Nevada

Historical Society Quarterly

Spring 2005

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.

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Nevada
Historical Society Quarterly

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Front Cover: The Wally's World trailer, interior with comfortable chairs with carved magpie by Ray Turek, Eureka. (*Photo by Stephen Davis*)

Wally Cuchine and Me

PETER L. BANDURRAGA

When Jim McCormick first spoke to me about doing an exhibition of Wally Cuchine's art collection at the Nevada Historical Society, I tried to remember when and where I had met Wally. It might have been Wilbur Shepperson who introduced us, or Judy Winzeler. The circumstances undoubtedly had something to do with the Nevada Humanities Committee (as Nevada Humanities was known in those days, the early 'eighties). Frankly, I can't remember. It seems like I've always known Wally, at least for as long as I've been in Nevada, and that's nearly twenty-five years.

Wally is part of the land; he is definitely part of the people. Most of the time it doesn't really matter where I run into him. There he will be, in the middle of the room, laughing and talking with old friends, even if he had just met them. It might be a meeting in Las Vegas, an opening in Carson City, or just an afternoon in the Nevada Historical Society. There's Wally—and we take up from where we left off before.

For the first few years, I seemed to be a kind of godfather for Wally, dispensing free advice when asked and listening to somewhat over-the-edge tales from the life of a peripatetic humanist. Then he began to stay in places for years at a time, places like Ely, and now Eureka. Now we are comrades, ever valiant, ever resilient, in our battles to save a bit of Nevada's heritage.

That's why Wally is so important, why this exhibition and special issue of the *Quarterly* are so important. Wally is sharing with us all the vision he has of Nevada and Nevadans, his adopted land and his adopted people. It's a unique vision, an idiosyncratic one and an original one. You'll like it. I know I do. Please turn the pages and meet my old friend Wally Cuchine.

NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
NEVADA DIVISION OF MUSEUMS AND HISTORY

THE NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Presents the exhibition

WALLY'S WORLD

THE LONELIEST ART COLLECTION IN NEVADA

May 20 – September 24, 2005

Reception:
Friday, May 20, 5:30–7:30 P.M.

In the Entry Gallery:

WALLY CUCHINE AND RURAL NEVADA
PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEPHEN DAVIS

March 20 - August 27, 2005

Photo: Stephen Davis,*The Wally's World trailer, interior with comfortable chairs with carved magpie by Ray Turek, Eureka.*

The Nevada Historical Society is located at 1650 N. Virginia St., Reno, NV 89503.
For more information, please call 755 688-1190.
Galleries are open Monday – Saturday, 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM.
Research Library open Tuesday – Saturday, NOON to 4:00 PM.
Gallery admission: $3.00 for adults, $2.00 for seniors, and free for children under 18.

Wally's World
The Loneliest Art Collection in Nevada

James C. McCormick

In a manner of speaking, I wear my art. It always surrounds me.
Wally Cuchine

The noted American artist Leonard Baskin once suggested that "collecting involves all of the seven deadly sins." If true, Walter Edward Cuchine must surely be one of the most dedicated sinners in the annals of Nevada's visual arts.

From his birth on September 2, 1947, in Bozeman, Montana, Wally Cuchine has followed a serpentine trail on a sometimes burdensome, often rewarding odyssey—arriving fifty-eight years later at his current calling as the unofficial impresario of Eureka, Nevada. Along the way, he has pulled up for varying reasons and periods of time in San Antonio, San Francisco, Puerto Rico, and communities across the length and breadth of Nevada.

Merle Cuchine, Wally's mother, went into labor during a family excursion through Yellowstone National Park. Wally now quips, "I decided to pop my head out" at a hospital in Bozeman, a drive of some eighty miles north of the park. Within a month, the infant had been dropped off in Clancy, Montana, at the home of Harry and Elizabeth Mann, Wally's paternal grandparents, who took care of him for the first five years of his life.

As he started elementary school, it was decided that Wally would stay with his parents in East Helena from September to June, and live with his grandparents on weekends and over the summers. In 1958, when he was eleven, Wally's grandfather passed away, an event that drastically changed the youngster's life. His grandmother suddenly moved to Seattle; he still recalls with some bitterness, "I lost my happy home. I was stuck!" Returning to his parents' home, he remained in an uneasy relationship until graduation from Helena Senior High School in 1966, the same year his parents divorced.

James C. McCormick is a visual artist and professor of art emeritus at the University of Nevada, Reno. He previously curated "Seen About Town: the Art of Lew Hymers" and "A Reunion of Landmarks, the Paintings of Roy Powers" in the Changing Gallery of the Nevada Historical Society.

According to Wally, his older brother, Glen, and his sister, Mona, who is three years his junior, made respectable grades in school. Wally now believes that an undiagnosed case of dyslexia led to the academic straits he faced during his school years. Compounding this is the fact that he does not have stereoptic vision; his eyes do not work in sync. While this condition has never been explained to Wally's satisfaction, he does know his depth perception is impaired and that he has had to compensate for it every day of his life. Back in Helena Senior High School he had to settle for Ds and Fs.

Wally's experiences in public-school art classes were distressing. He recalls a fight with a fellow third grader that ended when Wally stabbed him with a pair of rounded scissors; he was banished from the class by his anguished teacher. Possibly it was Wally's hyperactivity that made drafting classes in seventh and eighth grade an uncomfortable part of his years in junior high school. As is still true today, Wally had difficulty sitting still. Patiently drawing lines and shapes with a sharpened pencil was simply too slow and tedious. The frustration that erupted into misbehavior often prompted his counselors to label Wally an academic misfit. One even told him that he was stupid. For many years, he accepted this judgment as gospel, and behaved accordingly.

Wally contends there was no art in his family's house in East Helena. It was a working-class home. His father, Charlie, had attended public school through the eighth grade; his mother graduated from high school. The daily grind, struggling to provide clothes, food, and a roof overhead, never allowed for frills like pictures on walls.

Wally grew up around miners and mining; his grandfather had been a contract miner, and there were other family members who worked in the industry before him. Wally fondly recalls the times when his grandfather would take him to the mine in which he was working. These excursions must have served to heighten Wally's fascination with geologic and environmental matters, especially when he enrolled years later in Sierra Nevada College, and when he applied for Nevada Humanities Committee residencies in mining towns like Pioche and Ely. To this day, Wally is most at home in rugged desert terrain, with a dry climate, and surrounded by the timber structures that remain in nineteenth century mining towns.

Because of his dysfunctional home life, and especially the strong differences with a father who wanted his younger son to leave, Wally desperately sought the support of others, and found it with Betty and Irving Boettger. The Boettgers had moved to East Helena with their four children when Wally was in his early teens. Mr. and Mrs. B, as he still fondly calls them, welcomed Wally into their comfortable home for extended periods, and, in the process, gave the adolescent his first exposure to original art. Irving's father had been an accomplished artist; their home was a virtual gallery of his watercolor paintings of wildlife. Around 1961, Wally met another generous family. Bob and Margaret Montgomery were quick to sense the problems the youth was having, and they, too,

gave Wally a place to which he could slip away; it is a friendship that continues to this day.

Wally's low ranking in his graduating class did little to encourage him to further his formal education. Bob Montgomery urged him to enlist in the United States Air Force; taking the advice, Wally signed on for a four-year stretch at a recruiting headquarters in Butte in June 1966. Between his enlistment and honorable discharge in 1970, Wally bounced around from base to base taking on a variety of assignments. The Vietnam War was raging, and the chances of ending up in a combat zone overseas remained high during his years of service. Following four weeks of basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Wally was ordered to Colorado for instruction in a nuclear weapons program. Shortly thereafter, he was dispatched to aircraft-maintenance school in Wichita Falls, Texas, for six months, then moved on to Glasgow Air Force Base in, of all places, Montana. He ended his enlistment at Ramey Air Force Base in Puerto Rico, working on and flying in C-47s, the durable two-engine aircraft affectionately known throughout the military as the Goony Bird. From the standpoint of Wally's eventual involvement with the visual arts, the Ramey base seems an unlikely place for this interest to have been advanced. However, he met an airman named George Miller, a painter from upstate New York who was living in the open bay of a nearby barracks. Wally was billeted in a private room. A deal was struck: Wally's room became Miller's painting studio, and in the process, Wally purchased several of Miller's works, the unintentional beginning of an art collection that now numbers in the hundreds.

Following his return to civilian life, Wally settled briefly in Helena, and enrolled in a local aircraft-maintenance school. After deciding that this program was not going to work, he dropped out and in late 1970 hopped a bus for San Francisco. Along the way, he stopped in Reno and visited the Montgomerys, who had moved to Sparks from Helena several years before. Margaret Montgomery assured Wally that if the Bay Area failed to live up to his expectations, he was welcome to return and live in their Sparks home. To the unsophisticated Montanan in his early twenties, San Francisco was not what he had envisioned; he was overwhelmed. After several days, Wally retreated to Nevada, and took the Montgomerys up on their offer of a place to stay. Early in his stay, he applied for a job at the Nevada Club in downtown Reno, and was interviewed by its crusty owner, Lincoln Fitzgerald. Following an on-the-spot math quiz by Fitzgerald, which Wally failed, he vowed he would never work in a casino, a promise he has faithfully kept over his thirty-four years in Nevada.

The path followed by Wally over the next few years gets complicated, and seemingly unrelated to his later involvement with the visual arts. On the other hand, this writer believes the story warrants a brief telling, if for no other reason than to provide the reader with a sense of the events that animated Wally's life before he finally settled into a more predictable, albeit, spirited life in Eureka—seriously collecting art.

Ed Curran became a co-worker and close friend following Wally's employment in the hardware department at Montgomery Ward in Reno. Curran kept bugging Wally to buy a motorcycle. He contended it would provide cheaper transportation and, besides, Curran raced cycles and needed a buddy to go with him to races along the eastern flank of California and across Nevada. Wally remembers that their longest junket was to Baja, Mexico. However, it was another drive, this one to Las Vegas, that made a far deeper impression. It seems that at this juncture in his life, Wally was in search of thrills and spills, exploits he had not undertaken as a youth in Montana, or in the military, for that matter. He bought his first new cycle—a Suzuki 250 dirt bike—quit his job at Montgomery Ward, and headed for Las Vegas.

"Young and cocky" is Wally's description of himself when he arrived in Las Vegas in April of 1972. In the months before leaving Reno, he began associating with a group of older Jesus-type people, mostly defectors from a number of religions, and, as a self-described Bible-thumping true believer, he continued to feed his fervor by joining a younger enclave of Christians in Las Vegas. Occasionally, he traveled to revival concerts across the West, at one point joining the Christian musical ensemble Dove Sounds, and meeting Pat Boone and Andre Crouch along the way. On July 20, Wally was riding his cycle across Las Vegas on his way to work from a Bible study meeting when the driver of the car in front of him abruptly jammed on her brakes, forcing Wally into a violent collision with the bumper. He tumbled out of control down the pavement for some yards, his motorcycle striking five cars before coming to rest. At the hospital he learned from the attending physician that the damage to his leg was sufficient to consider amputation. According to Wally, it was his lack of insurance coverage that saved the shattered leg, and put it in a cast; he was discharged as quickly as the hospital felt it was safe to do so.

This and other serious circumstances involving finances brought Wally to what appears to be the lowest point in his life. Certainly there is little in this part of this essay that foreshadows his eventual role in the arts and cultural life of Nevada.

With a leg that was slow to heal and no job, Wally decided to pull out of Las Vegas. He headed north and landed at Ed Curran's home in Reno. For a time he worked as a housekeeper and nanny for a friend and her children. Curran and his significant other, Hermalene Wick, moved to the north shore of Lake Tahoe in 1974, where Ed joined the staff of a Valley Bank branch, and simultaneously opened a shop featuring an unlikely combination: motorcycles and jewelry. Wally, still unemployed, was invited to join them. Curran sensed Wally's lack of direction and strongly advised him to take advantage of the G. I. Bill and enroll at nearby Sierra Nevada College. For Wally, this suggestion provoked many doubts. He painfully recalled his high-school counselor labeling him as stupid. With his insecurity and a mediocre high-school transcript in hand, Wally applied to the college and was accepted. To his dismay, he was

advised to take three classes: an introductory geology class, meteorology, and a hands-on raku ceramics class. Wally recalls with some pride that he received an A in the two environmental-science classes and a B in raku.

"Off and flying!" is the way Wally describes his mood at the time. With a Pell Grant and the knowledgeable and empowering John James as his primary instructor in the environmental-science program, Wally became absorbed in his academic studies. When he graduated in 1979, this *stupid* one had attained a 3.98 grade point average—with honors. Ironically, that first art class taken back in 1974 played a part in spoiling Wally's chances for a perfect 4.00 grade point average.

About the time Wally was completing his degree at Sierra Nevada College, he purchased an eighteen-foot 1950 Zenith travel trailer, the first in a line of trailers and mobile homes in which he was to live. Since 1978, he has seldom resided in a home that didn't touch the ground with rubber. And the size and floor plan of these trailers often dictated what and how much Wally collected, be it objects of utility, books or works of art.

Wally readily admits he was more than a little cocky following graduation. The conceit that he was going to disdain jobs that were not *"in my field"* led to plenty of waiting around. By late 1979, he had been forced to move his trailer from Lake Tahoe to Golden Valley, north of Reno; he was almost broke and under pressure to find some manner of employment.

It seems to have been typical that when pressed to find employment, Wally most often located jobs via the grapevine—promptings from friends or associates—rather than needing to personally pound the pavement. Such was the case when he caught wind of an opening in October 1979 at the Community Action Center in Hawthorne, Nevada. Wally frankly admits that Karen Wilson, the center manager, was not too impressed with his job experience, but she hired him because he was the only applicant with the academic qualifications; the two agreed to work together on a make-it-up-as-we-go basis. The grant that supported Wally's position lasted until April 1981; he hung around Hawthorne for two more months, unemployed, waiting for something more interesting to develop.

Aerovironment, a firm contracted to collect baseline data on coal-fired power plants throughout the western United States, had set up an office in Eureka, Nevada. Wally was hired to record air quality at the monitoring station in the region. He purchased another travel trailer, this time a twenty-eight-foot Argosy, and wheeled it into Eureka where it and he resided until October 1983. While the job wasn't all that interesting, Wally is quick to admit today that he fell in love with Eureka. He established relationships with local merchants, elected officials, and employees in the courthouse, associations that would be useful when he permanently settled in Eureka some eight years later.

In the meantime, Wally was again faced with an employment dilemma; his job with Aerovironment ended after a year and a half, earlier than anticipated.

Wally's expanding grapevine, represented this time in the person of Mildred Springer in Hawthorne, offered up the possibility that the Nevada Humanities Committee, with an office in Reno, might underwrite a Humanist-in-Residence program through the Mineral County Library. The project seemed made for Wally, and, after some intense negotiations with Wilbur Shepperson, who chaired the committee, he was engaged for the five-month residency.

At this point in the narrative, this writer wishes to break away somewhat from Wally's involvement with the Nevada Humanities Committee—an association that continued through six residencies in five years—and turn his attention to the evolution of Wally's art collection and the alliances and friendships that have developed because of it.

Wally was surprised when he discovered how many visual artists were living in Hawthorne. It is a community that straddles U.S. 95, a major north-south highway through western Nevada. Over the years, Hawthorne's fortunes have depended on the state of the sprawling naval ammunition depot that virtually surrounds it. In the face of transciency and the town's fragile economy, Wally was able to develop sustained relationships with a number of local artists: Colleen Powell, a painter, and Mildred Springer were the driving forces behind the Walker Wassuk Arts Alliance, a consortium of mostly amateur painters that met regularly and, at one time, set up a small gallery in the office of an abandoned filling station. Wally began to buy modest-sized paintings from Powell and Audrey Cooper. He met Shirley Shaft when she moved to town and opened the Desert Images Gallery and Frame Shop. Wally has been a consistent patron of Shaft over the years, and today owns twenty-one of her paintings and etchings, including *Alum Creek* (1984, watercolor, 16" x 10 1/2"). In this watercolor, Shaft focused on a dense grove of evergreens that hovers over a placid creek that meanders through the Wassuk range west of Hawthorne. Here, the artist revealed an eye for the intensity of nature; she heightened the painting's energy, the trees and rocky terrain serving as compositional elements that forcefully issue from the center of the painting.

Living on a shoestring budget that seldom allowed him to purchase a painting priced over $50, Wally gradually covered the walls of his trailer; by the time he left Hawthorne for Fallon and another residency in November 1983, he had enlarged his collection to thirty-five works. Most of these were landscapes purchased from Hawthorne artists, some featuring the skeletal remains of old sheds and mining structures in the region.

The theme of Wally's residency in Fallon was "Shadow Catchers." He had met Sharon Taylor, the director of the Churchill County Museum, when she came to Hawthorne to speak about her research on the history of the nineteenth-century narrow-gauge railroad between Austin and Battle Mountain. For the "Shadow Catchers" project, he and Taylor collaborated, taking oral histories from a number of photographers in Churchill County; the project concluded with a major exhibition in the museum featuring images of people and

sites in the region from 1867 to the present. During his five months in Fallon, Wally made the acquaintance of several photographers: Keith Mulcahy, whose beat was ghost towns and pioneer trails across Nevada, and Mary Foster, who had arrived in Ely in 1922 as a young wife, moved to Fallon in 1933 and opened a commercial photography studio. She closed the business forty-three years later, and, before her death in 1993, at the age of eighty-eight, she gave Wally more than two hundred photographic prints, a few of which he has framed and on display in his Eureka home. During his tenure in Fallon, Wally lived in a small travel trailer that was loaned to him for the duration of the residency, and, again, its size tended to restrict the acquisition of new works for the collection. Wally moved on to another five-month residency in Lovelock in the fall of 1985, during which he purchased few works.

But when Wally arrived in Lincoln County in October 1986, he drastically changed his collecting habits. The communities of Pioche, Panaca, and Caliente, located along a twenty-five-mile stretch of U.S. 93, just west of the Utah border, had distinct histories and survived on differing economies. For Wally, however, there was a common denominator. He suddenly found himself surrounded by artists, and his collection began to grow. He met sixth-grade teacher Brent Perkins, whose deftly rendered watercolors often depicted nonexistent ramshackle buildings. In the case of Perkins's *J. T. Frazier Hotel* (1986, watercolor, 10 1/2" x 13 1/2"), Wally's aquisition of this airy study of an abandoned building was by a gift of Kay Foremaster, a friend and second-grade teacher in the Lincoln County School District. He purchased several of Kay Duffin's watercolors of wildflowers. Friends from Reno days, the mother and daughter Carolyn and Adrian Kershaw, who had initially urged him to conduct a Humanities project in Lincoln County, were an active part of the cluster of artists living in the region. An outdoor art show was held in Caliente each spring. Wally describes it as a clothesline sale, unframed works of art on paper, clipped to a line, and available for sale at ridiculously low prices. While the paintings he purchased at this sale and directly from the artists in Lincoln County reflected Wally's evolving taste in art, as well as his financial situation, they are now relatively minor works when compared to his more adventuresome and astute collecting in recent years—with one exception.

Shortly after settling in Lincoln County, Wally met an interesting couple, Larry and Lorna Williamson; Larry was the art teacher at Lincoln County High School, and Lorna held a bachelor's degree in art from the University of Nevada in Reno and a master's in education from Utah State in Ogden. Their home was a veritable gallery, personal work and images collected from artists they met while Larry was teaching art in the Washoe County School District: a crisp and elegant photograph by Eric Lauritzen, paintings by Craig Sheppard, a ceramic bird by longtime UNR art professor Ed Martinez, and images by other artists whose work Wally himself would later collect.

It was important that Larry Williamson remained an active ceramicist while

teaching, not always an easy thing to do. His manner of working at that time did not yet suggest the wit and agility with materials that characterize his current mixed-media sculpture. Wally likes to accept some credit for the new directions that Williamson's work took. He started taking Williamson with him on anthropological field trips around the region during which they examined petroglyphs and other evidences of prehistoric life. Williamson seemed to have little difficulty incorporating symbols and shapes from these sites into his teapots, cups, and other objects of less utility. His images became livelier—with vaulting animals and guileless human figures stretching or grasping objects, in clay or wood with hair and carved bone affixed. He recently created *Eureka Present: The Angels Wait in Silence, the Deer Graze around. and Wally Descends into His Hot Tub* (2000, mixed media with wood, bone and hair, 21" x 23" x 3"); evokes the prehistoric culture Wally explored with Williamson almost twenty years earlier.

Once again, as Wally's mission in Lincoln County ended, he found himself waiting—but not for long. A phone call came from archeologist Barry Price in Ely; Price approached Wally about becoming a Humanist in Residence in White Pine County. The plan was to conduct research leading to the publication of a booklet to be titled *Saving Our Heritage*, a study of Ely's ethnically diverse population and its impact on the copper-rich mining district from the early decades of the twentieth century.

Wally approached this project with his usual enthusiasm, and, after it was successfully completed, he managed to take on an additional job working part-time as director of the White Pine Public Museum. At various times during his stay in Ely, he also undertook archeological field work at Price's direction. The responsibility for this combination of jobs meant there was little time to think about collecting art, with the exception of an occasional visit to Susan Robinson's art gallery, where he bought a few paintings and had new acquisitions framed.

However, change was in the air. Wally's career as a Humanist in Residence was about to end. He had been on the road for the Nevada Humanities Committee intermittently for five years. He sensed a new mood both at the committee's headquarters back in Reno and at the White Pine Public Museum, where the decision had been made to hire a full-time director. Wally didn't wait; he approached the Bristlecone Convention Center in Ely which had announced an opening for a full-time director. He was offered the position and accepted, not anticipating the increasing number of hassles with the center's board that were to come. After a little more than two years, he departed Ely and moved on.

Moving on meant applying for a newly created position in Eureka, some seventy miles to the west. Eureka County had advertised for a person to direct the recently restored Eureka Opera House; the position would later include management of a number of county facilities and, in some cases, conducting related programming: Eureka Sentinel Museum, swimming pool, fairgrounds,

and ball parks. Following interviews with the Eureka county commissioners—the second of which, Wally recalls with some bewilderment, was an open public meeting—he was hired, and at a salary lower than he had earned at the Bristlecone Convention Center. However, there were substantial advantages to the new position he assumed April 1, 1993. In addition to the fact that he was walking into an elegantly restored opera house, complete with state-of-the-art convention and kitchen facilities on the lower level, there also seemed to be unlimited funds for programming on its stage. It didn't take long for Wally to understand that Eureka County was experiencing a mining boom; tax dollars generated by the large mines in the northern part of the county, in the vicinity of Carlin, were finding their way into the Eureka infrastructure. One of Wally's first duties was to travel to Boston to receive a National Trust for Historic Preservation Honor Award on behalf of the people of Eureka County.

To Wally, his salary had not been a major issue in recent years. He had adopted a course to economic survival that included living in trailers with low upkeep and maintaining a disciplined approach to buying things. As a single male residing in small Nevada communities, Wally had only modest needs . . . until he arrived in Eureka.

As he approached the age of forty, Wally began to realize that he would have to end his nomadic existence, if for no other reason than that he had no retirement plan and few savings to take him into his senior years. While it wasn't a rude awakening, Wally sensed some urgency in the matter. Thus, when he applied for the position in Eureka, he had one eye on the challenges and excitement the job had to offer, and the other on the financial benefits that would come with it. What he didn't know at the time was that his urge—his compulsion to collect art—would accelerate at such a rapid rate in the next ten years; eventually he would be spending half his income on purchasing and framing art.

There were exhibition possibilities on the lower level of the Eureka Opera House—not a great deal of room, but spaces between display cases in the large meeting room, and blank walls along the hallway outside. Wally began to give serious thought to hanging traveling art exhibitions in these areas, and soon thereafter he booked a show titled "A Common Thread." It featured the works of Nevada artisans who worked in fiber and other materials not usually associated with traditional weaving. The exhibit not only provided opera house visitors with a rich and varied visual experience, but also encouraged Wally to continue scheduling occasional art shows.

He brought in another traveling exhibit, this time sponsored by the Sierra Arts Foundation in Reno. "The Biggest Little Art Show in Nevada: Playing with a Full Deck" featured fifty-two images created directly on regulation-size playing cards, all by artists from around the state. Wally purchased several of these miniatures for his collection.

Unlike Hawthorne, Eureka was not populated with visual artists. The

town's few closet amateurs would have found it terrifying to have a public showing.

Gary Link is a native of North Dakota who came to teach art at Eureka High School in 1990. A graduate of Northwestern State University in Louisiana, and with a master of arts degree, Link has had to go it alone in Eureka as far as fellow painters are concerned; there's no smoke-filled café where artists gather and get high on talk. Perhaps it was this isolation, and his knowledge that the opera house had sponsored "The Common Thread," that inspired Link to approach Wally with a proposal for an exhibition. His oil paintings can best be described as latter-day impressionism; he employs short, controlled daubs, juxtaposing colors in a manner similar to Van Gogh. The paintings, for the most part, depict vistas and structures around Eureka: Diamond Valley, mine sites at the edge of town, and abandoned buildings downtown. These paintings possess a vibrancy that can engage viewers from some distance. Link's painting *Whistler Peak in March* (2003, oil on canvas board, 14" x 11") is one of several that Wally purchased directly from the artist. A comfortable rapport has developed among Wally and the artist, his wife, Mime, and their two children. The friendship has afforded Wally the opportunity to view many of Link's paintings shortly after they have been pronounced finished, occasionally before the paint is even dry. Link considers Wally one of his most faithful patrons. The opening reception for the 1999 Link show at the Opera House was a rousing success. It is estimated that over 200 people attended; ten paintings were sold.

Denise Tracy was a longtime resident of the community, a counselor at the local high school, and an accomplished photographer. Her specialty was large-format black-and-white photographs ranging from studies of historic buildings to expansive landscapes. She approached Wally shortly after the Link show and asked if she, too, could mount an exhibit of her work. He welcomed her offer, and a show of her distinctive photographs was in place at the opera house for several months.

In order to understand why Wally's collecting began to gain momentum after he arrived in Eureka, it is helpful to examine the evolution of his housing arrangements, as well as his finances

Beginning with the purchase of the eighteen-foot Zenith travel trailer in 1978, each successive mobile home he acquired was larger. The twenty-eight foot Argosy suited his wanderlust during the 1980s. When he arrived in Ely in 1987, Wally needed additional space to hold the belongings he had acquired during his residencies, and to display his growing collection of paintings. He lived in the Valley View RV Park on the east side of Ely for a time, and was doubling as park manager when a fourteen-by-sixty-foot Charter mobile home that had belonged to a recently deceased neighbor came up for sale. Wally purchased it for $3,500 *cheap*, and it has remained his home to this day.

To Wally, the new mobile was like a license to buy . . . more art. By the time

he reached Eureka, the Charter was becoming filled with paintings, drawings, and prints—side by side, up and down, crowding walls, nooks, and crannies. And, by the late 1990s, visitors to Wally's home were wondering how he ever could find room for another picture. However, the pace of buying did not abate, and he kept making room for new acquisitions.

Whether it was shrewdness or just good instincts, Wally decided not to rent a space in Eureka for his mobile home. Rather, he purchased a lot in a neighborhood at the northern edge of town called Nob Hill, and moved his Charter onto it. Then he bought an adjacent lot and in 1994 placed a single-wide Fleetwood mobile home on it. This second trailer was intended as a rental investment—to pay for itself and the property on which it resided. A couple of years ago, the tenant who occupied this mobile home announced she was leaving; Wally discovered that its interior had been trashed.

Several issues were facing him. The vacated mobile home was not suitable for a new occupant. Costly work was needed to make it habitable, and the alternative of having it hauled off to trailer heaven crossed his mind. Meanwhile, the art collection crammed into his Charter had grown to the extent that soon he would have to start leaning newly acquired art up against the exterior wall of the trailer. None of these solutions was attractive to Wally.

A decision was made: Keep the rental trailer. Gut and rebuild it from the inside out. Partitions were removed, floors resurfaced. Interior walls were covered with new paneling. One end was converted into a combination kitchen-bathroom. A protected entry was installed. A local builder was contracted to sheath the exterior with corrugated tin siding. The result was an anonymous-looking building. Wally named it the Shed Gallery. Today, he doubts if many in town know what its function is. Few have asked, possibly uneasy with the possible answer their secretive neighbor might offer.

In the two years since the Shed Gallery was made ready for use, Wally has continued to buy art at a pace that could be described as near abandon. Some works that were in the Charter mobile home have been moved to the Shed Gallery; its walls are rapidly being covered. One wonders what will happen when available space in both structures has been, as they say, maxed out.

If possible, Wally's collecting has accelerated. It's a simple formula. Wally has consistently received raises from the county (his salary has more than doubled since his arrival in Eureka). Most of his debts have been retired. While it is not this writer's intention to reveal the intimate details of Wally's banking habits, he does know that Wally derives great pleasure in sitting down at the first of each month to write checks, especially since more than half of the amount written goes to artists whose works he has purchased, or to the shops that are framing them.

If askedwhence the works of art in his collection came, Wally is likely to answer, "all over."

Walk in the front door of Wally's trailer home, turn right, slip through a door

and into the front bedroom. It takes a few moments to adjust to the dimness and to the onslaught of framed pictures in all corners of the room. There's an eye-level portrait of Wally, obviously executed more than a few years ago. Several watercolor landscapes date back to his days in Hawthorne. One image stands out because of its powerful patterns of black and white; it appears to be a drawing, but is actually an original lithograph. A closer examination of the penciled words below the image yields more information: the fact that the print was editioned in 1935, that its title is *Washoe Valley Poplars* (1935, lithograph, 10" x 13 7/8"), and finally that the artist is James Lawrence. This print was acquired by Wally while he was visiting the East Fork Gallery in Gardnerville, Nevada. Lawrence, now in his mid nineties, was widowed several years ago, and has been forced to give up his art. At the time of Wally's visit, the East Fork Gallery, which Lawrence helped found, was selling prints from several of his early editions. It was a collecting coup.

"The simple act of painting a subject dignifies it," wrote the painter Ron Oden in *Stories from the Sagebrush: Celebrating Northern Nevada at the Millennium*, a project of the *Reno Gazette-Journal* and the Nevada Humanities Committee. Oden, whose illustrations appeared regularly in the *Reno Gazette-Journal* for a number of years, is the energetic owner of Gallery 516 in downtown Reno. Wally has dropped by 516 with fair regularity, just to check things out, and on one occasion he purchased *Green Truck* (2000, watercolor, 9 3/4" x 19 1/2"), a thoughtfully composed study of a generic Nevada filling station. Typical of most works in Wally's collection, there are no human figures present, only vestiges of human activity. Four other original paintings by Oden, all reproduced in *Stories from the Sagebrush*, now hang on the walls of the Shed Gallery—gifts of the artist.

One of the most startling images in the collection is Craig Sheppard's oil painting, *Ignominious Idea* (1950, oil on canvas, 24" x 18 1/4"). It is in company with two other works by Sheppard which Wally obtained at the Hermitage Gallery in Reno. The painting is from the *Dead Horse* series executed in the 1950s by the late University of Nevada, Reno professor of art. During that period, the artist, a bronc rider in his early twenties, seemed consumed with the contorted bodies of horses, their agony not unlike that depicted by Pablo Picasso in his tension-choked painting of 1937, *Guernica*. During his initial dealings with Donna Antraccoli, the accommodating owner of Hermitage, Wally learned for the first time that a commercial gallery might be open to selling works of art on time. This possibility added an entirely new way of looking at collecting, and fed right into Wally's addiction.

Whence did the works of art in Wally's collection come? The three examples above illustrate one aspect of Wally's approach—making systematic rounds of commercial galleries throughout northern Nevada. He has also been known to drive long distances to visit the studios of artists whose works he needs in his collection. The operative word here is *needs*. As Wally has become more

knowledgeable about Nevada artists, he has developed an inventory of artists he believes *must* be added to his collection.

Parowan, the self-proclaimed Mother Town of southern Utah, is located three hundred miles southeast of Eureka, twenty miles northeast of Cedar City, Utah. It is the home of Sue Cotter, and the Woodhenge Press. Cotter, a former Nevadan who obtained a bachelor's degree in art from the University of Nevada, Reno, established Woodhenge, a papermaking/book arts shop, in 1990. She is a mixed-media artist who incorporates found and manmade objects and handmade paper in her work. Perhaps it is this willingness to explore unique combinations of materials that appealed to Wally; perhaps it is her sensitivity to desert life, both its thematic and tactile possibilities, that convinced him to purchase *Tufa Woman* (2004, mixed media, 34 3/4" x 27 5/16"). It is Cotter's powerful tribute to Pyramid Lake, with actual rocks, bones, and tufa, and a soaring pelican and blue waters surrounding a contour collage of the pyramid itself. Curious about Cotter's studio, Wally made a special trip to Parowan, a pilgrimage that yielded a deeper understanding of the ideas that animate her process of working . . . and a new work for his collection.

Sharon Maczko is a self-taught painter who lives in Wellington, Nevada. As was the case with Sue Cotter, Wally believed it would be advantageous to meet the artist in her studio, and did. Sharon is a virtuoso when it comes to transparent watercolor, the medium that is probably most represented in his collection. He purchased *Conforming* (2002, watercolor, 22" x 20 1/4") after viewing it in a Reno Artown exhibit at Truckee Meadows Community College several years ago. It is one of a series in which the artist explored a doll motif. However, in Maczko's mind and hands, the doll is anything but an object of tender childhood memory. Its unclad torso hangs affixed to a weather-beaten fence; the setting is made even more ominous by the artist's treatment of the billowing clouds hovering in the distance. Maczko contends that this image is a deeply personal statement about the perils of bowing to external pressures.

This writer has made the point that Wally's selection of works for the collection was often determined by the available space in Wally's residence at the time of purchase. In the case of paintings by Mary Chadwell, such has never been the case. An internationally recognized miniaturist, she has seldom worked in a format larger than a piece of typing paper. *Pyramid Lake* (undated, watercolor, 2 3/4" x 4 3/4'), a watercolor that is slightly larger than a business card, was purchased at still another gallery on Wally's beat, the Reno Co-op Gallery, often referred to as the Mill Street Gallery. This 2001 painting of the ancient lake possesses a monumentality that defies its actual size, the outcroppings in the foreground and distant expanse of water rendered with the sharpened point of a brush having very few hairs.

When asked, Wally can relate an entertaining story about each and every piece in his collection: an anecdote about the artist, identification of the place depicted, or a recollection of when and where he obtained it—even how much he paid for it.

Few works in Wally's collection are the result of collaborations. On the other hand, *Words Growing Wild in the Woods* (1995, letterpress and hand-pulled etching, 16 5/16" x 9 3/8") was a cooperative venture among three artists, of whom this writer was one. We shared a common objective, the publication of an edition of one hundred broadsides. Montana poet Paul Zarzyski's moving poem about fishing with his father as a youth in Wisconsin came first; I then created an etching on a zinc plate that translated Zarzyski's words into visual terms; and Bob Blesse, the director of the Black Rock Press at the University of Nevada, Reno, pulled these elements together, guiding the design and printing of the edition. For Wally, the broadside represented a reunion of sorts. Zarzyski had often appeared on the stage of the Eureka Opera House giving riveting performances of his poetry. My own friendship with Wally went back a quarter of a century and included many shared projects, one of which will be discussed at length in the next few paragraphs. Blesse had been a consistent bridge between writers and visual artists, publishing limited edition books and broadsides with the imprint of the Black Rock Press. Many of these publications reside in Wally's library.

The Loneliest Art Workshop in Nevada was the brainchild of Wally and this writer, and took place in two installments. The first was over the weekend of October 22-24, 1999, and included the participation of eleven of Nevada's most respected visual artists.

This ambitious project had several dimensions. The catalog for the exhibit—held in the Eureka Opera House gallery six months after the workshop—explains what occurred: "The artists' involvement in this unique project meant spending three days wandering the streets and backwoods around Eureka. They made sketches, took photographs, and collected trash that were later incorporated in works of art back in their home studios, two and three dimensional images that reflected their impressions of Eureka." There was to be a trade-off between the host, Eureka County, and the artists. During their stay, they were guests of the county; rooms and meals were provided, and their schedule allowed time for getting better acquainted with each other. This feature of the workshop was especially gratifying since the invited artists came from communities around the state, and represented different points of view, ideationally, stylistically, and in terms of the materials with which they worked. In exchange, the artists were asked to create one work of art on a Eureka theme to be donated to the county art collection. In reality, the eleven works of art accessioned into the collection after the 1999 workshop were its first acquisitions. It was Wally's intention to build a fine art collection for Eureka County.

The success of this project inspired Wally to produce The Loneliest Art Workshop in Nevada II. Exactly one year after the original event, it was repeated during October 27-29, 2000, this time with twelve new invited artists. It should be noted that Eureka the painter Gary Link was grandfathered in for reasons of quality, not simply because he lived up the block.

Today, if visitors to the Eureka Opera House stroll down to the convention facilities on the lower level, they have an opportunity to view a combined exhibit that features The Loneliest Art Workshop in Nevada I and II, twenty-three impressions of a small town in central Nevada at the close of the twentieth century. In Wally's case, the workshops bestowed extra benefits. For each post-workshop exhibit, the artists were invited to bring an additional Eureka-inspired work, and these were displayed alongside those intended for the permanent collection. It goes without saying that Wally went into a kind of feeding frenzy, and over the succeeding months, he purchased a number of these "seconds."

Crossed Over (2001, digital photomontage with watercolor, 6 3/4" x 7"), by the Carson City artist Margery Hall Marshall, is a somber image. It reflects Marshall's experiences in Eureka during The Loneliest Art Workshop in Nevada. Strict attention is required before the many elements in this complex photomontage become apparent. In the lower right corner, a marble hand rises, topped by a finger pointing to the heavens. There are metal fences and gates overlapping barren branches, and the faint indication of a cross on a sacral white moon grave marker. With a minute of study, and the title noted, it becomes clear that one is looking into a cemetery, the old Eureka Catholic Cemetery, to be exact. The artist does not consider her picture morbid, and states that, for her, crossing over from life to death is natural, not a process to be feared. On Wally's gallery walls *Crossed Over* seems an anomaly.

Larry Jacox's reportorial style is nowhere more apparent than in his watercolor titled *Sink and Frame, Eureka, Nevada* (2001, watercolor, 11" x 15"). As a participant in The Loneliest Art Workshop in Nevada I, Jacox revisited Eureka several times, not in person, but through photography—he worked on the paintings in the comfort of his own studio from photographs obtained at the site. Jacox is not an artist of the plein-air persuasion, and he doesn't like to endure abrupt turns in the weather or the fluctuations of light when the sun is obscured by clouds or other atmospheric conditions. In *Sink and Frame*, the artist observed every branch, weathered board, and scrap around the base of the long-abandoned structure. Is it nostalgia and the graphic nature of the painting that appealed to Wally, and prompted him to acquire it?

As energetic and spontaneous as he appears, when collecting, Wally holds to certain predictable patterns of behavior. For instance, when bound for the west side of Nevada, he often follows an itinerary that includes Gardnerville, Carson City, Virginia City, Gold Hill, Silver City, and Reno. There are galleries and artists in these communities who must be visited—regularly. The excursions mean two things to Wally: viewing new works of art and nurturing friendships with the artists who created them.

Marilyn Melton has played a varied role in Wally's life. Their paths have crossed at the Nevada Humanities Committee, where Marilyn served as chair of the board for many years, and Wally has been a three-term representative

from the rural counties. This has meant attending countless meetings together, promoting and tending programs that advance the historical, social, and literary life of the state. At a more personal level, Wally has observed Melton's development as a painter and graphic artist.

Virginia City Churches (1997, oil on canvas, 24" x 36") offers a view past St. Paul's Episcopal Church to the left and the façade of St. Mary's in the Mountains on the right - down Six-Mile Canyon to the Pine Nut Range behind Dayton. Melton often takes on complex compositional challenges in her paintings. In *Virginia City Churches* she successfully balances deep atmospheric effects with a coherent placement of structures across the foreground. In a less analytical light, the painting allows the collector to vicariously return to a location that is a favorite with him; he is also aware of the artist's deep affection for the Comstock, and Virginia City in particular.

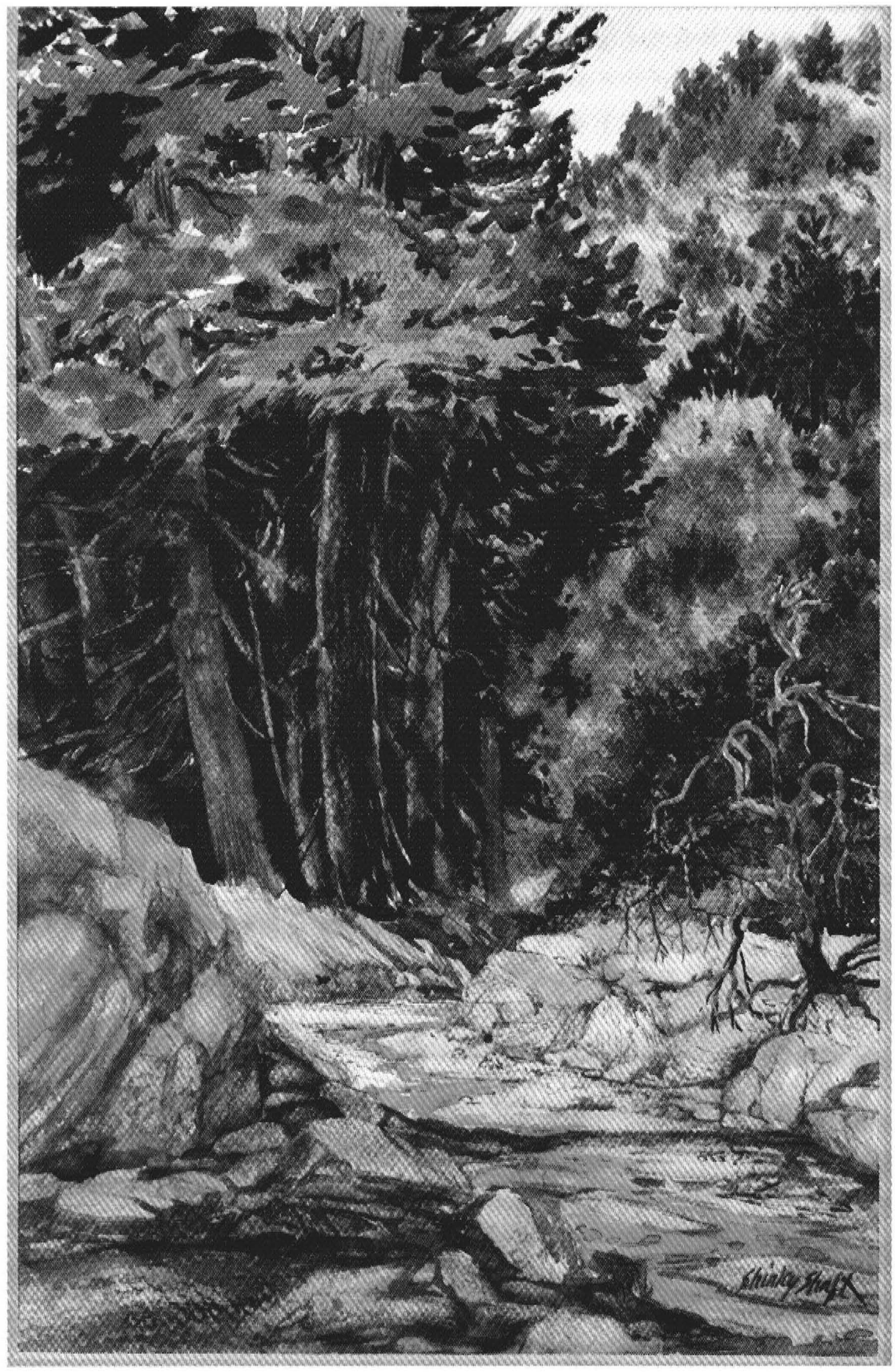
It has been difficult for Wally to build a collection of Nevada artists with any degree of cultural diversity. He has, on occasion, visited Albuquerque and Santa Fe, where galleries outnumber virtually every other kind of business, and purchased Native American pottery and Kachina dolls. There are few black visual artists in northern Nevada and Hispanic artists are just now beginning to emerge. Although there are talented youth in northern Nevada coming out of graffiti traditions and moving into mural training programs sponsored by Sierra Arts in Reno, few are exhibiting in local galleries on a regular basis. The tradition of Native American arts and crafts is much richer in Nevada and more in evident. Jack Malotte, a member of the Western Shoshone Tribe, is one of Wally's favorite artists. It is Malotte's mysterious landscapes, rendered in diagonal strokes of Prismacolor pencil across jet black paper, that have been catching Wally's eye for the past several years. *Dust Devil* (2003, prismacolor on black paper, 11" x 15") is a forceful example of this technique, and bears witness to Malotte's belief that when nature and man come in conflict, nature will abide. Malotte's relationship with Wally is somewhat different from that of most of the artists in Wally's circle. Malotte often seeks Wally out. He lives on the Duckwater Indian Reservation some fifty miles south of Eureka and seems to move about on his own time, occasionally showing up at the opera house with a sheaf of new works on paper for Wally to view . . . and buy. Wally always seems anxious to jump in his truck with the new Malottes, drive directly to Great Basin Gallery in Carson City, and enlist owners Jeff Nicholson or Rick Davis to custom frame them.

Speaking of frames and framing, it has become evident that with the heightened discernment and daring that has characterized his collecting in recent years, Wally has also seen to it that his acquisitions have been invested in state-of-the-art archival mat and frame assemblies, and, as finances have permitted, he has been bringing the rest of his collection up to that same standard. The question of framing is not as inconsequential as it may seem. When asked about its ultimate disposition, Wally not only considers possible ways to keep his

collection intact, but also worries about the future condition of each work, both when he passes it on and into the years beyond.

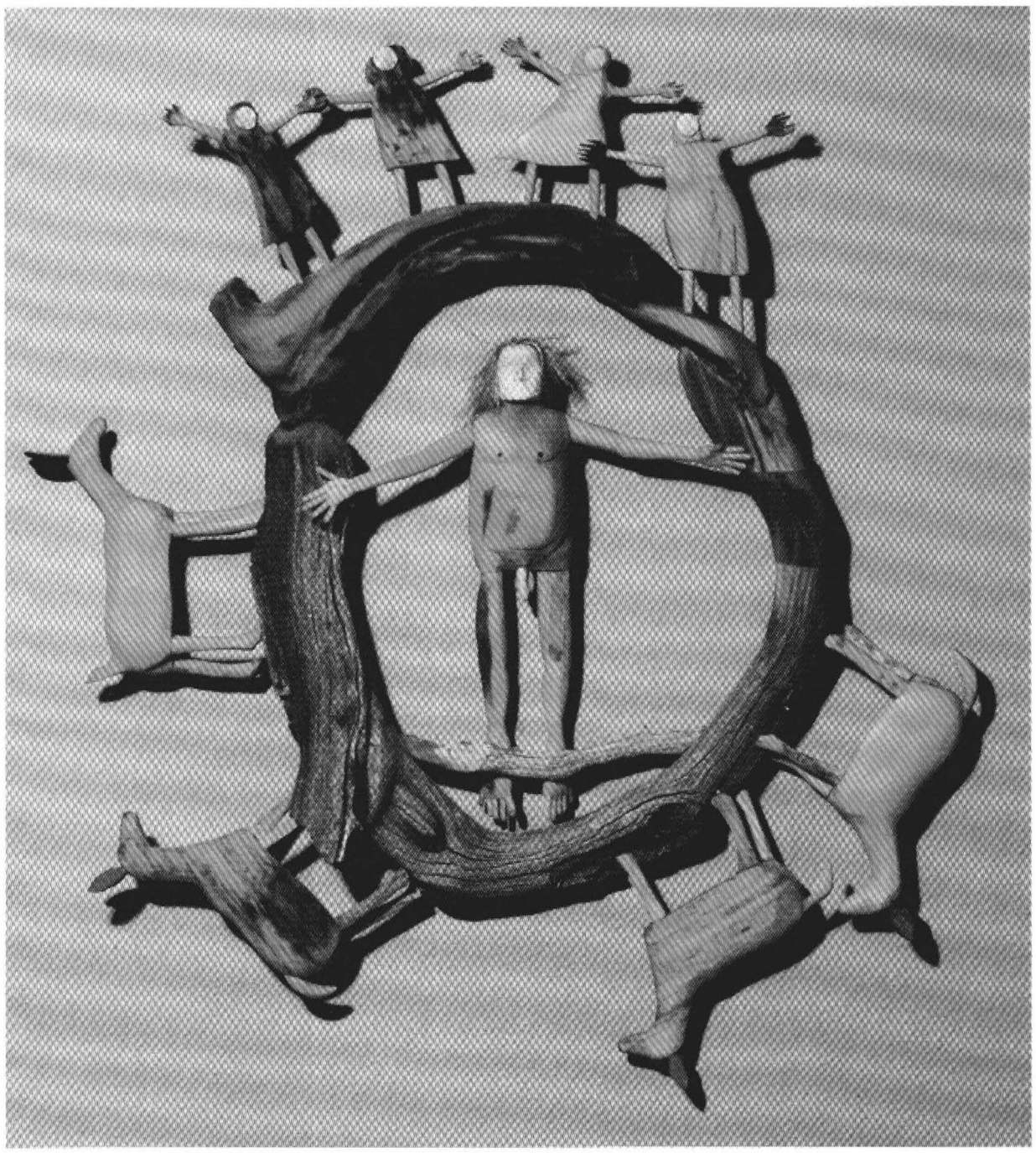
A case can be built that Wally Cuchine's collection, insofar as it mirrors his passage through Nevada' communities and its outback for a third of a century, serves as a kind of album, a pictorial retrospective of places discovered, people encountered, and all the sour and joyous memories they conjure.

Is Walter Edward Cuchine a sinner? Time and the viewers who visit "Wally's World: The Loneliest Art Collection in Nevada" will be the judge of that.

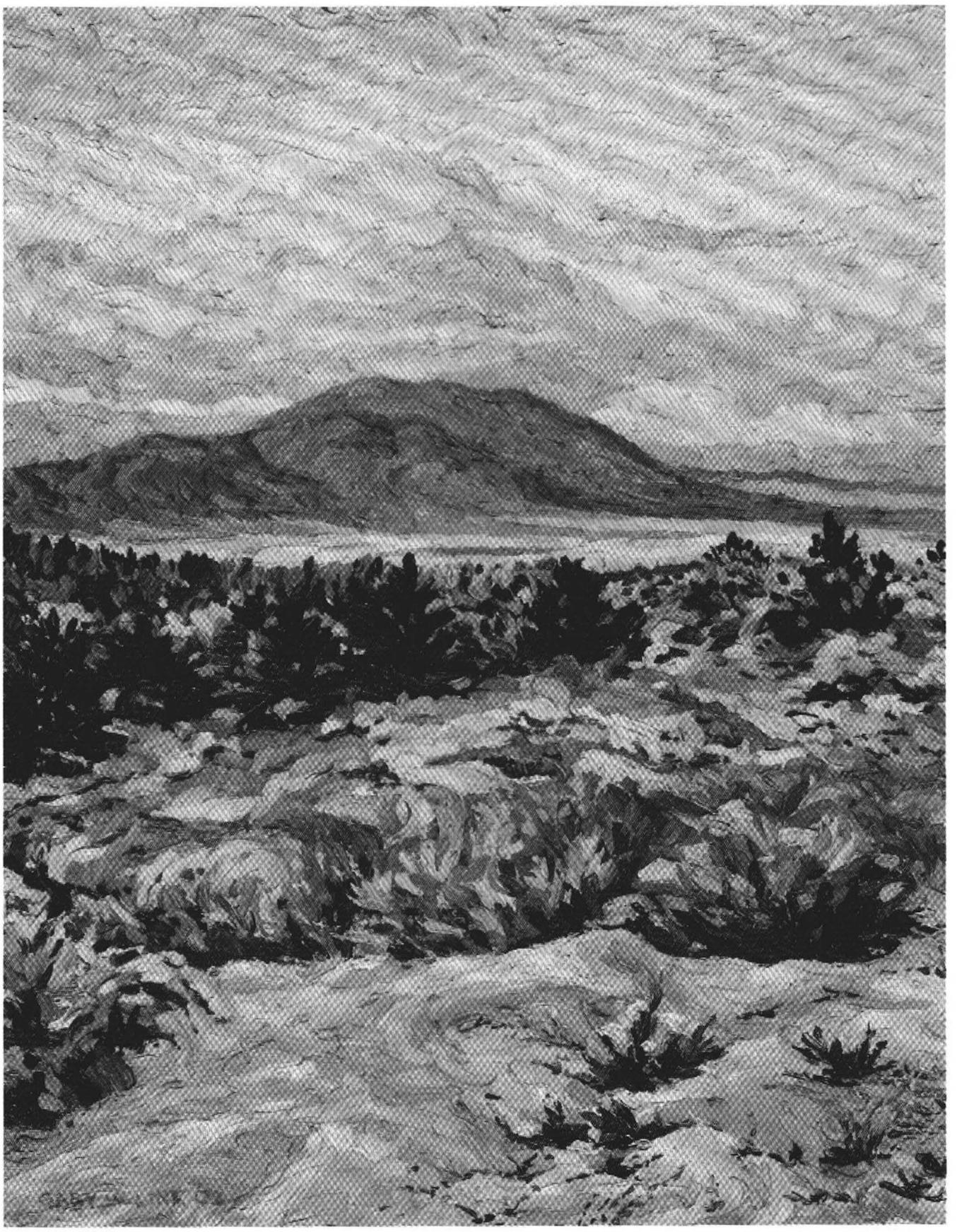


Shirley Shaft, *Alum Creek*, watercolor, 16" x 10 1/2," 1984

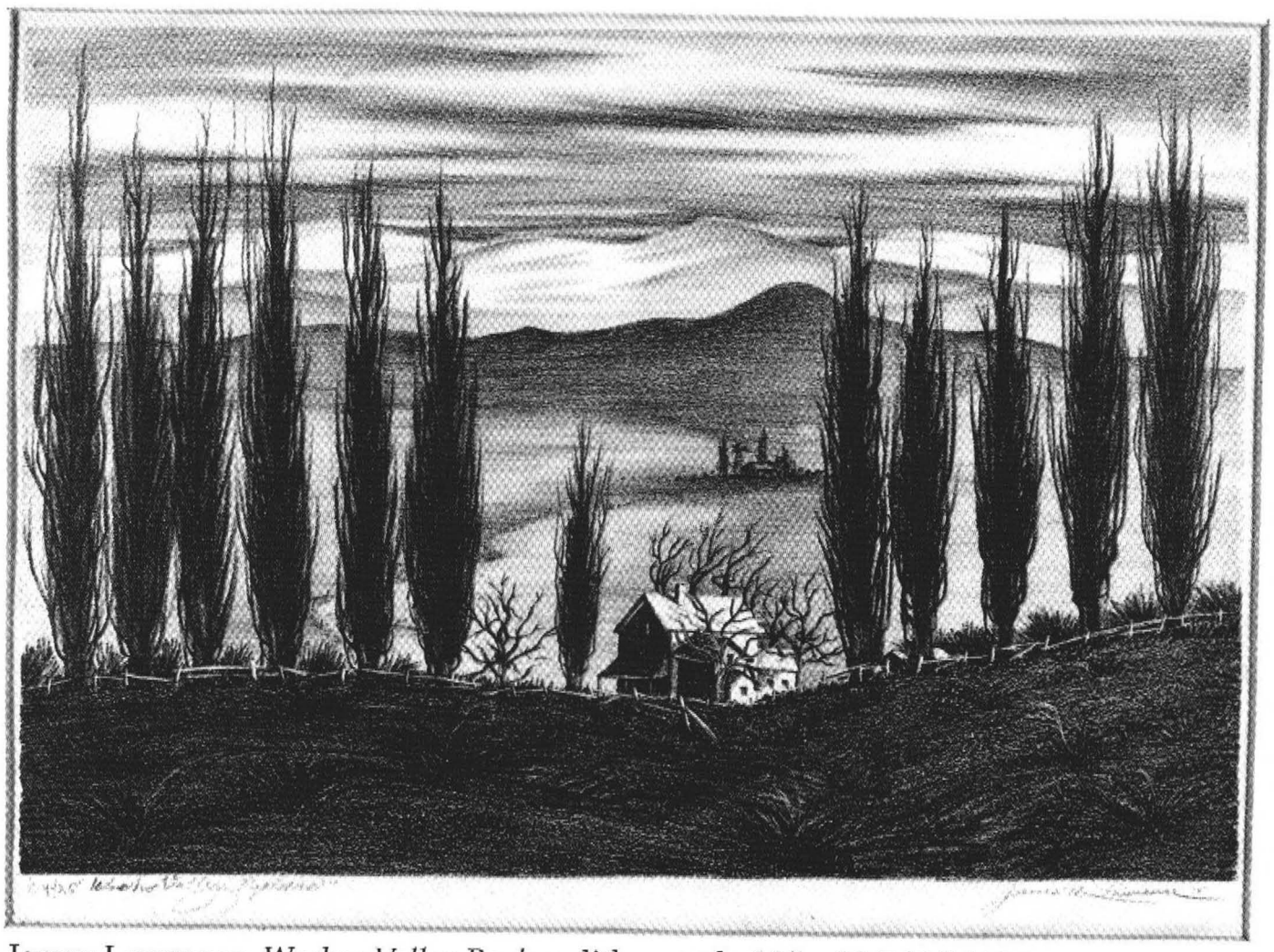
Brent H. Perkins, *J. T. Frazier Hotel*, watercolor, 10 1/2" x 13 1/2," 1986



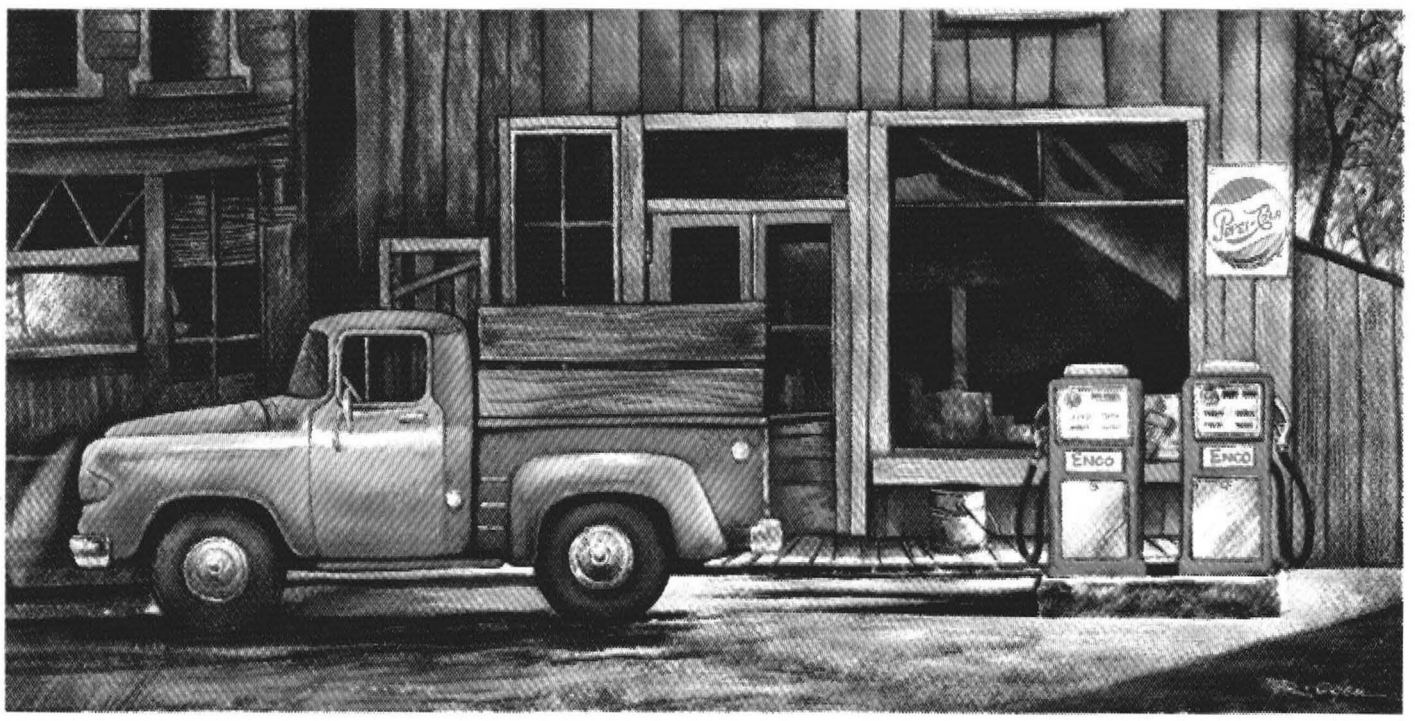
Larry Williamson, *Eureka Present: The Angels Wait in Silence, the Deer Graze around and Wally Descends into his Hot Tub*, mixed media with wood, bone and hair, 21" x 23" x 3," 2000



Gary Link, *Whistler Peak in March*, oil on canvas board, 14" x 11, " 2003

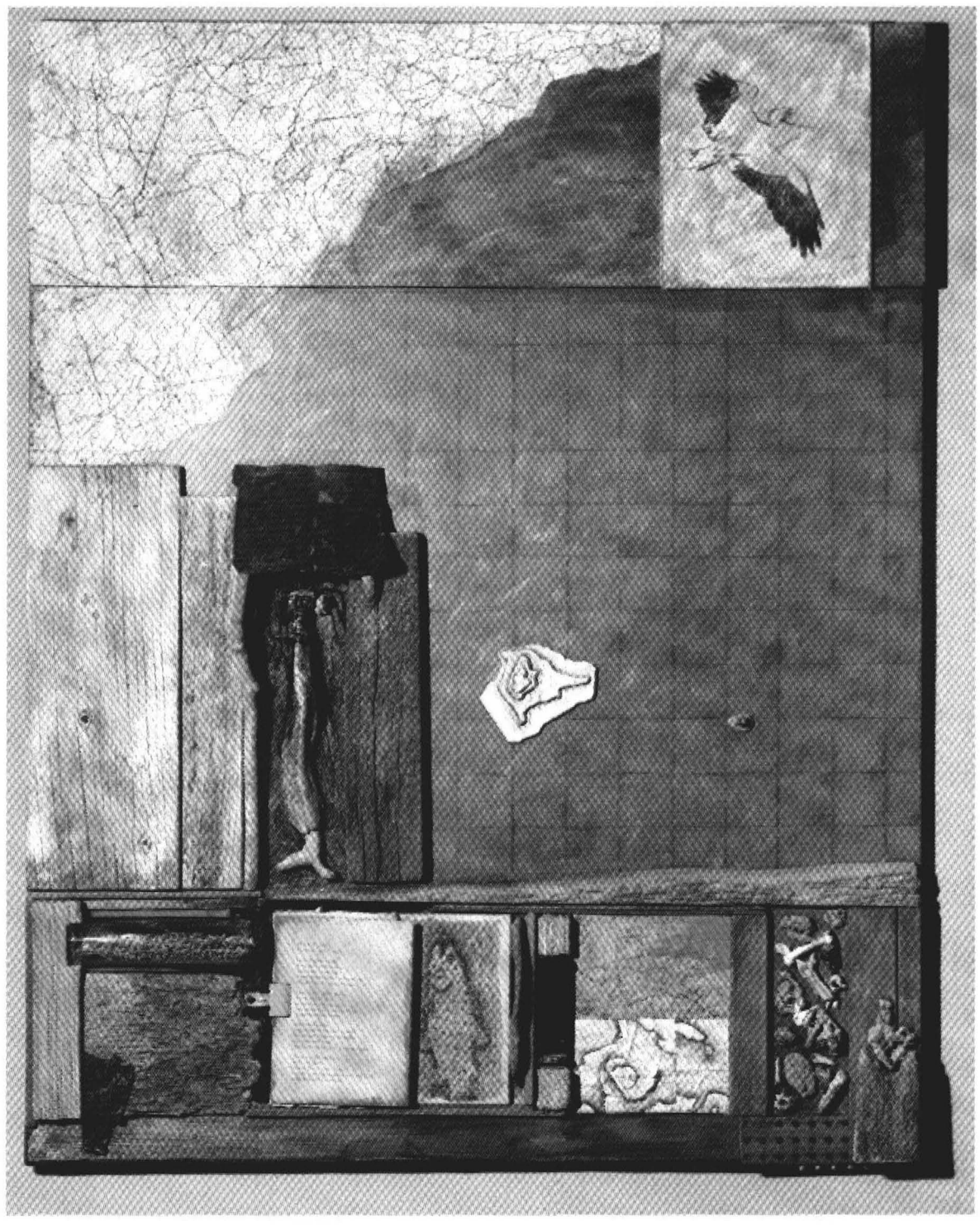


James Lawrence, *Washoe Valley Poplars*, lithograph, 10" x 13 7/8," 1935

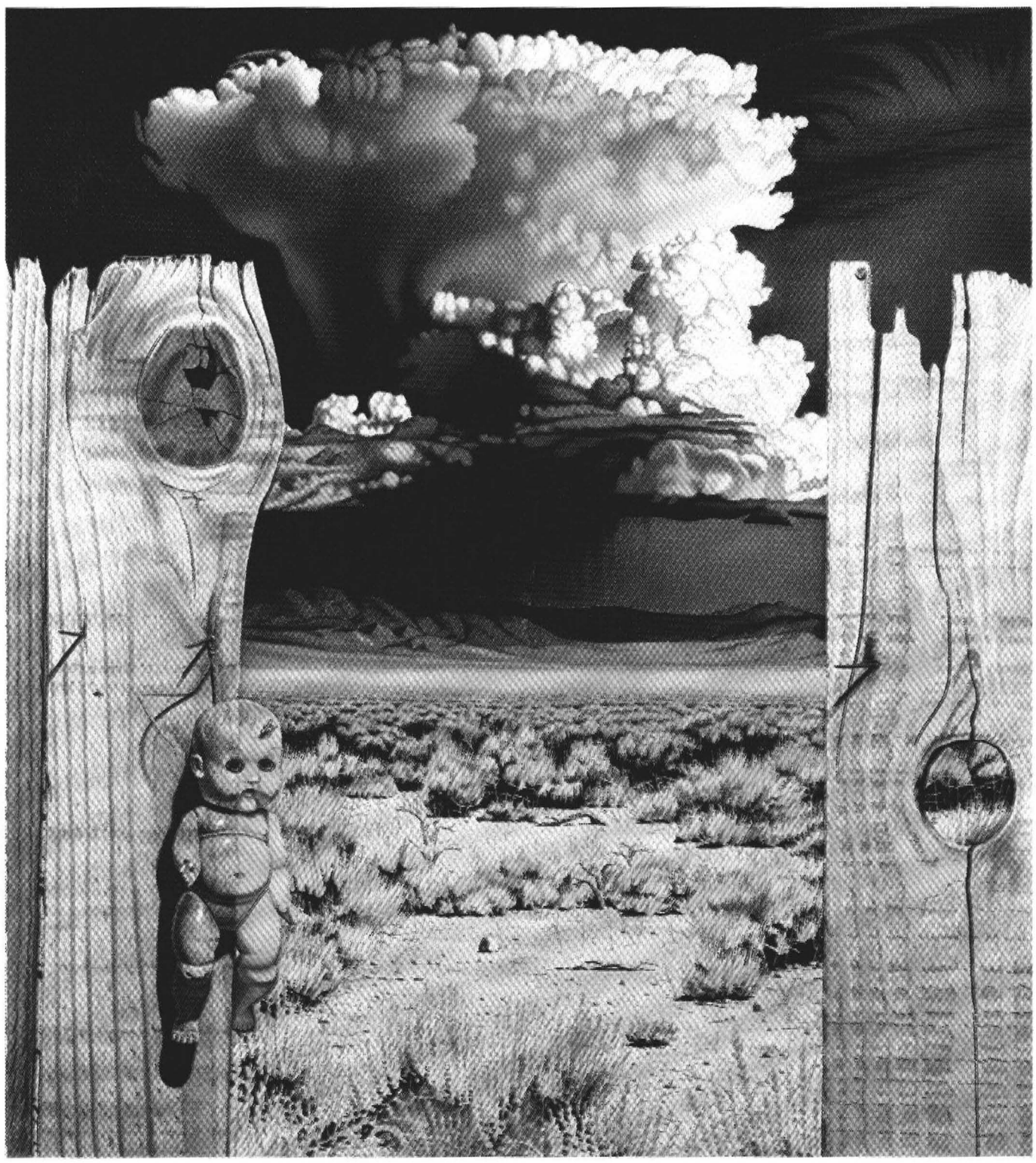


Ron Oden, *Green Truck*, watercolor, 9 3/4" x 19 1/2," 2000

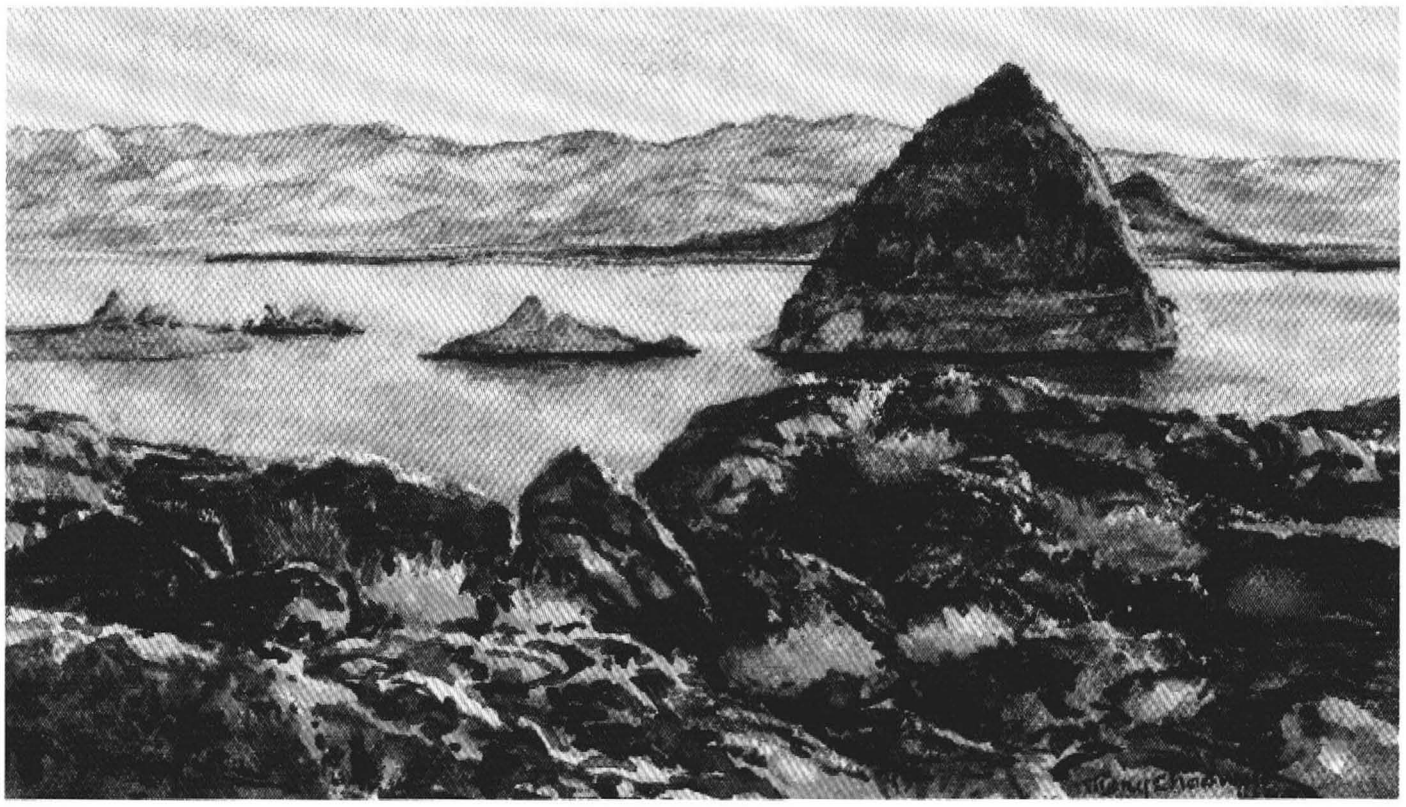
Craig Sheppard, *Ignominious Idea*, oil on canvas, 24' x 18 1/4," 1950s



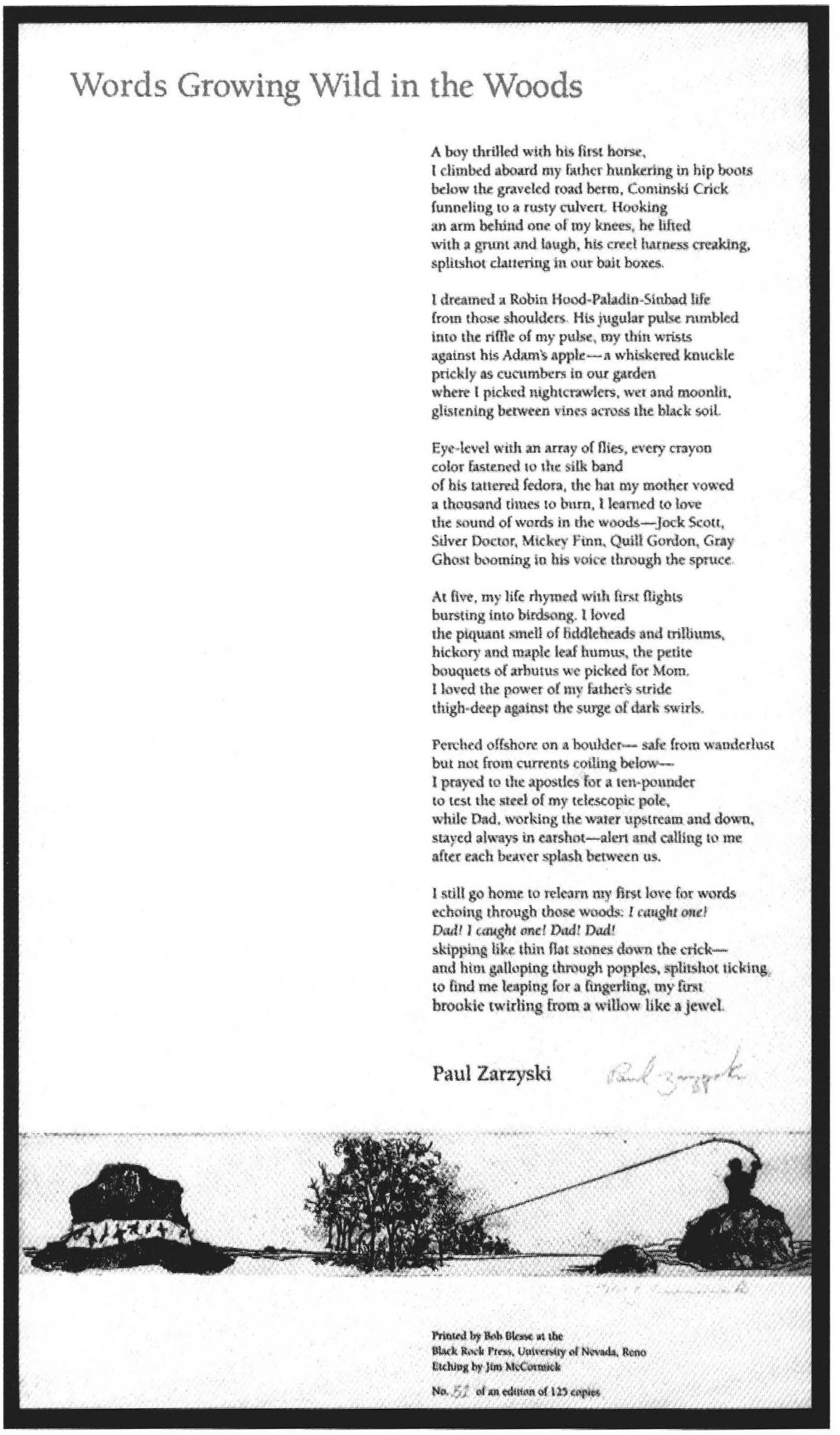
Sue Cotter, *Tufa Woman*, mixed media, 34 3/4" x 27 5/16," 2004



Sharon Maczko, *Conforming*, watercolor, 22" x 20 1/4," 2002



Mary Chadwell, *Pyramid Lake*, watercolor, 2 3/4" x 4 3/4," undated



Words Growing Wild in the Woods

A boy thrilled with his first horse,
I climbed aboard my father hunkering in hip boots
below the graveled road berm, Cominski Crick
funneling to a rusty culvert. Hooking
an arm behind one of my knees, he lifted
with a grunt and laugh, his creel harness creaking,
splitshot clattering in our bait boxes.

I dreamed a Robin Hood-Paladin-Sinbad life
from those shoulders. His jugular pulse rumbled
into the riffle of my pulse, my thin wrists
against his Adam's apple—a whiskered knuckle
prickly as cucumbers in our garden
where I picked nightcrawlers, wet and moonlit,
glistening between vines across the black soil.

Eye-level with an array of flies, every crayon
color fastened to the silk band
of his tattered fedora, the hat my mother vowed
a thousand times to burn, I learned to love
the sound of words in the woods—Jock Scott,
Silver Doctor, Mickey Finn, Quill Gordon, Gray
Ghost booming in his voice through the spruce.

At five, my life rhymed with first flights
bursting into birdsong. I loved
the piquant smell of fiddleheads and trilliums,
hickory and maple leaf humus, the petite
bouquets of arbutus we picked for Mom.
I loved the power of my father's stride
thigh-deep against the surge of dark swirls.

Perched offshore on a boulder— safe from wanderlust
but not from currents coiling below—
I prayed to the apostles for a ten-pounder
to test the steel of my telescopic pole,
while Dad, working the water upstream and down,
stayed always in earshot—alert and calling to me
after each beaver splash between us.

I still go home to relearn my first love for words
echoing through those woods: *I caught one!*
Dad! I caught one! Dad! Dad!
skipping like thin flat stones down the crick—
and him galloping through popples, splitshot ticking,
to find me leaping for a fingerling, my first
brookie twirling from a willow like a jewel.

Paul Zarzyski

Printed by Bob Blesse at the
Black Rock Press, University of Nevada, Reno
Etching by Jim McCormick

No. 51 of an edition of 125 copies

Jim McCormick and Paul Zarzyski, *Words Growing Wild in the Woods*, letterpress and hand-pulled etching, 16 5/16" x 9 3/8," 1995

Margery Hall Marshall, *Crossed Over*, digital photomontage with watercolor, 6 3/4" x 7," 2001

Larry Jacox, *Sink and Frame, Eureka, Nevada*, watercolor, 11" x 15," 2001

Marilyn Melton, *Virginia City Churches*, oil on canvas, 24" x 36," 1997

Jack Malotte, *Dust Devil*, prismacolor on black paper, 11" x 15," 2003

Community and Solitude
Wally Cuchine and Rural Nevada

Stephen Davis

Over the last year, I have had the opportunity to travel to Eureka, Nevada, several times, and to photograph the world that Wally Cuchine has built there. My five-hour car ride from Reno to Eureka is always a welcome journey: I love traveling through the Nevada desert, especially on Highway 50. What made these trips such a gift for me, however, was that when I arrived in Eureka, I was welcomed into the lovingly built community that Wally has created. It is a community of art and of friendship, in the middle of this state.

Wally and Wally's world is a treasure in our community and in my life, and through my camera and my interviews I hope to shed light on why that is so.

Wally Cuchine had a tough childhood. His troubled family lived in the hardscrabble world of Montana mining camps. Wally struggled. He struggled in school, he struggled to have a family, and he struggled to define who he was as a person. On graduation day from high school he packed his meager belongings and left the only world he had ever known.

But buried in Wally's painful memories were experiences that would ultimately help him find his place in the world. Much of his knowledge of rural life was gained during the five years he lived with his grandparents. They lived in a community of fifty people where his grandfather was a contract miner. Wally describes these years as being very similar to life in an early Nevada mining camp. "We had an outhouse, [and] we didn't have running water." When he began to explore remote areas of Nevada he discovered that these living conditions were the same as he was learning about in Nevada's ghost towns. Although he never wanted to return to Montana, his experience growing up in an "old family" helped him understand the importance of family, local history, and sense of place. Thus he came to Nevada with life experiences and intellectual resources that helped him develop a love for rural places, open spaces, and the intermountain West.

Stephen Davis is the assistant director of Nevada Humanities and is a skilled photographer. He holds a doctorate in history from the University of Wisconsin.

I have known Wally for more than a decade, both as a friend and as a colleague at Nevada Humanities, but I never realized, until now, what our very different early experiences had in common. He grew up in mountain mining towns in Montana while I spent my childhood in a lower-middle-class neighborhood on the fringes of Boston. But both of our families were troubled. My mother was bipolar, and every few years she would become manic and then spend months in a mental institution. The uncertainty of not knowing when my mother would be taken away was devastating for a five-year-old. What saved me was open land. We lived within the city limits, but there was open space behind my house, lots of it. There were swamps and thickets, woods and hiding places, a world to escape to—I found solace in the land; so too did Wally Cuchine. Coming from different parts of the country, coming from very different backgrounds, we both found the place we were seeking in Nevada; it was open, it was vast, and we knew that we were home. This story about Wally Cuchine is based primarily on an interview conducted in January 2005.

In hindsight, it appears that Wally's life decisions were carefully planned to bring him to rural Nevada and to make him a central figure in its cultural life. This, of course, is not literally true, but his choices led him deftly to his life's work. Wally was first drawn to rural Nevada while a student at Sierra Nevada College in Incline Village. He studied environmental science and eventually undertook several residencies, one in Eureka. He also opted out of traditional Western Civilization courses in favor of independent-study classes in Nevada history. Wally did not learn Nevada history just from textbooks; he absorbed it through the soles of his shoes. He traveled into the vast valleys of Nevada, visited historic communities and ghost towns, and, in the process, gained a love for Nevada and its history. For his final exams in these classes he would lead groups of students on Nevada history tours that would last for days. Wally still delights in leading history tours, and he is certainly one of the best tour guides available. Eventually the college hired him to teach week-long field classes in history.

Wally Cuchine is being recognized here for his role as a collector of contemporary Nevada art; however, it is important to realize that his love for Nevada's rural culture grew out of his work in the humanities and his long affiliation with the Nevada Humanities Committee (now Nevada Humanities). Wally's field classes and several environmental science residencies only whetted his appetite for more. In the early 1980s, he applied for his first Nevada Humanities Committee grant to be a Humanist in Residence at the Hawthorne library. Wally took this leap of faith without really knowing what was required. "I suppose in a way I was fairly arrogant," Wally confides, "in thinking that because of what I'd done . . . that I had the knowledge and wherewithal to do those things." Cuchine was told, in no uncertain terms, that he did not qualify for the position because he did not have a master's degree in a humanities discipline. With this settled, the interviewers, Wilbur Shepperson and Judith

Winzeler, had a two-hour in-depth conversation with Cuchine about his previous academic and work experience. Following the interview, Shepperson and Winzeler called Wally's references, including his beloved mentor John James of Sierra Nevada College. As a result of the very positive reports they received, they revised their earlier decision, and Wally was awarded the grant.

Thus began a series of six humanities residencies, which took place between July 1983 and June 1988, and which established Wally as a central figure in rural Nevada culture. These five-month residencies were hosted by institutions such as libraries, schools, and historical societies, and paid an opulent $1,500 per month. Wally often moved his trailer to the residency community, although in several cases he was provided with lodging. Humanist-in-Residence grants brought Cuchine to Hawthorne in Mineral County, Fallon in Churchill County, Lovelock in Pershing County, Lincoln County, and Ely in White Pine County for two residencies.

Hawthorne: Humanist in the Library (July 1 to November 30,1983)

Wally's residency in the Hawthorne library was designed to accomplish several goals. First, he would work to enlarge the library's Nevada collection by adding more history books. He also developed a lecture series on local history, and he helped create an historical map of Mineral County.

In addition, he organized a centennial celebration for the Mineral County Court House. Public-spirited citizens had saved this wonderful old building from destruction and so the community embraced the event. The old Court House was built in Hawthorne as the county seat of Esmeralda County when the two counties were joined. The county seat moved to Goldfield in 1905 and, when the county was split in 1911, Mineral County took over use of the Court House as its government center. Wally is enthusiastic when he reflects on the celebration. The popular event lasted a full week. Governor Richard Bryan spoke, and the entire Nevada congressional delegation showed up. It was a major event for rural Nevada—two thousand people attended. The fact that signs prominently announced that the Nevada Humanities Committee sponsored the event did not hurt his chances of getting future residencies. According to Wally, "it was a huge success."

The Hawthorne residency, centered as it was on a public institution that served as a community gathering place, brought Wally in touch with the entire community. "The Hawthorne residency," Wally states, "gave me a feeling, on a deep level, of being wanted . . . of that feeling of community . . . . I felt like I belonged."

Over the next four years, Cuchine undertook five more residencies in four rural communities. In many ways these five-month stints mirrored his experiences in Hawthorne, but with subtle and sometimes meaningful twists as follows.

Fallon: Humanist in the Museum (February 1 to June 30, 1984)

During his time in Hawthorne, Wally developed contacts at the Churchill County Museum in Fallon, and so, when his Hawthorne residency ended, he was asked to accept a residency at the museum in Fallon. The purpose of this residency was to create an exhibit of historical and contemporary photographs of Churchill County dating from 1867 to the present; the exhibit was entitled "Shadow Catchers." Each residency taught Cuchine more about Nevada history and about the skills and processes needed to be an historian. The Churchill County residency provided Wally with insight into the use of historical photography. In the process of developing the exhibit, he met photographers and artists from all around the state. The exhibition was very well received in Fallon, and subsequently spent a month in the foyer of the Nevada State Legislature in Carson City.

In addition to acquiring knowledge in historical photography, Wally developed a passion for archaeology. He joined the newly founded Fallon chapter of the Nevada Archaeological Association and met and learned from such luminaries as Peg Wheat and Kay and Don Fowler. "I suddenly had a whole new realm of the humanities opened to me," he says.

The Fallon residency was valuable to Wally both professionally and personally. His understanding of history and the humanities grew rapidly as he gained experience in new disciplines. Wally reflects upon his strong relationship with the Churchill County Museum with deep affection. However, he also has some regrets about not being as fully immersed in the community as he had been in Hawthorne.

Lovelock: Humanist in the Schools (September 3, 1985 to February 7, 1986)

Nancy List, a Nevada Humanities Committee board member and resident of Lovelock, asked Wally if he would consider creating a residency in the Pershing County schools. He accepted. The program resulting from this grant was a series of fourteen lectures, entitled "Pershing County in Perspective." This program was similar to the one he presented in Hawthorne except that, based on his recent experience with archaeology in Fallon, he included a segment on the pre-history of the area. Wally gave the last lecture in the series, summarizing the entire program. Thus the kid who had been abused in Montana schools as "stupid" was now lecturing in company with Nevada's leading scholars. Wally was able to involve many community institutions in the project including the schools, the Indian Colony, the library, and the Marsden House Museum. Cuchine's experience in Lovelock was similar to that in Hawthorne because he became part of the community, and the community responded by supporting the project energetically.

Lincoln County: Humanist in Schools (October 1, 1986 to February 28, 1987)

Every community Wally lived in felt like home, and when the residencies ended he always hoped he could stay. Unfortunately, it wasn't easy to find work. So, when things got tight in Lovelock he accepted the invitation of his friend Carolyn Kershaw to move his trailer to her property in Caliente in Lincoln County. Wally loved it there, and he hoped to make Lincoln County his home. He had a wonderful group of friends in Pioche, Panaca, and Caliente including the sculptor Larry Williamson and the poet Gary Short. The group would have potluck dinners, go on field trips, camping trips, and excursions of all sorts. They were "deep into archaeology," and created a chapter of the Nevada Archaeological Association in Lincoln County. Wally remained in Lincoln County for a year, but the offer of a residency in Ely, White Pine County, led to yet another move.

As part of his Lincoln County residency, Wally brought in Barry Price, archaeologist from the Bureau of Land Management, to lecture on the prehistory of the county. At the conclusion of his work in Lincoln County, Price asked Wally to consider a residency at the White Pine Public Museum in Ely.

Ely: Humanist-in-Residence, White Pine County Museum (June 16 to October 1987)

The goal of this residency was to develop a booklet on ethnic diversity in the copper mining region around Ely and McGill. The booklet and the lecture series that Wally developed in conjunction with it required that he utilize the services of several eminent Nevada historians. He needed the expertise of Wilbur Shepperson, the University of Nevada, Reno historian who had approved that initial grant. Shep had done extensive research on the area's ethnic diversity for his book *Restless Strangers* and was thus essential to the program. Wally also met UNR's Russell R. Elliott, a prominent historian who had grown up in White Pine County and who had studied the area extensively. When they first met, Wally felt "incredibly nervous." At the time, he thought, "[H]ere is this doctor in history; who am I to be talking to this god?" Wally's trepidation at meeting Elliott dissipated when the historian took him to meet many important people in the community. They developed a friendship that lasted until Elliott's death.

The booklet and lecture series were well received, and in their aftermath Wally was offered a part-time job at the White Pine Public Museum. The pay was skimpy, so the museum applied for another humanities residency to fill out his salary. Wally worked hard to expand and professionalize the museum. For example, he improved the gift shop by expanding the selection of Nevada books and developing a Nevada Book Fair. As a result of his efforts the directors of the museum decided that they needed a full-time employee.

The second Ely residency concluded Wally's career as a Humanist in Residence for the Nevada Humanities Committee. As he describes it, Nevada Humanities told him: "We've given you Hawthorne, Fallon, Lovelock, Lincoln

County, and then two residencies in Ely, and we can't be your bread and butter. So now you have to get a real job, Wally." He was approaching forty and knew he needed to settle down; he needed a real job with benefits. In 1991, at the age of forty-three, Wally became director of the Bristlecone Convention Center in Ely. Because of the relationships he had developed during his years as humanist in rural communities, Wally was able to attract conventions from groups such as the Nevada Archaeological Association and the Bureau of Land Management. He worked at the Bristlecone Convention Center from early 1991 until he accepted a position managing the Eureka Opera House in April of 1993.

Wally has lived in Eureka longer than in any other place, and he hopes to stay there for the rest of his life. Although he never did a humanities residency there, he was familiar with the community from a residency in environmental science that he undertook while a student at Sierra Nevada College. His work in history in rural Nevada also brought him into contact with people from Eureka. As Wally reflects on these early contacts with Eureka, he understands that Eureka has always been one of his favorite communities. "I loved being in Eureka," he says, " I loved being part of that Court House crowd when I was first working there." Wally is very proud of the fact that "fifty people from the community came to that County Commissioners meeting [that selected him] and said, 'We want him to do this! He's the person who can do it.'"

Wally's position at the Eureka Opera House was perfect for him. He had tremendous freedom because the county commissioners looked to him to define his responsibilities, and they gave him a great deal of money to achieve his goals. For instance, he decided to create a permanent art collection on Eureka topics, mounted at the opera house. Working with his friend Jim McCormick, together they lured dozens of artists to the community for weekend retreats, called the Loneliest Art Workshop in Nevada. Some of the work resulting from these "Loneliest" workshops became the core of the community's permanent art collection. When the opportunity arose to double the size of the Eureka Sentinel Museum by taking over the second floor of the building, Wally jumped at the chance. The county commissioners supported his ideas and provided the funds to make them a reality.

I met Wally not long after he moved to Eureka in 1993. It was 1994, and Peter Goin, professor of photography at UNR, and I were taking a group of advanced students on a rural Nevada photographic workshop. Peter and I knew that the Eureka Opera House had recently been restored and that there was an interesting new guy running the facility. Wally was welcoming and enthusiastic, and it was a very positive experience. Our friendship grew when we both joined the Nevada Humanities Committee in the fall of 1995, he as a board member and I as the assistant director. Wally and Jim McCormick also included me, as a photographer, in one of their "Loneliest" workshops.

One of my favorite Wally Cuchine memories comes from these years. Wally hosted a board meeting of the Nevada Humanities Committee in Eureka. He

had organized the event perfectly and he was a gracious host. One of his plans was to introduce board members to central Nevada, by arranging a trip to Spencer's Hot Springs, which is approximately half way between Eureka and Austin. Most board members were game, and so we left Eureka, caravan style, at about 9:00 p.m. for the one-hour trip. We arrived at the remote and mostly undeveloped hot spring on a perfectly clear moonless night. Sitting in a lusciously comfortable Nevada hot spring with friends is always wonderful, but what made this time especially memorable was that Comet Hale-Bopp was carving a brilliant arc across the star-filled moonless sky. I do not think that anyone on that desert trip will ever forget that scene. Wally is someone who makes events like this happen. He is aware of how to present the art of Nevada, whether that art is found in a circle of friends sitting in a hot springs on a beautiful night, or that art is found on a canvas or in a sculpture.

The term Wally's World has several meanings to Wally Cuchine's friends. In the broadest sense, it refers to the life, community, and sense of place that Wally has created in Eureka. In this broad sense, Wally's World has included cultural events, from classical to country music and theater, involving well-known artists and local talent. He has drawn all sorts of regional conferences to the Eureka Opera House. He arranges, each year, the popular Boars Head Feast, a grand party held prior to Christmas. Wally's World also encompasses the artists who have come to Eureka to work at his request, and whose work he has later displayed. Wally's World also refers to all the work that Wally himself has done at the Eureka Sentinel Museum.

But more specific, Wally's World refers to Cuchine's mobile home, to the Shed Gallery, and to the land. When a casual observer drives through Wally's Eureka neighborhood, composed of modest houses and mobile homes, it is nearly impossible to tell that there is something special about Wally's World. Of course, one might notice an overabundance of pink flamingos and cow skulls. There are also the wrought-iron saguaro cacti and the forest of dead trees which he has lovingly planted on the ridge behind his house. But for Wally's friends this anonymous place holds special meaning.

Wally's World is a three-part creation composed of the mobile home where Wally lives, the trailer that he calls the Shed Gallery—which contains part of his art collection—and the land behind his living quarters that provides the canvas for his unconventional notions of landscape design. Wally's World not only contains an art collection, it is a work of art. Wally's home is warm and inviting. Every surface, inside and out, contains artwork, memorabilia, found objects, and desert detritus.

It was enjoyable and challenging to photograph the interior of his home. As is usual in such structures, quarters are tight, and artwork is displayed from floor to ceiling and on every surface. While Jim McCormick and Wally worked on an inventory of his collection, I wandered and photographed. Jim was often frustrated because he could never complete his inventory because Wally

wouldn't stop buying art. Wally jokingly told Jim that he was going into a ten-step program to suppress his art-buying addiction. It was a ten-step program because a twelve-step program might actually help him quit.

Wally began his art collection during his humanities residencies, but his peripatetic lifestyle made serious collecting virtually impossible. Having a "real job" and the stability it brought allowed him to indulge his passion for art. Thus was born Wally's World. It is important to note that the Wally's World trailer is not only the home of a major collection of Nevada art but also contains a significant library of Nevada books covering all subjects from history to anthropology and geology to politics. His library has nearly three thousand items.

Among the reasons Wally loves Eureka is its ever-present sense of history as represented by its historic buildings, such as the Eureka Opera House and the Court House. For him, Eureka has the feel of an authentic mining town during its glory days. Wally also loves Eureka's proximity to the mountains and the quiet of the town. The community is just the right size for him. "It's small, but it's not so small that you don't have the amenities" such as a grocery store and a doctor.

At the same time, Eureka is different from many of the rural communities in which Wally has lived because "people don't interact with each other a lot." People in Eureka "stay to themselves and they leave each other alone, which is totally different from what I was used to." However, in many ways this suits Wally. He states that the community was perfect for him because he needed "to learn to like who I was . . . and to learn to like to be in my own space by myself."

Slowly Wally made friends with people such as the artist Gary Link and his family. He also befriended a number of elderly women—Wally's Widows they are called—whom he helps in many ways; he shovels their walks, takes them to doctor's visits in Reno, and spends time visiting. Wally has also made Eureka an important site on the state's cultural map. Artists from around the state know that the Shed Gallery is always available for an overnight stay or a week-long impromptu residency. Thus, Wally has created his own community consisting of his home in Eureka and a far-flung network of friends in small towns, on ranches, and in big cities. They are linked by their commitment to Nevada and its culture. Wally loves his solitude, but he is loved and welcomed throughout the state. "As I get older," he states, "I also really love that time when I can go home and close the door and I'm home alone, because I love being in my space. I love the life I've built for myself."

Wally travels a lot. He attends frequent meetings in Las Vegas, Reno, Elko, and Ely, as well as traveling out of state. But his commitment to Eureka and rural Nevada is stronger than ever. Wally "likes small." He likes the feeling that everybody knows everybody. He likes his solitude, but he also wants to know everybody on the street when he goes out. Wally has said, "I like to be

able to walk down the street and stop into any shop and I know those people, and they know me—whether they like me or not." It is always a relief for Wally when he heads back to Eureka. He continues, "I feel like I'm almost home, because I'm back to that little community where I could walk from one end of town to the other . . . . And I know everybody on every street."

Wally loves rural Nevada for its vastness and openness. "The difference between rural anyplace else and Nevada . . . is that when you leave Eureka, there is nobody between there and Austin, or there and Ely. It's out there, it's totally open, and it's mine. I can be there, I can go any place I want to go, and do anything I want to do because it's all public, which I think is really important. And you can't say that in other places."

Wally is one of Nevada's best tour guides. Here, he gives a tour of Eureka to a group of seniors from Sacramento, California. Wally's efforts to increase cultural tourism have encouraged many groups to visit Eureka. (*Photo by Stephen Davis*)

Wally discusses Nevada history with a California tourist in Eureka's Odd Fellows Cemetery. Eureka's cemeteries are extensive and contain stones that tell very human stories about life in a central Nevada mining town. (*Photo by Stephen Davis*)

Cuchine loves to entertain. Here he prepares an elaborate barbecue for Jim McCormick, Eureka artist Gary Link, and me. (*Photo by Stephen Davis*)

Juniper fence with cow skulls, Wally's World, Eureka. (*Photo by Stephen Davis*)

The Wally's World trailer, Wally's bedroom, portrait of Wally by Shirley Shaft (*Photo by Stephen Davis*)

The Wally's World trailer, interior with comfortable chairs with carved magpie by Ray Turek, Eureka. (*Photo by Stephen Davis*)

Wally's bedroom in his Wally's World trailer. (*Photo by Stephen Davis*)

The stage at the Eureka Opera House seen from the balcony. (*Photo by Stephen Davis*)

Book Reviews

Power and Place in the North American West. Edited by Richard White and John M. Findlay (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999)

Geographical Identities of Ethnic America: Race, Space, and Place. Edited by Kate A. Berry and Martha L. Henderson (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2002)

Social scientists and humanists, under the influence of postmodernism, have been in the last few decades examining the intersection of place, power, and identities in human interactions. Socially constructed spaces, relations of power, and the fluidity of identities, to name just a few well-turned phrases, have become part of mainstream nomenclature, no longer associated with political advocacy or the rantings of left-wing radicals. The books under review here speak to those changes.

Richard White and John M. Findlay's *Power and Place in the North American West* offers twelve essays originally delivered at a 1994 symposium. These revised essays collectively consider how power was exercised within specific places, relations of power between places (regions), and the power of the place (specifically, northwestern subregions).

The anthology, following the insightful, if somewhat repetitive introductory chapter, opens with three well-written essays on the resistance of Indians to non-Indian (actually EuroAmerican) power. James P. Rhonda leads off with a riveting piece on the declining power of the Clatsop Indians to defend their autonomy as the pace of Anglo-American encroachment picked up by the early nineteenth century. While Rhonda's piece explores how power relates to time and the pressure of the nation-state, James F. Brook's essay on nineteenth-century trafficking of humans in the New Mexican borderlands homes in on the structural force of the political economy determining these exchanges, although gender and class seemed to be at play here too. Concluding this section is John Lutz's "Making 'Indians' in British Columbia," which frames a familiar story of colonization within a framework of racialization.

The thread of politics and practice of race continues into section II. While the first section dwells on the exercise of power by structural forces, this one concentrates on that by people, both commoners and notables. Kevin Allen Leonard claims that the antifederal sentiment that followed World War II

developed in part from a backlash against the government's antidiscrimination efforts during the 1940s. Leonard is silent on how that compares to the tussle for lands and resources between westerners and federal authorities. Still, if some westerners were backward looking, others were the opposite. Los Angeles black boosters, as argued in "Race, Rhetoric, and Regional Identity," juxtaposed a favorable image of the West to the racist one of other regions, all in the name of promoting positive change in race relations. The dilemma of the bicultural identities of second-generation Chinese and Japanese during the 1930s and 1940s is a well-told tale, but Chris Friday situated the phenomena within trans-Pacific events that reinforced their ties to the homelands and weakened those to America.

Part III of this book turns the reader's attention to the western environment and its control by private enterprise and the government. While Hal Rothman examines the manufacturing of tourism in Sun Valley, Idaho, by investors and residents, Paul Hirt critiques the management of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest in the second half of the twentieth century. As in the case of the felling of timber, the harvesting of salmon in Oregon, the subject of Joseph E. Taylor III's essay, involved competing interests and the use of judiciary to adjudicate. In the end, both industries took aim at conservation, with federal authorities abetting such deeds. William G. Robbins's piece concludes this section of the book with an elaboration of the relationship in Oregon of the metropolis and the countryside, the economy and nature's bounty, in facilitating industrialism.

Only one essay graces the section entitled "Gender in the Urban West." Virginia Scharff's reflective, humor-tinged essay argues that restrictions, both political and cultural, on women's mobility have allowed inequality to persist and thus power to be exercised by some at the expense of others. A few essays that explain how the interplay of gender, race, class, and sexuality might have differed from region to region would well have served this volume.

Geographical Identities of Ethnic America, edited by Kate Berry and Martha Henderson, is a collection of eleven essays written by geographers. It echoes to a certain degree the theme of power and place of White and Findlay's book, although less is mentioned of the complexity of power. "How place matters in the experience and processes that shape racial and ethnic identity, and how individuals and groups acting on their identities create spatial patterns and landscapes" (p. xiv), explains the focus of this volume. Yet the book as a whole disappoints; it simply does not consistently deliver on its promise.

Curtis C. Roseman's workmanlike essay traces the changes in the ethnic makeup of the population of the United States in the last two decades of the twentieth century. Following that, three essays located in different spaces and times explore the production of ethnic identity and class status. In the years following the era of the civil-rights movement, the persistency of residential segregation and the physical mobility of the black middle class have left poor African Americans deprived of resources. The outcome is predictable: An

underclass had emerged. The next two essays are oddball ones; as outlines of the histories of the Asian-Indian Canadian and Greek-American communities, they fail to reflect the major theme of this volume. A comparative analysis of Asian Indians in Canada with those in the United States would have been helpful. Likewise, how identity changed relative to the demographic distribution of Greeks across time would have been appropriate. Several other essays in this volume echo the theme, but only to some degree. In "Alaska's Contested Rural Landscapes" by Steven Behnke, much of the focus is on tracing the history of the subsistence claims of Alaska's indigenous peoples rather than linking that to the creative use of the land, which in turn can suggest the cultural retention.

While some essays privilege ethnicity over space, others reverse that order. For example, Teresa L. Dillinger's essay on the contemporary delivery of health care on the Round Valley Indian reservation painstakingly explains that the scattered nature of Indian settlement has hindered the accessibility of health care. A question arises: Does this situation strengthen the use of traditional medicine? Jeffrey S. Smith's "Cultural Landscape Change in an Hispanic Region" details the changing shape of Hispanic settlements in New Mexico since the entry of Anglo-Americans in the midnineteenth century. Linear settlements, which arose because of the limitations imposed by nature, were soon replaced by nodal-shaped settlements as Anglos wrought economic transformations in this region. But how this relates to ethnic identity remains unexplained. Smith is more persuasive when he argues that the decline in the distribution of Penitente moradas and social/worker support chapter houses points to a weakening of traditional roots.

Three essays stand out in their discussion of the main theme. Matthew G. Hannah's narrative about the responses of the Oglala Lakota group in the 1870s to white colonization before the climatic 1876 Battle of the Little Bighorn says nothing new. His interpretation, however, demands our attention. Hannah points out that the Oglala tried to defend their autonomy through spatial forms of resistance. He explains that the Oglala resorted to manipulating mobility to catch the government off guard. They refused to move when ordered, and moved when asked to do the opposite. Two other essays borrow insights from anthropology to frame the stories of Samoan and Vietnamese cultural practices. In spite of migration, webs of intraethnic networks adapted to new environments, and in so doing, allowed for resistance to assimilation. For example, the Vietnamese in New Orleans, as described in Christopher A. Airriess's chapter, resorted to community landscape signatures that create a sense of place. Ethnic churches, Asian vegetable gardens, and commercial strips that offer goods from Vietnam and services that link co-ethnics to their homeland not only create a readily identifiable community in a white-dominated society, but also serve as "reminders of past places and adaptive features of present places" (p. 248).

These books provide a number of signposts for scholars to follow. First, what remains to be researched is the study of power and place beyond the "black-and-white" binary. History and contemporary life undoubtedly have been and continue to be shaped by the power of Euro-Americans. But what about power relations between the so-called marginalized groups? Another question deals with the possible difference between the way that Euro-Americans and other groups perceive space, or is any difference simply a function of the differing impact of economic upheavals? Both books, in spite of the reviewer's quibbles, testify to the generalization that spaces become places, and cultures turn into sites of power, when humans interact across boundaries of race, ethnicity, and national origins.

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Warm Sands: Uranium Mill Tailings Policy in the Atomic West. By Eric W. Mogren (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002)

Warm Sands is the history of federal uranium mill-tailings policy from the 1940s to the 1980s. In this insightful volume, historian Eric Mogren argues that, at least until the late 1970s, the Atomic Energy Commission's (AEC) Cold War goals for national defense took precedence over critics' concerns for health and environmental risks. Legal technicalities under the Atomic Energy Acts of 1946 and 1954 allowed the federal agency to relinquish responsibility for a dangerous by-product of uranium production: mill tailings laden with radioactive contaminants. Despite medical warnings of the dangers of uranium and its by-products as early as the 1920s, the AEC permitted private milling companies during the period following World War II to give their tailings to states and private firms for use in roadbeds, as backfill for commercial and residential areas, and for other construction projects. In the meantime, run-off from the tailings seeped into ground waters and drained into major streams, such as the Animas River, killing aquatic life and poisoning unsuspecting people.

When public health officials realized these perils by the late 1950s, the AEC claimed that regulation and remediation were the responsibilities of counties and states. After all, the average American, the AEC rationalized, greatly benefited from the development of the atom in the form of national defense and hopes for cheap and safe nuclear energy in the future. With overwhelming public support in this Cold War climate, federal policy makers felt justified in passing on the costs for clean-up to the states. Mogren interprets the AEC's actions as a violation of its "moral obligation to ensure the safety and health of . . . citizens" (p. 14). Mill workers and homeowners in towns like Grand

Junction, Colorado, and Salt Lake City, among other atomic energy cities, fell victim to this longstanding policy. Unusually high levels of birth defects, cancer, and other deadly ailments (discovered by physicians in the 1960s) plagued Colorado's western slope and other "atomic" communities, especially in the American West.

Mogren does not recognize it, but he is reiterating twentieth-century industrial tendencies (in both the private and public sectors) to ignore health and environmental consequences in favor of goals of national hegemony and corporate imperialism, at least until the explosion of environmentalism in the 1960s. Eventually this hegemonic ideology was countered with a concern for people and the environment, manifest in the Uranium Mill Tailings Remedial Action (UMTRA) project passed in the United States Congress in 1978. Efforts of state health and environmental agencies in cooperation with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the newly formed Nuclear Regulatory Agency, which replaced the AEC in the 1970s as a division of the Department of Energy (DOE) resulted in the removal and containment of forty million cubic yards of radioactive tailings and the decontamination of more than five thousand private and public properties. The federal government, especially through the efforts of the EPA (and despite delaying tactics by the Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush administrations), began to come to terms with its generations-long negligence of westerners and their water and air.

The strength of Mogren's informative monograph lies in his discussion of the evolution of the Atomic Energy Commission's uranium mill-tailings policy. He shows the continuity in the agency's legal assertions that the AEC was not responsible under federal law for tailings clean-up. An attorney turned historian, Mogren makes a compelling argument that the AEC used its chemical engineers, health experts, and agency attorneys to misinform the public about the dangers of the tailings and then to deflect responsibility for those dangers once state officials revealed the potential and actual risks in the 1950s and 1960s.

On the other hand, the author's emphasis on public policy makes for sometimes thick reading, filled with acronyms, atomic-energy jargon (that is often not defined), and legalistic exchanges common to weighty government reports. Mogren could have livened up the prose with more discussion of the people, rather than just the amorphous agencies, involved in the decades-long controversy. Although he does introduce officials of the AEC, other federal agencies, and state health offices, he does so superficially. Most glaring is the absence of the grassroots activists in general, whether homeowners in Grand Junction or environmentalists in the West, who played significant roles in influencing the atomic-energy establishment finally to take substantial steps toward remedial action. The reader wonders whether an Erin Brockovich archetype emerged during the tailings controversy, for example. Mogren also might have given more script to the implementation of UMTRA at the various grounds zero.

These criticisms aside, *Warm Sands* is an important book. Mogren shows the

continuities of damaging public industrial policies in masking health and environmental dangers. His study also suggests that greater emphasis on the impact of mining and processing of mineral resources is needed in the evolving literature, especially in general histories of the American West. A deeper understanding of the history of mining and the environment is necessary to paint a fuller portrait of the western past. Mogren's interpretation of the AEC's uranium tailings controversy is a step toward filling this gap.

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The Western: Parables of the American Dream. By Jeffrey Wallmann (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1999)

The Western is a compact book on a big subject. In about two hundred pages, Wallmann traces the history of writing about the West from the Indian-captivity narratives that developed in colonial America to the present. Wallmann's goals were to satisfy the need for a comprehensive study of the western, to persuade scholars to take this genre more seriously, and to do something to revive the western as a popular literary form. The book focuses on the written word, but the final chapters include information on television and movies. Wallmann demonstrates that the western in its various forms has served as an important indicator of cultural and intellectual trends in America. Readers will find the book valuable in three ways: as a history of the western genre, a bibliographic guide, and an insider's view of the publishing business.

Wallmann is uniquely qualified to bridge the worlds of academia, business, and the popular press. In addition to having solid scholarly credentials, he has published about two hundred western novels under various pseudonyms, and has worked as a private investigator, sales representative, and public relations specialist. Such a background provides a range of experiences not found on most academic résumés. Wallmann states his opinions directly and unequivocally: For example, everyone who reads the book will know that he dislikes the New Western Historians and chain bookstores.

The Western is divided into seven chapters. The first asks, what is the West, how have Americans conceptualized it, and what images have developed about it? In this chapter, Wallmann introduces the views of pre-eminent scholars, such as Henry Nash Smith and John G. Cawelti, whose ideas are essential for understanding the dualities that run throughout the book.Chapter 2 focuses on defining the western and presenting it as a complex literary form. To do this, Wallmann discusses the West's mythic aspects, as well as movement, process, violence, heroes, and concepts of wilderness and civilization. In Chapter

3 the western novel's raw material is traced to captivity narratives, and travel and military accounts, and then to the works of James Fenimore Cooper and John Filsen's "The Adventures of Col. Daniel Boone," which Filsen appended to *The Discovery, Settlement, and Present State of Kentucke* (1784). Wallmann designates Boone's "Adventures" as the first western novel. Chapter 4 concentrates on dime novels and demonstrates that they defined much about the legendary West and popularized enduring stereotypes, such as villainous Indians, shifty half-breeds, stalwart heroes, virginal heroines, and eastern dudes.

Chapter 5 covers the western from 1900 to1930, a time when everyone knew the names Owen Wister and Zane Grey, and western novels enjoyed tremendous popularity. According to Wallmann, Wister's *The Virginian* (1902) transformed dime-novel conventions into literature suitable for the parlor, and created the "contemporary western." This was a kind of literature built around a recent event (Wyoming's Johnson County War, 1892) and which also emphasized a concomitant concern for social justice emanating from the Progressive movement. For his part, Grey enchanted his readers with escapist romances built around adventure and affairs of the heart. Chapter 6 takes westerns from 1930 to the present, but breaks this time into two distinct subperiods—from 1930 to the late 1960s, and then the years after that. In the first time slot, westerns thrived in print, television, and movies, and reassured Americans that their core values were sound during the Great Depression, World War II, and the Cold War. However, in the late 1960s, westerns fragmented along with the rest of society; consequently, resolute heroes and heroines gave way to less heroic figures, non-heroes, and anti-heroes, and new forms of the western emerged—anachronistic, existentialist, and anti-establishment novels and films. The last part of chapter 6 examines the decline in popularity of the western in recent times. The seventh and final chapter considers the future of the western. In it Wallmann documents that the western has fallen on hard times, but predicts that it will survive, and even prosper, if faith in the American Dream strengthens and western writers remember that they must relate their themes and characters to the changing mood of society. For example, western heroes and heroines might become ecologically aware, since that sentiment is strong in America.

The book is a solid, comprehensive, and much-needed literary history of westerns. On the literary aspects, Wallmann keeps his comments precise and on target, thereby avoiding the tendency of many scholars to belabor minor literary points. Some sections, such as those on myth and mythical heroes, tackle complicated concepts and explain and analyze them briefly and understandably. Historians will appreciate the fact that he weaves westerns into the social and intellectual fabric with references to such events as the Enlightenment, Great Awakening, Progressivism, depressions, and wars.

Some portions of the book are thought-provoking. An emphasis on duality runs through the book, and includes good and evil, East and West, justice and

injustice, wilderness and civilization, nature's laws and people's laws, and wilderness as a condition to be conquered and preserved. As the subtitle of the book, *Parables of the American Dream*, suggests, Wallmann says that the western is tied inextricably to the American Dream, but is a special version of it with its own myths, characters, historicity, emphasis on movement and testing, sense of place, and concern about violence.

Some of Wallmann's material will spark debate. He defines the western as a work that involves "personal character striving to overcome perilous circumstances in adventure stories which could not happen anywhere but on a western or pseudo-western frontier" (p. 180). That definition, he argues, precludes science fiction from being a kind of western. Wallmann also defines success for westerns on the basis of popularity and cash-register receipts. Some would argue that the future of westerns lies more in quality than quantity.

The weaknesses of the book are minor. In several places, Wallmann says that Wild West shows played an important part in the development of the western myth; however, he does not provide many specifics to support that generalization. Some paragraphs stretch to unwieldy length, and many pages contain four or five direct quotations from secondary sources. Those familiar with the bibliography and archives on western literature will note that Wallmann does not cite unpublished works (such as noteworthy dissertations), published collections of letters, or archival sources. Such research would have provided more insights into the thought of these authors.

Over-all, the book is excellent. It fills the need for a comprehensive history of the western and provides valuable suggestions about reviving the genre. It is invaluable as a bibliographical tool for scholars in literature, history, film studies, and popular culture. *Choice* designated *The Western: Parables of the American Dream* as one of the five books in its "Humanities" division of "Outstanding Academic Titles, 2000." Wallman's outstanding volume deserves that award.

Paul Reddin
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Wiping the War Paint off the Lens: Native American Film and Video. By Beverly R. Singer (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001)

This is a short book on the images of Native Americans in video and film. As such, *Wiping the War Paint off the Lens* focuses on the early twentieth century to the present, although the author puts her subject in perspective by tracing the dominant images of Indians from colonial America to the contemporary world. Beverly Singer asserts that white society has been racist and continues to be so,

and supports this contention with references to Indian policy in the United States, entertainments such as Wild West shows and early movies, and the practice of using images of Native Americans as mascots for athletic teams. Singer argues that prejudice and ignorance make it impossible for even the best-intentioned white person to portray Indian culture accurately. She spikes this view with the following statement about movies: "Filmmaking is the white man's craft that betrayed Native Americans and promoted our demise" (p. 33). Singer argues that Indians must themselves make the films that are sensitive to Indian culture because they are the only ones familiar with the culture, particularly the oral traditions on which all accurate portrayals must be based. Singer says that Indians have demonstrated their ability to make aesthetically pleasing and accurate films about their culture whenever given the opportunity.

Beverly R. Singer possesses the credentials to write a book focused on white culture, the Native American worldview, and film. As a Native American from the pueblo of Santa Clara, she sees the world from an Indian perspective; attended public school in Espanola, New Mexico, and the College of Santa Fe; and has studied countless films. She also sees film and video from a producer's perspective, and knows many of the other Native Americans involved in this profession. Presently she serves as director of the Alfonso Ortiz Center for International Studies at the University of New Mexico, and remains committed to making films and videos.

Wiping the War Paint off the Lens consists of a forward by Robert Warrior, a "Prologue in Three Parts," acknowledgments, an introduction, five chapters, and a conclusion. The forward, prologue, and introduction stress that Native American people and white folks see the world differently, and that Indians need to tell their own story through film and video. Chapter 1 discusses the difficulty of identity for Native Americans in a country where the dominant culture bombilates Indians and everyone else with negative stereotypes, such as the mascots used for university and professional sports, screaming savages in Hollywood movies, and mass-produced "Indian" objects. Singer says that Indian-produced videos and films can serve as an antidote for such insensitive portrayals of their culture. Chapter 2 studies the roots of prevailing stereotypes, including that of Indians as a people to be subdued, found in Wild West shows and movies. Chapter 3 "Toward Independence," demonstrates that Indians have gained some control over video and movie making because of spokesmen like Vine Deloria, Jr., and rare sympathetic politicians such as senators Robert F. Kennedy and Edward M. Kennedy. In addition, the founding of Indian colleges, the American Indian Movement, wider acceptance of Indian art, and efforts by Indians for political self-determination have all made positive contributions to public awareness.

Chapter four is a history of Indian video and film production in the United States and Canada. Singer says that the last thirty years have been productive

because of such efforts as a National Science Foundation grant that put cameras in the hands of Navajo Indians to record their way of life, the Community Film Workshop in Santa Fe, and the Anthropology Film Center in Santa Fe. The chapter includes biographical sketches of twenty-one Indian filmmakers. Chapter 5 shows that Indians are deeply involved in video and film production, and that Indian-made films are accurate portrayals of Indian life and are based on the oral tradition. Six exemplary Indian movies are analyzed and summarized in the chapter. The conclusion documents the recent efforts of Native Americans to continue to expand their control of movies and videos. Singer also credits festivals and alliances for helping to build a sense of community among Native Americans.

This book is important for those interested in the production of films, but it also speaks to a larger audience. Those outside the field of film and video production will find the volume conveys a Native American perspective on the myths and stereotypes that permeate American society, on the history of Indians in film, and on Native Americans' efforts to win acceptance and respect from the dominant culture. This is an excellent source for anyone wanting to know about the worldview of Indians and about locating good films produced from that point of view. Those teaching courses with a multicultural perspective or component and those planning a film festival on Native Americans will find the movies and filmmakers listed in the book valuable.

The premise of the book is that the content of entertainment is controlled by those who produce it.. A different perspective is that performers have some power, at least in regard to Wild West shows. L.G. Moses in *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933* (1996) and Joy S. Kasson in *Buffalo Bill's Wild West: Celebrity, Memory, and Popular History* (2000) argue that Native American performers found some avenues for self-expression in these shows that were controlled by white showmen. While Singer's book is focused on the directors more than the performers, an examination of the proposition that Indians sometimes found ways to express their own views in entertainments run by white people would have formed an interesting paragraph or two in *Wiping the War Paint off the Lens.* Even a report of finding no evidence that this occurred would add a significant bit of material about the difference between live performances and movies in which Native Americans appeared.

The book is excellent. It serves as an historical document on stereotypes and popular culture, a handbook on Native American efforts in film and video, and a guide for changing the image of Indians in contemporary society. *Wiping the War Paint off the Lens* is a solid work, and one that deserves wide readership.

Paul Reddin
Mesa State College

Visions of Paradise: Glimpses of Our Landscape's Legacy. By John Warfield Simpson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999)

Visions of Paradise is one man's attempt to catalogue the forces that have combined to create the modern American suburban landscape. It combines intellectual history, environmental history, biography, urban planning, landscape architecture, anecdote, and personal essay to explore the origin and meaning of that landscape, which Simpson describes as "my heritage made visible" (p. ix). A child of the suburbs, this professor of landscape architecture and natural resources at Ohio State University sets out to understand the world in which he grew up. "Physically and socially," he claims, "suburbia is the essence of the American landscape" (p. 254). The book is his attempt to explain why. Synthesizing the work of numerous scholars, Simpson presents a general history of American landscape, beginning with eighteenth century military and settlement expeditions into the Ohio River valley, and following across the continent in the footsteps of Lewis and Clark, John Wesley Powell, and John Muir, among others.

In leisurely fashion *Visions of Paradise* first recounts the displacement of native people from territories claimed by the United States, acknowledging that Indian and Euro-American cultures had very different ways of managing the land they used. The book considers the origins and appeal of the rectangular survey, recounts the emergence of national parks and the conservation movement, and chronicles the milestones of changing American attitudes toward wilderness. Although an early introductory essay that depicts the complex personal histories of the mixed-race inhabitants of early Ohio promises a richly detailed history, most of this book is based on other books, not drawn from the archives.

Simpson organizes his work chronologically and follows American settlement westward across the continent. Nothing about his portrayal will surprise readers of Water Prescott Webb, Henry Nash Smith, Roderick Nash, John Stilgoe, or Kenneth Jackson. After explaining the influence of Enlightenment rationalism and Transcendentalist romanticism on American attitudes toward nature, Simpson delivers a standard account of increasing government regulation of the public domain during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, culminating with the 1977 Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act. The latter, as Simpson points out, mandates restoration of coal mines to their "approximate original contour" on the basis of very little factual evidence that such restoration is in fact environmentally responsible (p. 237). This example, he reminds us, demonstrates that "landscape is a personal perception shaped by many forces"(p. 244).

Reading the book is a bit like hearing a series of classroom lectures on the history of American settlement and attitudes toward nature. There are few surprises in *Visions of Paradise,* and no interpretive revelations; but the book

distills a mass of solid information and offers occasional intriguing insights along the way. For example, Simpson's account of 19th century landscape gardening includes not only the prominent exponent Andrew Jackson Downing, but also the religious ideas of Horace Bushnell and the domestic ideals propounded by the Beecher sisters, Catharine and Harriet. In this chapter, as throughout the book, illustrations and maps of the phenomena Simpson discusses are sorely lacking.

The final chapters, where Simpson finally reaches the suburbs that initially spurred his quest, backtrack historically to cover economic history and urban planning in the nineteenth century, including the Industrial Revolution and transportation innovations. Here the focus is not the division and exploitation of natural resources in the West, but urban planning, largely in the East. Simpson spends considerable time on the career of Frederick Law Olmsted, whom he credits with creating a vision of the city as a suburb and thereby launching the suburban pastoral ideal that was spread by the automobile and by government home-financing policies in the mid twentieth century (p. 316). Although Simpson notes the proliferation of suburban landscapes, he fails to answer his own provocative question, in the final chapter, about the meaning of this pervasive form. His book explains the many historical forces that have culminated in the modern suburb, but *Visions of Paradise* does not live up to its subtitle. Ultimately, the question of the landscape's legacy remains for someone else to answer.

C. Elizabeth Raymond
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Environmentalism Unbound: Exploring New Pathways for Change. By Robert Gottlieb (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001)

Robert Gottlieb, the Henry R. Luce Professor of Urban and Environmental Policy at Occidental College, has produced a well-reasoned and meticulously researched cross-disciplinarily work that in its detail and readability will help chart the future course of environmentalism. Both a concise history of the environmental movement and a call for a new action plan based largely on recent community-based activism, *Environmentalism Unbound* challenges all of us to understand that we can never really extricate ourselves as responsible agents in either environmental change or degradation. By detailing the discourse and failings of mainstream environmentalism, and then using three current issues as potential paths for change, Gottlieb issues a powerful call for action. He bases this call on real and powerful socioeconomic needs that point to the necessity of changing the very essence of modern capitalistic production.

Gottlieb first provides a concise overview of environmental perspectives on land and resources, city and countryside, and work and industry. Gottlieb argues that the environmental movement's narrow conception of the "environment" has isolated it from everyday life's key issues, including workplace safety, healthy communities, and food security. While he is careful not to condemn overtly the leaders of the Sierra Club or the Environmental Defense Fund, Gottlieb asserts that they have more often than not viewed these more human issues as industrial, community, or agricultural concerns. This fragmented approach, he argues, prevents an awareness of how these issues are also environmental in nature.

Next, Gottlieb moves to the three convincing examples of this new approach to social and environmental change. The first involves a small industry, dry cleaning, and the debate over pollution-prevention approaches to the widespread use of toxic perchloroethylene (Perc). In the second illustration, Gottlieb shows how "considerations of work, environment, and social change come into play in relation to janitorial work and the commercial cleaning sector" (p. 147). In the third case, which covers two chapters, Gottlieb investigates the opportunities and impediments presented by community or regional approaches to food supply in the face of an increasingly globalized food system.

The author's range as a researcher and thinker are evident in his seamless use of ideas from intellectuals in disciplines ranging from literary history to geography. Most comfortable with scholars like Raymond Williams and David Harvey who root their perspectives soundly in the Marxian tradition, Gottlieb lifts the veil of consumerism inherent in the environmental movement that in the end encourages the experience or purchase of "nature," for example, hiking in a national park. Gottlieb traces the discourse of environmentalism over the past century and, utilizing the theories of Williams and Michael Pollan, argues that humans must see themselves in and intimately connected to "nature" so that meaningful environmental action can occur (pp. 44-45).

Laying bare the entangled history of governmental regulation and industry response, Gottlieb faults both megaentities for continuously addressing endpoint problems caused by an industrial process (i.e., lowering toxic emission from steel plants' smokestacks to comply with air-quality standards) without addressing the productive process or the product itself. Industrial leaders have thus embraced enough change to skirt damaging criticism while maintaining or even increasing their companies' profits. This pattern is perhaps nowhere better seen than in the automotive industry.

Gottlieb's call for the restructuring of capitalism stems from a deep awareness of the interconnectedness of production and place:

> Ultimately the ethic of place, the conflicts over the global and local, are also political battlefields, requiring changes at both the community and global scale, through the political process, in the management and reinvention of nature and human places, and in relation to public and private decision-making processes. For environmentalism, place

does matter, and one can act or think locally as well as globally by focusing, as we speak and act, on all the places we inhabit and share (p. 277).

His agenda, like all of ours, rests on a combination of personal experience rooted in a region, his being the Los Angeles basin, and decades of education, thought, and work.

But Gottlieb does much more than talk the proverbial talk. From the opening scene of his weekly visit to the local farmer's market to his reflection on the race-and-place-based issues raised in the aftermath of the 1992 civil unrest in Los Angeles, Gottlieb proves himself a grounded, conscientious humanist *and* scientist. He has made a real difference in the debate over Perc usage in dry cleaning; a report he wrote with colleagues from the Pollution Prevention Education and Research Center at Occidental College, an affiliated center in the Urban and Environmental Policy Institute, formed the basis for the South Coast Air Quality Management District's adoption in 2002 of regulations that phase out the use of this toxic chemical. And, in another example, through the work of the Center for Food and Justice (also affiliated with the center in the Urban and Environmental Policy Institute at Occidential), he has helped establish and evaluate a number of innovative community food programs and organizing initiatives, including the farm-to-school program and the development of the Los Angeles Food Network. While conversations on the discourses of power in the environmental movement and in approaches to nature are not the usual utterances heard at a community public hearing, Gottlieb's *Environmentalism Unbound* manages that rare feat of combining complicated critical analysis and historical contextualization with meaningful examples upon which real environmental and social change can occur.

Anthea Hartig
La Sierra University

Collecting Nature: The American Environmental Movement and the Conservation Library. By Andrew Glenn Kirk (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001)

A relatively straightforward question frames *Collecting Nature: The American Environmental Movement and the Conservation Library*: "How does an environmental library created by an older generation of technophobic men evolve, in fifteen short years, into a cutting-edge laboratory for alternative technology research run by young women?" (p. ix). In answering this question, Andrew Glenn Kirk, a professor of history at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, reveals fundamental ideological changes within the environmental movement occurring in the 1960s and 1970s. Along the way, too, he explains much about

library politics in the context of the Conservation Library contained within the Denver Public Library. Though a unified history of a library and the environmental movement might seem like an odd combination, Kirk weaves the story well and illuminates important social changes in American society.

Historians often perceive libraries as simply static collections of books and manuscripts. *Collecting Nature* helps us view libraries instead as dynamic, political places in which struggles over meaning and ideology occur every day. The Conservation Library began as the brainchild of Arthur Carhart in the late 1950s. A landscape architect and prominent conservation writer, Carhart conceived of the Conservation Library as having two purposes. One, it would be a monument to past conservation achievements. Two, it would be a center for continued advocacy (p. 50). As Carhart gathered supporters for the library's concept, he quickly found that they could not agree on a definition of "conservation." They initially settled on "Conservation is thought and action directed by man to protect, maintain and fortify the environmental complex that supports and enriches life as it now exists on planet earth"—a definition that did not meet with consensus (p. 68). With some ambivalence about definitions, no one was quite sure what the conservation collection would collect.

Compounding that problem, the Conservation Library's earliest years corresponded with a particularly fertile period in environmental ideology that Kirk depicts as an important generational change. Much of Carhart's generation viewed conservation in decidedly antimodernist terms. This group, so influential in the formation and initial direction of the Conservation Library, believed that technology threatened and detracted from humans' intimate contact with the natural world. Their alienation toward modern life colored their vision of conservation and the collection they sought to compile. In the mid-to-late 1960s, another vision of conservation arose, influenced by the counterculture and New Left theorists like Murray Bookchin and Herbert Marcuse. Rather than rejecting technology outright, these environmentalists embraced "appropriate technology" (p. 148). In their minds, technology per se was not to be feared, because it might be "used morally and ecologically [to] create a revolution toward a utopian future" (pp. 84-85). Ultimately, this alternative environmental ideology represented a unique "convergence . . . of back-to-nature primitivism and renewed technological enthusiasm" (p. 109). Accordingly, the Conservation Library during the 1970s morphed from a collection emphasizing wilderness and traditional outdoor recreation to a diverse clearinghouse of information about alternative energy. Indeed, for a time in the late 1970s, flush with federal funding, the library was known as the Regional Energy/Environment Information Center. The Conservation Library can be seen "as a metaphor for the transformation of environmental thinking in the 1960s" as reflected in its collections (p. 73).

Besides the generational shift in environmental ideology, the library reflected a gender shift in the history of libraries and the environmental movement. Men

with Rooseveltian notions of masculinity and the outdoors founded the Conservation Library. But when Carhart retired after a stroke in 1966, a changing of the guard ensued. Kay Collins, a young historian, librarian, and environmentalist, became the director of the Conservation Library in 1970, a significant leadership position for a female librarian. Her ascendancy symbolized the "many women and younger people who constituted the front lines of grassroots environmental battles [and] began to question the leadership of an older generation that did not seem willing to relinquish authority" (p. 108). Much less interested in venerating an older generation of (male) conservationists, Collins envisioned the library as a center for grassroots environmental advocacy with a greater focus on contemporary issues. Collins frequently caused controversy both in and out of the library with her own activism. She recognized the need for environmentalists to "push the boundaries of information technology and move away from the antimodernism of previous generations" (p. 139). Thus, Collins represented the generational and gender shift in the library and the movement.

In *Collecting Nature*, Kirk contributes significantly to the wide-ranging field of environmental history. For instance, he challenges the rather linear view of the evolution of conservation into environmentalism made popular by Samuel P. Hays and others. Kirk eschews the simplicity of the model, arguing for continuity and coexistence of several environmental ideologies rather than smooth transitions. Most important, he highlights the technology-savvy environmentalists who are absent in most studies. One of the most welcome discussions in this book concerns gender. Especially in his accounts of Carhart's early career and the contributions of Collins, Kirk explores the significant ways in which gender and environmentalism intersect. We need more studies that are sensitive to this vital topic.

Kirk designed his study with twin foci: the environmental movement *and* the Conservation Library. Although this approach may be appropriate, the two focal points complicate the narrative. At times, the movement seems to propel changes in the library, making the library almost a passive or reactive object; at other times, the library seems to follow an independent trajectory, making it an active agent of change. In still other places, two distinct stories seem to emerge with only the vaguest connections between them. The result is a constantly shifting narrative, which might confuse or frustrate readers. Also, some readers may get caught up with the story of the library and be distracted by the material on the movement. Or vice versa. On the other hand, this dilemma may make the book doubly worthwhile for some.

This is a minor criticism in what is an excellent book. Kirk concludes by suggesting that "the greatest legacy of the Conservation Library may be the story of the struggle to redefine environmental thinking to better fit the contingencies and paradoxes of the late twentieth century" (p.175). But that is not all. Environmental historians will profit from considering Kirk's interpretation of

the environmental movement. Public historians will value Kirk's institutional history as nuanced and sophisticated. Western historians will identify common themes and issues related to resource struggles in the West. *Collecting Nature* deserves a wide audience.

Adam M. Sowards
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