is

printed on the editorial page.

[27]*Reno Evening Gazette* (1 January 1955).

[28]*Ibid.*

[29]Elliot and Rowley, *History of Nevada*, 330.

[30]*Reno Evening Gazette* (4 November 1954).

[31]*Sagebrush* (15 March 1957) and the McHenry Report, 58 both claim "that if the University of Nevada is the lengthened shadow of a man, that man is Silas E. Ross." This quotation has as its reference Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay "Self-Reliance"; the Emerson statement reads, "An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man...and all history resolves itself very easily into the biography of a few *stout* and earnest persons" (emphasis added).

[32]Hulse, *University of Nevada*, 52.

[33]Nevada Legislative Counsel Bureau, *The University of Nevada: An Appraisal - The Report of the University Survey*, bulletin 28 (Carson City: State Printing Office, December 1956), 184-93.

[34]Robert M. Gorrell, *University Growing Up: Rambling Reminiscences of an English Professor and Administrator, 1945-1980*, (Reno: University of Nevada, Oral History Program, 1983), 436-37.

[35]Professional resumé in Stout bio file, University of Nevada Archives, Reno; *Reno Gazette-Journal* (25 March 1994); obituary, *Reno Gazette-Journal* (25 March 1994). Minard W. Stout died on 23 March 1994.

[36]Stout, audio tapes, tape 3 of 3.

Rude and Raucous Catcalls

The Disputes of Governor's Day, 1970

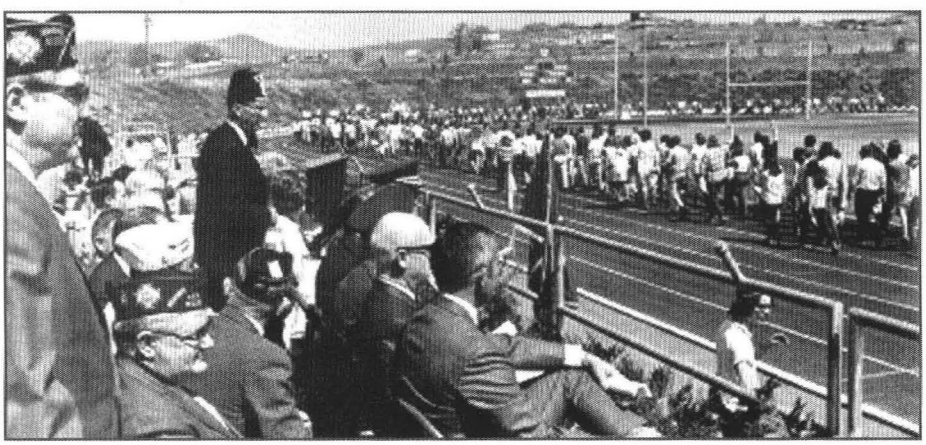
BRAD LUCAS

In the spring of 1970, the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), faced volatile weeks of unrest and protest unlike anything witnessed before, and nothing else quite like it has happened on the campus in the thirty years after. The week after United States troops invaded Cambodia, and one day following the tragic killing of students at Kent State University, several hundred UNR students, staff, and faculty marched in protest of the continued United States involvement in Indochina. At UNR's Governor's Day, May 5, 1970, they disrupted a ceremony attended by the governor, visiting military officials, and local citizens who were there to recognize ROTC troops. It was a peaceful protest against a senseless war—and against the administration's callous disregard for the students shot by the National Guard in Ohio. In the weeks that followed the protest, Nevada's citizens came down hard on the campus, threatening officials with economic and political sanctions, and demanding retribution for such un-American activity. In the end most Nevadans were satisfied that they collectively had kept things under control, tracing the root of this activity to two men who participated, and punishing just one of them for the actions of more than four hundred people. They accepted erroneous media representations, reacted with repressive measures, and lost sight of the interventions that opened dialogue and kept the peace on campus.

In the three decades since that Governor's Day, the protest has been written into local history as a small episode in the Vietnam War years; after all, to many

Brad Lucas is a Ph.D. candidate in English at the University of Nevada, Reno. He is editing the Governor's Day 1970 interviews for publication through the University of Nevada Oral History Program, and he is writing a book-length account of Governor's Day and the Adamian Affair. The author would like to thank Susan Lucas for her tireless help with the preparation of this article. This project would also not have been possible without the help of Karen Gash at the UNR Archives, as well as that of Tom King, Mary Larson, Kathleen Coles, Kate Ross, and Linda Sommer of the University of Nevada Oral History Program. A special debt is owed to Mary Ellen Glass (with Marian Rendall and Ruth Hilts) and Ken Carpenter for beginning the Governor's Day interview series in 1970, and to Paul Adamian, David Slemmons, Bob Mayberry, Dave Harvey, and Jane Detweiler for their generous help.

Two university students carried a banner at the head of the protest march on May 5, 1970. *(UNR Archives)*



Several hundred students, faculty, and staff marched to protest the invasion of Cambodia and the killings at Kent State University. *(UNR Archives)*

observers it was just one protest out of hundreds across the country. Two firebombing incidents shortly after the protest intensified the situation on campus, but the perpetrators were never found—although wishful thinkers often placed blame on radical outsiders from California. Thus, the story of Governor's Day became a simple narrative that fit in nicely with other stories of the time: Passionate activists staged a protest, things got out of hand, and someone took things a bit too far. As in good historical tragedy, a man paid dearly for battling forces larger than himself. Now, the Jones Visitor's Center at UNR displays an innocuous Governor's Day photo of two clean-cut students carrying a banner condemning American involvement in Cambodia, suggesting that good Nevada students protested the war only by carrying signs—not by disrupting military events. Of course, anyone who wants a traditional protest story can dig a bit deeper and hear stories about Governor's Day. On the surface, the events themselves have all the elements of a good story: The demonstration led by a long-haired radical (a minority sympathizer, no less), two subsequent firebombings, then a long legal trial driven by men in three-piece suits who purged the militant element from their community. This is the version of a similar story told on college campuses across the country, and left unquestioned, it can come across as a passion play for radicals, or it could be a simple story about the loss of American innocence. But simply recounting the events conveys only a partial vision of the last Governor's Day held at UNR, and it denies the complexities of problems that have never left the American political landscape of protest: racial inequities, the vested interests of powerful elites, and the unbridled spectacle purveyed by the mass media.

In the wake of the months of unrest in 1970, most Nevadans lost sight of some basic truths. Unlike many other demonstrations across the country, the protest at UNR was nonviolent; all that was involved was marching, singing, chanting, and some heckling. And unlike the case at other campuses, faculty and staff brought peace to the UNR campus through focus-group meetings with students in the days following the protest. With the university's President N. Edd Miller guiding the intervention efforts, a team of faculty, staff, and administrators spent several days trying to facilitate understanding, foster empathy, and temper passions across campus. Rather than following the lead of other schools, Miller and his supporters chose to avoid repressive measures, mass arrests, and the closing of the campus; instead, they implemented a campaign to engage ideological viewpoints across the political spectrum through group dialogue. It was a peace that weathered the upheaval of the two arson incidents. It was a plan of action based on a practical and personal understanding of the dynamics of academia, and a demonstration of empathy for the people who lived within it.

The Board of Regents, however, were facing public pressure and the threat of removal from their elected positions unless they displayed a show of control. When it was all over, they would disregard the conclusions of a UNR

Faculty Senate committtee (composed of scholars from disciplines across campus) and make choices based on their own assessments of the situation. Disregarding Miller's support of the committee and its findings, the Board of Regents proceeded to execute their own concept of justice for the campus. Although hundreds of participants had demonstrated for just over one hour, (neither drawing blood nor destroying property), and even though several other faculty members were part of this peaceful demonstration, only Professor Paul S. Adamian was terminated from his position. He had recently been approved for tenure.

What became known as the Adamian affair lasted in the court system for nearly a decade, but the actual events surrounding Governor's Day 1970 have remained distorted, exaggerated, or simply forgotten. Worse yet, the narrative of the protest has become a war story, one that perhaps reaffirms our notions of what the war was about. But Adamian's trial is long over; time cannot be turned backwards; and a complete rehashing of the legal proceedings is beyond the scope of the present discussion. What has been obscured from public memory is the larger context of the protest, the proclivity to assign individual credit for collective action that is part and parcel of American versions of history. Rethinking the events of Governor's Day is not just an academic exercise; it is an intentional unsettling of the expectations that we have placed on the past to suggest that the sixties are over—when there is little to suggest that much has changed.

As for the protest itself, there hasn't been much history to speak of. Newspaper accounts were often biased and sketchy, courtroom testimony was mostly directed at Adamian's case, and aside from a few photographs, other documentation of the event simply isn't available. Memories faded over the intervening thirty years generally recall the marching, chanting, and snippets of detail, but any semblance of the event can be crystallized only through multiple, detailed perspectives. The news from a reporter eager to generate the day's copy is no more unbiased than the testimony of a war veteran or a social psychologist—or an historian. However, thanks to the foresight of Mary Ellen Glass, Kenneth Carpenter, and others involved with the University of Nevada Oral History Program (UNOHP) in 1970, more than fifty individuals related to the events were interviewed on tape in the weeks immediately following the protest. Because of the legal battles over Adamian's case, the tapes were put into storage, untranscribed, until his case had officially ended, in 1980. By then, Governor's Day of 1970 had little continued interest in public or academic circles, so the tapes remained an untapped resource.

In 1998, with the support of Karen Gash, UNR archivist, and R. Tom King, current director of the UNOHP, the oral history interviews were transcribed, and I began the process of assembling the documents relating to May 5, 1970, and everything surrounding it. Considering the political sensitivity of the event, I was surprised to find that there were UNR faculty who had offered accounts

of Governor's Day just a few years after the event (though not with the benefit of the taped interviews). In 1974, historian James W. Hulse—who served as a monitor in the demonstration—discussed Governor's Day and the Adamian affair in *The University of Nevada: A Centennial History*. In 1975, anthropologist Warren L. d'Azevedo provided a more detailed account of these events in the context of his larger report, "American Indian and Black Students at the University of Nevada, 1874-1974."[1] Picking up where the work of these scholars ended was formidable—at best, I hoped to fill in some minor details. Many of the original chroniclers were still at UNR, while others had to be located. Almost everyone I asked was willing to talk about the events, often with the same level of sentiment recorded thirty years earlier.

I started to collate the stories of Governor's Day in the hopes of composing a detailed understanding of the troubled months of 1970. At first, it was easy to see the story as a typical narrative of the Vietnam years. The events unfold like a perfect chain: protest, firebombings, investigation, hearings, punishment. At the time, I was secretly hoping to find startling new information to exonerate Adamian, implicate one of the regents, or perhaps track down one of the militant Californians who firebombed the ROTC building. Instead, I found a series of events less sensational than their representation. Adamian wasn't a completely innocent scapegoat, the regents weren't all retrograde McCarthyites (although a few had their moments), and slow-burning kerosene had been poured into bottles to break a window, scorch a wall, and burn some curtains in an empty ROTC office on campus—on a night when police patrols were bound to notice. The most volatile moment in the entire episode was the firebombing of a house used by activists, while people were inside—an act of violence against the war demonstrators that could have killed several students.

The audiotaped interviews from 1970 simply document impressions, reflections, and arguments that can tell us little about the demonstration if we assess the interviews individually, but taken collectively, they provide a procession of stop-motion images that bring the events surrounding Governor's Day into clearer focus. They also supply the puzzle pieces that reveal complexities we haven't been able to consider in detail. In the remainder of this article, I draw together these interviews to offer a partial reconstruction of the days surrounding Governor's Day, in the hope of better understanding the forces that have affected the university system, and the people within it. More important, I want to highlight the peaceful interventions that were overlooked because the events at UNR were represented in terms of other publicized protests across the country.

Edd Miller assumed the presidency at UNR in 1965, the year America's longest war officially began. United States involvement in Vietnam did not provoke much public response until the following year, particularly in Nevada,

where military service was heralded as more or less essential to civic life. For Governor's Day 1966, however, an ROTC demonstration of counter guerrilla warfare on the football field at Mackay Stadium was still enough to surprise newly hired political science professor Joe Crowley: "I had just come to Nevada at that time, and I can remember how surprised I was to witness that sort of thing happening."[2] The next year, a few dozen student activists made their presence known on campus regarding various causes, provoking one spectator to throw coffee on a student during a demonstration (on another occasion, demonstrators were thrown into Manzanita Lake).[3] In the spring of 1967, students petitioned for a chapter of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), but were turned down by the student union for not having a faculty advisor. Crowley was later to become the faculty advisor for the UNR chapter of SDS, but until the late 1960s protest on campus was still minor compared to that at other schools. More student activity was directed toward participation in state politics, aided by political science faculty; these efforts made a direct impact on electoral politics in the 1968 elections.

However, as the war escalated, and campuses across the country raged against it, at UNR students staged manageable demonstrations, yet received no harsh reprisals from the administration. In fact, students felt supported by the university, even honoring President Miller with a celebration of his leadership on N. Edd Miller Day, an event noticed across the country that prompted a congratulatory letter from Richard Nixon.[4] It seems that Nevada was a haven for peaceful dissent. According to Dona Gearhart, students at Nevada Southern University—later , the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV)—basically ignored Vietnam altogether—they were quite content with intrastate school rivalry, seeing UNR, not Vietnam, as the object of protest. But by the time of the Vietnam-Moratorium protests across the country, activism in Nevada had become a noticeable, and mostly unwanted, presence in the community. The residue of resistance left a indelible mark in Nevada history: Nearly three decades after the events, Gearhart described the protests as an "orgy of antiwar activity."[5] If such a vigorous agitation did occur, it was short lived and blown far out of proportion.

UNR's annual Governor's Day had been an ROTC event since the 1930s, but with Vietnam came increasing resistance to such ceremonies. Protest against the war started with picket lines at Mackay Stadium in 1966, growing to such an extent that in 1969 a separate protest event was held at the Manzanita Bowl at the south end of campus.[6] This first Governor's Day Peace Rally drew crowds at the Bowl in numbers that surpassed the attendance at the stadium activities. The ROTC students had been prepared for the rally, and appointed themselves to guard their building the night before; but despite the volunteer effort, red dye was dumped into Manzanita Lake to color it blood red to dramatize war casualties, and unidentified fuel canisters were discovered near the ROTC building and quietly removed.[7] For the October 1969 Moratorium, a peaceful march

on Virginia Street through downtown Reno was successful in drawing substantial crowds and raising awareness about resisting the war, but beyond the march the day was uneventful. Around this time, newly arrived ROTC commander Colonel Robert H. Hill decided that Miller's office should have much more control in organizing Governor's Day because it was a university-sponsored event, and before the year was over, the date was scheduled for May 5, 1970.[8]

It is perhaps not surprising that, with the rise of activism at UNR in 1969, community hostility toward the university increased. At this time, according to a reporter's interview with Senator James Slattery, the Nevada State Legislature received a list—on university stationery—of nearly thirty faculty, staff, and students who were "supposed to be communists" or "communist dupes."[9] At the top of this list was Adamian, who had come to UNR in 1966 after leaving Southern Oregon College amidst a storm of controversy: He had refused to sign a loyalty oath required of its faculty. The case for Adamian's tenure was working its way through the university administration in early 1970, and he was approved for tenure (despite any concerns about his earlier efforts to unionize the UNR faculty).

Across the country, events of the first months of 1970 reached a boiling point for antiwar supporters. In February, guilty verdicts were returned against the Chicago Seven for conspiracy to incite riots at the 1968 Democratic convention—news of which prompted a wave of street fighting, bank burnings, and the bombing of corporate offices, ROTC buildings, police stations, and draft offices. To counter this activity, President Richard Nixon advocated a program commending United States citizens who took a stand against war demonstrators: "From now on, we are going to take a very aggressive 'militant' position against these people, not simply because the public is probably with us, but because we face a national crisis in terms of this disrespect for law, etc., at all levels."[10] For a growing sector of the population in the new decade, the lines between "us" and "them" were becoming clearer, and most of the battles were being waged at college campuses.

During the early months of 1970 at UNR, student unrest was focused primarily on minority issues, particularly legal proceedings against outspoken black students.[11] On March 10, sophomore Jesse Sattwhite, a football player and member of the Black Student Union (BSU), was brought up on misdemeanor charges for alleged incidents dating back to 1968. Sattwhite's case became a rallying point for issues of student rights, institutional abuse of power, and legal due process in the university system (cases against Sattwhite, and others, originated in the Nevada Attorney General's Office). A week after the charges were filed, Dan McKinney, BSU spokesman, summed up the racism many students perceived in the Sattwhite case: "It's a case of we've got a nigger and we're going to stop the niggers from talking. Sattwhite is an example of what can happen when 'a nigger gets out of his place.'"[12] Within days, the Washoe County

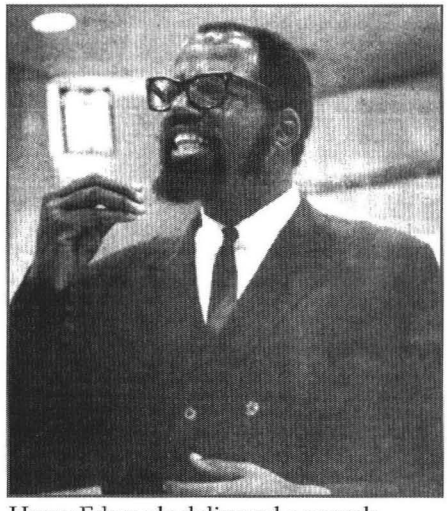
Sheriff's department prepared a warrant for McKinney's arrest for an incident that had happened four months earlier, even though the charges had already been dismissed on technical grounds.[13] Immediately following these events, the United Student Alliance (USA) was formed, a coalition of black and white students led by McKinney that was gaining increasing vocal support from UNR faculty. The USA was militant in its rhetoric, and what had simply been a minority organization was now reaching a broader base. Fairly small in numbers, the USA was not an immediate threat to the relative stability of UNR's campus life, but, with a more inclusive approach and increased faculty support, it was a larger and more complex group for the administration to contend with.

The Sattwhite case generated enough student hostility toward the administration that UNR's annual Black Week (the first week of April) was fueled by militant speeches and calls for action in place of discussion. Visiting from the University of California at Berkeley, Harry Edwards, author of *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*, addressed a crowd of more than two hundred at the gymnasium. The following statement was included in his fiery speech:

> I'm impressed by the total lack of sensitivity to the nature of the times and of the problems on the part of the acme of the administrators on this campus. President Miller and the other administrators on this campus are a bunch of vegetating, middle-class dinosaurs. The university could get Economic Opportunity Grants to finance the programs. This should be the president's responsibility, but any time you have a cracker sitting up in the president's office, the students [should] look into the programs themselves. The students control the campus. Once he sees there is no alternative but to solve it, you'll see a tremendous amount of motion in that direction. If the administration won't do it, it is incumbent on the student. Begin to get together to solve these problems. Once you get organized, there is nothing the administration can do to stop you. Nothing is more exciting than getting the right thing done. This struggle must result in rebellion and ultimately revolution in order that people can gain control. The rebellion must be brought into the classroom, or else the classroom will be brought into the street.[14]

Vocal demands for revolution and student takeover of the university were not simply gestures. Rumors had already been circulating that the Black Panthers had come to campus, and one of the national leaders of the Brown Berets (a Mexican-American affiliate of the Panthers) warned that "The only way to stop riots and end discrimination is to win over the youth [but] if it takes people to bear arms to get people to listen then we will do so . . . . It's time the students quit speaking so much about what they want to do and start acting."[15] Near campus, the calls for action were heard: A peaceful demonstration turned violent at the United States Census Bureau in Reno, as police clashed with individuals protesting the absence of black census takers for the 1970 census.[16] Although the antiwar militancy that shocked the rest of the country was not materializing in northern Nevada, conflict over minority issues was threatening to intensify.

Campus meetings were organized to discuss black-white relations, although the results were often not satisfactory to USA members and their



Harry Edwards delivered a speech during Black Week at UNR, criticizing the administration for neglecting student needs.. *(Sagebrush)*

supporters who demanded institution-wide reforms. Adamian was vocal at these meetings, as was art professor Ben Hazard, the first black faculty member hired by UNR. Calls for immediate action were tempered by suggestions to work within proper channels, voiced by political science professor Richard Siegel and newly elected student body president Frankie Sue Del Papa.[17] For many campus activists, however, the proper channels were seen as an ineffective or corrupt system designed to appease students. By mid April, the Student Judicial Council issued a disciplinary probation penalty against Sattwhite, with the exception that his probation would not affect his playing football for UNR.[18] With finals week approaching, the Mackay Drunk began during the last week in April—an extended campus party with a street dance, a rodeo, and a concert by the Ike and Tina Turner Review. (Miller had approved a partial closing of campus for Mackay Day—but the campus was not closed the following week in response to the Kent State shootings.) With Sattwhite's case over, and Black Week proceeding without any major problems, it seemed that tensions on campus might subside, but the month of April ended as turbulently as it began.

Across the country, active protests increased over the weekend as newspaper headlines declared that the United States had invaded Cambodia, and the stock market dropped with the news. Antiwar protests in Ohio turned violent as demonstrators clashed with national guardsmen, so Governor James Rhodes called in 1,200 troops to contend with the situation. After an ROTC building was burned at Kent State University, Rhodes called those responsible "the strongest, well-trained, militant revolutionary group that has ever assembled in

America," warning protestors that they would soon be outnumbered ten to one.[19] In Connecticut, some fifteen thousand protestors rallied at a Black Panther murder trial, prompting the mobilization of four thousand federal troops in case of violence. Over the next week, there was to be an explosion of antiwar activity, with schools shutting down across the country. California Governor Ronald Reagan closed the entire state university system, and more than five hundred campuses shut down nationwide. During that week, explosives or firebombs were ignited at ROTC buildings across the country at the rate of more than four per day.[20] While the country was feeling just the first waves of this violence, Nevada activists were deliberating to what degree they would respond to the invasion of Cambodia.

At UNR that weekend, protest plans were directed toward disrupting the Governor's Day ceremonies on Tuesday. In discussing options, some students called for occupying the ROTC building, and others envisioned bombing the ROTC building during the ceremony (because the building would be empty). Less-militant students simply wanted to hold a rally at the Manzanita Bowl as they had the year before. A consensus was finally reached among student activists that this year they would try to disrupt the ceremony, but in a nonviolent way. Because Reno police had drawn weapons at the Census Bureau protest, students were concerned that a volatile disruption might result in accidental shootings, so they decided on a mild disruption of the ceremonies: a march around the stadium track, and then disturbance from the stands. On Sunday, May 3, UNR student Brooke Piper appeared on local television news, stating that permission had been granted the year before for demonstrators to hold a rally and march to the stadium in peaceful protest. Although there had been no move to the stadium the year before, he asserted that the upcoming demonstration on Tuesday would involve such a march.[21]

On Monday, May 4, 1970, four people were killed and eleven wounded at Kent State University after eight hundred guardsmen—with bayonets and tear gas—stepped in to break up a crowd of nearly five hundred antiwar protestors. Campus strikes were called across the country, and word had spread across UNR that Governor's Day would be disrupted as part of the Tuesday strike, so extra police officers had been assigned for crowd control.[22] As a first salvo against the ceremony, hundreds of counterfeit flyers were circulated around campus, ostensibly a mandate from the Office of the President, claiming that Governor's Day activities were canceled in response to concerns over the intensification of United States military action in East Asia. Monday night, activists met at the Hobbit Hole, a house near campus, to plan for the protest, while on the other end of campus, cadets began their night-long vigil to guard the ROTC building (just as the year before). Faculty members present at the protest meeting attempted to persuade the students not to disrupt the ceremonies, but it was not possible to convince them that such a disruption was ineffective as means of protest.[23]

Tuesday was a day for strikes across the country, and at UNR the student newspaper, the *Sagebrush*, ran a headline announcing "Governor's Day to Feature ROTC, Anti-war Rallies." Coverage of the day's activities included the claim, "Unlike last year's Governor's Day Peace Rally, the two events will not be completely separated. Representatives of the anti-war group said they had received permission to participate in the ceremonies held in Mackay Stadium." The article stated that the protest march was scheduled to move past the Jot Travis Student Union building (JTSU) and circle around campus. Flyers were circulated with similar information, but with one additional item: "March to Mackay Stadium to participate in the review of troops by marching around the track."[24]

News spread quickly among the students, but faculty and administrators were largely unaware of the protest plans, and this information gap colored the perception of the rest of the day's events. Because the ROTC had shifted the planning for Governor's Day to Miller's office, the event now included a breakfast reception at the JTSU, and military officials and other dignitaries had gathered at 9:30 that morning for refreshments at the JTSU before driving to the stadium. All who entered the JTSU for the reception passed under a large banner reading "Stop U.S. Butchery," and the morning was temporarily disturbed when a false bomb threat was called in—shortly after Governor Paul Laxalt arrived.[25] When English professor Robert Harvey first heard of the planned disruption of the ceremonies, he went to the JTSU to talk with Miller about acknowledging Kent State and Cambodia as part of the Governor's Day ceremonies. According to Harvey, when he asked Laxalt to make a speech discussing the Kent State tragedy, Laxalt flatly refused, stating, "No way. My friend Governor Rhodes in Ohio is running for the senate nomination today, and I'm not going to embarrass him in any way. I don't want any story going out on the national wire from Nevada that would embarrass him."[26] Rhodes was seeking a vital Senate position, one of seven needed to ensure Republican control of the senate for the next congress. Considering that similar requests to acknowledge Kent State had been turned down by both Miller and Laxalt's offices, the administrative position about the ceremony seemed firmly entrenched.

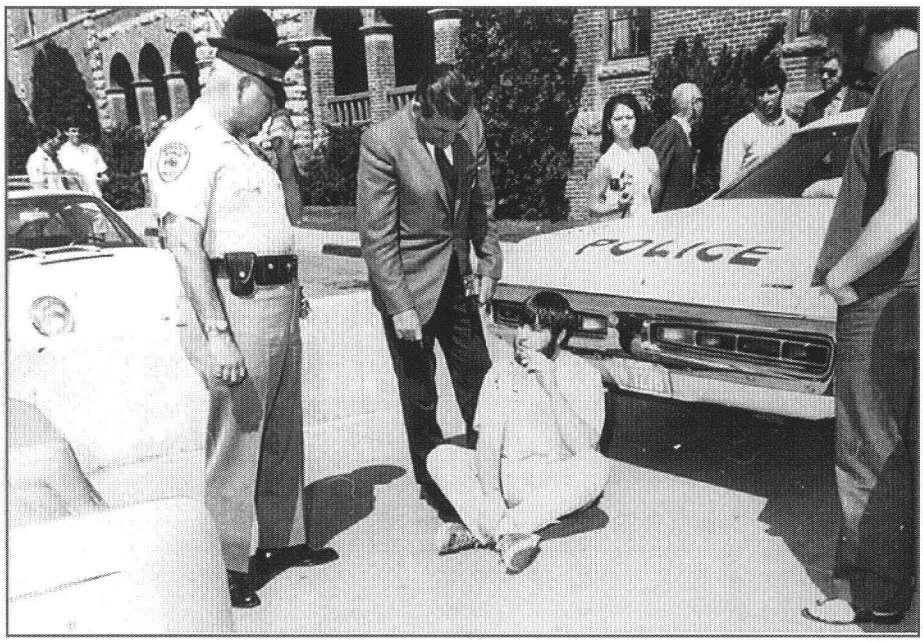
While Harvey was working his way through the small crowd at the ROTC reception, problems had already developed at the Manzanita Bowl. A microphone system that was supposed to be provided for the rally had not been delivered, causing some anger and frustration for the organizers. The confusion that followed was misinterpreted by outsiders as disorganization and disagreement among the protest planners about the demonstration itself. This impression gave rise to later claims about a "spontaneous" exodus from the Bowl toward the stadium, lending a sense of immediacy for those involved. The march to the stadium had been planned days before, but one spontaneous decision was indeed made: to intercept the governor's motorcade which consisted of seventeen vehicles parked alongside the JTSU.[27] Harvey, Hulse, and

other faculty members who perceived the marchers as an unorganized mob tried to dissuade the crowd, but, failing that, decided to serve as monitors to ensure some degree of safety for the protest.[28]

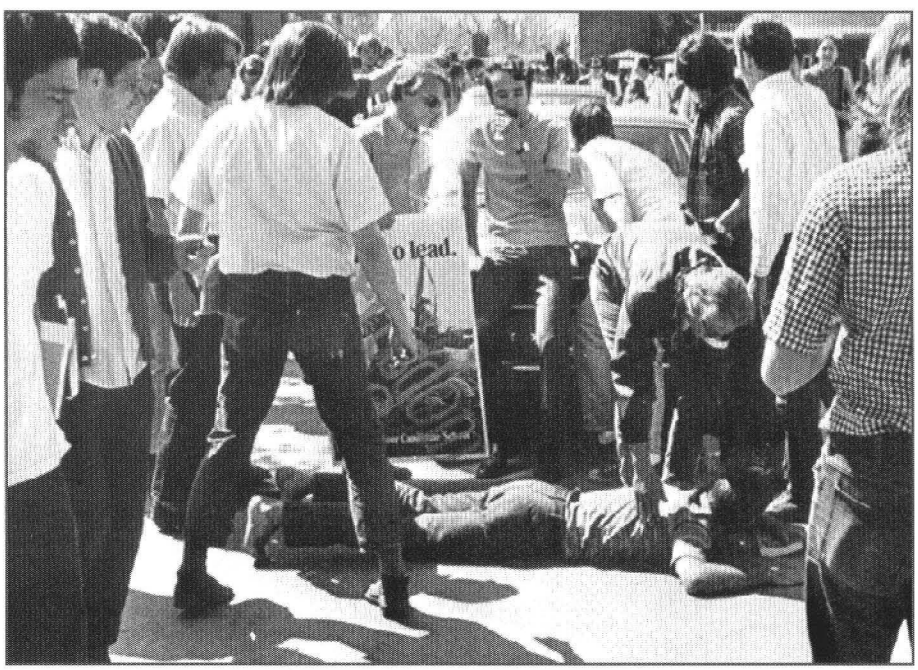
The lead car in the motorcade carrying Miller and Laxalt was preparing to leave just before the crowd arrived. What prevented the other vehicles from leaving, and what enabled the brief blockade to succeed, was one person's actions and the response from one police officer. One student sat down in the roadway behind the lead car, prompting an officer to tell him he had just one minute to move, or he would be arrested. When the student responded that he would take the full minute—and started ticking off the seconds on his wristwatch—the young officer reached for the student. An older policeman intervened, forcing the other officer to keep his word and let the student have his minute. Convinced that the police had the matter under control, Miller and Laxalt decided to proceed to the stadium, leaving the other cars blocked by sitting students. They drove off as the minute lapsed and marchers began to gather around the standing motorcade, delaying the procession and giving the marchers their first taste of confrontation.[29]

As the crowd began to swarm through the motorcade, the shouting and chanting of antiwar slogans mounted to a deafening roar, and many passengers were afraid—and their first impressions of the demonstrators were to be shaped while sitting inside vehicles enveloped by an animated, chanting mob. When two of the protestors turned on each other and began a fistfight, they were quickly separated, but the altercation surely added to the instant turmoil of the entire scene.[30] Not surprisingly, the military officials in the cars were not at all pleased with the blockade, and some of the vehicles tried to edge their way through the crowd. Former ROTC commander Colonel Earl Ralf was riding in the fifth car, and he recalls actually encouraging his driver, a young cadet, to drive through the throng—even if it meant running over anyone in the way.[31] While no one was hurt in the incident, there were several near accidents as vehicles tried to inch their way through, not realizing that students were sitting or lying down across the pavement. Harvey, Adamian, and others tried to pull students out of the way, shouting through the noise to alert drivers that people were in danger.

One student in particular was stretched out on his stomach in front of a car, and Adamian was shouting at him and also pounding on the car hood. Demonstrators assert that Adamian was trying to encourage the student to move, hitting the car to alert the driver. To the passengers in the motorcade, however, it appeared that Adamian was shouting out orders to students to place themselves between the cars, and pounding on car hoods to scare the drivers into stopping.[32] In later deliberations about Adamian's participation in the event, a photograph of Adamian pointing at the student left open either interpretation: He could have been directing the student to get up, or telling him to lie in front of the car. Later, a different student stood on one of the military cars to direct



A student sits in protest, blocking the Governor's motorcade on tis way to Mackay stadium. *(UNR Archives)*



English Professor Paul S. Adamian engages a student lying in front of a car during the motorcade blockade. *(Artemesia* 1969-70*)*

the crowd away from the motorcade, toward the more important goal of reaching the stadium, and he was abruptly yanked down by Colonel Hill. The two men began shouting at each other, and Harvey intervened before their argument turned physical.[33] With assistance from some of the faculty, the Reno police were finally able to clear the blockade and re-route the motorcade up Virginia Street as the original route was now blocked by marchers on their way to the stadium. Altogether, the blockade lasted only ten or fifteen minutes, but it was perhaps enough of a conflict to encourage demonstrators and build their confidence levels for the protest at the stadium.[34]

Hulse, disturbed by the tenor of the protest, ran ahead to the gymnasium, where he saw Procter Hug, Jr., chairman of the Board of Regents, and voiced his concerns. When asked for a plan of action, Hulse told Hug he would try to stop the procession and ran to the head of the march. It was clear that the protestors were heading to the stadium and would not stop, but there was discussion among the monitors that the crowd would circle the stadium track three times. Hulse ran back to tell Hug of the plans, and Hug agreed that this would be a good way to avoid trouble, allowing the crowd to express their views, all without disrupting the ceremony itself.[35] However, somewhere along the line of communication a distortion had occurred: It was assumed that the crowd would leave after circling the stadium, rather than moving the protest into the stands.

As four or five hundred protestors entered the stadium, they began to circle the track shouting "peace now!" "no more war!" and "end the war!" The cadets stood at parade rest at the east side of the stadium, facing the bleacher stands to the west, where dignitaries and officials filled the first two rows. The crowd marched north along the track, circling clockwise around the stadium twice.[36] Some students tried to run a peace flag up an empty flagpole, but couldn't secure the flag properly. One student threatened to take a rifle from one of the cadets, and hearing this, Hazard—who had remained a silent participant in the march until this point—confronted the student, pushing him to think about his actions. In responding to the student, Hazard exaggerated the student's faulty thinking, and outlined a plan for a useful demonstration:

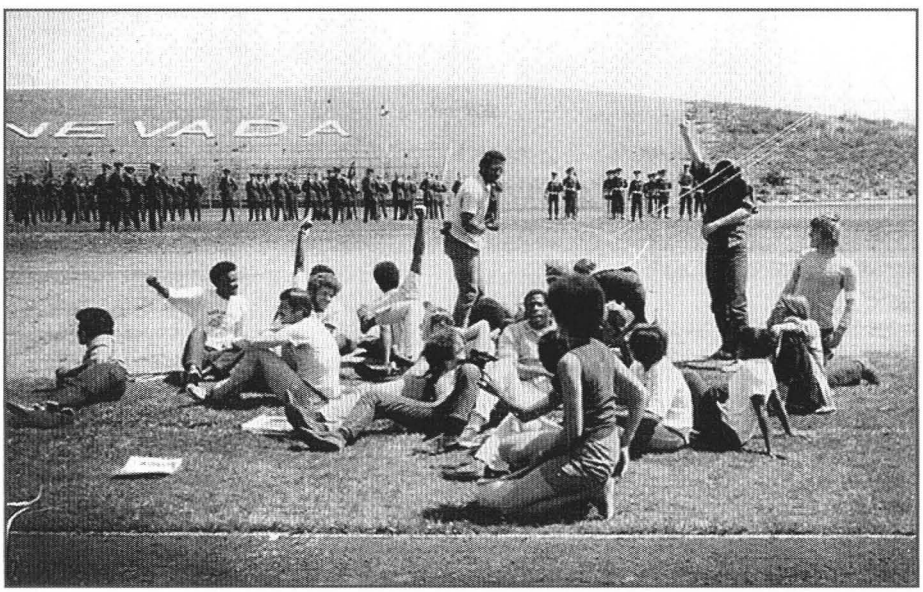
> If you want to be so violent, if you feel so dedicated, do it where it counts. These kids out there in the field, with their little green uniforms and their guns, know no more about the war than you do. They have seen no more of the war than you have. They sit with you in your same classroom. Why are you going to get him? If you feel so dedicated and that your cause is so right, go over there! See, there's eight generals sitting in that front row. Go grab one of them. Beat the hell out of them, because you know they've seen it. If that's not strong enough, see that next row? That far end, that's Governor Laxalt, and the other end is President Miller, and all these other people like senators and all the other heavies. Go whip one of them. Beat the hell out of one of them. If that's not strong enough, or if that's too strong, then the next row are all regents. Go grab one of them. And the parents, you go grab one and beat the hell out of one of them, if you feel so convinced that you're way is right. Otherwise, get the hell back in there and act like you've got some sense.[37]

Granted permission to march at the stadium, demonstrators proceed with faculty monitors. *(UNR Archives)*

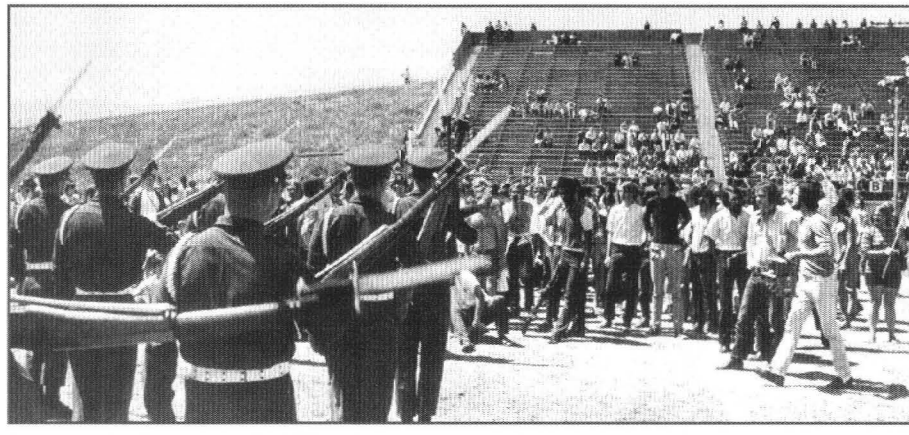
Using hyperbole was typical of Hazard's style of dealing with the radical students. Taken out of context, his exchange with the student could easily be interpreted as a call for violence; otherwise, it's an example of the tensions along the march—and the need for faculty monitors to prevent violence in some unorthodox ways. Hazard, Adamian, and other monitors believed that they were operating on a sound philosophy of protest, tempered by years of experience in civil rights demonstrations. In many ways, it was simple: Don't try to contain what refuses containment. Or, put another way, they were attempting to focus energies in useful channels, rather than trying to eliminate crowd momentum or commanding it to stop. For students who want to disarm a soldier, the effective response is not to tell them that they should stop feeling that way, or that they can't do it, but to direct their feelings away from impulse and toward sensible action, and help them understand that actions do have consequences.

Hazard and other faculty monitors made vigorous efforts to keep the demonstrators on track, trying to prevent them from acting on impulse, but knowing that there was a powerful momentum that couldn't be easily stopped. Marching and chanting were simply not enough for some demonstrators. As they passed the ROTC formation at rest, some marchers couldn't resist knocking a few hats off the heads of the cadets standing at attention. Other students proposed taking down the American flag to shred it, and then run up the peace flag, but they ran into strong faculty resistance.[38] In the end, although there were numerous opportunities for individuals to turn the orderly march into something more volatile and possibly dangerous, the faculty as a whole knew enough about the students involved to engage them in productive ways.

Demonstrators raise arms and cheer in the bleacher stands as the Govenor's Day ceremonies proceed. *(UNR Archives)*



Members of the Union Student Alliance sit on the field as a separate protest and a show of solidarity. *(UNR Archives)*



Armed with bayonets, ROTC cadets come into close contact with demonstrators. (*Artemesia* 1969-70)

With only two trips around the stadium, the protest moved into the stands as planned (although there was some deliberation about whether to occupy the empty "visitors" bleachers or to join the ROTC ceremony observers). The protest group, by then reduced to some two or three hundred demonstrators, sat behind the dignitaries—clearly outnumbering the small group gathered for the ceremony. But the entire protest crowd did not enter the stands. Approximately twenty members of the racially mixed USA sat on the edge of the field, south of the seated dignitaries, to accentuate their issues that had been so prominent in the prior weeks. When a military aide later asked them to move, they refused; after Del Papa tried to speak with them, she returned to the stands in tears. As one cadet claimed, the university police were under orders not to touch the black students.[39] And for whatever reason, UNR police did not disturb the group: perhaps out of fear that an immediate conflict between black students and police would be perceived as racially motivated, or possibly because this smaller group was not doing anything directly to disturb the ceremonies.

At any rate, despite the chanting and singing, the ceremony proceeded with no official recognition of the situation in Cambodia or the deaths at Kent State. As it became increasingly clear that the ceremony was not going to include any such acknowledgment, the crowd grew more noisy and disruptive, ridiculing the military proceedings at every opportunity with singing and chanting—everything from the Mickey Mouse theme song to "Onward Christian Soldiers."[40] Miller asked the crowd to settle down and allow the ceremony to proceed undisturbed, reminding them that they already had been allowed to voice their concerns. However, Miller did not give in to the crowd demands with regard to Cambodia or Kent State.[41] His pleas did result in a lull, as the demonstrators briefly quieted down.

It was at this point that some witnesses single out Adamian as having tried to maintain the crowd's momentum, but most demonstrators have argued that they were all acting independently and Adamian did nothing extraordinary to encourage the protest.[42] Other protest actions provoked wildly different reactions from the ROTC audience, perhaps the most notorious being the playing of taps while some parents were presenting an award in memory of their son killed in Vietnam. The student who played taps had borrowed a trombone from the band performing at the ceremony, and most observers thought that it was a gesture of mockery. But some thought it was part of the program, while others thought the student was trying to highlight the deaths resulting from the war.[43] At another point during the ceremony, a student asked Hulse if he'd be willing to make a speech about Cambodia and ask for a moment of silence to honor the Kent State victims. Instead of asking for permission to speak, the student told Miller that it was Hulse who requested to speak, but again Miller refused to disrupt the ceremonies as they had originally been planned. The demonstrators were told, however, that after the ceremony was over they could have access to the microphone for the rest of the day.[44]

At this point, the demonstrators grew restless, discouraged that the desired recognition would not be made part of the ceremony. After perhaps forty-five minutes, they had grown tired of just shouting about their dismay and wanted to do something more. After all, the ceremony had gone on as scheduled, and without one word about Kent State or Cambodia from the government and military representatives visiting the school. With impatience growing, a few students suggested that the protest move to the field to interrupt the Sierra Guardsmen, the drill team marching in formation to demonstrate skills they had perfected during the year. The guardsmen had by then affixed bayonets on their rifles, and were marching about the field with various turns and advances. The USA group at the edge of the field had been calling out to people in the stands to join them on the field, and while Laxalt was crossing the track to deliver an award, faculty monitors argued with students in the stands that leaving for the field would be dangerous. At that moment, Adamian left the stands and headed toward the field by himself.[45] He would later be accused of rallying the demonstrators to leave, and then leading them to a dangerous situation, but he made no overt gestures to do so. Instead, he purportedly led by example. As Adamian has it, he just wanted to join the USA group on the field because he had been actively supporting their cause during the weeks leading up to Governor's Day. It's also likely that he was the first person to leave the stands because the crowd was clearly growing restless and angry, needing to move—and since trying to contain the crowd would be useless, the energy had to be directed somewhere. Although some faculty monitors did try to compel demonstrators to stay in the stands, after Adamian left the protestors began to trickle down the steps out onto the field, let out in ones and twos by the monitors to prevent a mob-like rush.[46]

The protest group on the field, growing to roughly two hundred strong, now stood in defiance of the marching units, drifting into their path to interrupt the drill.[47] The monitors left the stands to help prevent any confrontation, and the situation became highly tense as the two groups approached one another.[48] While the actions of some demonstrators had arguably been rude and raucous up until this point, it was now the everyday "normal" citizens who showed their inclination to scream out their emotions and call for reactionary violence: ROTC supporters were heard shouting from the stands for the cadets to tear into the protest crowd, goading the cadets and encouraging them to march into the crowd with their bayonets.[49] (At this point, there was no intervention by police, and it is compelling to consider a possible explanation: If indeed there had been orders to refrain from interfering with the black students, the new configuration of the protest was certainly perplexing and might have held off immediate action.) With sociology professors Carl Backman and James Richardson, Adamian, Harvey, and Hazard positioned themselves between the protestors and the cadets, hoping to fend off a clash between the groups.[50]

As the armed units approached, the monitors stood in considerable danger, with Harvey and Backman in serious danger of being cut by bayonet blades (so close that Backman's jacket was torn by a bayonet), but fortunately an impromptu command had been given for the cadets to perform a flank movement, directing them away from the protest group.[51] The cadets were incensed and disgusted, but did not break ranks despite the harassment—which included one demonstrator riding a unicycle through their ranks.[52] Finishing their performance, the drill team joined with other groups of cadets and passed the reviewing stand while marching out of the stadium. The protest group marched behind them, gesturing with their fingers raised in the V of the peace sign. When people in the stands started booing, the demonstrators changed their hand signals to raised middle fingers.[53]

As the two crowds exited the stadium, demonstrators were shown a display of force assembled across the street: Thirty police officers with four squad cars, a paddy-wagon, and several motorcycles were ready to intervene at a moment's notice (rumors later circulated that the police were secretly holed up in a locker room anticipating the protest). If, as the regents later contended, there had been a "real danger of violent confrontation" resulting from Adamian's leading by example, then the lack of action by the administration is curious indeed. While the police may not have been able to prevent any conflict, surely they would have been called in at the first suggestion that violence was possible. Of course, the so-called confrontation on the field lasted only a few minutes; the same is true of the other flashes of severity in the protest. And the entire Governor's Day demonstration, from the motorcade to the stadium, lasted approximately ninety minutes altogether. This short, nonviolent protest never moved beyond loud noises, and it was a demonstration that had been given permission to come to the stadium, but after months of sensationalism, the noisy affair was

eventually dubbed by journalist Ty Cobb as "the most disgraceful day in the history of Nevada." Never mind that UNR students in 1900 shouted for the Board of Regents to be hanged, or that in 1956 they hanged university deans and the president in effigy. Never mind that at the beginning of the 1960s UNR students—following a long precedent of minority oppression—had donned blackface or Ku Klux Klan robes to enhance their collegiate experience.[54] Many Nevadans were eagerly awaiting news of unrest on their college campus, because the war at home appeared to be everywhere. In the years before Watergate, when average citizens were being told by the authorities that militant radicals were taking over at Reno, most Nevadans believed it.

Among the demonstrators, reactions to the protest were mixed: Some saw it as a success, while others were disturbed by the extreme emotions generated by the crowd. After leaving the stadium, roughly a hundred members of the protest group returned to the Manzanita Bowl to make some speeches. During this gathering, a few ROTC cadets disconnected the sound system, causing a minor fistfight to break out, but little else happened other than discussion.[55] Tensions remained high all day, and groups across campus discussed the events at the stadium; by the end of the day, students and faculty had planned to hold a memorial service on campus later that week in honor of the Kent State students.[56]

On Wednesday morning, sensational media coverage of the event began to spread, generating public hostility toward the UNR campus and its administration. KOLO radio began repeated airing's of an editorial that provoked reactionary responses across the state. Stan Weisberger, vice president and general manager of the station, assured his listeners that a militant group of students and some faculty had embarrassed the governor and insulted the country and flag by jeering during the national anthem. He issued a warning: "If the university president and the Board of Regents will not see that students who break the law and incite riots are expelled and formally charged in our courts, it's high time that the taxpayers of this state fill these positions with people who will control these militants." He urged listeners to contact the administration and "demand that these students and professors be expelled from the campus, and if they do not respond, see that [sic]at the next election when the Board of Regents are on the ballot that they are replaced."[57] Similarly, in his regular column for the *Nevada State Journal* that day, Cobb highlighted the most distasteful elements of the protest, and placed the blame on faculty leadership: "It was an eye-opener to see how a crowd is stimulated, with certain faculty members—the 'liberal professors'—infiltrating their ranks and prodding them on to further rudeness." The newspaper featured a front-page photograph of Adamian speaking to a crowd at the Manzanita Bowl, and elsewhere an article covering the protest asserted that he "was observed leading the chants and apparently exercising a large amount of control over the actions of the demonstrators."[58] Most reporters covering the incident could not go beyond appear-

ances, and if Adamian was presumably the only key figure in the demonstration, the student organizers were just an unorganized assembly of kids whipped into a frenzy by one radicalized faculty mentor working alone. The other faculty monitors were rarely mentioned. But this was only the first day after the protest: Newspaper coverage was distorted, but there was no indication that the university administration was seeking punitive measures or making much of the protest.

On campus that day, faculty organized several meetings to contend with the wild feelings left over from Tuesday's protest. During an afternoon meeting at the JTSU lounge, students and faculty argued about the events and the growing negative response from the community. Some students lamented that the ceremonies weren't completely disrupted, calling for immediate action to close down the university—or more violent displays.[59] Some three hundred students and some faculty crowded into a room for a student senate meeting later that night. In what was described as a "tense drama" of "cowboys" against the "longhairs," the senate discussed a course of action for the Kent State memorial and a possible campus-wide strike at the end of the week. With the sensationalizing media coverage and growing tension on campus, the administration was worried about outbreaks of violence that could tip the scales against UNR. Edward Olsen, director of information for the university, explained the plan for crowd control measures to be used should the senate meeting generate any physical conflict:

> If it did develop into a physical confrontation on the part of a few people, the only place they could go to get it out of their system would be out on the lawn in front of the [JTSU]. We had campus policemen stationed at all the sprinkler valves—upon signal, radio signal—to turn on all the sprinkling systems. We also had the fire hoses manned in Lincoln Hall to just water everybody down and consequently, perhaps, cool the situation without having to resort to calling in outside policemen.

The primary goal for Miller's office was to calm the campus, and intervene with some type of force if needed, but keep matters within the university's control. Focusing on dialogue was a wise choice, and it was working. Throughout the senate deliberations, participants exchanged heated words, but there were no indications of violence. The only turbulence was caused by four off-campus youths from Reno who repeatedly voiced loud remarks, generating some hostilities during the exchanges, but were not otherwise disruptive. After the meeting, small groups met in various parts of the building to continue discussions about issues regarding the war and the response on campus. Colonel Hill, Hazard, and others were still talking with students until shortly after 2:00 a.m., when the colonel received word that Hartman Hall had been firebombed.[60]

Police Chief Bob Malone had been hearing rumors of destructive plans throughout the day, so he had intensified patrols on campus. Kerosene-filled wine bottles had been thrown through the windows of the building, and within

minutes a patrolling officer noticed smoke and was able to call in the incident and had time to put out the small fires by himself. Malone immediately called in the FBI.[61] Thursday morning's newspapers carried stories of the arson, and after Malone assessed the damage (scorched walls and burnt desktop items), he stated publicly that it was the first case of radical militant action in the university's history. He made this statement without knowing who caused the blaze or why. (Some students mused that anyone who had sense—or more important, who wanted to do serious damage—would have used a volatile fuel, not slow-burning kerosene.) Laxalt now commented publicly that the Governor's Day protest was "infantile exhibitionism" and railed against the "handful of potential revolutionaries" out to shame the state.[62] He received telegrams that day that apologized on behalf of the students, and other wires arrived, likely prompted by KOLO, that called for the Board of Regents to take immediate action on campus by dismissing students and faculty who participated. In local newspapers, Hug stated, "University students who are responsible for such activities should be subject to strong disciplinary action. Faculty who actively participate or incite disruption of normal university activity or violence should not be permitted to remain as faculty members of this university."[63] He had heard that a UNR professor had openly criticized the government and administration during a class, using obscenities to do so. While top administrators were certainly not pleased with the rudeness on Governor's Day, before the firebombing they had not issued any serious condemnation of the demonstration, let alone threats of disciplinary action or dismissal from the university. Now, with media coverage, irate citizens, and calls going out to federal agents, Governor's Day was imagined as a catalyst, the source of escalating problems.

On campus, student radicals dismissed the arson as stupidity and asserted their platform of nonviolence, and rumors soon began to spread about "outside agitators" who had been vocal during campus meetings.[64] That morning, the *Sagebrush* printed a letter from President Miller as well as a "Faculty and Staff Statement" (signed by more than a hundred) acknowledging the killings at Kent State. It was the university's first public response to the tragedy coming three days after it had occurred. For anyone who wanted to blame the arson at Hartman Hall on radicals, it could appear that the antiwar forces had won a victory: After all, days of peaceful protest did not elicit a response, but the administration issued a public statement immediately following a destructive act. Such interpretations were wrong, however, because Miller had prepared the statement well before windows were broken and paperwork burned at Hartman Hall.

Seeing that there was a danger of the arson polarizing the campus, Miller met with the deans and various faculty that morning to encourage everyone to participate actively in as many group events as possible, including a candlelight vigil and teach-in that night, as well as the memorial scheduled for the

next day.[65] That afternoon a major meeting at the JTSU involved all factions of students, as well as the so-called outsiders (now considered to have been SDS members from Berkeley) who tried to radicalize the activists. Hulse and John Dodson, director of the Center for Religion and Life, took control of the meeting and moderated discussion. Although tempers flared, again the larger meeting broke into small discussion groups, and, with the aid of faculty, staff, and administrators, tensions eased and students were able to let off some steam.[66]

By 5:30 that evening, nearly a hundred and fifty people met at the Manzanita Bowl for the Cambodia teach-in led by seven designated speakers. The names of the four Kent State victims were read aloud, followed by a fifteen minute silence. Harvey and Hulse delivered speeches, as did two sociology professors, Stanford Lyman and Dave Harvey.[67] A candlelight vigil followed at 8:30 that evening, and the crowd had grown to roughly three hundred participants. Although some students heckled the proceedings from a distance, the event was otherwise peaceful.[68] That night, as ROTC cadets stood watch over Hartman Hall, activists planned for the campus strike Friday morning.[69]

Picket lines were set up at various entrances to the UNR campus at 8:00 a.m., and some seven hundred students didn't attend class. The memorial service at the Manzanita Bowl began at noon, with a crowd of more than five hundred attending, and the service consisted of readings, folks songs, and prayers.[70] A group of "cowboys" made a dramatic entrance during the service as a show of force and a symbolic display of good behavior as a lesson for the "longhairs." Their presence heightened tensions, but the service was finished according to plan, without any conflict. William Thornton, past president of the university's alumni association, announced the establishment of an annual peace prize during the memorial service (an award that is still given annually at UNR), more group meetings followed the service, and again students were able to work out their differences and find common ground during the group meetings.[71] Outside the UNR campus, however, Nevadans heard not about the successful problem-solving events, but instead heard detailed accounts of anti-American activity on campus, and they reacted to headlines about firebombings by radical militant left-wingers. Most of the general public was never informed about the succession of group activities, or the sincere efforts from across the campus to ease tensions and facilitate understanding. Instead of praising Miller for keeping the university functioning and relatively calm, media portrayals and political statements conveyed the impression that UNR was a university under siege. And like any good story about the West, the cliché of rounding up a posse started to take hold.

In Elko, the Board of Regents began their monthly meeting that afternoon. During the two-day meeting, President Miller outlined the recent campus events for the regents, fielding questions as the meeting continued. Later, Hug began citing passages from the university's code of conduct, calling for an investigation of two faculty members he believed were prominent in the week's

Proctor Hug, Jr., President of the Board of Regents, called for the investigation of two faculty members for their involvement in the Governor's Day protest. *(UNR Archives)*

disruptions. He referred to one faculty member who not only "encouraged the students to stop the cars," which "endangered the lives of students," but also "led the students in raucous and rude catcalls and had encouraged them to disrupt the ceremonies." Hug alleged that another faculty member had conducted a class discussion in very vulgar terms. Both professors, he said, should be terminated from the university if they could not explain their conduct. After further discussion among the regents, a motion was carried to investigate two instructors from the English department, "and any other faculty who may be found to have been involved in violations of the University Code."[72] Adamian was implicated in the Governor's Day protest, whereas Fred Maher, a Ph.D. student and instructor, was identified as the teacher who allegedly used foul language and criticized officials who held positions of authority. By the end of the weekend, voices from across the state were at fever pitch, demanding action. Monday night, May 11, Senator Slattery appeared on television, suggesting that the "cowboys" take matters into their own hands and "clean up" the campus by driving out the left-wing element themselves.[73] In effect, the senator's statements appeared as an appeal for vigilante justice; the posse had been joined by a call for a lynch mob.

Several hours after Slattery's comments were televised, a quick-burning gasoline firebomb was thrown at the Hobbit Hole while its residents were inside. The students who lived there had received threats in the days prior, but no one was hurt in the attack. Del Papa and Miller appeared on television later that day to plead for an end to the violence, and to request that misinformation

about campus events be avoided at all costs.[74] Within days, state politicians made public comments that the university could lose funds as a result of the previous week's events, reiterating the threats made earlier on KOLO radio. State Senator Archie Pozzi (R-Carson City) warned that by January 1971, when legislature would be in session, "it will be appropriate to take a fine look at what is going on at the university." The week-long efforts to generate dialogue and foster understanding among the student population never received media coverage, and it was clear that some tangible action had to be witnessed in order for the university to survive the protests on campus.[75] According to the most vocal of state politicians, if the regents couldn't show that they had controlled the university by the end of the year, they'd likely lose their positions to people who could.

The regents began to take control by clarifying for the university what was acceptable behavior and what punishments could be expected for breaking the rules. On May 21, Hug distributed to his fellow regents a copy of "Interim Rules and Disciplinary Procedures for Members of the University Community, University of Nevada System," a set of temporary rules—related to the recent events—that should be adopted until a permanent code could be developed. Many of the items in the interim code were already covered by the university catalog and faculty codes, often in quite different language, and this disagreement caused considerable problems for faculty who were evaluating the document. However, most of the deans approved the interim code. The UNR chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) issued a letter to the Board of Regents, arguing that the interim rules were already covered elsewhere, and two sets would confuse the issues "and succeed only in conveying an impression that the Board is thinking solely in terms of punitive responses." The regents approved the rules as an interim policy until the December 1970 meeting, when a permanent set of rules would be established.[76] The interim code would be law for the rest of the year, ensuring that no other Governor's Day protests could occur. With such a set of rules in place, it was likely that state legislators would see the campus controlled—at least until after the 1971 legislature was in session.

The summer brought no new activity to campus, and some developments passed rather quietly. The charges against Maher, based on Hug's allegations, were dropped when the investigation was unable to produce any evidence against him—finding instead that his students considered him an excellent teacher, one who explicitly argued against discussing the Vietnam War in his class. Although Maher was not formally charged, he was quietly reassigned to a position as a research assistant, effectively removing him from interacting with undergraduate students. Facing a similar consequence in August, Adamian was suspended from teaching by the regents during a closed-door personnel session.[77] A detailed account of the events relevant to the the Adamian affair are beyond the scope of this article, but it is possible to highlight some of the

major legal developments surrounding his termination.

In October 1970, Adamian's case went before an ad hoc committee appointed by the UNR Faculty Senate. The committee found that his actions at the motorcade blockade did not violate the university code, and it concluded that the evidence about the Governor's Day protest was so conflicting that it was impossible to determine the nature of Adamian's alleged leadership role, especially considering that he was assuredly not acting alone and that Miller and Hug had given consent for the demonstrators to march at the stadium. The committee recommended that Adamian be formally censured, but not terminated from his position. Miller agreed with the committee, but the regents returned the committee's findings in November with numerous objections. After reviewing the case with the contested points in mind, the committee reaffirmed its initial conclusions.[78] As part of its December meeting, the Board of Regents decided during another closed-door personnel session to override the decisions of both the Faculty Senate committee and the university president. The regents, pursuing punishment more severe than that recommended, fired Adamian from his tenured position at the university.

Adamian later filed suit in the United States District Court for the District of Nevada, and the case was reassigned to Las Vegas. In 1973, Chief Judge Roger D. Foley ruled that the Board of Regents' decision was based on a vague university code, and ordered Adamian reinstated with back pay. The regents appealed, and in 1975 the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals overturned Foley's ruling, sending the case back to the district court for review. In 1976, the court then ruled in favor of the university, and, despite another appeal to the Ninth Circuit, its decision was upheld in 1979. In May 1980, ten years after the Governor's Day protest, the United States Supreme Court refused to hear the case, without comment. While these legal battles played out, Adamian did not secure academic work because he refused to hide his activist past when applying for other teaching positions. He never returned to academia, and with the exception of the work by Hulse and d'Azevedo in the mid 1970s, Governor's Day has received scant attention over the years.

The Nevadans who pressured the Board of Regents had acted on impulse, responding to narratives about their university that sounded too much like the volatile events on other campuses. While administrators and other officials could have seized the opportunity to valorize the peacekeeping activities on campus, energies were instead directed toward political and economic interests. In the summer of 1970, Hug explained the possible consequences of not responding to community demands for some punishment to be carried out at UNR:

> If no direct punitive action is taken, I think we would find that we would have very few new programs approved. The faculty raises would have a very difficult time being passed. That benefits such as pension or fringe benefits would be very hard to come by. I think that we would find that our building requests would be if not . . . they wouldn't be entirely turned down, but we would be penalized in some way by not getting the request.[79]

UNR stood to lose thousands of dollars in funding, and, rather than clarify matters for the public, the university carried out the punishments as planned. Instead of highlighting the nonviolent aspects of the protest in contrast to other demonstrations across the country, some critics had seized on the actions of individuals, startling the general population into thinking that university faculty were out to corrupt impressionable youths and destroy American values in the process. Nevadans demanded that those responsible for Governor's Day be kicked off campus, and as a show of force, the regents terminated one faculty member. Riding into the sunset of the Vietnam years, the men in white hats drove the bad element out of town, and the sleepy little community could finally rest assured that their children were safe, and justice had been done.

All in all, perhaps the fallout from Governor's Day was inevitable, considering the chaos sweeping the country. However, later changes to the university system can in some ways provide one method of passing final judgment about the protest, and about Adamian's unjust treatment by an elected board of administrators. In 1973 a new university code was established, depriving the Board of Regents of absolute authority over decisions to terminate faculty from the university. In all such decisions to follow, it was the university president who would have final say. So, in theory, considering that President Miller approved the recommendation for censure, if the 1973 code were retroactively applied to Adamian's 1970 case, Adamian would have kept his job as an English professor and continued to educate students. If he were still teaching today, perhaps he'd offer lessons in his research specialty—drama or, more specifically, the rise of domestic tragedy.

Recalling the missed opportunities of Governor's Day can teach us lessons about the domestic tragedies in our country during Vietnam, prompting us to rethink the political and economic forces that shaped what we have considered history. The distortions caused by mass media will continue to pose unique problems for revisiting history, in that sometimes media representations—and faded memories—are the only sources of vision we have. The oral histories of Governor's Day 1970 testify to the need to record events from multiple perspectives, from a wide variety of people, in the wake of dramatic social events.

The tragedies that provoked passions on May 5, 1970, caused a variety of reactions and responses from everyone involved. In the end, Governor's Day ceased to be celebrated, and stories eventually took shape about what had happened that year. The spirit of peaceful intervention, however, carries on in the Thornton Peace Prize, an annual award given at UNR to recognize "an individual or group who exemplifies the idea that the use of force is not an acceptable means of settling disputes." What should have been accepted was a peaceful demonstration by a group that wanted to be heard. What wasn't acknowledged, but what should have been celebrated, was the settling of disputes through discussion and dialogue, patience and empathy, and the guidance of those who knew the university from within.

NOTES

[1]James W. Hulse, *The University of Nevada: A Centennial History* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1974). Warren L. d'Azevedo, "American Indian and Black Students at the University of Nevada, 1874-1974" (report, Department of Anthropology, University of Nevada, Reno, 1975), published as "The Ethnic Minority Experience at the University of Nevada, 1874-1974," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 41:4 (Winter 1998), 225-92.

[2]Joseph Crowley, interview, tape recording, 8 June 1970, University of Nevada Oral History Program, University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) (Edited from verbatim transcript). Series conducted by Mary Ellen Glass, Marian Rendall, and Ruth Hilts (AC 20, University Archives, UNR). Subsequent references to interviews from this series are cited as "UNOHP interview."

[3]David Slemmons, e-mail to author, 9 May 2000.

[4]Hulse, 72.

[5]Dona Gearhart, "The 1960s Revolution: UNLV Style," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 40:2 (Summer 1997), 199.

[6]Hulse, 127.

[7]"Governor's Day to Feature ROTC, Anti-war Rallies," *Sagebrush* (5 May 1970), p.3; see also UNR police report, 8 May 1969.

[8]Anthony Springer, UNOHP interview, tape recording, 2 June 1970; N. Edd Miller, UNOHP interview, tape recording, 18 June 1970.

[9]Reporter's notes of interview with Slattery, 20 March 1969. Warren d'Azevedo Papers, 1959-1987, AC 221, Box 1, University Archives, UNR.

[10]Richard M. Nixon, memo to White House Chief of Staff, H. R. Haldeman, 2 March 1970, in Brude Oudes, ed., *From the President: Richard Nixon's Secret Files* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 103-4.

[11]See d'Azevedo, "Etnic Minority Experience," 257-63, for the only detailed discussion of these events in print.

[12]"Council Gets Sattwhite Case," *Sagebrush* (19 March 1970), 4.

[13]"Warrant Issued; McKinney Surrenders," *Sagebrush* (31 March 1970), 6; "McKinney Charges Dismissed," *Sagebrush* (19 March 1970), 3.

[14]Harry Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete* (New York: Free Press, 1969). The exact arrangement of comments from Edwards's speech is not clear; excerpts cited in the text are culled from the following newspaper accounts: Scott Campbell, "'Live Together as Brothers or Perish Together as Fools,'" *Sagebrush* (3 April 1970), 5; "Harry Edwards Charges: Miller Not Even Concerned," *Sagebrush* (3 April 1970), pp. 1,12; "N. Edd Miller Replies: Edwards Didn't Investigate" *Sagebrush* (3 April 1970), 1.

[15]"Brown Berets Plan for U.N.," *Sagebrush* (3 April 1970), 2.

[16]"Misunderstanding + Mistakes = Trouble," *Sagebrush* (3 April 1970), 3; "Nevada Student Arrested after Racial Disturbance," *Sagebrush* (7 April 1970), 1.

[17]Sheila Caudle, "News Analysis," *Sagebrush* (8 April 1970), 2; *idem*, "Black-White Meeting Turns to Demands," *Sagebrush* (17 April 1970), 2.

[18]Mike Graham, "Sattwhite Gets Probation; SRO Crowd at Hearing," *Sagebrush* (17 April 1970), 3.

[19]"11 Editors Call Strike," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (4 May 1970), 1.

[20]Tom Wells, *The War Within: America's Battle over Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 425-26.

[21]Dan Teglia, UNOHP interview, tape recording, 28 May 1970; James Richardson, letter to N. Edd Miller, 6 May 1970; (AC 209. University Archive, UNR); Brooke Piper, UNOHP interview, tape recording, 17 June 1970.

[22]"Nixon-Cambodia Protest Planned on Reno Campus," *Reno Evening Gazette* (4 May 1970), 1-2.

[23]Richardson, letter to Miller; "Week of Tension Starts Communication," *Sagebrush* (12 May 1970), 3.

[24]"Governor's Day to Feature ROTC, Anti-war Rallies: Peace Marchers to Join Cadets in Mackay Stadium Ceremonies," *Sagebrush* (5 May 1970), 1-3.

[25]"Governor's Day Riot Fails: Only Loud Obscene Noise," *Morning Desert Free Press* (6 May 1970), 2; George Frank and Jeanne Rasmussen, "Protest Delays Reno Ceremonies," *Reno Evening*

Gazette (5 May 1970), 1.

[26]Robert Harvey, UNOHP interview, tape recording, 1 June 1970. Laxalt's comments also discussed by Charlotte Morse, UNOHP interview, tape recording, 5 June 1970.

[27]James Hulse, letter to N. Edd Miller, 8 May 1970 (AC 209. University Archive, UNR); Robert Harvey, interview; Kenneth Carpenter, UNOHP interview, tape recording, 27 May 1970; John R. Doherty, UNOHP interview, tape recording, 5 June 1970; Edward Olsen, UNOHP interview, tape recording, 14 July 1970; Richardson, letter to Miller.

[28]R.Harvey, interview; Richardson, letter to Miller.

[29]Mike Nash, "Cadets Praised as Dissidents Mar Ceremony," *Nevada State Journal* (6 May 1970), 1; Olsen, interview.

[30]R. Harvey, interview; Nash, "Cadets Praised," p. 1; Olsen, interview.

[31]Earl W. Ralf, interview by author, 30 June 2000. Ralf states, "If the guy laid down in front of the car, I'd run over him. If he didn't have any more sense than that, then it's his problem. And I would do it. [The cadet driver] had apprehension; I said, "If there's any question in your mind, I'll drive."

[32]R. Harvey, interview; Olsen, interview; Frankie Sue Del Papa, UNOHP interview, tape recording, 16 June 1970; Taber Griswold, UNOHP interview, tape recording, 18 June 1970; "Adamian: Investigation Is a 'Witch Hunt,'" *Sagebrush* (12 May 1970), 7; Piper, interview.

[33]Alan Ryall, UNOHP interview, tape recording, 27 May 1970; R. Harvey, interview; Frank and Jeanne Rasmussen, "Protest," 1-2; Fred Maher, UNOHP interview, tape recording, 15 June 1970.

[34]R. Harvey, interview; Olsen, interview; Frank and Jeanne Rasmussen, "Protest," 1-2; "UNR Students Circle Laxalt Auto on Campus" *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (5 May 1970), 1; Richardson, letter to Miller; Nash, "Cadets Praised," 1.

[35]Hulse, interview; Procter Hug, Jr., UNOHP interview, tape recording, 18 June 1970; R. Harvey, interview.

[36]Frank and Jeanne Rasmussen, "Protest," 1-2; Bruce Douglas, UNOHP interview, tape recording, 11 June 1970; R. Harvey, interview.

[37]Ben Hazard, UNOHP interview, tape recording, 15 June 1970. The discussion is also mentioned in Griswold, interview.

[38]R. Harvey, interview; Hulse, interview; Beverly Hudson, UNOHP interview, tape recording, 10 June 1970.

[39]R. Harvey, interview; Edward Pine, UNOHP interview, tape recording, 2 June 1970; Frank and Jeanne Rasmussen, "Protest," 1-2; "Peaceful Demonstration," letter to the editor, *Reno Evening Gazette* (16 May 1970), 1-2. According to ROTC cadet Jim Blink, the university police had been ordered not to disturb the black students (UNOHP interview, tape recording, 27 May 1970).

[40]Douglas, interview; Edmund Barmettler, UNOHP interview, tape recording, 29 May 1970; R. Harvey, interview.

[41]Maher, interview; Frank and Jeanne Rasmussen, "Protest," 1; Springer, interview; R. Harvey, interview; Joel Gartenberg, UNOHP interview, tape recording, 2 June 1970.

[42]Hug, interview; Elizabeth Anderson, UNOHP interview, tape recording, 29 May 1970; Blink, interview; Douglas, interview.

[43]See "Peaceful Demonstration"; Thomas Cosgrove, UNOHP interview, tape recording, 2 June 1970; Del Papa, interview; Douglas, interview; Dennis Flynn, UNOHP interview, tape recording, 3 June 1970; Charles Seufferle, UNOHP interview, tape recording, 5 June 1970; Olsen, interview; Piper, interview.

[44]Hulse, interview; Teglia, interview; Miller, interview; Hulse, letter to Miller; James T. Richardson, UNOHP interview, tape recording, 16 June 1970.

[45]Hazard, interview; R. Harvey, interview; Springer, interview; Hulse, interview.

[46]Del Papa, interview; R. Harvey, interview; Pine, interview; Maher, interview.

[47]Olsen, interview; R. Harvey, interview.

[48]Richardson, interview.

[49]Blink, interview; Del Papa, interview; Hudson, interview; Hug, interview; Anderson, interview.

[50]Maher, interview; Hazard, interview; Hulse, interview; David L. Harvey, interview with author, tape recording, 10 July 2000, Oral History Program, University of Nevada, Reno.

[51]D. Harvey, interview; Richardson, letter to Miller; Seufferle, interview; Anderson, interview.

[52]Gartenberg, interview; Blink, interview; "Peaceful Demonstration."

[53]D. Harvey, interview; Maher, interview; Nash, "Cadet Praises," 1; Douglas, interview.

[54]Doherty, interview; R. Harvey, interview; Del Papa, interview; Richard G. Patterson, Jr., UNOHP interview, tape recording, 3 June 1970; Ty Cobb, "Sweeping Away—the Cobbwebs," *Nevada State Journal* (20 September 1970), 10; Hulse, *University of Nevada*, 36, 57; d'Azevedo, "Ethnic Minority Experience,"240-45.

[55]Maher, interview; Nash, "Cadet Praises," 1; Griswold, interview.

[56]Elmer Rusco, UNOHP interview, 29 May 1970; tape recording, Carpenter, interview; R. Harvey, interview; "Week of Tension Starts Communication."

[57]Mike Graham, "Adamian Affair: A Chronology," *Sagebrush* (13 November 1970), 8.

[58]Ty Cobb, "Sweeping Away—The Cobbwebs," *Nevada State Journal* (6 May 1970), 2.; Nash, "Cadet Praises," 1.

[59]Brian Whalen, incident report submitted to Bob Malone, 7 May 1970; Morse, interview; "Strike Called for Friday," *Sagebrush* (7 May 1970), 2.

[60]"ASUN Senate Surrounded by 300 Pros and Cons," *Sagebrush* (7 May 1970), 3; Olsen, interview; Lawrence Kirk, UNOHP interview, tape recording, 12 June 1970.

[61]UNR Police Felony Crime Report #2475, 7 May 1970; Bob Malone, UNOHP interview, tape recording, 1 June 1970.

[62]News of the firebombing went out over the Associated Press wire service. See "Reno Campus Bombed," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (7 May 1970), 1; "University of Nevada Firebombed," *Nevada Appeal* (7 May 1970), 1; "Laxalt Blasts UNR Violence," *Nevada Appeal* (7 May 1970), 1; "Reno Campus ROTC Is Firebombed, an Action Laxalt Says Is Criminal," *Reno Evening Gazette* (7 May 1970), 1.

[63]Telegrams in Paul Laxalt Papers, Nevada State Archives, 010 Cambodian Issue, GOV-0488 1970; "Reno Campus ROTC Is Firebombed."

[64]Griswold, interview; Piper, interview.

[65]Olsen, interview; Gary Peltier, UNOHP interview, tape recording, 9 June 1970; "Miller Deplores Bombing," *Sagebrush* (8 May 1970), 2; Rusco, interview.

[66]Hulse, interview; Barmettler, interview; "Students Draft Letter, Make Plea for Unity, Decry Firebombing," *Sagebrush* (8 May 1970), p.2; Douglas, interview; Rusco, interview; Hazard, interview.

[67]"UNR Strike Leaders Urge Students to Boycott Class," *Nevada Appeal* (8 May 1970), 1; John Doherty, "Consensus at the Bowl: Close It Down—Nonviolently," *Sagebrush* (8 May 1970), 3.

[68]Doherty, "Consensus," 3; Rusco, interview.

[69]Blink, interview; Gartenberg, interview; Hulse, interview; Cosgrove, interview.

[70]George Frank, "Bombing Probed; Protest Goes on at University," *Reno Evening Gazette* (8 May 1970), 1; "Strike Nonviolent," *Sagebrush* (12 May 1970), 2; "N. State, Nevada Collegians Modify War Protest Tactics," *The Sacramento Bee* (9 May 1970), A12.

[71]Sam Basta, UNOHP interview, tape recording, 12 June 1970; "Strike Nonviolent," 2; Laurence Hyde, Jr., UNOHP interview, tape recording, 29 May 1970; Rusco, interview; Frank, "Bombing Probed;" Piper, interview.

[72]Minutes, Board of Regents, University of Nevada System, 8/9 May 1970, 78-130.

[73]"Slattery Demands," *Morning Desert Free Press* (12 May 1970), 1; George Frank, "Campus Scene Is Calm as Requested by Officials," *Reno Evening Gazette* (13 May 1970), 1; Kirk, interview; David Keller, UNOHP interview, tape recording, 28 May 1970; Piper, interview; Richardson, interview.

[74]John Crosley, "Blast Rumored Retaliation for ROTC Fire," *Nevada Appeal* (12 May 1970), 1; Sheila Caudle, "Residents Escape Unhurt at 3 a.m.: Students Report Seeing Cougar Speed from Scene," *Sagebrush* (12 May 1970), 1; John Doherty, "Sagebrush Reporter Awakes to Flames," *Sagebrush* (12 May 1970), 1; "Firebomb Burns Building Used by Nevada Protestors," *Sagebrush* (12 May 1970), 1; "Are Professors Slaves or Citizens?" *Sagebrush* (15 May 1970), 2; Rusco, interview.

[75]"Avoid Political Issue on Campus Problems, Miller Asks Nevadans," *Reno Evening Gazette* (15 May 1970), 1; "Unrest Jeopardizes Funds for University—Senators," *Reno Evening Gazette* (15 May 1970), 1; Hug, interview.

[76]AAUP, letter to Board of Regents, 2 June 1970; Minutes, Board of Regents, University of Nevada System, 12 June 1970, 131-87.

[77]Bert Goldwater, letter to N. Edd Miller, 21 July 1970 (AC 209, University Archives, UNR). See also Mike Graham, "Politics or Civic Concern?" *Sagebrush* (18 August 1970), 2; "Professor Barred from Teaching Pending Hearing," *Reno Evening Gazette* (10 September 1970), 1.

[78]"Findings and Decision of the Ad Hoc Faculty Senate Hearing Committee in the matter of Dr. Paul S. Adamian," 28 October 1970, Paul S. Adamian Papers, 1965-1979, AC 403, Folder 2, University Archives, UNR; UNR Faculty Information Bulletin 70:12; N. Edd Miller, letter to the Board of Regents, 10 November 1970 (AC 209, University Archives, UNR).

[79]Hug, interview.

The Bureau of Reclamation and the West, 1945-2000

DONALD J. PISANI

Visit the the Bureau of Reclamation website and you discover the following: The bureau is the nation's second largest wholesale water supplier and the nation's second largest producer of hydroelectric power, after the United States Army Corps of Engineers. It operates 58 hydroelectric plants, 348 dams and reservoirs, and 308 recreation areas visited by 90 million people each year. It delivers water to more than 31 million municipal, rural, and industrial water users, including one in five western farmers who cultivate 10 million acres. That's one third of the irrigated land in the West. Those farms produce 60 percent of the nation's vegetables and 25 percent of its fruits and nuts.

But there is more. While the Bureau of Reclamation has not constructed a major dam since the 1970s, it is not just the caretaker of a vast hydraulic museum. In recent years, the website suggests, the bureau has transformed itself into a champion of the environment, dedicated to preserving wetlands, increasing migratory fish populations, and bringing "competing interests together to find consensus-based approaches in such areas as California's Sacramento Delta/San Francisco Bay to improve water quality." Its objectives now include "water conservation and environmental restoration," "water reclamation, recycling, and reuse," and support for the "self-determination efforts of Native American tribes." These are ambitious goals. Nevertheless, adjusted for inflation the bureau's 850-million-dollar budget for fiscal year 2000 is but a small fraction of its construction budgets in the three decades following the end of World War II.[1]

The Bureau of Reclamation has reinvented itself many times, particularly during the 1930s, after World War II, and in the 1980s and 1990s. The best-

Donald J. Pisani is a Merrick professor of history at the University of Oklahoma. His works on water in the west include *From Family Farm to Agribusiness: The Irrigation Crusade in California and the West, 1850-1931* (1984); *To Reclaim a Divided West: Water, Law and Public Policy, 1848-1902* (1992); and a forthcoming book from the University of California Press entitled *Water and American Government*. This paper was originally delivered at the University of Nevada, Reno, September 22, 2000 as part of the university's Hilliard Lectures.

President Roosevelt dedicating Hoover Dam, September 30, 1935.
(Nevada Historical Society)

known history of water in the West, Marc Reisner's *Cadillac Desert*, suggests that following World War II the Bureau of Reclamation and Corps of Engineers went on a dam-building binge. The passion to manage nature, the assumption that the United States Congress had a responsibility to subsidize the economic development of the West, and the desire of federal bureaus to protect their turf and expand their budgets all fueled the dam mania. Neither agency exhibited idealism, let alone vision. Wedded as they were to logrolling and pork barrel politics, the Bureau of Reclamation and the Corps of Engineers became a juggernaut beyond democratic control. It mattered little that most Americans found many of the projects the agencies built to be wasteful and impractical. The dam builders were stopped not by public opinion but by a simple geological fact: By the 1970s the West had run out of safe dam sites.[2]

There is truth to Reisner's interpretation, but it is half the truth. In this essay, I argue that the major impulse behind dam building in the 1950s and the 1960s was a postwar idealism that sought to revive and expand the New Deal of the 1930s and win the Cold War against the Soviet Union. Whatever the power of the dam builders in Congress, they never led the charmed life that Reisner suggests. They faced severe criticism, and not just from those dedicated to protecting parks and wilderness areas. That criticism mounted during the 1960s and 1970s and, eventually, the public turned against the Bureau of Reclamation and Corps of Engineers. Some critics complained about the sheer cost of the projects, much of which was paid for from the general treasury. Some opposed the massive subsidies to agribusiness in the West. Some chastised the bureau for abandoning the goal of turning the West into a land of family farms. Still others deplored the damage large water projects inflicted on the environment. In 1945, the great strength of the agency was its idealism. But that idealism was hard to sustain, particularly in the face of congressional opposition to any form of "social planning." Furthermore, while dams were icons of progress in the 1930s and 1940s, by the 1970s they represented an old and inflexible technology.

The Bureau of Reclamation–originally the Reclamation Service—was established in 1902 to irrigate desert land. Its mission was not just to create new family farms on the public domain, but also to provide supplemental water to established farmers on private land. The objectives of the bureau were inconsistent from the start. Was its goal to stimulate regional economic development or to create a new society? Federal reclamation was not a welfare program. Farmers could claim government land within the projects for nothing, but they had to pay their pro-rata costs of constructing dams and canals in ten years, without interest. The bureau launched 30 water projects in the years from 1905 to 1917, but the agricultural depression of the 1920s and 1930s, and many other problems, limited the land reclaimed to fewer than 3 million acres–far from the 100 million acres promised by the most optimistic proponents of the Reclamation Act in 1902. Most of that land had been irrigated before 1902.[3]

In the 1920s, the bureau faced a host of seemingly insurmountable problems as the farmers it served were unwilling or unable to repay their debts to the government. There was talk of giving the Bureau of Reclamation's work to the Corps of Engineers. And while the 1930s provided the bureau with new opportunities, as it built such high dams as Hoover, Grand Coulee, and Shasta, most of those dams were authorized in order to put people to work rather than because their water and power were needed at the time. It was World War II that made the high dams look like good investments. By increasing the demand for power, the war gave the bureau a new source of revenue that could be used to subsidize agriculture and a new lease on life.

At the end of World War II, and for some years thereafter, the fear of a return to the struggles of the Great Depression played a prominent part in Bureau of Reclamation planning. In 1944, Bernard DeVoto observed,

> "The fear is that, terrible as the war is, the coming peace will make these war years seem to have been a time of quiet, order, and optimism. That, ghastly as the problems of war are, the problems of peace will prove worse. That, whatever the war may have done to us, it has kept us comparatively united, comparatively of one purpose, comparatively effective as a society. That, once the external discipline of war is relaxed, there will be grave danger of our collapsing into disorder, disunity, civil and social strife. That whereas war has brought us hope, or at least courage, the coming peace may bring despair."

Not the least of DeVoto's fears was that jobs would have to be found for 12 million former soldiers, sailors, and marines along with countless workers in the defense industry. Public works became a vital part of reconversion to a peacetime economy.[4]

New Deal Democrats assumed that the West had sufficient potential water projects that they could be used as a *permanent* economic stimulus to prevent recessions, ensure full employment, and sustain economic growth. Not surprisingly, in April 1945, the bureau presented to Congress plans for 415 irrigation and multiple-purpose water projects in 17 western states. From state-to-state the number varied, from a modest five projects in Washington to 96 in Montana, and from 101,000 acres in Utah to 2.2 million acres in California. These projects were expected to add 11 million acres of new land to cultivation and provide supplemental water to nearly as many acres of old land. That was twice the amount of land irrigated in 1945.[5]

In 1945, Bureau of Reclamation officials regarded the West as an undeveloped region; it contained only 20 percent of the nation's population, 25 percent of its farms, and an even smaller share of its industry. If the West did not continue the process of industrialization begun during the war, its economy would stagnate. But industrialization could advance only if the federal government provided the West with new dams for power and irrigation. A second assumption followed from the first: In the future almost all major water projects would be built by the federal government, not by private companies, municipalities,

or the states. Save for California and Texas, the cost of multiple-purpose projects was beyond the means of the western states. Third, hydroelectricity was not just the cheapest and most reliable form of power available to westerners, its use would conserve other natural resources, including oil, coal, and natural gas. In this way, the bureau would strengthen the nation's defenses. Fourth, the crop surpluses of the 1930s were a thing of the past, if only because the United States would have to feed large parts of Europe and Asia for decades after the war was over. There was no danger of bringing too much land into production too fast.

World War II solved many chronic farm problems. Farm income more than doubled between 1939 and 1945, and the amount invested in machinery more than tripled. The need for food and fiber wiped out the surpluses of the 1930s; the demand for soldiers and war workers drained off the surplus farm population; and high wartime crop prices restored agriculture to a prosperity that lasted into the 1950s. Farmers on government irrigation projects doubled their production between Pearl Harbor and the end of the war, and the value of their crops increased by more than 250 percent from 1941 to 1945. Postwar demands for food and fiber in Europe, and generous price supports from the Department of Agriculture, sustained prosperity after the war. Bureau of Reclamation officials believed, as they had always believed, in a direct correlation between the rate of population increase and the expansion of irrigation. In the decade from 1940 to 1950, the population of the seventeen western states went up nearly by 25 percent, and the population of California, Washington, and Oregon increased by 48 percent. The population of the entire nation increased by 15 percent during the same decade.[6]

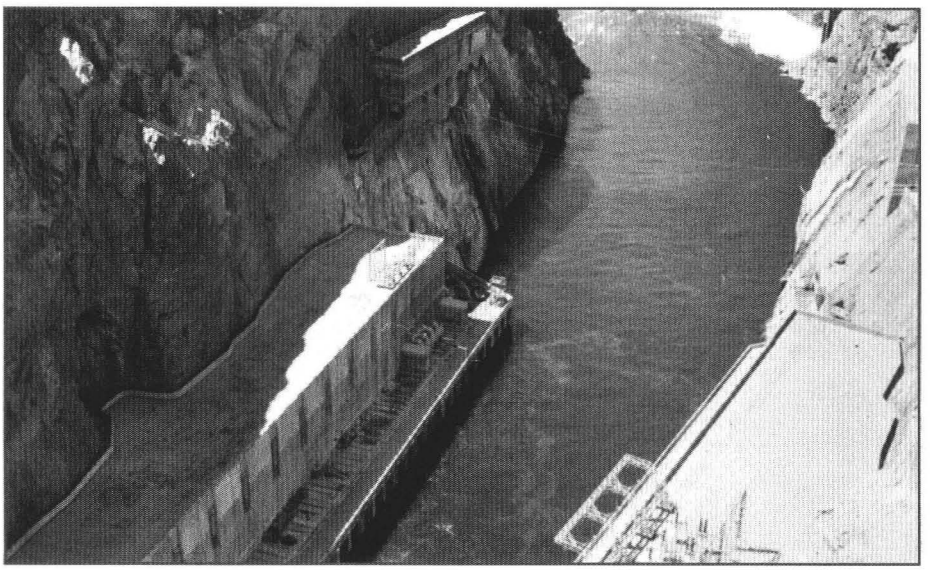
Hundreds of thousands of war workers moved west during World War II, and the hydroelectric power produced at dams like Grand Coulee and Hoover contributed to the relocation of much of the defense industry, particularly the construction of ships and aircraft. Half the military airplanes produced in the United States during World War II were built with the power from one dam, Grand Coulee. When the war ended, or so it was widely assumed, cheap and abundant hydroelectric power would expand the region's industrial base and give the West the balanced or diversified economy it had long lacked.[7]

In the years between 1945 and 1948, the Cold War against the Soviet Union dominated every aspect of American life. It was a mixed blessing to the Bureau of Reclamation. On the one hand, the bureau provided much of the power and food needed to defend the Free World against Communism. Nevertheless, the struggle against Russia also helped to undermine the New Deal, or the Fair Deal as it was called in the Truman administration. It diverted attention from domestic to international concerns and killed the idealism that sustained political reform. And if military spending commanded too much of the federal budget, the United States might not be able to sustain the civilian standard of living that distinguished it from the Soviet Union. "Indeed," as Secretary of the

Interior Oscar Chapman observed in 1951, "the final test of victory will lie in the answer to this simple question: Is America richer, stronger, better able to provide her people with a good life and to assume her position of world leadership than she was before the challenge [of the Cold War] was first raised?" Chapman feared that if the United States returned to a wartime economy, "we shall find that the old economic freedoms which give American life so much of its richness have disappeared. We shall be supporting an enormous budget, with a huge proportion for defense, and yet find ourselves poor as church mice where our great basic [social] programs are involved." The United States must, Chapman warned, avoid the "pinched, Spartan existence which is inevitable under a straight military economy."[8]

Nevertheless, there was a great deal of idealism within the Bureau of Reclamation after World War II, and that idealism is often overlooked by historians who think of the bureau as a pack of engineers bent on building as many dams as possible as rapidly as possible. For example, arid land reclamation was quickly perceived as an instrument of international diplomacy, and the bureau developed close ties to the State Department. The Cold War gave the Bureau of Reclamation a new mission as the defender of freedom and democracy around the world. In 1945, on his return from the Yalta Conference, President Franklin D. Roosevelt asked to fly over the Arabian Desert, and that experience suggested that a major dam project in the Middle East would relieve poverty and the danger of revolution. "When I get through being President of the United States and this damn war is over," FDR remarked to his Secretary of Labor, Frances Perkins, "I think Eleanor and I will go to the Near East and see if we can manage to put over an operation like the Tennessee Valley system that will really make something of that country. I would love to do it." In 1944 John L. Savage, the bureau's chief design engineer, a man who had played a large part in planning Grand Coulee, Shasta, and Hoover dams, went to China at the request of the Chinese government. There he made preliminary surveys for a gigantic power, irrigation, and flood control project on the Yangtze River. He then spent several months inspecting likely water projects in India. At the end of the war, thirty-eight engineers from fifteen foreign countries visited Bureau of Reclamation projects and offices and the bureau launched a program to teach its methods to foreign engineers. Nineteen engineers from China began training with the bureau in the summer of 1945.[9]

As the Cold War deepened, dam building became a major diplomatic weapon. The widespread human suffering in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, it was widely believed, offered fertile ground to the spread of Communism. Yet the so-called underdeveloped world was full of potential water projects that could eliminate or mitigate poverty, just as the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) had improved the lives of poor residents of Tennessee and Alabama during the 1930s. Some of these projects were staggering in size. For example, the Yangtze River project would impound twice the water captured by Hoover Dam and



Hoover Dam. *(Nevada Historical Society)*

generate twice the output of Grand Coulee, Hoover, and Shasta dams combined. In fiscal year 1952, the bureau sent ninety-two employees to twenty-two different countries on thirty-three separate missions. The countries included Costa Rica, Ethiopia, India, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Northern Rhodesia, and Thailand. The bureau also arranged international water conferences, including the first International Reclamation Conference, held in Yakima, Washington, in June 1952. It was attended by representatives from twenty foreign countries.[10]

At home, New Deal and Cold War idealism could be seen in the bureau's abortive attempts to revive the building of family farms after the war. In many parts of the West, the average farm size increased dramatically during the long agricultural depression that extended from 1920 to 1940. Average farm size in Montana leaped from 480 acres to 821 acres, and in Wyoming from 749 to 1,866 acres. Tenancy had also increased. In 1946, Commissioner of Reclamation Michael Straus predicted that within five years the bureau would have opened more than 45,000 family-sized farms on 4 million acres.[11] The bureau's magazine, *Reclamation Era*, promised that the bureau would provide as many homes to returning veterans and their families as it had created on all its projects during the four decades prior to World War II. The first farms would be on the Klamath, Yakima, Minidoka, and Shoshone projects, but the single largest project would be in the Columbia River basin, where the bureau hoped to have at least 400,000 acres ready for settlement by 1950 or 1951. "The ultimate objective of

the Bureau of Reclamation and its staff," *Reclamation Era* reported, "is to develop the West through the creation of permanent family farms on Federal Reclamation projects."[12]

The irrigable public domain was long gone by the 1930s. Therefore, postwar government projects would reclaim private land, or land purchased by the federal government. As early as 1906, Congress had prohibited the bureau from laying out model towns, and from building roads, schools, and sanitation systems or selling electricity directly to consumers for purposes other than pumping water for irrigation. In anticipation of the end of the war, however, in 1943 Congress authorized the bureau to buy up more than a million acres of privately owned, dry-farmed land north of Pasco, Washington, subdivide it, and lay out 10,000 to 20,000 farms. At the time, the irrigable lands of the Columbia River basin were inhabited by struggling ranchers and wheat farmers. By regulating land sales and enforcing the 160-acre limitation on the amount of land for which each farmer could receive water–a limitation that had been largely ignored—the bureau hoped to prevent the chronic land speculation that had undermined the effectiveness of both private and public irrigation projects in the past. Project towns and farms were expected to provide homes to more than 300,000 people. Central Washington, it was hoped, would become a model for future government reclamation projects within the Colorado and Missouri basins.[13]

The Columbia Basin Project was as close to planned settlement as the bureau ever got, but it failed to live up to expectations. Congress required the bureau to cooperate with the state of Washington and local irrigation districts in planning the project, but there was constant tension among federal, state, and local officials. There were also problems with drainage and alkali, the project land was incapable of producing high-value crops, and government farmers resisted planning and direction—as farmers always had on government projects. By 1958 the project was still only half complete, and it was home to fewer than 2,300 families, rather than the 10,000 to 15,000 anticipated at the end of the war.

The Columbia Basin Project did not result in the resettlement of farmers from marginal lands on the Great Plains, nor did it become a land of small subsistence farms. Most settlers came from the state of Washington, and most of those from out-of-state hailed from Utah. Nor were they young men looking for a fresh start–the median age was forty. Nor were they poor–more than half had family assets in excess of $20,000. Nor did they relish building homes on the land. About one-third lived in towns or cities, usually within twenty or thirty miles of the land. Worse still, 25 percent of the owners of Columbia Basin Project land received 75 percent of the government benefits. In 1968, the bureau turned the project over to three irrigation districts, tacit acknowledgment that the federal government would never complete it. The leading historian of the Columbia Basin Project has concluded that even had the project been finished, it would have failed. "It would be a collection of family farms ranging from forty to

eighty acres," Paul Pitzer has written, "none of them capable of supplying their owners with a satisfactory living. The area would be a rural slum. It is for the best that this aspect of the project failed."[14]

In the years immediately following the war, the Bureau of Reclamation received as many as a thousand queries a month from returning veterans who wanted land, but in 1947 the government could offer only 245 farms covering 20,000 acres. By 1952, less than 4 percent of the veterans who had applied to the Bureau for a government farm had received one, compared to 13 percent after World War I. Secretary of the Interior Julius Krug blamed "large land companies and their adherents" for thwarting the bureau's plans. But there was also opposition within the bureau to creating family farms for settlers with limited means. In the 1930s, the bureau had shifted its focus to the urban West. The experience of 1902 to 1940, some of its leaders feared, suggested that only those who were prosperous when they took up their government farms would succeed. A return to creating homesteads would invite a "welfare class" onto the projects, a class destined to fail no matter how much federal aid it received. Therefore, the bureau required a family to have $7,500 in savings before it could move onto the Columbia Basin Project, and it expected these families to have several times this amount in assets. The dream of turning the West into a democratic Eden or "planned promise land" through the resettlement of veterans on government water projects disappeared in the 1960s.[15]

The Bureau of Reclamation had other reasons to fear large-scale planning, including its distrust of autonomous river basin authorities. During and after the war, a handful of western Democrats pushed legislation to transplant the TVA model to the West, legislation nominally favored by Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman. New Deal planners hoped that riverbasin authorities would result in the marriage of national and local governments, limiting state authority over water. But the bureau feared that such authorities would restrict its ability to survey, plan, select, and build western water projects, particularly within the Columbia, Missouri, and Colorado river basins.[16]

Nevertheless, the bureau never entirely rejected the idea of regional governments. Such authorities could lay the foundation for public power, and for a time the bureau advocated building its own transmission lines and steam power plants to supplement the hydroelectricity generated by its dams. In that way, it could become the West's major source of power. President Harry S. Truman favored expanding the bureau's role in electrifying the West but Congress rejected it, even after the Democrats regained control of Congress in 1948. Opposition to direct sales of power to consumers, and to community planning, became so intense that in 1948 Congress refused to appropriate money to pay the salary of any reclamation commissioner who was not an engineer. In the early 1950s, the fear of "creeping socialism," and opposition to the "Sovietization" of the West, undermined what remained of the idealism that had been so strong in 1945.[17]

Marc Reisner, whose *Cadillac Desert* is the most widely read study of water policy in the twentieth-century West, characterizes the postwar period as the Go-Go Years. He can be faulted for ignoring the powerful impact of the New Deal and Cold War on postwar planning, but some water projects that appeared in the 1950s and 1960s *were* incredible. The Pacific Southwest Water Plan, proposed in 1964, included 1,000-mile aqueduct that would have carried a water supply half the size of the average flow of the Colorado River, to run from the Columbia River, past a string of irrigation projects in Oregon and Nevada, to Southern California. It was rejected not because it was impractical, or too expensive, but because Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson of Washington opposed it. Another scheme, released by the bureau in 1971, proposed pumping water upstream from the Mississippi River to the high plains of west Texas and New Mexico, where groundwater depletion threatened a collapse of the local economy. The electrical power needed to pump the water uphill would have exceeded all the energy used in the entire state of Texas at that time.[18]

A project nearly as questionable won the approval of Congress in 1968, in no small part because of Senator Carl Hayden of Arizona. This was the Central Arizona Project, the single largest public works appropriation ever made by Congress. When asked why the project had been authorized, Floyd Dominy, the commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation in the 1960s, responded: "Well–number one–Senator Hayden was a man that I loved." More important, Senator Hayden was a powerful member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and no water project, east or west, could be approved without his support. Everyone in Congress deferred to Carl Hayden.

The legislation passed in 1968 was designed to pacify both upstream and downstream interests on the Colorado River. Upstream, a series of new dams would be built, and downstream, an aqueduct from Lake Mead, the reservoir behind Hoover Dam, to Las Vegas and a 300-mile-long aqueduct across Arizona that would pass by Phoenix on its way to Tucson. This aqueduct carried more water than the combined water supplies of Cleveland, Detroit, and Chicago, and it included a massive pump system to lift the water more than 1,000 feet and a series of reservoirs to store it. The increasing political clout of the southwestern states was demonstrated by the fact that in 1984, when the Central Arizona Aqueduct was nearly finished, only one of the five projects slated for Colorado was under construction.[19]

Dams often threatened the boundaries of national parks and wilderness areas, and they tested the vigilance of conservation groups throughout the 1950s and the 1960s.[20] The struggle to protect Echo Park, which many historians credit for creating the modern environmental movement, is well known. The issue was whether public works projects should take precedence over the sanctity of national parks, and whether immediate economic self-interest should take precedence over the rights of future generations.[21] There was far more to these battles than protecting extraordinary scenery in remote parts of the West.

Gradually, as Samuel P. Hays has shown, middle-class Americans came to see wilderness in very personal terms—as part of their own back yard, and as an antidote to a highly regimented society rather than as an obstacle to progress. Americans no longer feared unemployment, or a return to the Great Depression, and their attitudes toward nature were changing.[22]

More and more Americans thought that rivers ought to be preserved in their native states for future generations, not managed to the last drop. Just as Congress enacted legislation to protect wilderness areas in 1964, it protected wild, scenic, and recreational rivers in 1965. The "wild" rivers, like the wilderness areas, were "living museums" of nature. They constituted less than 2 percent of the waterways in the United States, but putting them off-limits sharply reduced the remaining dam sites available to the Bureau of Reclamation and the Corps of Engineers. Even within cities, rivers once seen as sewers were now regarded as amenities. Riverfronts became parks complete with bicycle and jogging paths. The recreational value of rivers–not just for those who rafted through the Grand Canyon but for urban dwellers–symbolized a new kind of consumer economy that dealt in the experience of interacting with nature, not just the consumption of factory products.[23]

Yet it was not just a greater appreciation for nature that undermined public faith in dams and canals. As the population of the west grew in the decades after World War II, and as California eclipsed New York as the most populous state in the Union, easterners became more and more concerned to see their residents, as well as their tax dollars, moving west. In the late nineteenth century, western politicians complained that their region did not get its fair share of the money spent by Congress on river and harbor improvements. But from 1950 to 1976, the Northeast received only 6 percent of the funds spent by the Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation. The West received about half the money spent, and the South 28 percent. By the time Jimmy Carter became president in 1977, residents of northeastern cities complained that the growth of southwestern cities was being subsidized at their expense. The Rust Belt took a stand against the Sun Belt.[24]

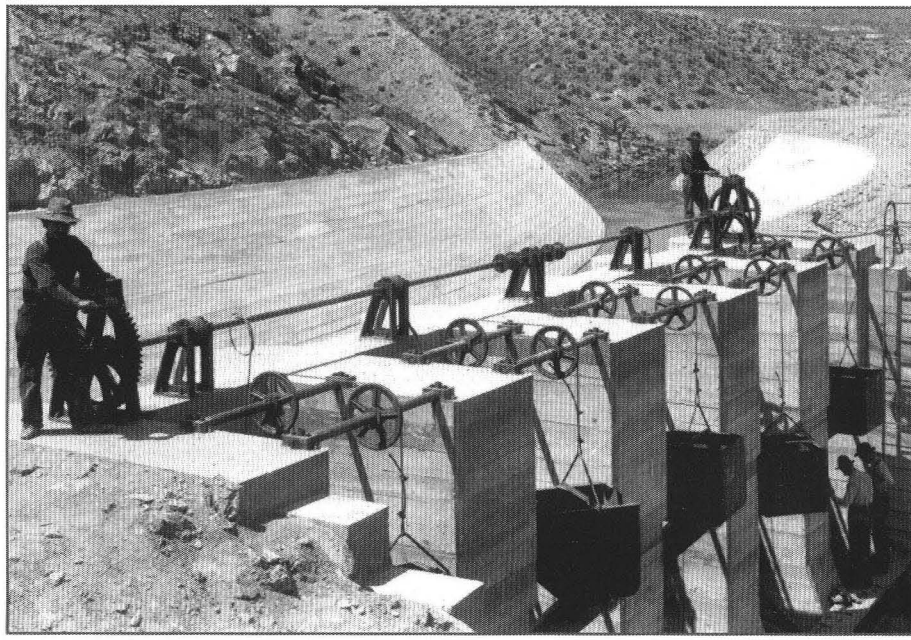
Equally important, criticism of massive Bureau of Reclamation subsidies to western farmers mounted. Taxpayers paid twice for irrigation projects, first for the direct subsidy, and then for the crop price-support programs required partly because of overproduction on subsidized lands in the West.[25] In an age of crop surpluses, it made little sense to cultivate subsidized cotton in the San Joaquin Valley and pay farmers not to grow cotton in the South. The Bureau of Reclamation irrigated land while the United States Department of Agriculture attempted to hold down agricultural production through its Soil Bank Program, its Cropland Conversion Program, the Commodity Diversion Program, and the Cropland Adjustment Program, all of which were designed to convert cropped land into fields of trees and grass. More than 50 million acres of land had been idled by government farm programs, and more than one third of all

available farmland was unused. Why expand irrigation in the West when the production of food and fiber on already cultivated land could be increased by 40 or 50 percent simply through the use of new insecticides and farm machinery?[26]

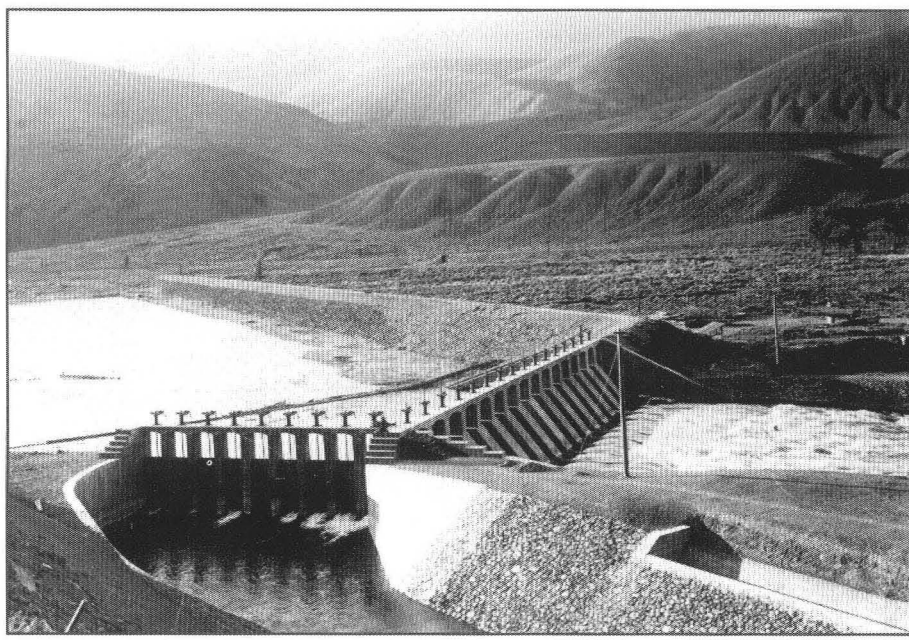
At the end of World War II, 95 percent of the money spent on federal reclamation was reimbursable; only 5 percent of the cost of project construction was excused in the name of navigation improvement or flood control. The Reclamation Project Act of 1939 permitted the bureau to write off the cost of providing navigation, flood control, and fish and wildlife protection in its water projects. After the war, the bureau wanted to add to that list recreation, salinity control, sediment control, public health, the promotion of the national defense, and international treaty obligations.[27] In 1978, the agricultural economist Philip LeVeen estimated that western farmers repaid only about 3 percent of the cost of land reclaimed by the federal government. Proceeds from the sale of electricity paid for 57 percent of the cost, but another 40 percent came from general tax revenues. On the Westlands Irrigation District in the San Joaquin Valley, farmers repaid only 10 percent of the cost of constructing their irrigation works, and 70 percent of their profit came from federal subsidies.[28]

Aside from the subsidies, critics of the Reclamation Bureau raised doubts whether dams represented the best technology for generating electrical power. In the dark days of the Cold War, military strategists worried that centralizing the production of power at huge dams would make the United States more vulnerable to attack from Soviet missiles. If the Soviet Union targeted the West's massive dams, it could cripple the region's economy–including much of the defense industry. Then, too, there had always been questions about whether hydroelectric power was as reliable as steam-generated power. Few high dams produced a sufficiently consistent flow of water to guarantee the same amount of power throughout the entire year, and the cost of generating power at steam-powered plants had declined markedly during the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. Increasingly, hydroelectric power was used to supplement steam-generated electricity, rather than the reverse.

Nevertheless, steam plants represented old technology, too. In the 1940s, David Brower suggested that atomic energy would make dams obsolete long before they began to silt up. "If we learn to use it [atomic energy] properly . . . we won't need to harness all the rivers of the land . . . . At least we might wait a little while and see what happens before we drown out our greatest canyons and destroy forever so much natural beauty." One dream of the postwar era was to use the atom to desalinize water from the oceans, rendering dams and canals to serve the cities of the Pacific Coast entirely unnecessary. By the 1960s, General Electric was producing reactors that could generate more power than the largest of existing or planned bureau dams at half the installation cost. Atomic plants also had the advantage that they could be located closer to cities and were thus more accessible to transportation and raw materials. Eventu-



Derby Dam waste-way gates, showing the bucket weight on north side, June 20, 1905. *(Nevada Historical Society)*



Derby Dam, c. 1910. *(Nevada Historical Society)*

ally, nuclear power would be seen as even more of a threat to the environment than dams, but that was not true in the 1950s and 1960s.[29]

By the early 1970s, study after study surveyed how dams damaged or threatened the environment, including the Ralph Nader study group's *Damming the West*, published in 1973.[30] R. L. Coughlin of the Federal Water Quality Administration observed that "The Bureau of Reclamation is the prime source of water pollution in the far West. They manage their damn reservoirs as if they had blinders on." Critics pointed to massive fish kills in the Snake and the Columbia rivers. It was not just that bureau dams interfered with the spawning of salmon, they interfered with the temperature and oxygen level in water far below the dams. Dams also increased the impact of municipal and industrial wastes by reducing the capacity of rivers to dilute sewage and chemicals. The result was the eutrophication and prolific growth of algae.[31]

Equally important, by the 1970s the West was running out of safe, let alone cost-effective, dam sites. As Marc Reisner put it, "Fontenelle [on the Green River in southwestern Wyoming] was an inferior site compared with Flaming Gorge, as Glen Canyon was inferior to Hoover, as Auburn was vastly inferior to Shasta . . . . [T]he Bureau was now being forced to build on sites it had rejected forty, fifty, or sixty years earlier. It was building on them because while the ideal damsites had rapidly disappeared, the demand for new projects had not."[32]

The Teton Dam was finished during the winter of 1975. It stood 300 feet above the bed of the Teton River–a tributary of the Snake—and stretched nearly 3,000 feet across the canyon. Unfortunately, it was erected in what geologists call a fill valley created by earthquake faults. Three grout curtains were supposed to prevent seepage under and around the dam, but the first leak appeared on June 3, 1976, and two days later the north end of the dam collapsed, sending a 10-foot wall of water down the valley, killing 11 people, leaving 15,000 homeless, drowning 13,000 cattle, and stripping the topsoil from 100,000 acres of prime farmland. In all, the failure of the Teton Dam cost a billion dollars in property damages. An independent study of the disaster concluded that the dam had not been properly designed for its location.[33]

The collapse of Teton Dam had little impact on public works spending for fiscal year 1977. But it came in the wake of other bad news for the Bureau of Reclamation. In August 1975, an earthquake of 5.9 magnitude hit Oroville, California, on a seismic fault thought to be inactive. This raised doubts about the safety of the proposed Auburn Dam above Sacramento, which was also located on or near a supposedly inactive fault. Bureau of Reclamation studies required by the state of California revealed that a complete failure of the Auburn Dam would render 750,000 people homeless, put five military bases out of commission, and destroy the state capital. More than $200 million had been invested in the project when work was halted. The dam was not financially feasible, anyway. The water it stored was expected to cost more than seven

times the price of water from Shasta Dam and more than three times the cost of water from Oroville Dam. Auburn Dam would cost ten times the amount originally authorized by Congress, more than all the money the bureau had spent in California since the 1930s.[34]

Much has been made of President Jimmy Carter's hit list, his abortive attempt in 1977 to limit pork barrel spending on water projects. Carter was a New Democrat, and he came to Washington in the post-Watergate era, a time characterized by public hostility toward the Old Politics and by stagflation–a stagnant economy afflicted with double-digit inflation. Carter promised to cut federal spending and balance the budget. In April 1977, he deleted eighteen water projects from the proposed fiscal year 1978 budget, which had been prepared by President Gerald Ford's administration. A firestorm of criticism erupted in the West, persuading Carter to cut the number in half. This did little to placate those who thought that Congress, not the president, should control the purse strings, and now the environmentalists considered him inconstant and undependable. What hurt Carter most were not the cuts themselves but his inconsistencies. Carter, who owned a family peanut farm in Georgia, supported California Governor Jerry Brown's demand that the 160-acre limitation on the amount of land for which each farmer could receive water from the Bureau of Reclamation be raised to 1,260 acres, and he supported cheap water for one of the West's most heavily subsidized irrigation projects, the Westlands Irrigation District in the San Joaquin Valley. He opposed many new water projects but had little interest in challenging agribusiness.[35]

Jimmy Carter learned his lesson too late. Yet from the perspective of the Bureau of Reclamation, this was much ado about very little. Most of the big projects cut by Carter were Corps of Engineers' schemes. The bureau continued to build water projects into the 1980s, but the last major authorization for a *new* project came in 1968. Long before the collapse of Teton Dam, and long before Jimmy Carter became president, irrigation had begun to move to the center of the country, where dam sites were few. As the flow of surface streams was exhausted, farmers relied more and more heavily on underground water. Underground water was less subject to litigation than surface water, and the supply was more dependable. The Great Plains covered vast pools of water, such as the Oglalla Aquifer, and a new generation of gasoline pumps pulled the water to the surface. Often that water was distributed by center-pivot irrigation systems. By the 1960s and 1970s, most new land opened to irrigation was located in Texas, Nebraska, Colorado, Kansas, and the Dakotas, not in the far West. During the 1970s, California averaged an increase of less than 2 percent per year in irrigated land while the Great Plains averaged nearly 9 percent per year. Put another way, the high plains accounted for 40 percent of the new acreage irrigated in the West between 1945 and 1974. Year by year the water table declined and the cost of pumping the water to the surface increased.[36]

In the new age of scarcity and constraints, officials in the Bureau of Reclama-

tion recognized that the era of the high dam had passed. There was little merit in inventing billions of dollars in new dams and canals when a small fraction of that amount spent on conservation could expand the water supply at far less cost. Lining ditches with concete, using sprinkler and drip irrigation, and carrying water to crops through underground pipes rather than furrows made sense. In any event, when President Ronald Reagan, James Watt, and David Stockman came to Washington in 1981, they demanded that those who benefited from water projects–whether the projects involved navigation, flood control, or irrigation–pay part of the cost. The result was a stalemate, and in the West no major dams were authorized in the 1980s or 1990s. Cost-sharing was a very old idea, an idea which the Bureau of Reclamation had first suggested before World War I, but it never had much support in the West. Although the future of the Bureau of Reclamation was uncertain, the boom years of dam building were clearly over.[37]

Conclusion

Historians often attribute far more power and foresight to the Bureau of Reclamation than it actually exercised. The bureau was as much the captive of events as it was their maker, and it is easy to forget how much was beyond its control. For example, the bureau faced a rapidly changing economy in which agricultural productivity increased far faster than the nation's population. The per-acre yield of wheat more than doubled between 1940 and 1970, and the per-acre yield of potatoes tripled. Put another way, in 1940 one farm worker fed eleven people, but twenty years later he fed twenty-six. Meanwhile, the number of farms declined across the United States, from 6.1 million in 1940 to 3.7 million in 1960, and the average farm size increased from 174 to 302 acres. In 1935, the farm population was 25 percent of the nation's total, and by 1980, less than 3 percent. Rural life was not attractive to most Americans, and for good reason. By 1970 the proportion of rural residents living below the poverty line was twice that of urban dwellers, and in many parts of the nation the family farm had become synonymous with a rural slum. There was less and less justification for reclaiming arid land.[38]

Federal reclamation had been launched with very ambiguous goals, and subsistence agriculture and regional economic development often clashed. By the 1930s, and increasingly during and after World War II, building up the West meant building up the region's cities. Indeed, Bureau of Reclamation water policies gave rural residents plenty of excuses to flee their alfalfa farms for the defense plants of Seattle, Oakland, Portland, or Los Angeles.

This inconsistency in objectives was compounded by the fact that the public's attitudes toward dams changed dramatically from the 1940s to the 1970s. A 1948 article in *Fortune* magazine proclaimed that "When men of future centu-

ries come to examine the artifacts of this age, the great dams will stand as monuments to whatever civilization we have had the wisdom to produce, still delivering their legacies of power to new generations under the sun . . . . [T]he great dams, more than armies, are a big part of the real power of the West."[39] From the 1930s to the 1970s, the vision of the Bureau of Reclamation shifted from the rural to the urban West, from the land to be reclaimed to the dams themselves, and from created homesteads to technology. As dams grew in size, as they became capable of generating ever larger numbers of jobs and greater amounts of power revenue, their story eclipsed the older saga of the transformation of the land. In the 1930s and the 1940s, dams were monuments to the human desire to transcend nature and to escape the unpredictable and the transitory in human lives. By the 1970s, however, they were concrete anchors to the past, reminders of an age of rigid, inflexible, and simple technology, and relics of an age vexed by very different problems from those Americans faced in the 1970s and after. A few, such as Hoover Dam, still inspired awe, but their very size also prompted deep misgivings and dismay. Were these monuments to human ingenuity or to human folly?

It was not just the dams that came into question, so did the men who built them. By the late 1960s, engineers were no longer the statesmen of progress they had been in 1902 or 1950. The war in Vietnam undermined faith in "the experts," and engineers were the quintessential experts. Americans had always exhibited a naive faith in technology and the ability of technology to solve human problems. But no amount of technology seemed able to win the Vietnam War, and no amount of technology seemed able to provide the West with an unlimited supply of water. In the 1970s, Americans were afflicted by a growing sense of scarcity—scarcity ranging from long lines at the gasoline pumps during the Arab oil embargo to tight money in Congress. Big water projects were one of the casualties of the new age of limits.

The political context also changed. Congress generally lumped water projects together in a single bill, making it difficult for representatives and senators to oppose bad projects because a vote against one was a vote against all. And when an omnibus bill landed on the president's desk, he had the same choice: Take all or none. The success of these bills depended on the strength of the "iron triangles" that drafted them, the iron triangles being alliances among federal bureaus, local interest groups, and congressional committees that permit the triumph of public works projects that enjoy little widespread support. This explanation suggests that ideology and differences between the two major political parties played little part in the history of the Bureau of Reclamation. A powerful combination of real estate speculators, private construction companies, industrialists, and agribusiness interests pushed the water projects through Congress.

The iron triangle is at best a partial explanation of why the Bureau of Reclamation built so many water projects after World War II. Prior to the New Deal,

the region's population was small and the midwestern farm bloc successfully resisted any expansion of federal reclamation. Between the 1920s and 1950s, however, the power of the old agricultural states in Congress declined dramatically, as did the power of the Department of Agriculture to resist the expanding authority of the Department of the Interior, which was home to the Bureau of Reclamation. This, as well as the growing wealth of the United States after World War II, counted for more than iron triangles.

Seniority in Congress, the flamboyant personalities of such bureau leaders as Michael Straus and Floyd Dominy, and a new generation of presidents who practiced the politics of fiscal constraint were also important. The West, like the South, returned many of its politicians to office term after term, giving them seniority on key congressional committees. As mentioned earlier, Carl Hayden was particularly powerful as chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee. And both Straus and Dominy were larger than life. "I became Reclamation," Dominy once observed, "and I'm proud as hell of the fact that for 13 years I ran the damn place. And I was running it long before that, but they wouldn't admit it." Dominy was not an engineer, but he was a politician–one with incredible personal magnetism and boldness. Finally, in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s presidents tripped the balance against new water projects despite considerable support for those projects within Congress. Presidents do matter, and no president since the mid-1970s has been a fan of water projects.[40]

Who knows what the future holds for the Bureau of Reclamation? Will we enter an era of green pork, as the bureau attempts to carry out its new conservation agenda? Will cleaning up selenium and other dangerous by-products of irrigation give the bureau a new mission? Or building new dams to replace unsafe ones? Or tearing down dams? Will the bureau be able to live in harmony with western environmental groups? Who knows? But one thing is certain: Water will remain the most important public policy issue in the West. The trends seem inexorable. Phoenix and Las Vegas model their futures on Los Angeles, and more and more the region is characterized by what Gerald Nash once called urban oases. The Bureau of Reclamation was created to decentralize America, but most of the nation's fastest growing cities are in the West. The bureau may no longer be the force in western politics it was in 1950 or 1960, but its legacy is enormous.

Lahontan Dam, Fallon Nevada, completed 1914. *(Nevada Historical Society)*

Notes

[1]Bureau of Reclamation "Fact Sheet," 23 August 2000, *www.usbr.gov.* On the same website, see the bureau's annual report for 1998. The most complete statistical compilation of Bureau of Reclamation activities is the Department of the Interior's *1992 Summary Statistics: Water, Land, and Related Data* (Denver: U.S. Department of the Interior, n.d.). My thanks to Brit Storey, senior historian of the Bureau of Reclamation, who kindly provided me with additional data on the bureau's recent activities.

[2]Marc Reisner, *Cadillac Desert: The American West and Its Disappearing Water* (New York:Viking, 1986). Two other histories of water in the West merit mention, Donald Worster's *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity, and the Growth of the American West* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), and Daniel McCool, *Command of the Waters: Iron Triangles, Federal Water Development, and Indian Water* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

[3]The most dispassionate and reliable survey of federal reclamation is still Paul Wallace Gates's "Reclamation of the Arid Lands," in his *History of Public Land Law Development* (New York: Arno Press, 1979), 635-98.

[4]Bernard DeVoto, "The Easy Chair," *Harper's Magazine*, 188 (March 1944), 345; "Basis for Postwar Planning: One-Fifth of a Nation Government Owned," *Business Week*, 720 (19 June 1943), 57-58; Stuart Chase, "Big Government," *Survey Graphic*, 33 (December 1944), 487.

[5]*Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1945* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1945), xii-xiii; *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior, Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1948* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1948), 3-4, 14.

[6]Gilbert C. Fite, *American Farmers: The New Minority* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), 80; Donald E. Green, *Land of the Underground Rain: Irrigation on the Texas High Plains. 1910-1970* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1973), 146; *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1944* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1944), 10; *Annual Report of the Secretary* (1945), 7.

[7]Wayne Whittaker, "Power for Our Western Empire," *Popular Mechanics*, 82 (September 1944), 18-25.

[8]Reisner, *Cadillac Desert*, 169-70; *Annual Report of the Secretary* (1948), 52; *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior, Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1951* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1951), iv-vi.

[9]Willard R. Espy, "Dams for the Floods of War," *New York Times Magazine*, (27 October 1946), 12-13, 56-58; *Annual Report of the Secretary* (1945), 36-37.

[10]*Annual Report of the Secretary* (1951), xxxix; *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior. Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1952* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1952), 15, 22-23.

[11]*Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior, Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1946* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1946), 57.

[12]Goodrich W. Lineweaver, "The Human Side," *Reclamation Era*, 32 (May 1946), 110; John R. Murdock, "Veterans—Here's Your Farm," *ibid.*, 95-96; "Return of the Homesteader," *ibid.*, 32 (July 1946), 149-50.

[13]The Public Works Administration had constructed Grand Coulee Dam during the 1930s, but in that decade there was no demand for irrigated land in the Pacific Northwest and markets for hydroelectric power were limited.

[14]Paul C. Pitzer, *Grand Coulee: Harnessing a Dream* (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1994), 176-87, 287-88, 298-99, 315, 327, 329, 365-67. The quoted material appears on page 367. Also see Alfred R. Golze, *Reclamation in the United States* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1952), 176-87. On postwar enthusiasm for the Columbia Basin Project see "Columbia Basin Reclamation," *New Republic*, 113 (13 August 1945), 145; Rafe Gibbs, "Million-Acre Boom," *Collier's*, 119 (1 March 1947), 14-15, 58.

[15]*Annual Report of the Secretary* (1946), 4-5; Golze, *Reclamation in the United States*, 369-72; Pitzer, *Grand Coulee*, 308.

[16]On river-basin authorities after the war, see Donald J. Pisani, "Federal Water Policy and the Rural West," in *The Rural West since World War II*, R. Douglas Hurt, ed. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 120-27. Also see Elmo Richardson, *Dams, Parks, and Politics: Resource Development and Preservation in the Truman-Eisenhower Era* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky,

1973); Henry Hart, *The Dark Missouri* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957); Marian E. Ridgeway, *The Missouri Basin's Pick-Sloan Plan* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1955).

[17]Charles Coate, "'The New School of Thought': Reclamation and the Fair Deal, 1945-1953," *Journal of the West*, 22 (April 1983), 58-63; Clayton R. Koppes, "Public Water, Private Land: Origins of the Acreage Limitation Controversy, 1933-1953," *Pacific Historical Review*, 47 (November 1978), 607-36; Joseph Kinsey Howard, "Golden River: What's to Be Done about the Missouri?" *Harper's Magazine*, 190 (May 1945), 522.

[18]Reisner, *Cadillac Desert*, 13, 284-88.

[19]Reisner, *Cadillac Desert*, 300-16; Dennis Hanson, "Pumping Billions into the Desert," *Audubon Magazine*, 79 (May 1977), 133-45.

[20]See, for example, the following articles in *Living Wilderness*: Laurette S. Collier, "Congress and Jackson Hole Monument," 10 (February 1945), 28-31; Bernard Frank, "The Wilderness: A Major Water Resource," 11 (June 1946), 5-16; "The Lake Solitude Case," 13 (Spring 1948), 15-25; "News Items of Interest," 13 (Summer 1948), 24-29. Also see Bernard DeVoto, "Shall We Let Them Ruin Our National Parks?" *Saturday Evening Post*, 223 (22 July 1950), 17-19, 42-48.

[21]Mark W. T. Harvey, *A Symbol of Wilderness: Echo Park and the American Conservation Movement* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994).

[22]Samuel P. Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955-1985* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); *idem*, "Three Decades of Environmental Politics: The Historical Context," in *Government and Environmental Politics: Essays on Historical Developments since World War II*, Michael J. Lacey, ed.(Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 19-79.

[23]Tim Palmer, *Endangered Rivers and the Conservation Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 138, 147.

[24]Palmer, *Endangered Rivers*, 182-83.

[25]Kenneth D. Frederick, "Irrigation and the Future of American Agriculture," in *The Future of American Agriculture as a Strategic Resource*, Sandra S. Batie and Robert G. Healy, eds. (Washington, D.C.: The Conservation Foundation, 1980), 165, 187.

[26]Richard L. Berkman and W. Kip Viscusi, *Damming the West* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1973), 15.

[27]Berkman and Viscusi, *Damming the West*, 79; *Annual Report of the Secretary* (1944), 4; *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior, Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1949* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1949); "Time to Modernize," *Reclamation Era*, 32 (December 1946), 279-80.

[28]Worster, *Rivers of Empire*, 292-94; Reisner, *Cadillac Desert*, 501-02.

[29]"Dams," *Sierra Club Bulletin*, 33 (June 1948), 4; David Brower, "To Dam or Not to Dam," *Sierra Club Bulletin*, 33 (September-October 1948), 3-4; Ginny Wood Hill, "Rampart—Foolish Dam," *Living Wilderness*, 29 (Spring 1965), 3-7.

[30]See note 26 above. Palmer, *Endangered Rivers*, 132. For a good summary of the environmental problems caused or exacerbated by water projects, see Worster, *Rivers of Empire*, 317-26.

[31]Berkman and Viscusi, *Damming the West*, 29, 31.

[32]Reisner, *Cadillac Desert*, 396-97.

[33]Dorothy Gallagher, "The Collapse of the Great Teton Dam," *New York Times Magazine* (19 September 1976), 16; George Laycock, "A Dam Is Not Difficult to Build Unless It Is in the Wrong Place," *Audubon Magazine*, 78 (November 1976), 132-35; *Business Week* (24 January 1977), 21-22.

[34]Palmer, *Endangered Rivers*, 116.

[35]In 1982, the 160-acre restriction was raised to 960 acres and the landowner was allowed to lease any amount of land if he or she paid interest on the per-acre charge for construction. See Worster, *Rivers of Empire*, 300-02.

[36]Gates, *History of Public Land Law Development*, 698; John Opie, *The Law of the Land: Two Hundred Years of American Farmland Policy* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 119; Frederick, "Irrigation and the Future of American Agriculture," 160-61, 170.

[37]Daniel McCool, "Water Welfare and the New Politics of Water: The Era of Water Welfare," *Halcyon*, 14 (1992), 98-99.

[38]Willard W. Cochrane, *The Development of American Agriculture: A Historical Analysis* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979), 128; Fite, *American Farmers*, 101, 115, 234; Earl 0. Heady *et al. Roots of the Farm Problem: Changing Technology, Changing Capital Use, Changing Labor*

Needs (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1965), 10, 20-21; Stanley Andrews, *The Farmer's Dilemma* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1961), 9, 158.

[39]"Power of the West," *Fortune*, 37 (January 1948), 98.

[40]Hanson, "Pumping Billions into the Desert," 136.

[41]Gerald Nash, *The American West in the Twentieth Century: A Short History of an Urban Oasis* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973).

Notes and Documents

Nevada: Prisms and Perspectives

PETER L. BANDURRAGA

The new permanent exhibition in the Wilbur S. Shepperson Gallery at the Nevada Historical Society, *Nevada: Prisms and Perspectives*, is now complete and open for visitors and students. Using unique elements from the Historical Society's artifact, photography, map, and print collections, the exhibition tells five stories about life in the Silver State and how Nevada society has come to its present state: "Living on the Land," "Riches from the Earth," "Passing Through," "Neon Nights," and "Federal Presence." The new show takes a very different approach from the previous show that was in the old gallery for nearly twenty-five years, an approach that incorporates new research and new historical thinking. The old show, mostly photography and text, with some artifacts and prints, recounted a political narrative of the early events in the state's life. The new show uses artifacts, photographs, maps, and prints to show how people lived and what they did in various ways, from the earliest days of human habitation in Nevada to the present.

The Historical Society was fortunate to receive a substantial capital improvement allocation of over $1 million from the 1997 session of the Nevada Legislature. Most of the funds went toward remodeling and renovating the 1968 museum and library building, which was reopened in April 1999. The Board of Museums and History, which manages the private funds for all the museums in the Division of Museums and History in the Nevada Department of Museums, Library, and Arts, allocated an additional $100,000 from Historical Society reserves to bring the total exhibition budget to $250,000. Historical Society staff provided curatorial and interpretative expertise, which saved $50,000. Howard Schureman and Associates of Riverside, California, was chosen to do

Peter L. Bandurraga is the director of the Nevada Historical Society in Reno, Nevada and served as chief curator for the design and installation of the permanent exhibition in the newly remodeled Shepperson Gallery. The next major exhibition project for the Nevada Historical Society is an installation in the lobby of the Virginia Hotel in downtown Reno, scheduled to open in the spring of 2001.

the exhibition design, and Gyford Productions of Reno did the fabrication and installation. James Mickey of Worth Group Architects of Reno had done the overall redesign, and construction was done by F. Evans Contractors of Sparks. This was a project of the Nevada Public Works Board, with Craig DeFriez serving as the project engineer.

Living on the Land

Although the land of the eastern Sierra Nevada and the Great Basin appears to be a harsh place, people have been taking their living from the land here for over 10,000 years. From the earliest times, Native Nevadans learned to live lightly on the land. To illustrate this idea, the exhibition opens with a 1,500-year old sagebrush hat and an atlatl (a precursor to the bow and arrow) with darts from Lovelock Cave that is even older. About 1,000 years ago the Anazazi built adobe towns and farmed the rich bottom lands of the Virgin and Muddy river valleys. Four pots recovered from the Lost City area of southern Nevada illustrate the high level of culture the Anazazi attained, and four southwestern pots suggest the idea that the modern Hopi and Zuñi are the descendants of the "Ancient Ones."

More recently, four major groups have occupied what is now Nevada. The Washoe are in the corner around Lake Tahoe, the center of their spiritual world. The Northern Paiute range stretches into what is now Oregon and Idaho, and to the southwest toward the Owens Valley. To the east, the Western Shoshone fill the middle section, and the Southern Paiute range includes parts of Nevada and Utah. All four groups are represented by particularly fine baskets and other artifacts, including the wickiup built by Paiute Wuzzi George and anthropologist Peg Wheat for the Historical Society in 1968.

When Euroamericans began arriving in the Great Basin in the 1820s, they first sought wealth in the form of beaver pelts to be used in the making of fashionable hats. As some came to stay, they turned to farming and ranching. By the last part of the century, traditional Native American life was no longer possible in Nevada, and many of the state's indigenous inhabitants turned to the new ranches and towns for jobs. Some women adapted ancient arts to new markets. Most notable of these was the Washoe basketmaker Dat-so-la-lee. The Historical Society is fortunate to have ten examples of her art from the Abraham and Amy Cohn Collection.

Today ranching and farming continue to prosper in Nevada. Although most of the Silver State's towns were founded to support mining or transportation, some have always been agricultural centers as well. Today, in addition to dairy and meat and wool, Nevada's ranchers and farmers produce alfalfa, garlic, potatoes, and onions.

Riches from the Earth

The Great Basin has been the source of fabulous mineral wealth for thousands of years. From the earliest times Native Nevadans mined salt and turquoise. More recently, prospectors and soldiers heading back east from the Mexican-American War and the first wave of the California Gold Rush found traces of the yellow metal in streams on the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada. Real excitement began in 1859, when placer miners panning the streams of Gold Canyon in the Virginia Mountains discovered that the blue clay that had been seen as a nuisance was really remarkably rich silver ore.

The "Rush to Washoe" brought thousands of '49ers flocking in the renewed hope of finding their fortunes. Mining in Nevada was different than in California, however, and it soon became apparent that large amounts of capital and new technology were going to be needed to extract the silver from the Comstock Lode. A wonderful set of lithographs taken from a Gould & Curry illustrated prospectus of the territorial period shows the mining and milling process on the Comstock Lode from start to finish. At the same time, new cities—Virginia City, Gold Hill, Silver City—were built to house, feed, and entertain the thousands of miners and their families who came to work in the mines. Owners and speculators got rich, everyone else worked for wages, good wages of $4 per day, but wages nonetheless.

Mining brought modern American civilization to Nevada. Comstock Lode silver and gold built the stock exchange in San Francisco, helped pay for the Civil War and fostered statehood for Nevada. A poignant reminder of the Civil War era occupies a place of honor in the gallery; it is the fifty pound sack of flour Ruel Gridley took from the lonely camp of Austin to towns all over Nevada and California, raising hundreds of thousands of dollars for the Sanitary Commission, the nineteenth-century precursor of the Red Cross. All over the state—from Treasure Hill to Eureka to Austin to Belmont to Candelaria to Columbia to El Dorado Canyon—mining camps boomed, grew into instant cities, and then went bust, sometimes in the space of a few months. Men and women from all the continents of the earth came to make their fortunes; the fortunate made a living. With easy access to wealth, railroads, the telegraph, they could be part of the nation and acquire all of the new products that were coming out of industrial America. In the gallery a general store displays luxury goods and household items alike, all purchased and used in Nevada's towns. The boom did not last, however, and for over twenty years, there was nothing, the people left, the state almost blew away.

In 1902 Tonopah in central Nevada suddenly boomed, followed in a few years by even more fabulous Goldfield. About the same time, large-scale copper mining started in White Pine County. Since then, mining has continued to be an important element in Nevada's economy. Today the Silver State is the largest gold-producer in the nation, and many industrial minerals are pulled from the earth.

Passing Through

People have been getting across what is now Nevada, on their way to somewhere else, for decades. Interstate 80, in fact, which is just about a mile south of the Historical Society, is the latest version of U.S. 40, which was the Victory Highway, which was built along the route of the Central Pacific end of the transcontinental railroad, which was laid along the path of the old wagon road the Donner Party took to get to California, which was also the route into the Sierra Nevada which took John C. Frémont and his party to Lake Tahoe, which was the path the Washoes used to move into the mountains from the north for the summer season. East of Reno and the Forty-Mile Desert, this modern superhighway follows the old Humboldt River route that brought so many pioneers to the Far West. The Historical Society is blessed with a marvelous collection of maps and prints to document the exploration of the Great Basin and the development of various ways of passing through. A few maps and prints at a time are in the case of drawers in the gallery, to be viewed by the public, and on the north wall is an 1823 map of the United States which depicts the Great Basin as a great blank except for the mythical San Buenaventura River, that was supposed to connect the Great Salt Lake with San Francisco Bay.

Nevada has always been on the way to somewhere else. For most of history, people walked on their own two feet to pass through. In the second quarter of the nineteenth century, however, Euroamericans from east of the Mississippi River and south of the Colorado River came in on horseback, using horses, mules and oxen to haul wagons. With the introduction of wheeled vehicles, it became necessary to lay out and maintain roads, not just trails. Freight and stage coach lines grew up in the 1860s to service the many mining camps that were spread across the Great Basin. Perhaps the most famous freighting operations in all of the West were the twenty-mule teams that hauled borax from Death Valley. At the entrance to "Passing Through" is a model of a twenty-mule team that came from the San Francisco office of Borax Smith, the developer of the industry.

In 1867 the Central Pacific Railroad laid the first track, down from the Sierra Nevada into the Truckee Meadows, on the way to linking the transcontinental railway with the Union Pacific at Promontory Point in Utah in 1869. It was not long before a number of short-line railroads, including the Virginia & Truckee and the Carson & Colorado, were built to link various towns in Nevada with the main line.

By the 1880s, bicycling was on its way to becoming a national craze, and the first true highways were laid out to provide safe cycling. The penny-farthing bicycle that has delighted visitors to the Historical Society for decades returns to permanent display, along with trophies and memorabilia from the Reno Wheelmen, the cycling club that became the preeminent social organization in the state in the early part of the twentieth century. On the other hand, the new

mining camps of Tonopah and Goldfield, shortly after the turn of the twentieth century, benefitted from a growing number of automobiles, which in turn opened up the tourism market for Nevada after World War II. In the 1920s the federal government pioneered air mail routes across Nevada, and commercial aviation eventually grew to be a giant.

Neon Nights

Nevada is known around the world as a land of enchantment, offering fun, food, and instant fortune. It's the place to go to do things you shouldn't do at home. And that doesn't mean just gambling. The Corbett-Fitzsimmons championship boxing match in 1897 was the first time Nevada attracted national attention for allowing an event that was illegal everywhere else. About the same time, the state's liberal residency laws (six weeks eventually) began attracting the attention of unhappy husbands and wives, who began to make the trek to Nevada for "Renovation," easy divorce and, sometimes, a quick marriage. Hotels, dude ranches, boarding houses, casinos, bars and restaurants met the challenge of increased traffic through the 1920s. Casino gambling was sanctioned by the legislature in 1931 as a business move, designed to protect and bolster the tourist trade in the face of the Depression.

The early casinos in both Reno and Las Vegas were dark and smoky dives where no good woman would be seen. As soldiers and sailors came through Nevada on the way to the Pacific Coast during World War II, a new prosperity hit the clubs and they began to expand and improve. With the wildcat growth of California after the war, the markets north and south all took off and the clubs went right along. Spurred by the money to be made, the new clubs developed new looks, and neon became an art form in Nevada. The sign from the old "Phone Booth" on First Street in Reno now graces the gallery. In Reno growth meant bigger and better, with expansion soon coming on the south shore of nearby Lake Tahoe. In Las Vegas the new clubs were built out of the downtown, on the Los Angeles highway, which became the "Strip." The old sawdust joints gave way to luxury resorts built by California's hottest architects and displaying the most fantastic themes.

Federal Presence

Although Nevada is the seventh largest state in the Union, the federal government owns 87 percent of the land. That simple fact has made the federal presence central to the development of the Silver State in the twentieth century. A large USGS map at the beginning of this section of the gallery points out exactly which federal agencies own what parts of Nevada.

It is a little known fact that federal reclamation programs had their start in Nevada with the Newlands Project in 1902, which took water from the Carson and Truckee rivers to make the desert around Fallon bloom. The fact that the Paiute fishery at Pyramid Lake was hurt in the process has led to the longest-running federal law suit in history, still unresolved. The construction of Hoover Dam (1931-1935) on the Colorado River brought abundant water and electrical power to Clark County in the south and sparked the transformation of Las Vegas from a division point on the railroad into a vast playground for adults and one of the fastest growing cities in the country.

With World War II came thousands of men and women in the military services, passing through Nevada and staying to work in defense industries. Huge military bases sprouted up throughout the state. After the war, the testing of nuclear bombs spurred further growth. Even today, after the testing has ended, Nevada is facing federal pressure to become the storehouse for the nation's nuclear waste. Not only is the federal government Nevada's primary landlord, federal policies and actions have had a great impact on the Silver State's growth and development.

Conclusion

It is impossible, in just a few pages, to do justice to the new gallery, especially the hundreds of photographs from the Historical Society's collections that fill the walls. The only way to savor the experience fully is to visit the new exhibition and walk through the galleries. All are invited. We hope you come as often as you can and spend time with our state's heritage.

Book Reviews

Mountain City, by Gregory Martin (New York: North Point Press [Farrar, Straus, and Giroux] 2000)

When someone in another part of the country thinks of Nevada, the image that most likely comes to mind is the Las Vegas Strip, drenched in neon, fannypacking tourists crowding the sidewalks, gawking at the mock Lady Liberty or the half-size Eiffel Tower.

But Las Vegas and Nevada are very different things. Nevada isn't about big cities, for one thing. And it is not really about casinos, either. Nevada is about surviving in a harsh environment. It is about small towns that barely have a reason to exist, except to provide provisions for the ranchers and miners who scratch out a life in the unforgiving Great Basin.

And while tens of millions of people visit Las Vegas each year, they spend little, if any, time outside the city. After all, what does Nevada have to offer when every modern distraction is readily available in Las Vegas?

Gregory Martin sees things differently. He has devoted a good portion of his life to Nevada, although he has never been a permanent resident. He is constantly drawn to a tiny, dying town in northeast Nevada called Mountain City.

Martin has family there, which is the main attraction, but his *Mountain City* makes it clear that he is also fascinated by the pace, people, and history of this quintessential Nevada town.

Mountain City is about as remote as remote gets. It is eighty-four miles north of Elko, not far from the Idaho border. It is the last vestige of boom-and-bust copper mining in the area dating to 1869. At one time, thousands of people lived in Mountain City, but those days are long gone.

The lives of its thirty-three remaining residents bear little resemblance to the typical on-the-edge, on-the-go urban dweller. It is an enviable simpler life, one in which an evening walk or a well-told story can be a day's highlight.

Martin's story revolves around Tremewan's Store, one of just seven commercial establishments in Mountain City. The store has been owned and operated for decades by Martin's grandparents and his aunt and uncle. It's the community gathering place for Mountain City residents, as well as people living in outlying areas, including the nearby Duck Valley Indian Reservation.

Tremewan's has to be one of the last places in America that allows people to keep a tab. Regular customers pay their bills once a month.

The star of Martin's book is his Uncle Mel, who came from the Basque Country at age fourteen to herd sheep in northern Nevada. He is an extrovert who is

a funny and captivating storyteller, even though he tells the same stories and jokes again and again. Martin writes:

> My uncle Mel has a Basco joke for nearly every occasion, and he tells them so often that they become highly refined. The store's five cramped, overcrowded aisles are decorated with evidence of his sense of humor. Mounted on a wall above a rack of bright orange clothes is a camouflage cap with a set of antlers growing out its top: BASCO HUNTING HAT. Hanging from a hook next to a few gardening tools is a plastic bag full of Cheerios: BASCO DONUT SEEDS. On another hook above the bread and pastries, the looped plastic off a six-pack of beer is stapled to the end of a wooden ruler: BASCO FLYSWATTER. (p. 5)

Mel's been working in the store six days a week, ten hours a day for forty years. He's tired, ready to do something different, but is trapped by a routine that he has made as pleasant as possible by finding humor in the mundane and joy in human interaction. As a result, his talk of retirement isn't convincing.

And while it has many light moments, *Mountain City* is much more tragedy than comedy. It is really an elegy for the town, whose residents are dying and aren't being replaced.

> There are no young couples, no young families, in *Mountain City* who could take over the store, because there are no young couples and no young families in Mountain City. There is no one in their 30s. Mitch, at 40, is his decade's only representative. Graham and I are the only ones in our 20s, and we come and go. There is no one to wait for either, no heirs, no successors. There are no children in Mountain City. No teenagers, no toddlers. (p. 130)

Martin's spare, unsentimental prose is a refreshing respite from the glut of irony and cleverness in today's media-drenched world. His detailed portraits of the town's characters are sarcasm-free. His style owes much to Hemingway and Carver, though a more relevant reference point would be Bob Laxalt, one of Nevada's great writers, who has similarly chronicled the lives of the state's salt-of-the-earth denizens.

Perhaps the book's only drawback is Martin's reluctance to reveal more of himself. We learn nothing about his life outside Mountain City (the book jacket reveals that he lives in Seattle). We learn almost nothing about his parents (his mother is a college professor somewhere). Although Martin has purposely avoided elaborating on these points, choosing to focus on Mountain City's inhabitants, we finish the book feeling that some things are missing. It is a rare instance of a book that might have benefited from a bit more heft.

That said, *Mountain City* is a small gem of a book, elegantly documenting a dying way of life. Martin clearly is saddened by Mountain City's slow demise, and so should we all.

Geoff Schumacher
Las Vegas, Nevada

In Nevada: The Land, the People, God, and Chance, by David Thomson (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1999)

This is a wonderful book and perhaps the best interpretive history of Nevada we have to date, certainly the best since Richard Lillard's *Desert Challenge* which appeared in 1942. David Thomson is a new name to Nevada historiography, although he is a well known author on film, writing biographies of David A. Selznick and Orson Welles among other works. So what does this *parvenu* have to say about the Nevada experience? Plenty, in this rich, evocative volume. There are several dominating themes:

First, the author loves Nevada, especially the vast, empty spaces of the state. "I am going north again-the way I began this book," he says in his closing. "But farther this time, past Gerlach, all the way to the straight line of Nevada's northern border. It is the part of the state I love the most, the part I see when anyone says 'Nevada.'" (p.299) So what does Thomson love about it? Well, to begin with, its emptiness and its aloneness; its awesome, stark beauty, its sense of space, its peculiar light, and its feeling of timelessness. He loves this aspect of Nevada for its romance, but, more than that, as something he finds spiritually satisfying. It is the world without the imprint of man; its unproductiveness and its desolation repel visitation, and yet is alluring to the author.

A different part of the Nevada experience is something which the author clearly abhors, and that is the development of reckless, out-of-control technology which gave the nation the atomic bomb, and which, during the 1950s and 1960s, led to incessant testing in the Nevada desert. On this point Thomson is passionate. According to him, the ensuing radioactive fallout left a permanent blight on people living on the leeward side of the blasts. His very full discussion on atomic bomb testing goes back, somewhat gratuitously, to the creation of the Manhattan project in 1942 and the decision by President Harry Truman to drop the bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. When various atomic test sites were investigated, "Nevada was chosen. And it is still America's favorite dead ground." (p.227)

If, indeed, Nevada is the testing ground for new things and ideas, and if the testing for weapons is indisputably destructive, at least to Thomson, might there be some compensation in the state as a testing ground for "new social ideas," such as gambling which led to the development of the Las Vegas area and has so dominated recent Nevada history? In this area one might expect that a film critic give a rapturous commentary, but Thomson is clearly ambivalent toward Nevada's "peculiar institution." "Can there be community and purpose if you encourage things deep in human nature yet supposedly alien to order and togetherness? Do we need to find out?"(p.62) Maybe so, and the effort is perhaps worth the experiment, but ultimately Las Vegas seems to the author, beyond all its glitz and razzamatazz, rather depressing and boring. "No, there are times when a roomful of slot machines resembles some

photograph of early industrialization-with slaves at the machines, obsessed, deluded, and, above all, lonely." (p.284) His portrayal of Las Vegas is multifaceted; as a place it is both fascinating and dull.

Intertwined with all this, and threading its way through the book, is a rather systematic history of the state. He covers the chief items: the Comstock. George Wingfield and his era, the construction of Hoover Dam, which served as a catalyst for sending Las Vegas on its way, "Hoover Dam is glorious because it lets you know that sometimes mankind can play the great game of creation and look good doing it" (p. 187), and the rise of gambling and Las Vegas. There is much valuable information on the transformation of the gaming industry, yet Thomson uses methods that few conventional historians would dare use. For example, he offers a lengthy and provocative character delineation of George Wingfield based on a single photograph of the young Wingfield (pp. 123-25). The characterization is provocative one can only admire the audacity of an author willing to extract so much from so little, and able to pull it off. The book does have mistakes in it, and better editorial work on the part of the publisher should have caught this, but on the big picture, Thomson is just fine. The historical sections are also, it must be said, well researched at least from the secondary literature.

At the end, he brings his themes of the desolate, timeless landscape and the intrusion of manmade technology together:

> And then from out there, over the crumpled plain of Oregon, looking north, there comes the gong and thud of a sonic boom as some aircraft breaks the sound barrier. The plane is too fast to see. But the sound is slow, grand and sad, like a tree falling, or a cello string bursting-sound unheard by anyone else, maybe. But I am here to hear it and I cannot tell whether-as an omen-it means beginning or end. (p.305)

Each chapter is a discrete essay. Thomson crosscuts between themes, so any given chapter will have two or three rather different themes woven together; it all works quite successfully. Thomson is also a splendid stylist. His views are at times quirky (Is Art Bell really the best known living Nevadan, followed by Andre Agassi?) *In Nevada* is brilliant, evocative, and a bit elusive at times. It's a superb work!

Jerome E. Edwards
University of Nevada, Reno

Mapping the Empty: Eight Artists and Nevada, by William L. Fox (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1999)

If anyone is still laboring under the notion that art arrived in Nevada only with the opening of the celebrated Bellagio Gallery of Fine Arts in the fall of 1998, William Fox's *Mapping the Empty: Eight Artists and Nevada* should go a long way toward dispelling that misconception. Although modest in scale (its dimensions a scant 8.25 by 6.25 inches, and 168 pages), Fox's book is very large in its ambitions: an introduction to the work of eight contemporary artists whose art engages in one form or another with the physical environment of Nevada, it is as well a sustained meditation on the ways in which that art elucidates our relationship to the land and to its history. Written with the layperson rather than the art historian or Western historian in mind, Fox's book might be likened to an ambitious primer intended to acquaint its students with such major concepts as "landscape," "public art," and "abstraction," even as it sketches the biographies of eight very diverse artists, touches on the role institutions from the academy to the marketplace have played in their careers, and explains media, such as assemblage, which might otherwise be unfamiliar to the reader.

Somewhat paradoxically, it is the author's breadth of approach to his subject that makes for both the strengths and the weaknesses of his text. Certainly, it is one of the book's strengths that it reveals the scope and diversity of art-making in Nevada at the end of the twentieth century, including as it does essays dealing with artists who work in a variety of media, ranging from the performances and paintings of Mary Ann Bonjorni to the assemblages of Walter McNamara to the website of Bill Barker. In the process, Fox lays to rest the claim that Nevada is a cultural wasteland, and he does so, moreover, in the form of an elegantly written text that only reaffirms that the refinements of civilization have indeed taken root in the West. On the other hand, the range of ideas with which Fox addresses the works in question is so vast and all inclusive, especially within the context of a text addressed to the layperson, that his points are often insufficiently elaborated or explained; at times, this scattershot approach produces an argument about a work of art that is at best unconvincing, and at worst, completely mystifying, as when, referring to Mary Ann Bonjorni's installation, *Chair House*, he writes: "The content *was* [sic] the content, not just a commentary on the content" (p. 160).

When it comes to meeting its major goals, however, *Mapping the Empty* more than succeeds. Chief among those goals is Fox's desire to make his readers acutely aware of the role that cultural productions such as language and art play in determining the relationship of human beings to that physical environment we designate as "Nevada." Drawing upon the work of cultural geographers such as J. B. Jackson and historians such as Simon Schama (whose recent book *Landscape and Memory* (1995) clearly had an impact on the author's thinking), Fox uses the term "landscape" as a kind of shorthand to indicate the

degree to which individuals actively construct, rather than passively receive, their perceptions of their surrounding environments. With its connotations of creation and convention, of making and memory, "landscape" telegraphs the idea that one's apprehension of the physical environment is never direct and unencumbered, but always mediated, unavoidably inflected by language, both written and visual, and by the myths, prejudices, and ideologies which language articulates. As Fox points out, the Nevada landscape encompasses much more for us than simply that physical entity we know as the Great Basin for it has come to be understood as the West incarnate, its spaces providing the locus for a mythology of individual freedom and untrammeled opportunity. Fox's ultimate goal, however, is not only to make the reader confront the constructs of the Western landscape he or she may carry around unthinkingly, but to re-examine them in the hopes that self-conscious reflection upon how we imagine our landscapes will become the impetus for more responsible action toward the land itself.

As the above might suggest, for Fox the defining feature of life in Nevada is its landscape, and thus his interest in contemporary art in the state focuses on how art participates in the transformation of the land of the Great Basin into the Nevada "landscape." Given that responses of humans to their physical settings are always in flux, in constant negotiation with a physical environment which itself is always changing, the most insightful and engaging essays in his book are those in which art's power to transform land into landscape takes change into account by giving the artwork discussed an historical dimension. In considering the installations and mixed media works of the Reno printmaker, Jim McCormick, for instance, Fox locates the artist's production within a brief history of visual representations of the West which takes as its starting point the maps and other visual imagery engendered by the great government-sponsored surveys of the nineteenth century. Viewed in the light of this lineage, McCormick's installations and mixed media works from the late 1980s and 1990s reveal themselves as self-conscious and self-reflexive responses to this tradition of visual imagery and to the expansionist aims which brought so much of it into being in the first place; composed of grids and survey transits, of fragments of topography and intimations of specific places, the works encourage the viewer to reflect upon the very process of how he perceives the land and the degree to which that process is mediated by both structures of representation and the demands of memory. As insightful as Fox's remarks about McCormick's works appear to be, their credibility is tested by the very small dimensions of the book and the tiny reproductions they mandate; minuscule images of works such as *Moving Heaven and Earth in Fallon* from the *Fallon Intersection* series of 1995 frustrate the viewer's desire to see personally the visual and conceptual complexity of McCormick's collaging of photos, drawings, and commercial paint swatches, as well as to test the validity of Fox's argument that in this series McCormick has brought to the surface the degree

to which perception of land in the West is invariably inflected by issues of politics and property. And, whether intended or not, the irony of the diminuitive scale of the book and the huge size of the state seems to say something about the value that art, is, in fact, accorded within the cultural landscape of Nevada.

If, in his essay on McCormick, Fox emphasizes the self-reflexive dimension which the artist brings to the history of representing the Nevada landscape, the same might be said of his discussion of the paintings of Robert Beckmann, although in this case the history is much more recent and the vision of the Nevada landscape at play that much more disturbing. *The Body of a House*, a series of paintings produced by Beckmann in the early 1990s, owes its genesis to a 1950s Department of Defense film which documented the destruction of a "typical" suburban house in an atomic blast at the Nevada Test Site; choosing a sequence of frames from the film, Beckmann enlarged and projected them, and then set about totally transforming the viewer's relationship to the imagery through his meticulous process of re-presenting them. It is in writing about *The Body of a House* that Fox produces one of the most compelling arguments in his book, an argument that uses the series of paintings as a means of meditating upon the larger question of just what value the medium of painting has to offer viewers at the end of the twentieth century. Following Susan Sontag's contention that photography anaesthetizes viewers against horror and destruction, Fox argues that Beckmann, precisely because he works out of, and against, a technology of reproduction, produces paintings that literally restore viewers to their senses. In his analysis of Beckmann's transformation of film still into painting, a physical re-creation which involves not only the introduction of color, but the lived, temporal experience of the handcrafting of an object, Fox highlights the degree to which painting, anachronistic as it may seem at the beginning of the twenty-first century, restores an emotional, experiential component to the consumption of visual imagery. Living as we do in what has been deemed a "visual culture," one in which we are constantly surrounded by imagery designed to lull us into docile acceptance of the corporate or political promises of the day, paintings such as Beckmann's rouse us out of our complacency—to use Fox's metaphor, they "rescue" us by forcing us to respond actively to their imagery of human potential for self-destruction rather than simply to accept it passively.

Fox's essays on both McCormick and Beckmann underscore not only art's ability to transform land into landscape, but its capacity to make the viewer ponder how that transformation takes place as well, whether it be through the agency of structures of representation such as cartography, or through reproductive technologies that seemingly offer the world up to us effortlessly and without substance. As a result, one of the underlying themes of Fox's book is surely the value art has to offer our culture as we enter the twenty-first century, a subtext which becomes even more explicit when Fox examines a work by the sculptor Michael Heizer from the vantage point of its success as "public art."

Heizer is, without a doubt, the best known of the eight artists Fox discusses in his book, but rather than concentrating upon examples of earth art such as *Double Negative*, which brought Heizer to prominence in the late 1960s, and which literally use the Nevada desert as their medium, Fox chose instead to concentrate upon an example of Heizer's art which fits more readily into traditional categories of art-making—that is, the scupture known as *Perforated Object*, which stands in front of the federal courthouse building in Reno.

As was the case with McCormick and Beckmann, history is an issue in considering Heizer's work of art, for the form of the artist's monumental (approximately 10 by 27 by 3 feet) weathered steel sculpture was inspired by a tiny Mesoamerican horn artifact, discovered by his father, a well-known archaeologist, in the Nevada desert in the 1930s. The concept of change that history is based upon is writ large in *Perforated Object*: a small object produced from organic materials for reasons still unknown today, but more likely than not connected with totemism, has been transformed into a monumental, industrially produced work of art, a category of object which in the late twentieth century is loaded with its own ritualistic connotations. According to Fox's argument, the power of Heizer's work lies in its ability to confront viewers with questions of time—not only the long ago past of the horn artifact when there was no concept of Nevada, let alone a mythology of the West, but the place of its steel counterpart in both the present and the future—and, in the process, provoke them to re-examine their notions of history and the degree to which they are dependent upon context and human agency. And again, according to Fox, it is precisely this provocative quality of the sculpture, its ability to generate open-ended questions regarding time and place, that makes the presence of *Perforated Object* in Nevada a "cause for fierce celebration."

For all Fox's skillful exegesis of the ways in which the work's meanings emerge from the dialogue between Mesoamerican artifact and contemporary sculpture, and for all his eloquent unravelings of the complexity of Heizer's work, at the end of the essay the question still lingers in the reader's mind as to the effectiveness of *Perforated Object* as "public art," especially since this is a question intially raised by the author himself. If, as Fox points out, the success of public art depends ultimately upon the response of the public rather than that of the critic, he fails to address the problems built into the very concept of an art for the "public" at the end of the twentieth century. To speak of an entity known as the public is difficult enough given the diversity and competing interests typical of our social and political life today; throw art into the mix and the potential for problematization only multiplies, considering the variety of needs, desires and wishes, not to mention the differing levels of knowledge and interest, that individuals bring to their experience of art. Given these difficulties, it is not enough to suggest, as Fox seems to do, that simply the presence of a sculpture by an artist of the calibre of Michael Heizer is reason enough for its celebration, for the presence of the work makes a difference only if people

are able to respond to, to engage with, to care about, the works of art that make up their landscape. And it is with regard to his analysis of *Perforated Object* that Fox's disdain, expressed elsewhere in the book, for the elitism of the contemporary art world begins to ring a little hollow; in many ways, what could be more elitist than a work of art which at first glance appears to be simply another variety of large, steel abstraction and which is offered to a public that may have little taste for or knowledge of abstraction in the first place, let alone the various histories that inspired this particular object and that make it so very meaningful within its Nevada context.

If the essays on McCormick, Beckmann, and Heizer are the most successful in the book, that success is not only the product of Fox's marked abilities as a writer and critic but is probably due to the nature of the artworks he is writing about as well—that is, McCormick, Heizer, and Beckmann make the kind of visually and conceptually complex works that demand responsiveness on the part of the viewer, that encourage his or her reaching after insight and understanding. While the other essays in the book raise a whole slew of interesting issues—i.e., the nature and value of abstraction at the end of the twentieth century in the discussion of the paintings and sculpture of Rita Deanin Abbey, the power of the marketplace to define art and determine its value in the discussion of the ceramics of Dennis Parks, the discussion of the critique of capitalism from within practiced by Bill Barker in his website—the artworks which Fox has chosen as their subjects, and, which, after all, are the ostensible topic of the book, are themselves unable to sustain a comparable degree of interest.

Ultimately, however, Fox has produced an admirable introduction to the manifold forms that contemporary art takes in Nevada as well as a cogent analysis of how that art works with and upon our construct of the Nevada landscape. And, in thinking back to how Fox introduces his subject—his concern with the transformation of land into landscape through the agency of art—one is struck by the degree to which his essays reveal that that transformation is so often haunted by the spectre, if not the outright presence, of the United States government: one feels its presence in the dialogue at work between McCormick's assemblages and installations and the representational structures and strategies of government-sponsored surveys as well as in Beckmann's visual and visceral reclamation of the Nevada Test Site, and especially in the role of the General Services Administration acting as patron for *Perforated Object* at the federal courthouse. For all that the myth of the West is based upon the freedom of the individual, in the end, it appears that much of the best art produced in Nevada is art in which the government is involved, one way or another. In a little book, filled with ironies, that is, perhaps, the greatest.

Linda Graham
Community College of Southern Nevada

American Dreamer: A Life of Henry A. Wallace, by John C. Culver and John Hyde (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2000)

John Culver, a five-term representative and then United States senator from Iowa, and John Hyde, former editor and reporter for the *Des Moines Register*, have teamed up to produce what they call the first single comprehensive biography of Henry A. Wallace. In the introductory material, Culver remarks that Wallace was remarkably little known to most people. Yet the authors' acknowledgments list of names of people they interviewed covers a page and their bibliography of books and articles runs to thirteen pages. These sources yielded such a plenitude of information that Culver and Hyde did not find it necessary to make extensive use of the massive collection of Wallace papers available at the University of Iowa and on microfilm. Nor did they seriously examine the equally massive files of the Department of Agriculture for the period of Wallace's tenure as secretary, now in the National Archives, as well as relevant files in other repositories, such as the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park. Nevertheless, Culver and Hyde have produced a well-written, fascinating, study of the nation's greatest secretary of agriculture, one who was that and much more: the creator of one of the earliest statistical laboratories in the United States, a distinguished geneticist who founded a seed company that made him a millionaire many times over, a distinguished farm editor and author of several books and articles designed to influence public opinion primarily during the New Deal years, vice-president of the United States from 1941 to 1945, an occasional mystic, secretary of commerce, and a third-party candidate for the presidency of the United States in 1948, running in opposition to American foreign policy which he believed played a significant role in launching and later escalating the Cold War.

To do all of this and more in one volume no doubt explains why Culver and Hyde could not be comprehensive in their review of Wallace's wide-ranging career of seventy-seven years. Truth to tell, Henry A. Wallace was a genius whose heart and soul were rooted, like those of his father and grandfather, in the rich, loamy black soil of his native Iowa. His broad-gauged inquisitive mind led him to experiment and probe deeply asking questions about agriculture in all its manifold dimensions, and for several years reflecting on mystical ideas that seemed strange to most people partaking of more traditional religious experiences. Yet at the same time he successfully managed the largest department of the federal government with thousands of employees, held important government posts during the World War II years while serving as vice-president, ran for president, etcetera. To many people Wallace appeared shy and aloof. At the same time he was clear and concise in both his speaking and writing and was a master of any topic that commanded his interest.

While he was one of the most important New Dealers, his rural roots grounded in moral values did not make him an attractive figure to most politi-

cal bosses and many urban Americans. Seeking the presidency in 1948 on the Progressive Party ticket, he was given to biblical references while insisting he would not speak before segregated audiences. The fact that he favored a reconciliation of differences with the Soviet Union led President Harry Truman to call for his resignation from his post as secretary of commerce, and gained him the support of the Communist Party and of individuals and organizations in accord with his views. To most Americans, including longtime friends, former associates, and even family members, he was naïve and uncompromising in his refusal to consider suggestions in running his campaign, which he conducted with the zeal of a prophet engaged in a righteous crusade. Particularly interesting and moving is the account of how Wallace stoically faced his impending death from a rare muscular degenerative disease, often called Lou Gehrig's disease.

As suggested above, this reviewer does not consider Culver and Hyde's admirable study a truly comprehensive one. But it is assuredly the best biography of Henry A. Wallace currently available. And it will undoubtedly become the standard study as few scholars will have the interest, energy, time (Culver and Hyde spent a decade on the project), and support to prepare a biography that truly could be called comprehensive.

Richard Lowitt
University of Oklahoma

America's Jeffersonian Experiment: Remaking State Constitutions 1820-1850, by Laura J. Scalia (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1999)

Scalia, an independent scholar of political science, seeks in this work to examine Americans' commitment to popular sovereignty through an analysis of stale constitutions and state constitutional conventions between 1820 and 1850. As she lightly notes, most research has focused on the national Constitution, "a document whose primary concern was never to empower ordinary citizens." Consequently, she argues that although historians, theorists, and political scientists can track the development of early- and mid-nineteenth-century reforms leading to greater popular sovereignty as exemplified by expansions of suffrage and elections, they lack any rationale for understanding and explaining that development. Only by studying reform movements and subsequent constitution making at the state level is it possible to make sense of the power of popular sovereignty in the American mind.

The premise of this book and its title rests upon the disagreement between James Madison and Thomas Jefferson over the reverence to be accorded foundational documents such as constitutions. Madison was adamantly opposed

to frequent revision of constitutions for fear that such tampering would not only engender disrespect for the document and instability for the regime, but, perhaps more important, would affect the security of property rights, Jefferson, conversely, was an advocate of regular scrutiny of constitutions so that they might be made to reflect advances in politics and so that they would be the product of each generation's own mind. Thus, notes Scalia, "Jefferson tipped the scales toward self-government whereas Madison tipped them toward rights."

It is, of course, this dichotomy that has always vexed America's constitution makers, be they national or state. That is, in a democratic society how does one balance popular sovereignty, on the one hand, with certain rights deemed to be untouchable by either legislative or popular majorities on the other? Scholars of the United States Constitution know that Madison clearly won the battle in the creation of that document, representing as it does a triumph of fairly stable, long-term rights protections over self-government. At the state level, however, Scalia argues that Madison's warnings were ignored and, in accordance with Jefferson's admonition, state constitutions were regularly scrutinized, amended, and rewritten between 1790 and 1850.

By way of evaluating the Jeffersonian experiment, as Scalia names it, she examines the debates from ten state constitutional conventions, in seven states, between 1820 and 1850, a period of increased democratization known frequently as the Jacksonian Era. In choosing these states, the author attempts to create as diverse a sample of states as possible: Massachusetts (1820-21), New York (1821, 1846), Virginia (1829-30, 1850-51), North Carolina (1835), Louisiana (1845), Ohio (1850-51), and Iowa (1844, 1846). This collection of states represents a wide array of geographical, political, social, moral, economic, and religious cultures that allow the author to make reasonable generalizations across a broad spectrum of state types. In spite of the diversity and major differences between and among the seven states, Scalia's analysis of the ten constitutional conventions finds a surprisingly significant number of similarities among the debates.

Initially, of course, she found that conventions during this era were typically composed of two major opposing groups: the reformers (or expansionists), who wanted to establish greater popular sovereignty and democracy by relaxing suffrage requirements, making more elective, and apportioning legislative seats more fairly than in the past, and the antireformers (or restrictionists), who feared that such reforms would endanger the rights of property.

Other similarities arose in the constitutional debates over substantive issues, including the origin of rights (ch. 1), popular sovereignty (ch. 2), property (ch. 3), virtue (ch. 4), and good citizenship (ch. 5). In each state and on each issue, unsurprisingly, the expansionists and the restrictionists argued from a particular perspective that, respectively, supported or rejected electoral reforms.

By way of example, we might examine Scalia's conclusions regarding the origin of rights. Although the state conventions debated electoral reforms and not bills of rights, this was a critical issue in their deliberations. Expansionists

and restrictionists generally agreed that certain rights were beyond and above ordinary law; however, they disagreed as to the source of these rights. Because expansionists took a natural-law point of view (that is, that God or nature had bestowed the rights of life, liberty, and property on man and that these rights could not be taken away by man or his government), they believed that these rights would not be endangered by electoral reforms such as expanded suffrage. Restrictionists, on the other hand, took a positivist perspective that concluded that rights derive their legitimacy not from God or nature but from the agreements, traditions, and constitutions of man. Thus, they feared that electoral reforms and the expansion of the franchise to the poor and unpropertied could endanger these rights, especially the right of property.

Scalia's work is incredibly fascinating and indicates an amazing amount of hard work and careful analysis. To her credit, she has sifted through the records of the ten state constitutional conventions and derived from them common themes and the differences of opinion exhibited in them. As one who has only skimmed through the debates of the Nevada conventions of 1863 and 1864, I can praise her for what must be amazing organizational skills and discipline. Since this study started out as a dissertation, one would expect to find extensive references and notes; they are here in abundance and the work is the better for it. It is highly recommended for anyone interested in American political thought, state constitutions, or history and political science more generally.

Although at first blush a review of *America's Jeffersonian Experiment* in the *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* might appear to be misplaced, Scalia's data collection and analysis should certainly be of interest to Nevada students and scholars. The state constitutional conventions she examines occur as little as twelve years before Nevada's own 1863 and 1864 constitutional conventions, and thus her work can provide a framework for analysis of our state's own debates and constitutional provisions. For example, did Nevada's delegates divide along the same expansionist/restrictionist lines as those examined by Scalia? What were their perspectives on the origin of rights, popular sovereignty, property, virtue, and good citizenship, and do they parallel those in Scalia's study? To what extent did the Civil War, occurring as it did between the end of Scalia's study and the Nevada conventions, affect the thinking of Nevada's constitution writers? There is clearly an interesting scholarly project to be done here.

If one believes, as I do, that good scholarly work not only provides information and answers but also stimulates others to engage in additional scholarship utilizing the author's framework in different spheres and circumstances, then *America's Jeffersonian Experiment* is a success on all counts.

Michael W. Bowers
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Nevada 2001: A Photographic Odyssey

Devil's Gate, c. 1889, James H. Crockwell, photographer. In this classic image, a stagecoach and wagon team pose for the photographer in the Devil's Gate, a high-walled section of canyon on the road between Gold Hill and Silver City.

January 19 - April 28, 2001

Changing Gallery, Nevada Historical Society

A photographic survey of Nevada from 1870 to the present.
Including the photography of:

Carlton Watkins
James H. Crockwell
Al Smith
E. W. Smith
P. E. Larson
Northeast Johnson
Roy Curtis
William Cann
Oakes
Don Dondero
Eric Lauritzen
Peter Goin
William Binzer

A seven-part lecture series on photography in Nevada is planned.
Please call the Nevada Historical Society for details

The Nevada Historical Society is located at 1650 North Virginia Street, Reno, Nevada 89503.
The Museum Gallery is open Monday through Saturday, 10:00AM to 5:00PM. Admission is $2.00.
For more information please call 775 688-1191.

Nevada 2001:
A Photographic Odyssey

Lecture Series at the Nevada Historical Society
Thursdays at 7:00pm

February 15, 2001 — Jack Chase:
James H. Crockwell, Images of Nevada, 1885-1891
A leading collector and scholar of Crockwell's work, Jack Chase will discuss his current research.

February 22, 2001 — Peter Palmquist:
Carleton Watkins in Nevada
One of the most respected historians of 19th Century photography in the American West, Peter Palmquist will share his insight and scholarship regarding the work of Carleton Watkins.

March 1, 2001 — Bernadette Franke:
An Overview of the Works of 19th Century Virginia City Photographers
Bernadette Franke will share her insights and research into the 19th Century photographers of Virginia City.

March 15, 2001 — Erik Lauritzen:
Making Light of It
A contemporary photographer and photography historian, Erik Lauritzen will discuss his documentation of the Nevada landscape.

March 29, 2001 — Peter Goin:
Confronting Time With the Landscape
Nevada's best-known contemporary photographer, Peter Goin will talk about his work, which examines the historical impact of humanity on the Western landscape.

April 12, 2001 — William Binzen:
"Azimuth" Mythos, Mortality and the New West
William Binzen, a contemporary photographer, will discuss the interplay between the physical and the human environment that he strives to capture in his work.

April 26, 2001 – Lee Brumbaugh:
Coming Into Its Own: 20th Century Photography in Nevada
Curator of Photography for the Nevada Historical Society, Lee Brumbaugh brings his perspective to the study of photography in Nevada.

This program is made possible in part by a grant from the Nevada Humanities Committee, a state program of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Nevada Historical Society is a part of the Nevada Department of Museums, Library, and Arts.

Nevada Historical Society Membership Information

Memberships help support the costs of special exhibitions, educational projects, and the publication of the *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly.* With your assistance we can continue the excellent work that the community and our visitors expect.

Benefits:

Nevada Historical Society Quarterly.
Free admission to the museum.
Free admission to the Division of Museums and History museums.
10% discount at NHS and divisional gift shops.
10% discount on the purchase of photographs.
10% discount on tours to historic sites.
Special invitations to openings and events.
Advance sales of occasional publications.

My check for membership is enclosed for:

____ Regular	$25	
____ Family	$35	
____ Student	$15	
____ Senior	$15	*(60 and over-no Quarterly)*
____ Sustaining	$50	
____ Contributing	$100	
____ Departmental Fellow	$250	*(receives publications of all divisional museums)*
____ Patron	$500	
____ Benefactor	$1000	
____ Life	$2500	
Corporate		
____ Regular	$250	
____ Contributing	$500	

Contact the Nevada Historical Society at 775 688-1191 for more information.

Nevada Historical Society Quarterly

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.