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Stigma Cities:
Birmingham and Las Vegas in the National Newspaper Media, 1945-2000

JONATHAN FOSTER

Early in 1994, *Time* magazine proclaimed Las Vegas "The New All-American City," a place "so freakishly democratic" that Americans just could not resist it.[1] Twenty-three years earlier, *Look* magazine had conferred the same title upon Birmingham, Alabama, stressing its progress in race relations.[2] Such favorable media representations must have surprised the American people in both instances. By the time of each city's designation as All-American, the media had long since informed the public of each place's abnormalities and deviance from national norms. Both cities held fully formed stigmatized identities by the mid 1960s. Las Vegas symbolized the abnormalities of legalized gambling, sexual promiscuity, and organized crime. Mention of Birmingham evoked association with the deviance of racial intolerance and violent resistance to progressive change. A survey of the two cities' treatment in the national media provides insight into key aspects of how these images developed and endured from 1945 to 2000. Likewise, such a study reveals central characteristics of the stigmatization process itself, and how society can occasionally perceive a city as both All-American and deviant simultaneously.

Jonathan Foster is a Ph.D. candidate at UNLV and a 2007-2008 recipient of the university's Presidential Graduate Fellowship. He is presently completing his dissertation, which examines the intersection of major historical events with perceptions of urban settings in the United States' West, South, and Mexican border region. Foster would like to thank Professor David Wrobel for his expert guidance at every stage of this essay's development, and Professor Eugene Moehring for his invaluable suggestions on its content.

STIGMA AND PLACE

Historians have largely ignored the phenomenon of stigmatization, especially when applied to such modern cities as Birmingham and Las Vegas. Beyond Howard M. Solomon, few historians have been willing to advocate the centrality of ruined identities to their subject material.[3] In their defense, examining such a perceptual process represents dangerous territory for the historian. The "mind" of America has admittedly lacked consensus and left few concrete sources for the historian's research and analysis. Yet the means by which places become mentally classified and, in some cases, stigmatized deserve historical analysis.

Fields outside of history have displayed a greater openness to studying the process of stigmatization. Social psychologists and sociologists have produced a particularly strong body of work on the subject. In particular, the pioneering works of Erving Goffman and Irwin Katz have contributed greatly to understanding it as an important and complex social process.[4] From these and subsequent social scientists, a definition and a framework present themselves, offering historians an exciting and potentially invaluable new way of looking at the perception of place over time.

Sociologists have traced the word *stigma* to ancient Greek origins. In its original usage, a stigma represented a defacing mark, burn, or cut, applied to an individual with the intention of instantly exposing the person's "different" classification to any who might look upon him. The differences the stigmatizing mark revealed might include either deviant conduct or association with the temple. Beginning in early Christian times, stigma expanded upon this dual meaning. On one level, the word referred to outward signs of physical disability and, by relation, bodily deviance. At the same time, many of the religious saw a connection between physical eruptions of the skin and an individual's proximity to holy grace. In modern times, society has adopted a more complex and abstract usage of the word and concept. *Stigma* now refers as commonly to a suspected or confirmed association with a known deviant activity as it does to the outward appearance of any physical "abnormality." While still important in revealing some stigmas, physical markings are no longer required for all. Further, an action that might be stigmatized in one culture or era might be completely accepted in another. In sum, stigmatization is a social construct, ever changing and relative to the cultural mores of its respective era and setting.[5]

Goffman offers the consensus definition of modern stigma as "an attribute that is deeply discrediting," leaving the wider society with the impression that an individual "is not quite human."[6] These attributes, while varying over time and place, normally discredit the person stigmatized while confirming "the usualness" of others.[7] Goffman further argues that modern stigmatization takes on one of three main variations. These are physical "abominations of the body," perceptual "blemishes of the character," and stereotypical "tribal stigmas."[8]

The conceptions of character blemishes and "tribal" stigmatization are both particularly relevant for historical understanding of the stigmatization of place. Character blemishes result from direct actions perceived as outside societal norms. These deviations might include criminal acts, manifestations of mental or physical infirmities, or any other element perceived as contrary to normal expectations. Tribal stigmatization, by contrast, characterizes individuals as deviant simply on the basis of their association with a larger group considered abnormal.[9] Thus, an outsider, having never met a particular southerner, might cast the individual as racist simply because prevailing stereotypes stress the South's history of racial intolerance. At the same time, a westerner might enjoy a reputation as egalitarian resting merely on the public's popular perception of the West as the nation's most democratic region.

Media coverage can further perpetuate this process. Because of the nature of their industry, reporters tend to focus on the sensational event. Often, the sensational event creates or reinforces a city's stereotypical identity. Once created, such place-based stereotypes gain popularity as journalists refer to the sensational events of the past, although they often have no bearing on current affairs. Further, popular stereotypes of the region within which the cities reside provide an easy intellectual reference for the journalist to employ. The local place, therefore, easily assumes the identity of both the abnormal event and its wider geographic and cultural placement.

Reactions to stigmatized places are harder to pin down. While most outsiders react negatively to the stigmatized, that is not always the case. Often, even though the public views a person or place as deviant in certain ways, a level of pity, curiosity in the unusual, or even a proclivity to pull for the underdog lead outsiders to cast the stigmatized in an improved light. As the social psychologist Irwin Katz argues, this inconsistency results from an ambivalence central to the relativism of the stigmatization process. An individual or society may harbor feelings of both love and hate for a person, group, or place at the same time. Depending on the accepted cultural mores of a time and setting, a degree of oscillation between the emotions often presents itself in the larger society's dealings with "others."[10] Media coverage of Las Vegas certainly supports such a culturally based ambivalence.

Historical Basis of Stigma in Birmingham and Las Vegas

Early boosters liked to associate Birmingham with the ideal of the New South. Founded in 1871, the town seemingly turned its back on the South's troubled agrarian past and embraced modern industrialism wholeheartedly. With their town situated at a rare convergence of railroad transportation and all of the natural resources required for the production of iron and steel, founders foresaw Birmingham as the prospective center of a new, production-oriented South. As

blast furnaces and factories dotted the local landscape by 1885, their expectations seemed destined for fruition.[11] The young town's booming population further supported their optimistic outlook, increasing by an astonishing 748 percent from 1880 to 1890. By 1910, Birmingham had become Alabama's largest city and a force to be reckoned with in the wider South, claiming a population of 138,685 people.[12] Yet in many ways, this burgeoning New South city proved not so new after all.

Planter interests had actually conceptualized an industrial city at Birmingham's location in 1859. Their plans called for an industrial slave center that would help move the South into the industrial future while preserving the status quo of established labor and race relations by using slaves to do the heavy work. While the Civil War intervened to render this plan impossible, the city that emerged soon afterward differed only in its dependence on wage labor rather than slavery. The historian W. David Lewis and social geographer Bobby Wilson have shown that most of the city's founders and early industrialists shared a common planter or upper-level-merchant background. These men represented the elite of the Old South, with their business, labor, and racial philosophies formed in the plantation society. As manufacturers, they quickly embraced black convict labor and actively sought to keep labor divided along racial lines for decades following the city's founding. These New South industrialists further traveled the path of the old South by choosing to rely more upon labor-intensive methods of production rather than the recent technological innovations that powered northern industry. The divided labor force was, after all, cheap and readily available, while the latest technology required considerable capital outlays.[13] In some ways, the booming town came to resemble "an overgrown iron plantation."[14]

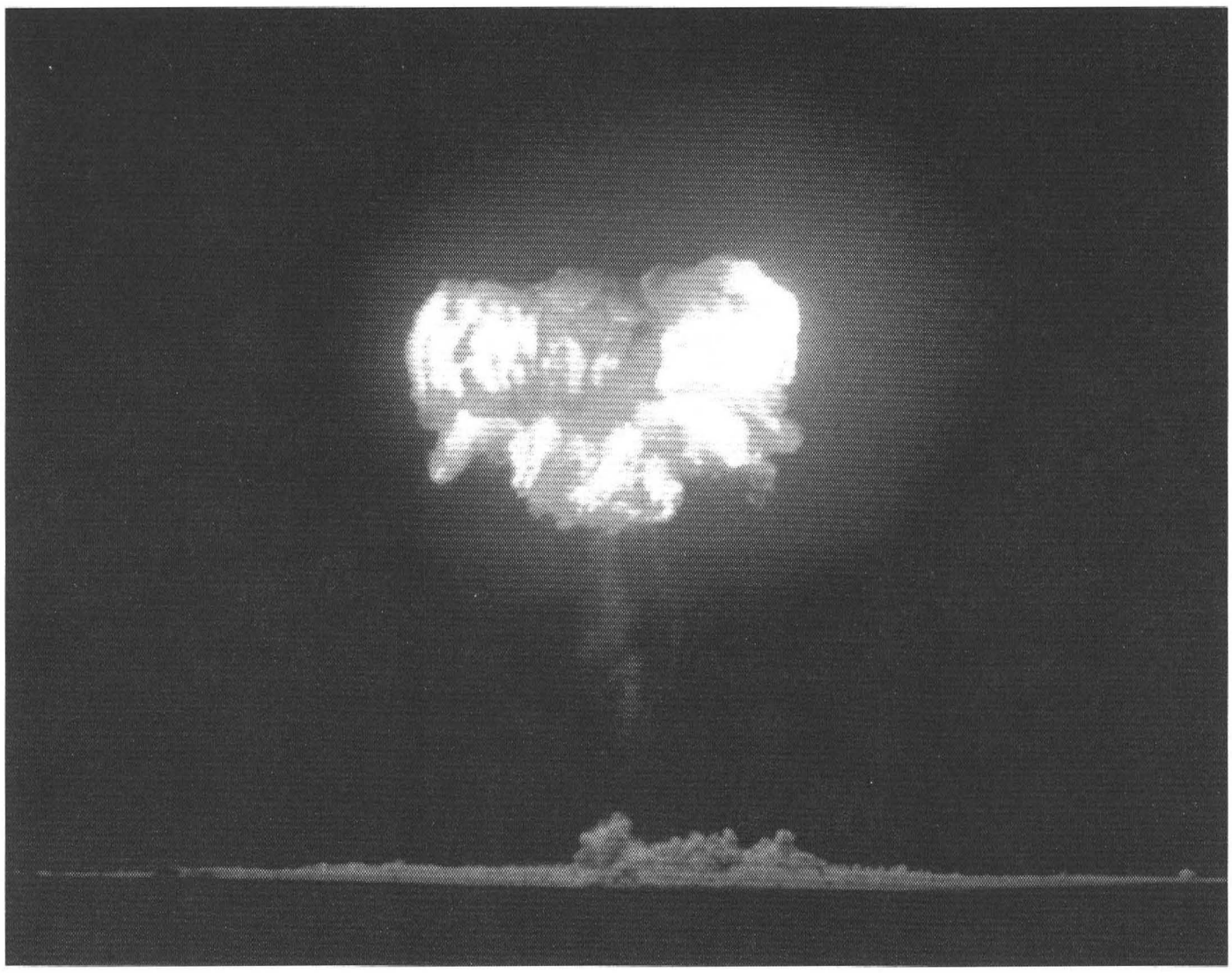
Birmingham's system of racial division matured in the first three decades of the twentieth century. By 1910, blacks held 75 percent of steel-mill and iron-furnace jobs. Total black employment in the industry fell to 54 percent by 1930, as pro-union whites entered the city's industrial work force in large numbers. Jobs within the plants subsequently took on an increased stratification of white work and black work. Labor organization strengthened this process, with unionized white workers exercising their newfound influence on management to enforce job discrimination.[15]

Blacks faced additional segregation in the social sphere. The city commission instituted streetcar segregation in 1923 and consistently refused to zone an adequate amount of land for black residency. Overcrowded black neighborhoods continued to lack basic services, and homes resembled sharecropper shacks. Attempts at reform in the teens and twenties served only to bring blacks more firmly and efficiently under governmental control. Then, the Great Depression devastated local industry. Conditions in Birmingham, already substandard for local blacks, grew exponentially worse as unemployment and hunger gripped the town. Its crippling effect prompted President Franklin Roosevelt to proclaim Birmingham the "worst hit" city in the nation.[16]

The racial inequality built into Birmingham's labor force and social system began to manifest itself in active unrest immediately after World War II. Between 1945 and 1965, fifty racially motivated bombings occurred within the city limits, earning the city the derisive moniker of "Bombingham."[17] Typically, the home of an outspoken black resident or a black family seeking to move into an all-white neighborhood served as the setting for a bombing. In 1963, the city experienced what many consider to be the most important demonstrations of the civil-rights movement. That May, the world watched in horror as local police, under the direction of the notoriously racist commissioner of public safety Eugene "Bull" Connor, unleashed vicious dogs, fire hoses, and clubs on protesting schoolchildren. Then, in September, a bomb exploded in the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, killing four black girls. While these horrendous acts directly influenced the decision of the United States Congress to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964, they also solidified Birmingham's reputation as a violent, racially intolerant city.[18]

The city concurrently entered a long period of population decline, falling from its peak of 340,887 residents in the early 1960s to 242,820 residents by 2000.[19] Much of this loss, as in the similar examples of Detroit and Cleveland, resulted from industrial stagnation and white flight to the suburbs. Yet Birmingham carried an additional burden: its highly publicized deviant actions of the 1960s. Although the following decades would bring vast changes to the city—including the election of a predominantly black city government by 1979 and a successful shift from an industrial to a service economy—the stigma of racism continued to mar the city's image and shape national media representation of the place.

As with Birmingham, seemingly abnormal events and characteristics in Las Vegas's history have influenced the national media's coverage and the public's perception of the city. In an area first settled in 1855 by Mormon pioneers, Las Vegas obtained railroad-town status by 1905 and officially incorporated in June 1911. The young railway stopover quickly claimed an attention similar to that received by the rest of Nevada. This increased notoriety grew from a frontier association with easy divorce, illegal gambling, bootlegging, and prostitution. Meanwhile, ample sunshine and mild winters prompted town leaders and boosters toward more ambitious ideas throughout the 1920s—ideas of a Palm Springs-like resort center. Then, the early 1930s legalization of wide-open gambling in Nevada, the improvement of access roads, and the nearby construction of Hoover Dam combined to increase the town's prospects. As the dam became a destination for curious travelers, Las Vegans embraced the idea of a gaming-centered economy. World War II soldiers and defense workers then reinforced the logic of this idea through their eager patronization of the town's still-small gaming emporiums.[20] City leaders and business people employed various themes designed to draw tourists to Las Vegas hotels and legal casinos over the decades that followed. These ranged from the idea of America's last western



Las Vegas city leaders and even business owners promoted atomic testing at the Nevada Test Site to tourists. Photographer unknown. *(Nevada Historical Society)*

frontier to modernistic atomic testing to an almost simultaneous promotion of Sin City and family-friendly adult Disneyland.

Whatever the approach, the idea of a tourist-based economy surpassed all expectations in Las Vegas. With the largest booms after 1945, and most specifically after the 1980s, the city finished the twentieth century anchoring the fastest growing metropolitan center in the United States. Between 1990 and 1997, the metropolis grew by 48 percent, adding 409,453 residents.[21] As the historian Hal Rothman argues, the post-industrial gaming economy of Las Vegas offered the same financial opportunity that had earlier drawn residents to such industrial boomtowns as Detroit. In post-modern Las Vegas, an individual with even a marginal education could expect to make a good living. A relatively low cost of living combined with the high wages and ample benefits of a unionized gaming and tourist industry to render such expectations generally realistic.[22]

Despite its rapid growth and economic opportunity, Las Vegas also experienced problems. First, its existence as a gambling center proved too tempting

for less than reputable figures. Second, for much of the period following 1945, its open promotion of legal gambling and physical gratification seemingly lay outside the confines of American moral norms. Las Vegas quickly established and maintained its position and image as the center of American gaming.[23] Such an image resulted in a plethora of both negative and positive media representations of the city.

The problem of organized crime undeniably played a role in Las Vegas's development, history, and popular image. The mob first won attention in Las Vegas in the early 1940s with the murder of the race-wire owner James Ragen and the efforts of gangster Bugsy Siegel to purchase the El Cortez hotel-casino. This, along with Siegel's involvement in the construction of the Flamingo Hotel, established a pattern in which, over the next two decades, many resorts on the Strip depended upon disreputable financing and direct mob involvement for their construction and operation.[24] In 1950, United States Senator Estes Kefauver's hearings on organized crime brought increased, albeit limited, national attention to organized crime's infiltration of the city's gaming industry. From this, national bestsellers such as Ed Reid and Ovis Demaris's *The Green Felt Jungle* appeared, casting Las Vegas as a violent, greedy, immoral, and crime-infested city.[25] The late 1970s and early 1980s witnessed a rebirth of such ideas, thanks to FBI sting operations that revealed political corruption, and to federal investigations that exposed the mob's control of the Stardust, Fremont, Aladdin, and Tropicana hotels.[26]

Yet, despite decades of charges, Americans seemed to maintain an affection for the seemingly wayward city. As for the popular appeal of this center of gambling and "sin," David Schwartz and John Findlay offer insightful explanations. Schwartz argues that post-war suburban Americans did not mind gambling and a certain lack of morality if they were safely confined to areas distant from their own communities. At a safe distance, the suburbanites could enjoy the escapist pleasures of the otherwise deviant place, then return home without endangering their communities' moral standards.[27] Findlay contends that Las Vegas offered much more than mere escapism; its gambling evoked the American perception of the risk- and opportunity-laden western frontier and identity. To Findlay, Las Vegas also embodied a new and innovative western society emanating from southern California in the post-war period. Gambling, and by association Las Vegas, offered modern Americans the thrill of chance so central to the westward expansion of the nineteenth century. This chance further nurtured ideas of democracy and egalitarian tendencies.[28] Social standing alone did not determine the odds of winning or losing at the tables.

Over the years, media representations of Las Vegas have borne out the ambivalent nature of its stigmatized identity. The love side of this relationship particularly enhanced itself through the writing of the renowned journalist Gladwin Hill. Later known for his path-breaking environmental reporting, *The New York Times*'s Los Angeles correspondent's typewriter served as a virtual

The Tropicana Hotel in Las Vegas was revealed to have been controlled by the mob. Photographer unknown. *(Nevada Historical Society)*

booster megaphone for Las Vegas in the 1950s. Throughout the decade, Hill ladled out a steady dose of such articles as "Klondike in the Desert," "The 'Sure Thing' Boom at Las Vegas," "Las Vegas Is More Than the 'Strip,'" and "Las Vegas Keeps the Wheels Turning." Each of these pieces acknowledged the centrality of gambling to the Las Vegas experience, but cast the growing tourist destination in an unusually favorable light. Hill consistently championed both the city's democratic opportunity and western location, while offering up a selection of population- and economic-growth statistics that any Chamber of Commerce publicist would proudly claim. Las Vegas, as portrayed by Hill, was not merely a sinful conglomerate of organized crime and vice. Instead, it resembled a "cruise ship" on land where gambling and tourism served as economic motors driving a booming and surprisingly diverse urban area. In this exciting place "that could pass for Broadway," both the "man in workpants" and the "dinner dressed patron" had the same chance of realizing that "western tradition" of striking it rich. Beyond the gaming floors, a more diverse Las Vegas existed. Here, Hill expounded upon the favorable influence of religion, the industrial boom in Henderson, and the windfall of defense spending. Quite simply, Hill's Las Vegas stood as a western entertainment center basking in a post-World War II boom. This Las Vegas served as a place where a more democratic spirit

prevailed, people had fun, and real-estate investment could never be a losing proposition. It seemed to be a place where people got it right.[29]

By contrast, media coverage of post-World War II events in Birmingham preoccupied itself with the deviant aspects of the city's history. Birmingham's identification with race transfixed the national media during this period; stories continued to associate Birmingham with regional stereotypes of the racist South. Although, Las Vegas's media exposure harbored similar tendencies, there was a continuing tempering element. The media did trumpet the city's deviance as exhibited through organized crime, gambling, and sex, but periodically continuing to evoke the popular conceptions of the isolated and democratic West.

Media representation of this sort abounds in the formative period of each city's stigmatization. For Birmingham, one can find examples concentrated on the topics of racial segregation in 1960 and the civil-rights demonstrations and church bombing of 1963. The rightfully negative coverage of this early period continued throughout the ensuing decades—often without merit—in various exposés and reports on non-racial events in the city. Examples of the stigma's endurance are strikingly evident in the coverage of the 1998 bombing of the All-Women, New-Woman abortion clinic. Representations of Las Vegas's deviance first appeared during the 1910s through 1930s and centered on divorce. In the 1930s, the "abnormal" Las Vegas became a contextual side note to stories concerning Hoover Dam. Newspaper travel stories in the late 1940s and the media's emphasis during the 1960s on organized crime's infiltration of the gaming industry helped cement the idea of a deviant and opportunistic western Las Vegas. The federal investigations of the 1970s and 1980s, the MGM fire of 1980, and the mayoral election of the former mob attorney Oscar Goodman in 1999 provided additional opportunities for the media to revisit Las Vegas's tradition of deviance.

The Building of Stigma

On April 8, 1960, city leaders in Birmingham reacted with shocked outrage at an exposé of their city that appeared in *The New York Times*. The front-page headline read "Fear and Hatred Grip Birmingham." *The Times* reporter Harrison E. Salisbury had produced a well-deserved two-page indictment of the city's race relations. Salisbury wrote of a "brooding Birmingham," on the verge of outright racial conflict. It was a cowering city, he observed, a place where "no one talks freely" out of fear of violence and retribution. His article revealed that every aspect of life within the city experienced strict segregation, with "Bull" Connor serving as the brutal enforcer of the racial status quo. Salisbury detailed the wrath encountered in the rare cases when individuals in Birmingham spoke or acted against the norm. He offered one striking example of a young student who participated in a public "prayer for freedom." Later that evening, "seven

hooded men" arrived at the youth's house armed with "iron pipes, clubs, and leather blackjacks into which razor blades had been sunk." When they left, the youth, his sister, and mother lay severely beaten, the mother with crushed hands, a broken leg, and severely lacerated scalp.[30]

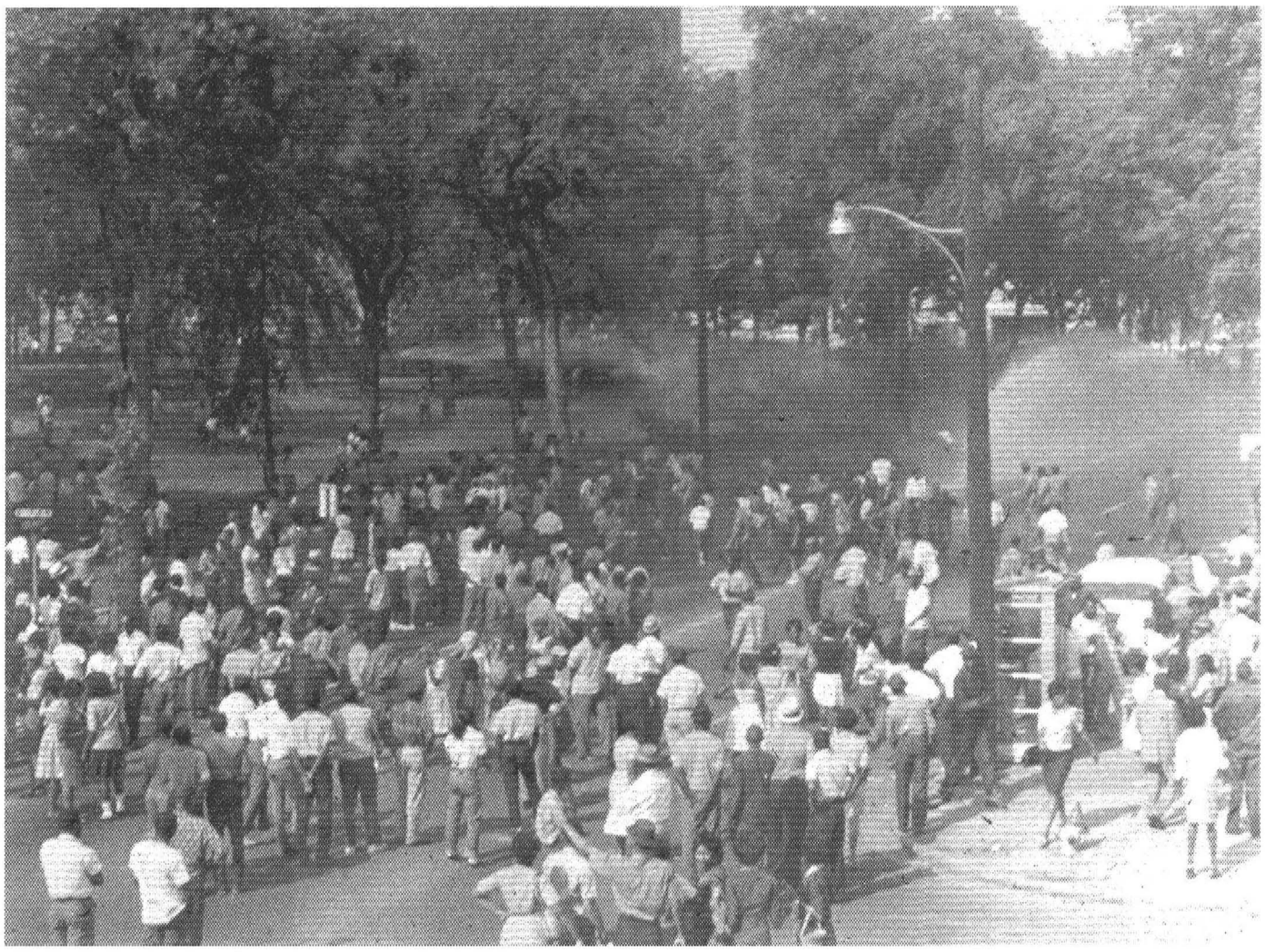
Neither Connor nor his fellow commissioners should have expressed surprise at the media's negative portrayal of their city. First, racial intolerance in the city assumed a quality and invasiveness every bit as bad as the article portrayed. Second, although dealt with more forthrightly and extensively by Salisbury's piece, Birmingham's racial problems had been increasingly highlighted in *The Times* throughout the 1950s. Instances of local segregation had served as the basis for sixteen stories in the paper between 1950 and 1959.[31] Additional stories dealt with individual acts of violence perpetrated by whites upon blacks, and with racially motivated bombings.[32] The articles' increasing frequency, in a major newspaper with great agenda-setting power, mirrored the nation's growing awareness of racial tension as the civil-rights movement advanced. Yet Salisbury's piece offered a direct and prominent indictment of the city as a whole by the national newspaper. As such, it was an important, although by no means unjustified, step in constructing the city's racist stigma in the public's mind.

Over the next three years, additional media coverage of events solidified Birmingham's image as a racist, violent, and intolerant city. Coverage of key events in 1961 and 1963 proved central to this identity's formation. In response to the Salisbury article and the city's subsequent libel suit against *The New York Times*, CBS decided to film a segment of "CBS Reports" in Birmingham early in 1961.[33] Titled "Who Speaks for Birmingham" and eventually airing nationally on the night of May 18, 1961, the program further exposed the city's racist violence, while also deeming it representative of regional southern intolerance. The narrator was the respected television journalist Howard K. Smith, who described Birmingham as "the largest segregated city in the South." In addition, he credited the local *Birmingham Post-Herald* with being the "voice of the segregated South." As for the question raised in the program's title, Smith contended that the violent and uncooperative "Bull" Connor had "emerged as the voice of Birmingham."[34]

If earlier actions in Birmingham had not established the city's social deviance, the events of 1963 ensured the place's future stigmatization. In May, Salisbury's prophesied racial confrontation came to pass as civil rights demonstrations overwhelmed the city. With the city's jail space overfilled, and hundreds of teenaged prisoners confined at the state fairground's livestock pavilion, the official reaction soon turned violent. Connor's police force ruthlessly and without qualm employed its much-vaunted armored tanks, dogs, and firehoses.[35]

The national media captured it all, both in print and in image. As the violent response on the city's part increased, articles concerning the demonstrations gained more prominent placement in *The New York Times*. In a one-month period

between April 15 and May 15, the paper's editors deemed some twenty-two articles dealing with the protests worthy of front-page placement.[36] The most powerful of these appeared on May 4, with an accompanying image of a police dog violently grasping the abdomen of a young protester as a uniformed Birmingham police officer held him in place.[37] This image, along with others like it, undoubtedly strengthened the national perception of Birmingham as a violent center of racism. When this coverage combined with *The New York Times*'s twenty-eight articles focusing on the tragic Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing on September 16, 1963, the stigma stood solidly entrenched and available for future media use as events warranted.[38]



Birmingham, Alabama firemen use high pressure water hoses to disperse civil rights demonstrators in Kelly Ingram Park, early May 1963—demonstators can be seen among the trees. The people in the foreground are bystanders. Photographer unknown. *(Birmingham Public Library Archives, Catalog #783.1.10)*

World events also played a role in the nation's acceptance of this stigmatization in the post-World War II era. Aware of the contradiction that racism posed to American democracy's supposed egalitarianism, the public and government sought to rationalize the identity it held of itself and projected to the Cold War-era world. This led parts of the nation to form their identities in opposition to parts seen as deviantly

racist. Actions of the United States government contributed to this process. As the historian Mary L. Dudziak has argued, concern over America's international image during the Cold War prompted the government to purposefully label the South, and violently racist areas within it, as deviant from the national norm.[39]

At a time when the United States actively sought to export its influence, governmental system, and economic theory abroad, internationally publicized instances of racial violence proved embarrassing and threatened its success. The Soviet Union made great propaganda use of racist events and images—such as those flowing out of Birmingham—in extolling capitalism's inherent inequality. This particularly threatened the democratic images of the United States in the newly independent nations of Africa. To quell the success of the Soviet propaganda campaign, the United States government initiated one of its own. In addition to characterizing southern areas as abnormal within the American system, the campaign championed instances of federal intervention as proof of the triumph of the more widely shared values of equality and democratic capitalism's progress even in the nation's most backward region. The media's portrayal of Birmingham thus took on a degree of official sanction.

Where else could one gamble in a swimming pool? Only in Las Vegas. Photographer unknown. *(Nevada Historical Society)*

The South, with its brutal and uncompromising "Bull" Connor and others of his ilk, assumed the role of repository for the nation's sin. As an isolated and deviant exception to the national norm, the city provided rationalization for the inconsistency of racial oppression in a democratic system. Against this image, the rest of the nation could form its own racially progressive identity.[40]

Media stigmatization of Las Vegas lacked the single cataclysmic event found in Birmingham's unconscionable response to the civil-rights movement. Thus, it proceeded more subtly. Yet, as with Birmingham's racial intolerance, Las Vegas's gambling and, to a lesser degree, association with organized crime eventually became crucial to how the national media shaped the city's image in the wider consciousness.

Media representations of Las Vegas before 1945 appeared primarily as contextual material for pieces examining celebrity marriage problems.[41] Las Vegas received mention on its own merit in *The New York Times* only four times during its first forty years. The first two instances occurred in 1911, as the newspaper examined the young "rival" in relation to Reno's established divorce industry.[42] The city did not appear again as the lone subject of a *Times* article until 1936. That year, the newspaper briefly examined the "Wild West town" that neighbored Boulder Dam.[43] Three years later the newspaper offered a one-paragraph examination of the city's decision to close its bars for three hours in observance of Good Friday. According to *The Times* reporter, the "saloons" of "America's last frontier hit the Sawdust Trail" on that day.[44]

Between 1945 and 1949, *The New York Times* continued to cover Las Vegas primarily in relation to Hoover Dam's popularity as a tourist destination. Yet these stories increasingly emphasized Las Vegas's growth as a tourist draw in its own right. Representative titles include "Las Vegas Vacation Center: Seeing Boulder Dam by Automobile," and "Lively Las Vegas: New Vacation Wonderland Is Growing Up Rapidly around the Great Lake at Hoover Dam."[45] One 1947 article conceded Las Vegas's status as a stand-alone tourist attraction. "Desert Attractions: Tourism Is Las Vegas' Major Industry and Spring Business Is Booming," marked the first instance of the national media acknowledging the city as a tourist destination in its own right.[46]

Each article of this period highlighted attractions other than casinos, but invariably mentioned the city's legalized gambling. *The Times* reporter Ward Howe characterized the city as "the gateway to Boulder Dam," where "neon signs lend a garish effect and signal invitations to try one's luck."[47] Jack Goodman used the first two paragraphs of his article to detail the growth of local gaming resorts before stipulating that "not all vacationists are heading for the gambling casinos."[48] Fellow reporter Grady Johnson introduced the city as "known only for its legalized gambling and easy divorce laws" before noting its low rates of juvenile delinquency and the outdoor recreational activities at Mount Charleston and Lake Mead.[49]

Explicit ties to pre-existing regional conceptions of the West also appeared

in each of these early articles. Howe reaffirmed the locals' propensity to call the city "a frontier town," while he characterized it as a "gateway" and "picturesque desert town."[50] Goodman emphasized both its "desert" location and its proximity to "many noteworthy western park areas." A photograph of men on horseback and dressed as cowboys at a nearby dude ranch accompanied his article.[51] Johnson's article called attention to the West's recreational opportunities, dry climate, and democratic tendencies. To him, Las Vegas resided "in the heart of some of the West's most scenic playgrounds," where visitors could "soak up Sun and breath[e] the dry desert air" and mingle in "dinner jackets, cowboy shirts, and jeans" on the same dance floors without notice.[52] These articles conformed to a pattern of showcasing Las Vegas's exceptionalism, symbolized by gambling, western isolation, democratic social activities, and a liberal sense of morality.

As with the South, the West certainly owned a distinct regional image by the mid twentieth century. Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis had long ago described the vast West as both safety valve of opportunity and fountain of American democracy.[53] In the late nineteenth century, the western paintings of Thomas Moran, Albert Bierstadt, and Frederic Remington joined with popular western writers such as Owen Wister and Bret Harte to cast the West as individualistic, masculine, and free.[54] Around the same time, the United States initiated its national park system, with most of the parks located in the West. These parks, which preserved extraordinary and seemingly representative landscapes, provided ever-increasing numbers of tourists with false images of the pristine West.[55] With the rise of the motion-picture industry, and specifically the popularity of the western movie in the first half of the twentieth century, films carried on the tradition of the frontier image.[56] That the mid-century media chose to cast the emerging tourist city of Las Vegas within the colorful contours of this established western image is not surprising.

Las Vegas's alternative, negative image—its association with organized crime— resembles Birmingham's racist stigmatization in that the national media coverage ultimately proved event-based and exhibited strong ties to the national historical context of the time. On November 16, 1950, *The New York Times* printed a small story on page twenty-five titled "Investigation in Nevada." This article was the only one to appear in *The Times* that year specifically addressing Senator Estes Kefauver's local hearings into organized crime's influence over the Las Vegas gaming industry. The article did, nonetheless, tie the gaming industry to the late gangster Bugsy Siegel and mob figures in New York.[57]

Thirteen years later *The New York Times* made up for its subdued treatment of the Kefauver hearing. In November 1963—the same year that Birmingham became front-page news and the lead story on the television networks—the newspaper ran a series of front-page stories exposing organized crime's control of the Las Vegas gaming industry. In the first of these articles, Wallace Turner reported on casinos run by convicted felons misusing "hundreds of

millions of dollars." Further, he called the gambling-fueled mob a powerful "new force in American life."[58] In the third article of the series, he credited Las Vegas with bringing together a "greater collection of skilled law violators than exists anywhere in the country." He went on to detail the involvement of such public personalities as Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin with gambling interests, implying an association with organized crime. Yet even Turner's indictment of Las Vegas as a criminal haven could not resist linking the city to its isolated western placement. The "desert and mountain milieu" served as the setting for this "most intensive concentration of gambling" in the world's history.[59]

Extensive exposure of the city's organized-crime problem also appeared during this period in other media outlets. As mentioned, the bestselling book *The Green Felt Jungle* (1963) dismissed Las Vegas as a city controlled by crime and lacking redeeming value.[60] Television exposés further linked the city's vice-centered gaming and entertainment industry with organized crime. David Susskind's popular television talk show, "Open End," aired a two-hour special on March 15, 1964, that sought to detail "the link between a seemingly innocuous nickel bet and narcotics and prostitution" controlled by organized crime.[61]

Two years later, NBC televised a three-and-one-half hour special titled "American White Paper: Organized Crime in the United States," which examined organized crime in Las Vegas and Youngstown, Ohio. In the end, it argued that while local interests controlled the crime in Youngstown, Las Vegas's gambling industry fostered more insidious national affiliations.[62] This dramatic upswing in media coverage of Las Vegas's ties to organized crime can be seen as the culmination of a wider historical trend in which the United States public sought to identify itself and the national purpose in the 1950s and early 1960s. By the end of the 1950s, the American press, government, and public had begun to question the nation's success and direction in its Cold War struggle with the Soviet Union. International events had seemingly eroded the unquestioned confidence in the United States as world leader that the country experienced in 1945. The Soviet Union's emergence as a nuclear power in 1949, its launch of Sputnik in 1957, its seemingly superior economic growth rate, the disastrous Suez Crisis, the failure to help the Hungarian Revolution, and the U-2 spy-plane incident all combined to cast uncertainty among many Americans. Occasional economic downturns during the years of the Eisenhower administration strengthened this idea that something had gone wrong. Led by the press and government, some Americans began to look inward for the cause of their seeming deficiency. Corruption, conformity, and crass materialism stood central to the conclusions they reached.[63]

As early as 1952, Dwight Eisenhower's presidential campaign had revealed this uncertainty within American consciousness over the moral centering of the nation. Eisenhower constantly cast the campaign as a "crusade" to bring the nation back "to the things he thought America stood for."[64] Even his cam-

paign slogan of K1C 2 (Korea, Communism, and Corruption) emphasized the threats facing America and the waywardness of its culture.[65] Concerns over internal weakness, corruption, and communist infiltration obsessed the nation. The House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) had been exposing imagined communists with impunity while such popular game shows as the "$64,000 Question" proved dishonest. Meanwhile, consumerism had taken hold as the suburbanites enjoyed their increased personal wealth and buying power of the immediate post-1945 period.[66] Some contemporaries, such as John Kenneth Galbraith in his 1958 bestseller *The Affluent Society*, warned about the excesses of consumerism and private-sector wealth while highlighting the persistence of public-sector poverty in America.[67] Countervailing forces of traditional morality and hedonistic materialism thus fought for the American public's allegiance throughout the 1950s and early 1960s. From this cultural apprehension, Las Vegas emerged as an easy target for those frustrated by the nation's drift. With the media's help, as evidenced in its increased concentration on organized crime in the early 1960s, the city became an isolated repository for the containment of widespread corruption and American materialistic shortcomings. Much like Birmingham, Las Vegas became a deviant example against which the wider American society could define its moral center.

Yet this city also displayed attractive qualities. As a representative of the American West, it served as an available counterbalance for the perceived tendency of suburbia and conformist society to emasculate formerly individualistic men.[68] As William Whyte observed in *The Organization Man* (1956), the conformist impulse of post-war suburban society worked to transform men from independent "inner-directed" beings into "other-directed" grey-suited clones of corporatism.[69] Las Vegas offered a convenient yet isolated escape from these consensus norms if they became too overbearing. No such partially positive attributes attached themselves to media representations of Birmingham.

In this enlivened characterization of Las Vegas as a bastion of organized crime, as well as the contemporary casting of Birmingham as a center of racial intolerance, the media clearly intertwined character defect and tribally-based stigma. Organized crime's infiltration and control of gambling served as the deviant event for Las Vegas. Likewise, Birmingham's reaction to civil-rights protests stood as the perfect abnormal action to provoke widespread condemnation. These events took place in the context of established local stereotypes and deviance. Media coverage had already revealed the comfortable acceptance of gambling and divorce in Las Vegas before exposing the Mafia involvement. Coverage of Birmingham had similarly established the primacy of segregation and violence in the city before the violent upheavals of 1963. In addition, the media had placed each city squarely within the established stereotypes of their respective regions; for Las Vegas, the freer, more democratic, and isolated West, while Birmingham fell into the accepted image of the racist South. This made Las Vegas's gambling and Birmingham's racism more readily identifiable and associable with each regional city. The cities therefore developed a

dual-level stigmatization, based on both events and perceptions of setting reinforced by a popular culture particularly shaped by the Cold War and other frustrations. The national media's coverage of local events following the deviance-establishment period—1945 up to the mid 1960s—reveals that this dual-level stigma, once applied, proved a lasting characterization. As the social commentator Walter Lippmann noted in 1922, editors who are concerned with maintaining circulation prove hesitant to stray from established norms in public expectations.[70]

The Endurance of Stigma

This perseverance first exhibited itself in the wider media's reaction when *Look* magazine named Birmingham to its prestigious list of All-American Cities in 1971. While at first glance such recognition seemed to deviate from the city's established popular stereotype, a closer examination of national press reaction to it reveals a distinct continuity. For example, an article appeared in *The New York Times* titled "Proud Birmingham Steers into Mainstream, U.S.A.," which acknowledged the strides made by Birmingham since 1963, but still brought attention to the problems that had existed and continued to exist, and the piece reinforced ideas of regional differences. The reporter Roy Reed, who covered the civil-rights movement for *The Times*, stressed Birmingham's troubled past through explicit references to the city's various identities of "Bombingham," "the police-dog capital of the South," and "the most segregated city in America." The issue of regional identity emerged as he supposed that "Northerners who move" to the southern city might consider it "Americanized enough" to feel at home—faint praise indeed.[71]

Other seemingly favorable accounts of Birmingham's progress in the 1970s adopted a similar tone. A *Time* magazine piece appearing in 1976 began with the following captions:

> Birmingham! The All-American City! . . . Blacks sitting in at stores and restaurants. "Nigger lover" scrawled on shattered plate-glass windows of merchants suspected of sympathizing with them. . .
>
> Birmingham! The Magic City! . . . Firemen battering black women with high-pressure hoses, snarling police dogs. . .
>
> Birmingham! The football Capital of the South! . . . The mangled bodies of four little girls in a bombed out church. Martin Luther King Jr. and Theophilus Eugene ("Bull") Connor—the irresistible black force meeting the immovable white object—confronting each other amid the flamed. . .
>
> Birmingham?[72]

Right to left, Fred Shuttlesworth (Birmingham civil rights leader), Ralph Abernathy and Martin Luther King Jr. on Good Friday, April 12, 1963. King and the others violated a court order not to march in order to be arrested and to spur on additional demonstrators. It was during this stay in jail that King wrote the first draft of his "Lettter from Birmingham Jail." Birmingham, Alabama Police Department surveillance photos.
(Birmingham Public Library Archives, Catalog #1125.11.20A-1)

Although the article's purpose was to champion the progress Birmingham had made in race relations since the early 1960s, its introductory emphasis on racism and the accompanying photographs of police dogs and crying women evoked the traditional image of racially violent Birmingham. It further postulated quite accurately that Birmingham had a long way to go to achieve racial harmony. Quoting then councilman Richard Arrington—the man who would soon become Birmingham's first black mayor—the article suggested that much of the obvious change had been mere "tokenism." [73] While such statements certainly contained a degree of validity, to directly associate the racial environment of 1976 with that of 1963 was somewhat of a stretch on the magazine's part.

Coverage of events in Las Vegas during this period also continued to draw upon the city's established reputation for deviance. The media's reaction to a new exposure of organized crime's ties to the gaming industry and the tragic MGM Grand fire clearly illustrated its reliance on the city's abnormal classifi-

The Las Vegas MGM Grand not long before the fire of 1980. Photographer unknown. *(Nevada Historical Society)*

cation. The front page of the February 24, 1980, *The New York Times* featured an article on the federal Abscam sting operation, the FBI's investigation into organized crime. Through secret recordings and undercover work, the FBI uncovered widespread racketeering, union corruption, murder, bribery of elected officials, and skimming of Las Vegas casino revenues by organized-crime figures. This article and others that followed made much of the Las Vegas connection, even though large corporations were in the process of taking over the industry.[74] More important, they treated the Mafia's involvement in the gaming industry as no surprise. One revealing passage stated that "in recent years . . . organized crime has infiltrated a variety of businesses in addition to gambling and pornography."[75] In other words, the story implied that the only surprise was in organized crime's spread beyond the realm of Las Vegas's acknowledged vices.

The MGM Grand fire of November 21, 1980, offers an example of how established media stereotypes of deviance often extended beyond the boundaries of events directly associated with perceived abnormalities. Initial coverage of the fire by *The New York Times* proved straightforward and factual. Pamela Hollie's front-page article respectfully conveyed the tragic circumstances of the fire that killed more than eighty people and trapped approximately thirty-five hundred more for several hours.[76] But the next day, an article appeared that employed

virtually every available stereotype of the city. Referring to Las Vegas as a distant "desert fantasy land," John Crewdson reported in detail how the greed of gambling and desire for a good time quelled any remorse for the fire's victims. He focused his story on patrons occupying the casinos around the newly "black gap in a brilliant neon universe." Citing individual reactions as representative of a larger city reaction, Crewdson wrote of a man at the Desert Inn placing a $10.00 bet with his friend over the fire's eventual body count. The article further stated that tragedy was meaningless to a city that experiences "a thousand tiny personal ones" on a daily basis. The reporter ended his assault by questioning the morality of locals who continued to gamble as the fire raged. He applied the time-honored, one-dimensional stereotype of the city's sinful deviance to a horrible event that owed no direct connection to gaming.[77] This resulted in one of the most thoroughly unscrupulous articles ever to stain the pages of the long-respected newspaper, and one has to question the judgment of *The Times* editors in publishing such a piece.

The racist stigma of Birmingham has also resulted in unprofessional reporting in recent years. On January 29, 1998, a remotely-detonated pipe bomb exploded outside the city's New Woman, All Women abortion clinic. The blast killed the security guard Robert Sanderson and gravely injured a nurse, Emily Lyons. This event marked the first fatal bombing of an abortion clinic in United States history.[78] In its coverage of this terrible incident, *The New York Times* proved commendable. In a series of articles over the following days, journalist Rick Bragg stuck to the issue at hand, impartially relating the circumstance and tragedy of the bombing. He made no speculative connections between the city's history of bombings and this latest blast.[79] If any fault can be found in *The Times*'s coverage, it resides in reporter Kevin Slack's later articles that emphasized the "southern identity" of the bombing and bomber.[80]

Print coverage in other large markets lacked *The Times*'s tact in dealing with the tragedy. A headline in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* read "Birmingham Clinic Bombing: A City's Past Comes Roaring Back." The reporter Marlon Manuel went on to equate the clinic bombing with the city's epidemic of racially motivated blasts from 1945 to 1963. More specifically, he drew comparisons to the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing of 1963.[81] On the same day, an equally unfair commentary by Clarence Page appeared in the *Chicago Tribune*. Having recently viewed Spike Lee's documentary "Four Little Girls," Page directly evoked both the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing and the derisive label "Bombingham." He saw the event as evidence that racial progress in "Birmingham and the rest of the South" still had far to go.[82]

Although both articles addressed the clinic bombing as an act of extremism destined to galvanize pro-choice activists, its circumstances simply did not warrant an equation with Birmingham's past racial violence. Both atrocities obviously resulted from an extremist mindset, yet the more recent was otherwise unconnected to the city's previous experiences with racist terrorism. The

bombings from the 1940s to the 1960s stemmed from a series of events that were distinctly racist, systemized, and connected to Birmingham's characteristics of the time.[83] Thus, history warrants association of that violence with the racially segregated Birmingham of that period. The clinic bombing, by contrast, was more random and unrelated to race. The North Carolina perpetrator of the blast could have chosen any number of clinics in other cities to bomb as a means of publicizing his extremist ideals.[84] Nor does the evidence suggest that he cared about the race of those who were receiving abortions, were injured, or killed in the blast. The city merely happened to be the setting of the bomber's choice. Thus, the media's 1998 linking of these two events only served to further develop a false continuum of racist deviance upon which systematic and intolerant violence has supposedly survived unchecked in Birmingham since the 1960s.

Las Vegas also ended the twentieth century with the media drawing upon its established stigmatized reputation. The election of Mayor Oscar Goodman provided the opportunity for national media to review the city's relationships with organized crime. In his career as an attorney, Goodman had made a name for himself by defending such infamous clients as Meyer Lansky and Tony Spilotro. As his June 8, 1999 runoff-election victory played out, *The New York Times* could not resist highlighting his past, and by association, the city's history of criminal association. Storylines such as "A Colorful Lawyer Is Running for Mayor" and "Mob Lawyer Wins Race" indicated the direction of *The Times*'s coverage.[85] Each of these articles and others covering the event specifically listed Goodman's past defense of Las Vegas gangsters. Todd Purdum's report went so far as to offer detailed descriptions of how Goodman kept Spilotro out of Las Vegas jails "despite accusations that he had killed 22 people." Purdum also wrote directly of Las Vegas's stigmatized image, calling it a "sin-soaked city, which has worked hard in recent years to reinvent itself as a family friendly resort in which mob rule is a distant memory."[86] Yet neither he nor his fellow reporters displayed any qualms about playing up Goodman's relationship with that distant memory.

Over-all, national media representation of Las Vegas and Birmingham from 1945 to 2000 had displayed key examples of the sociological elements required for the formation and persistence of stigma. In each instance, the rightful role of media led it to expose local events that often proved deviant from perceived national norms. Abnormal actions within the cities thus became common knowledge to distant observers. Yet the media often went further by placing each city within regional stereotypes that conformed to popularly held and long-established ideals. At times, as in the case of Las Vegas, such relations of place and action resulted in an ambivalent stigmatization, with favorable characterizations appearing alongside the more numerous condemnations. Such reporting found a receptive audience in an America challenged with defining itself and with overcoming perceived shortcomings during the Cold War period. This ready acceptance provided a strong foundation for the perseverance of the

cities' deviant classifications. The newsprint media exploited this foundation by continuing to call upon historical event-based stereotypes in later instances that did not warrant such associations.

This practice continues unimpeded. It revealed itself most recently in a series of *New York Times* exposés on Las Vegas that appeared from May 30 to June 4, 2004. While focusing on Las Vegas's spectacular growth, these articles simultaneously cast the city as virtually uninhabitable by a family-oriented person. Instead, a post-apocalyptic wasteland emerged—one that fosters only uncontrollable adolescents, gambling, drug addiction, hardened strippers, and shattered dreams.[87] As a result of such reporting, both Sin City and Bombingham maintain recognizable locations on the mental maps of the national consciousness.

Notes

[1]Kurt Anderson, "Las Vegas: The New All-American City," *Time* (10 January 1994), 42-51.

[2]Gerald Astor, "All America Cities 1970," *Look* (23 March 1971), 72-74; "An invitation to enter the All-America Cities Competition: 1971 Awards for Community Betterment through Citizen Action," pamphlet published by the National Municipal League and *Look* magazine, 1971, Birmingham Department of Archives and Manuscripts, Lynn Henley Research Library, Birmingham, Alabama.

[3]Howard M. Solomon, "Stigma and Western Culture: A Historical Approach," in *The Dilemma of Stigma: A Multidisciplinary View of Stigma,* Stephen C. Ainlay, Gaylene Becker, and Lerita M. Coleman, eds. (New York: Plenum, 1986), 59-76.

[4]Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963); Irwin Katz, *Stigma: A Social Psychological Analysis* (Hillsdale, New Jersey: LEA, 1981).

[5]Goffman, *Stigma: Notes,* 1-7; Katz, *Stigma,* 1-2; Robert M. Page, *Stigma* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), 1-3; Stephen C. Ainlay, Lerita M.Coleman, and Gaylene Becker, "Stigma Reconsidered," in *Dilemma of Stigma,* Ainlay, Becker, and Coleman, eds. (New York: Plenum, 1986), 1-13.

[6]Goffman, *Stigma Notes,* 3, 5.

[7]*Ibid.*, 3.

[8]*Ibid.*, 4.

[9]*Ibid.*; Katz, *Stigma,* 2; Page, *Stigma,* 4.

[10]Katz, *Stigma,* 1-11.

[11]Justin Fuller, "Boom Towns and Blast Furnaces: Town Promotion in Alabama, 1885-1893," *The Alabama Review* 29 (January 1976), 38.

[12]Martha Mitchell Bigelow, "Birmingham's Carnival of Crime, 1871-1910," *The Alabama Review* 3 (April 1950), 124.

[13]W. David Lewis, *Sloss Furnaces and the Rise of the Birmingham District: An Industrial Epic* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1994), 82-91; Bobby M. Wilson, *America's Johannesburg: Industrialization and Racial Transformation in Birmingham* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 4-5, 50-51, 60-62, 65-79, 86-87, 92, 109-12.

[14]Lewis, *Sloss Furnaces,* 475.

[15]Robert J. Norrell, "Caste in Steel: Jim Crow Careers in Birmingham, Alabama," *Journal of American History* 73 (December 1986), 671.

[16]Blaine A. Brownell, "Birmingham, Alabama: New South City in the 1920s," *The Journal of Southern History* 38 (February 1972), 24, 28-30; Carl V. Harris, "Reforms in Governmental Control of Negroes in Birmingham, Alabama, 1890-1920," *The Journal of Southern History* 38 (November 1972), 569.

[17]Glenn T. Eskew, *But for Birmingham: The Local and National Movements in the Civil Rights Struggle* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 53-54.

[18]Eskew, *But for Birmingham,* 17, 299, 310-12; Diane McWhorter, *Carry Me Home: Birmingham, Alabama: The Climactic Battle of the Civil Rights Revolution* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001), 25, 440.

[19]Bureau of the Census, *1990 Census of Population and Housing: Population and Housing Unit Counts, United States.* Prepared by the Economics and Statistics Administration, Bureau of the Census (Washington, D.C., 1990), 593; Bureau of Census, *County and City Data Book: 2000,* www.census.gov/statab/www/ccdb.html. (Accessed 6 March 2004).

[20]Eugene Moehring, *Resort City in the Sunbelt: Las Vegas, 1930-1970* (Reno: The University of Nevada Press, 1989), 1-21; for a concise, yet informative survey of mid-nineteenth-century Mormon settlement in southern Nevada, see as well Michael W. Bowers, *The Sagebrush State: Nevada's History, Government, and Politics,* 2nd ed. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2002), 6-7.

[21]Bureau of the Census, *State and Metropolitan Area Data book, 1997-1998: A Statistical Abstract Supplement,* 5th edition. Prepared by the Economics and Statistics Administration, Bureau of the Census (Washington, D.C., 1998), 62. The metropolitan area's population grew from 852,646 in 1990 to 1,262,099 in 1997. Within the metropolitan area, the city of Las Vegas also experienced spectacular growth during this period. The city's population increased by 84.1 percent, from 258,204 in 1990 to 478,434 in 2000. This represented an astounding population growth for the decade. It is also of importance that Birmingham's city population decreased over the same period by 8.7 percent, falling from 265,940 in 1990 to 242,820 in 2000. Statistical data for the cities in the 1997-to-2000 period can be found in Bureau of the Census, *County and City Data Book: 2000.*

[22]Hal K. Rothman, *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1998), 313-18, 336-37; *idem*, *Neon Metropolis: How Las Vegas Started the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 63-88.

[23]Rothman, *Devil's Bargains*, 314-15; Richard O. Davies, "Only in Nevada: America's Unique Experiment with Legalized Sports Gambling," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* 44:1 (Spring 2001), 3; Peter L. Bandurraga, "Desert Mirage: Casino Gaming and the Image of Nevada," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* 29:2 (Summer 1986), 109, 114.

[24]Rothman, *Neon Metropolis*, 12-13.

[25]Ed Reid and Ovid Demaris, *The Green Felt Jungle* (Cutchogue, New York: Buccaneer Books, 1963), 1-11, 14-29, 82-85, 92-99, 194-220.

[26]Wallace Turner, "Las Vegas: Gambling Take Creates New Force in U.S.: Millions in Untaxed 'Black Money' Give Obscure Figures Power that Extends from Underworld to Government," *New York Times* (18 November 1963), 1, 37; *idem*, "Las Vegas: Casinos' Hoodlums Face a Cleanup: State Starting to Act against Shady Figures Who Run or Patronize Gambling," *New York Times* (30 November 1963), 1, 39.

[27]David G. Schwartz, *Suburban Xanadu: The Casino Resort on the Las Vegas Strip and Beyond* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 6-8.

[28]John M. Findlay, "Gambling, Las Vegas, and American Culture: Chance and Change in the Mid Twentieth Century," paper delivered at Organization of American Historians meeting, Reno, Nevada, March 25,1988; *idem*, "Suckers and Escapists? Interpreting Las Vegas and Post-War America," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* 33:1 (Spring 1990), 1-15; *idem*, *People of Chance: Gambling in American Society from Jamestown to Las Vegas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). Additional research concerning gambling's direct linkage to western identity can be found in Gary L. Cunningham, "Chance, Culture, and Compulsion: The Gambling Games of the Kansas Cattle Towns," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* 26:4 (Winter 1983), 255-71.

[29]Gladwin Hill, "Klondike in the Desert," *New York Times* (7 June 1953); *idem*, "The 'Sure Thing' Boom at Las Vegas," *New York Times* (20 January 1955); "Mr. Coward Dissects Las Vegas," *New York Times* (26 June 1955); *idem*, "Las Vegas is More than the Strip," *New York Times* (16 March 1958); *idem*, "Las Vegas Keeps the Wheels Turning," *New York Times* (19 October 1958).

[30]Harrison E. Salisbury, "Fear and Hatred Grip Birmingham: Racial Tension Smoldering after Belated Sitdowns," *New York Times* (8 April 1960), 1, 25.

[31]The following *New York Times* articles directly addressed Birmingham's racially segregated structure in the decade prior to the "shocking" Salisbury exposé: "Birmingham Loses Negro Zoning Plea: Federal Appeals Court Rules City 'All-White' Regulation Is Unconstitutional," *New York Times* (21 December 1950); "Birmingham Firm on Law: Robinson All-Star Cannot Use White Players There," *New York Times* (9 October 1953); "Birmingham Eases Bias in Athletics," *New York Times* (27 January 1954); "Segregation Law Eased: Birmingham Permits Mixed 'Pro' Baseball and Football," *New York Times* (24 March 1954); "Justice in Birmingham: Negro Entertainers Have Long Performed before White Southern Audiences without Challenge," *New York Times* (22 April 1956); "Segregation Foes Trail in Alabama: Vote Shows Support for Plans Aimed at High Court Rule for Schools and Parks," *New York Times* (29 August 1956); "Birmingham Defiance Ends," *New York Times* (28 December 1956); "White Foe of Bias Attacked by Mob: Sat with Negro in Alabama Station," *New York Times* (7 March 1957); "28 Negroes Fined in Bus Bias Case: Birmingham Judge Attacks Court's Integration Ruling and 14th Amendment Cites Montgomery Decision," *New York Times* (22 March 1957); "Alabama Negro Clergyman Beaten while Trying to Enroll Students," *New York Times* (10 September 1957); "Birmingham Ends Negro Job Curbs," *New York Times* (25 July 1958); "Bus Law Repealed: Birmingham Gives Companies Power on Seating," *New York Times* (15 October 1958); "Negroes Arrested in Test of Bus Law," *New York Times* (21 October 1958); "Minister Arrested in Bus Law Protest," *New York Times* (22 October 1958); "14 Negroes Jailed in Dispute on Buses," *New York Times* (25 October 1958); "2 Alabama Negroes Jailed in Bus Case," *New York Times* (28 October 1958).

[32]Additional *New York Times* stories featuring Birmingham's intolerant and violent race relations include: "Birmingham Seeks Home Dynamiters: Police Start Hunt Following Second Blasting of a Negro's Residence Within 10 Days," *New York Times* (24 April 1950); "Birmingham Bans Reds: Communists Given 48 Hours to Get Out of Town," *New York Times* (19 July 1950); "Alabamians Attack 'King' Cole on Stage," *New York Times* (11 April 1956); "Bombing in Alabama Injures 5, Wrecks

Negro Minister's Home," *New York Times* (26 December 1956); "Boys in Birmingham Held as Bus Snipers," *New York Times* (31 December 1956); "Negro in Alabama to Die for Burglary," *New York Times* (24 April 1957); "3 Klansmen Held in Negro Torture," *New York Times* (8 September 1957); "Two Bomb Scares Stir Birmingham," *New York Times* (11 September 1957); "4th Klansman Guilty: Alabamian Gets 20 Years for Mutilation of Negro," *New York Times* (21 February 1958); "3 Whites Held in Blast," *New York Times* (3 August 1958).

[33]"Three in Birmingham to Sue *The Times*: City Commissioners Base Libel Action on an Article Reporting Racial Hatred," *New York Times* (16 April 1960); "Police Head Charges Smear," *New York Times* (16 April 1960).

[34]"CBS Reports: Who Speaks for Birmingham," program transcript, Birmingham Department of Archives and Manuscripts, Lynn Henley Research Library, Birmingham, Alabama.

[35]"Police Consider K9s One of Top Achievements," *Birmingham News* (16 April 1961). Connor bragged in this article of his numerous instruments of social control. These included police dogs, water cannons, and a specially equipped armored vehicle.

[36]Foster Hailey, "Fighting Erupts at Birmingham," *New York Times* (15 April 1963); *idem*, "New Birmingham Regime Sworn, Raising Hopes for Racial Peace," *New York Times* (16 April 1963); *idem*, "500 Are Arrested in Negro Protest At Birmingham," *New York Times* (3 May 1963); *idem*, "Dogs and Fire Hoses Repulse Negroes at Birmingham," *New York Times* (4 May 1963); Claude Sitton, "Violence Explodes at Racial Protests in Alabama," *New York Times* (4 May 1963); Foster Hailey, "U.S. Seeking a Truce in Birmingham: Hoses Again Drive Off Protestors," *New York Times* (5 May 1963); *idem*, "Birmingham Talks Pushed," *New York Times* (6 May 1963); Claude Sitton, "Birmingham Jails 1,000 More Negroes," *New York Times* (7 May 1963); "Hoses and Armored Cars Used Against Demonstrators," *New York Times* (8 May 1963); John D. Pomfret, "President Voices Birmingham Hope," *New York Times* (8 May 1963); Claude Sitton, "Rioting Negroes Routed by Police at Birmingham," *New York Times* (8 May 1963); *idem*, "Hurdles Remain: Negroes Warn of New Protests Today if Parleys Fail," *New York Times* (9 May 1963); John D. Pomfret, "Kennedy Reacts," *New York Times* (9 May 1963); "Peace Talks Gain at Birmingham: A Day of Truce," *New York Times* (9 May 1963); Claude Sitton, "Birmingham Talks Reach an Accord on Ending Crisis," *New York Times* (10 May 1963); *idem*, "Birmingham Pact Sets Timetable for Integration," *New York Times* (11 May 1963); Hedrick Smith, "Bombs Touch Off Widespread Riot at Birmingham," *New York Times* (12 May 1963); Claude Sitton, "50 Hurt in Negro Rioting after Birmingham Blasts," *New York Times* (13 May 1963); Anthony Lewis, "U.S. Sends Troops into Alabama after Riots Sweep Birmingham," *New York Times* (13 May 1963); "Wallace Decries Kennedy Action: Says Birmingham and State Can Cope with Crisis," *New York Times* (13 May 1963); Claude Sitton, "Birmingham Still Quiet," *New York Times* (14 May 1963); Tom Wicker, "Troops Won't Go into Birmingham if Peace Prevails," *New York Times* (14 May 1963); Claude Sitton, "Whites Cautious on Alabama Pact: Birmingham Leaders Balk at Giving Public Support to Accord with Negroes," *New York Times* (15 May 1963).

[37]Sitton, "Violence Explodes at Racial Protests in Alabama," *New York Times* (4 May 1963), 1.

[38]Fred Powledge, "Alabama Bombing Protested Here," *New York Times* (17 September 1963); "Lawyer in Alabama Blames Whites, Saying 'We All Did It,'" *New York Times* (17 September 1963); John Herbers, "Parents Are Sad but Not Bitter," *New York Times* (17 September 1963); "Vatican Paper Decries Killings in Birmingham," *New York Times* (17 September 1963); "The Blame and Beyond," *New York Times* (17 September 1963); "Day of Mourning Urged," *New York Times* (18 September 1963); "Hughes Asks for Prayer for Bombing Victims," *New York Times* (18 September 1963); "Ugandans Protest Alabama Bombing," *New York Times* (18 September 1963); John Herbers, "White Birmingham 4th Graders Back Negroes in Class Themes: All Voice Sympathy 'Sorry for Children,'" *New York Times* (18 September 1963); "Connor Holds Court to Blame in Bombing," *New York Times* (19 September 1963); "Funeral Is Held for Bomb Victims: Dr. King Delivers Tribute of Rites in Birmingham," *New York Times* (19 September 1963); "Bombing in Birmingham: Atrocities Declared No Deterrent to Negro's Fight for Equality," *New York Times* (19 September 1963); Lawrence Davies, "Negroes Protest in San Francisco: Decry Alabama Bombing," *New York Times* (19 September 1963); "Rally to Mourn 6 Slain Negroes," *New York Times* (19 September 1963); James Preston, "Birmingham: 'Look Away. . . Look Away, Look Away, Dixie Land,'" *New York Times* (20 September 1963); "1,000 in Elizabeth Attend Bomb Rites," *New York Times* (20 September 1963); "Presbyterians Ask Silence Sunday for Bomb Victims," *New York Times* (20 September 1963); George Dugan, "Birmingham Stirs Faith to Action," *New York Times* (21 September 1963); "Birmingham Bomb Planted," *New York Times* (21 September

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[41]Between its first 1911 mention and 1945, eighty articles appeared in *The New York Times* announcing celebrity divorces or marriages in Las Vegas. A representative sampling of these include "Nevada Divorce Aim of L. K. Rhinelander," *New York Times* (13 June 1929); "Hudson gets Divorce to Wed 'Ma' Kennedy," *New York Times* (19 September 1931); "Wife Sues John R. Hearst," *New York Times* (15 March 1932); "E. R. Burroughs Gets Divorce," *New York Times* (7 December 1934); "Bancroft Sues for Divorce," *New York Times* (6 March 1936); "Mrs. Gable Files Suit: Wife of Actor Nears End of Nevada's Required Residency," *New York Times* (5 March 1939); "Lana Turner Weds Crane: Actress Becomes His Wife Again after an Annulment," *New York Times* (6 April 1943); "Wife Divorces Mickey Rooney," *New York Times* (15 September 1943).

[42]"New Rival for Reno: Las Vegas, Nev., Will Make Specialty of Winter Divorces," *New York Times* (29 August 1911), 1; "A Rival Divorce Colony," *New York Times* (30 August 1911), 6.

[43]"Wild West Town near Boulder Dam," *New York Times* (23 August 1936), XX10

[44]"Las Vegas Saloons Are Closed," *New York Times* (8 April 1939), 30.

[45]Ward Allen Howe, "Las Vegas Vacation Center: Seeing Boulder Dam by Automobile," *New York Times* (24 March 1946), 57; Grady Johnson, "Lively Las Vegas: New Vacationland is Growing up Rapidly around the Great Lake at Hoover Dam," *New York Times* (14 November 1948), X16.

[46]Jack Goodman, "Desert Attractions: Tourism Is Las Vegas' Major Industry and Spring Business Is Booming," *New York Times* (16 March 1947), X14.

[47]Howe, "Las Vegas Vacation Center."

[48]Goodman, "Desert Attractions."

[49]Johnson, "Lively Las Vegas."

[50]Howe, "Las Vegas Vacation Center."

[51]Goodman, "Desert Attractions."

[52]Johnson, "Lively Las Vegas."

[53]Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," in *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner: "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" and Other Essays*, by John Mack Faragher (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1994), 31-60.

[54]Lee Clark Mitchell, *Westerns: Making the Man in Fiction and Film* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 57-149.

[55]For the national parks' relationship to tourism and their transformed and symbolic environments, see Mark David Barringer, *Selling Yellowstone: Capitalism and the Construction of Nature* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002); Paul Schullery, *Searching for Yellowstone: Ecology and Wonder in the Last Wilderness* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997); Mark David Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Ted Steinberg, *Down to Earth: Nature's Role in American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 144-56.

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[57]"Investigation in Nevada," *New York Times* (16 November 1950), 25.

[58]Turner, "Las Vegas: Gambling Take Creates New Force," 1, 37.

[59]Turner, "Las Vegas: Casinos' Hoodlums Face Cleanup," 1, 39.

[60]Reid and Demaris, *Green Felt Jungle*, 1-11, 14-29, 82-85, 92-99, 194-220. Basically, the entire book is a condemnation of Las Vegas's gambling, immorality, and corruption. The pages listed offer a representative glimpse of this.

[61]"Open End Lists Crime Discussion," *New York Times* (24 February 1963), 49.

[62]George Gent, "The American Way of Crime," *New York Times* (21 August 1966), 110.

[63]John W. Jefferies, "The Quest for National Purpose of 1960," *American Quarterly* 30 (Autumn 1978), 451-70.

[64]Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier and President* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990), 273-77.

[65]*Ibid.*, 277.

[66]William H. Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey: America since World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 121-23, 129-30, 145.

[67]John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1958).

[68]Chafe, *Unfinished Journey*, 121-23, 134. Chafe sees suburbia as having an emasculating effect on the perceived identity of the American man through its bringing him more squarely into the normal routines of family life and its assault on individualism.

[69]William H. Whyte, *The Organization Man* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956).

[70]Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1922; Reprint Filiquarian Publishing Company, 2007), 300-01.

[71]Roy Reed, "Proud Birmingham Steers into Mainstream, U.S.A.," *New York Times* (28 March 1972), 45, 86.

[72]"A City Reborn," *Time* (27 September 1976), 55-56.

[73]*Ibid.*

[74]Jeff Gerth, "U.S. to Seek Charges from a Wide Inquiry on Organized Crime: F.B.I. Surveillance Used in Several Cities: Allegations to Focus on Union and Businesses," *New York Times* (24 February 1980), 1; Wallace Turner, "Federal Robes Can't Disguise Local Hackles in Las Vegas," *New York Times* (27 April 1980), E5.

[75]Gerth, "U.S. to Seek Charges."

[76]Pamela G. Hollie, "Hundreds Are Injured as Blaze Traps 3,500 on the Upper Floors," *New York Times* (22 November 1980), 1.

[77]John M. Crewdson, "On Las Vegas's Strip, a Few Refused to Be Interrupted," *New York Times* (23 November 1980), 34.

[78]Carol Mason, *Killing for Life: The Apocalyptic Narrative of Pro-Life Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 27; Donald P. Baker, "Blast at Alabama Abortion Clinic Kills a Policeman, Injures Nurse: Fatality is the First From Bombing of Such a Facility," *The Washington Post*, (30 January, 1998), A1.

[79]Rick Bragg, "Bomb Kills Guard at an Alabama Abortion Clinic," *New York Times* (30 January 1998), A1; Rick Bragg, "Abortion Clinic Bomb Was Intended to Kill, an Official Says," *New York Times* (31 January 1998), A7; "The Bombing of Abortion Rights," editorial, *New York Times* (31 January 1998), A14.

[80]Kevin Sack, "Suspect in Southern Bombings is an Enigma to Law Enforcement," *New York Times* (28 February 1998); *idem*, "Southern Bombing Fugitive Is Seen in North Carolina," *New York Times* (14 July 1998), A12.

[81]Marlon Manuel, "Birmingham Clinic Bombing: A City's Past Comes Roaring Back," *Atlanta Constitution-Journal* (1 February 1998), A3.

[82]Clarence Page, "Pro-Life until You Get in Their Way," *Chicago Tribune* (1 February 1998), 19.

[83]The most thorough explanation for Birmingham's racially motivated bombings from 1945 to 1963 can be found in Glenn T. Eskew's *But for Birmingham*, (pp. 19-83). Eskew painstakingly chronicles the local whites' violent reaction to blacks attempting to move into the white-zoned neighborhoods surrounding Legion Field and Birmingham-Southern College. This was systemized violence in that it was carried out by structured vigilante groups who often warned neighboring whites of impending blasts, and was systematically overlooked by the local police force and press.

[84]Mason, *Killing for Life*, 30-31.

[85]Todd S. Purdum, "A Colorful Lawyer Is Running for Mayor: Las Vegas Would Be His Primary Client," *New York Times* (2 May 1999), 25; "Lawyer Faces Runoff for Las Vegas Mayor," *New York Times* (5 May 1999), A21; "Mob Lawyer Wins Race," *New York Times* (9 June 1999), A18.

[86]Purdum, "A Colorful Lawyer is Running for Mayor," *New York Times* (2 May 1999), 25.

[87]Dean E. Murphy, "As for the Myth of Unlimited Cheap Housing, the Mortgage Has Come Due," *New York Times* (30 May 2004); Dean E. Murphy, "Seekers, Drawn to Las Vegas, Find a Broken Promised Land," *New York Times* (30 May 2004); Patricia Leigh Brown, "A Besieged School District and Its Nomadic Students Struggle to Keep Up," *New York Times* (31 May 2004); *idem*, "New Teachers, Pupils, and Classes With Revolving Doors," *New York Times* (31 May 2004); Charlie LeDuff, "A Las Vegas Judge Finds His Test Case at Home," *New York Times* (1 June 2004); *idem*, "Adolescents in Adult City: Often from Elsewhere, and Often Going Nowhere," *New York Times* (1 June 2004); Sarah Kershaw, "A Life as a Live! Nude! Girl! Has a Few Strings Attached," *New York Times* (2 June 2004).

High Rock High Jinx
Or How the Cow Outmaneuvered the Plow

David W. Valentine

In 1951, Louis L'Amour published *The Riders of the High Rock*, using the pen name Tex Burns.[1] The High Rock that is the scene of the novel is the spectacular gorge and tributary canyons carved into the volcanic highlands of northern Washoe County. In the story, Hopalong Cassidy saves the life and ranch of his good friend Red Conners from a gang of rustlers. One need not turn to fiction, however, to find plenty of historical extralegal activity involving ranchers in the High Rock country. These activities centered mainly on land acquisition, and resulted in a court battle between a large corporate ranch and a group of dry-farm homesteaders. The case illustrates the problems with state and federal homesteading laws and associated surveys, and the lengths to which ranchers were forced to go to procure enough land for their operations. It shows that Nevada's high country is ill suited for agricultural pursuits beyond ranching. It also demonstrates that some lawlessness involving western lands often had as much to do with big business and the courts as with cattle rustling.

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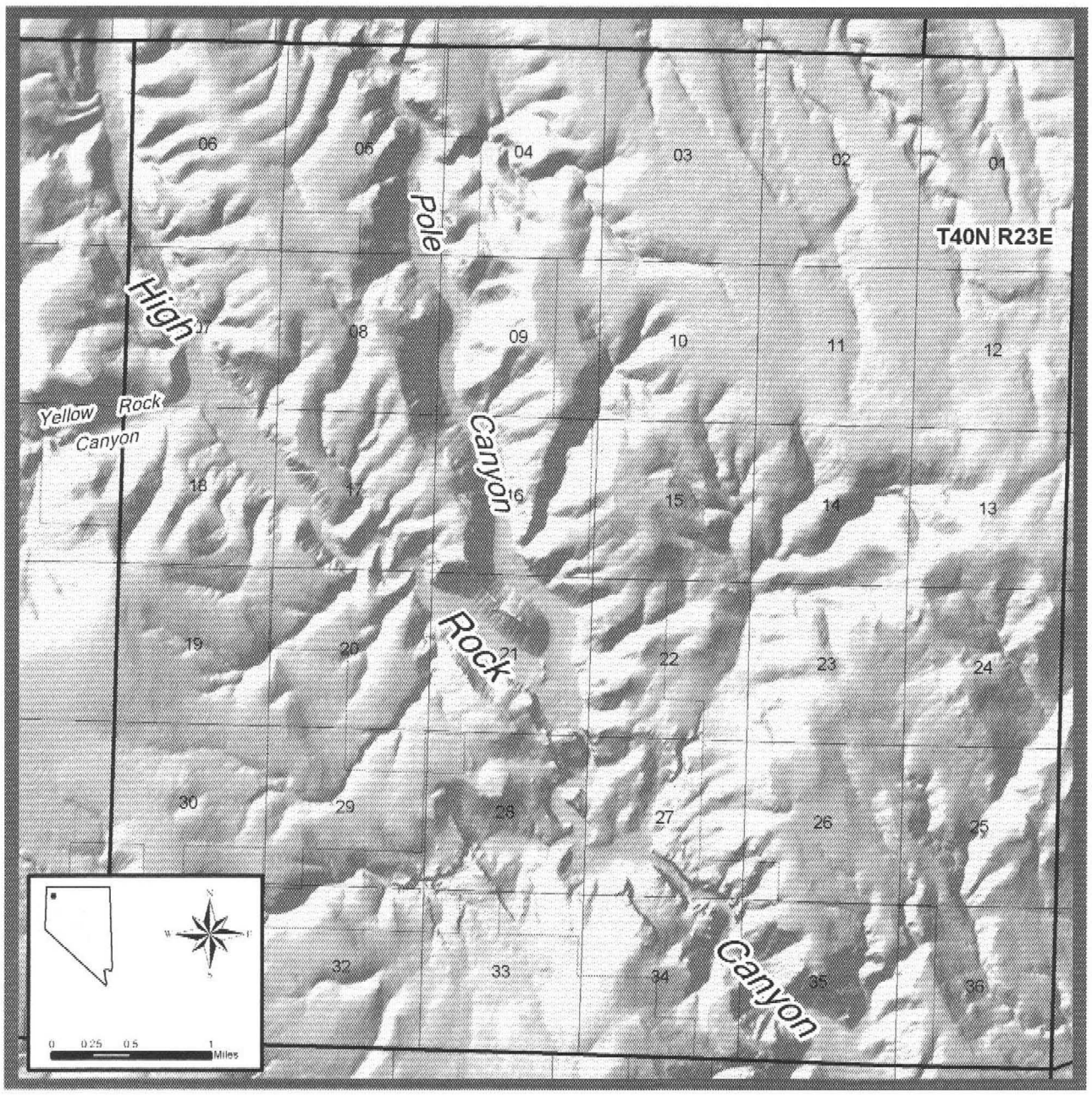


High Rock Canyon in northern Nevada map prepared by Vince Lincoln, Winnemucca Nevada District Office. *(Bureau of Land Management)*

RANCHING IN THE HIGH ROCK

Agricultural usage west of the High Rock country began in 1864 when stockmen from the San Joaquin and Sacramento valleys in California moved into the area to escape an extended California drought. By 1875, they had established farms and ranches from the Truckee Meadows to Goose Lake Valley and from the Smoke Creek Desert to the Pit River, with much of the High Rock country grazed by sheep and cattle.[2] The ranchers used the 1862 Homestead Act to establish their headquarters in the better-watered areas of the region, such as Surprise Valley, California. They also tried to procure water sources for ranching by buying lands that the state of Nevada had acquired from the federal government. Myron Angel's 1881 *History of Nevada*[3] notes that in High Rock Canyon, "Some land has been taken up, and a creek runs through it. Along the

creek, the land has been surveyed." These early ranches were relatively small and were family or individually owned.

But starting in the early 1870s, large California corporate ranches that were not above bending the rules to get what they wanted began buying out these smaller enterprises. The first in High Rock Canyon was the Black Rock Ranch, established by Eliot Waller Crutcher in partnership with his uncle, Dr. Hugh D. "Doc" Glenn. Glenn had first driven cattle into the Sacramento Valley in 1849 from Missouri, and established a large ranching and wheat-farming concern northwest of Sacramento in Colusa County. In the early 1870s, realizing that the open-range conditions of California's central valley were coming to an end, Glenn began searching for new areas to run cattle. In 1872, he moved several thousand cattle into the Donner und Blitzen River drainage in Oregon, with partner Peter French. Glenn also partnered with a man named Todhunter, who had large ranching concerns in Nevada and Oregon.[4]

Glenn and his nephew had an agreement: Glenn would provide the capital and Crutcher would operate whatever ranches he could pull together. Crutcher would receive a "third of the income and increase."[5] Crutcher probably scouted the area around 1871.[6] He liked the region, and acquired property at Piute Meadows in 1872.[7] Crutcher apparently did so by forcing a previous settler off of the place by using lies and intimidation.[8]

In the arid lands of the West, a family-owned ranching operation might require as many as four thousand acres of land to be able to operate at a profit.[9] With the need for so much acreage, many ranchers, especially corporate ranchers with sufficient capital, often took extraordinary means to build up their land bases. Crutcher, with the financial backing of his uncle, was one of these. He started an aggressive program to acquire additional land by buying out existing ranches and buying up Nevada state lands through intermediaries—relatives and employees who satisfied the initial requirements for the purchases and then transferred the properties to Crutcher. This practice was technically illegal because state law limited any one buyer to 320 acres until 1881, when the acreage was doubled. However, state land-office staff often helped the ranchers by-pass acreage limitations. The ranchers also purchased lands that had water, which in turn enabled them to control huge amounts of adjoining federal lands.[10]

Crutcher's abuse of these land laws allowed him to acquire a great deal of land in High Rock Canyon. Crutcher used his relatives James W., Charles R., James G., and O. Crutcher, as well as Hugh and Alphonso Glenn, in this land acquisition scheme. Two others who filed on Nevada State Select lands for Crutcher were W. C. Murdock and Samuel E. Wilson.[11] They may have been employees or partners of Glenn or his nephew, since they listed their places of residence as Colusa or Sacramento county, California, the center of Glenn's ranching and farming empire.[12] Crutcher's Black Rock Ranch eventually ended up with private holdings totaling 7,568.75 acres in northern Washoe and northwestern

Humboldt counties. The size of his herd was reported to be five thousand head of cattle,[13] although it could have been much larger, since ranchers commonly under-reported herd sizes as a way to avoid taxes.[14]

In 1883, Doc Glenn was murdered by a bookkeeper he had just fired.[15] His heirs decided that they wanted to sell off the Nevada ranch lands, and struck a deal with the Miller and Lux ranching empire. The Black Rock Ranch was sold to Henry Miller and Charles Lux on November 21, 1884, for $30,000.[16]

Miller and Lux were butchers who became partners in 1857 to buy cattle for slaughter. Before long, they also were acquiring lands and water rights in California to raise their own cattle and feed for the herds. The Miller and Lux firm grew to be one of the largest corporate enterprises on the West Coast in the nineteenth century, and set new standards for water and land acquisition and use. Their operations greatly industrialized ranching and slaughtering in the West, and reflect many corporate practices of the time, such as developing a stratified management structure with mid-level managers, making efforts to reduce employee expenses by using low-paid immigrant laborers for seasonal activities, and running company stores. The historian David Igler coined the term Industrial Cowboys to refer to the operators of this type of large corporate ranch.[17] After Lux died, in 1887, Miller wrested control of the firm from Lux's inheritors and continued ranching, acquiring land, and running slaughterhouses.[18]

Following an 1878 outbreak of splenic fever (better known now as anthrax) that infected large portions of the Miller and Lux herds in California, Miller started buying and investing in ranches in Oregon and Nevada. The cooler climates in these areas meant that the cattle raised there were less likely to contract this disease (or other warm-weather diseases). The completion of the Central Pacific Railroad in 1869 allowed Miller to cheaply ship the Nevada and Oregon cattle into California.[19]

Henry Miller and the Miller and Lux Corporation worked to increase their holdings in northwestern Nevada by resorting to methods similar to Crutcher's, including using family members and employees to acquire Nevada State Select lands.[20] They also obtained additional acreage through land exchanges with the federal government[21] and by buying out other ranches.[22] In 1917, the firm reached its land-holding peak of 23,498.67 acres in Washoe County, with another 57,262.87 acres in adjoining Humboldt County. The firm ran thousands of cattle, sheep, and horses on its Nevada properties, and raised significant amounts of hay. The properties that Miller and the Miller and Lux Corporation owned were all reorganized and consolidated under the name Pacific Live Stock Company between 1905 and 1914.[23]

Henry Miller died on October 14, 1916, at the age of eighty-nine.[24] He divested himself of the firm by deeding it to his daughter shortly before his death so that his heirs could avoid paying inheritance taxes. The federal government and the state governments of California and Nevada objected to this ploy and

sued for inheritance taxes, with Nevada claiming a tax bill of around $50,000.[25] The issue dragged on in the courts for years, with the family eventually paying some back taxes.[26]

Miller's only son died young,[27] and Miller's grandson who had received training in ranching, died in an Oregon blizzard in 1909.[28] Therefore, after Miller's death, over-all management of the firm fell to his son-in-law, J. Leroy Nickel; his training was as a lawyer, and his initial position was in Miller and Lux's legal department. He became the firm's vice-president in 1897, and served as president from 1914 to 1925.[29] Nickel was not a rancher, and his decisions often were not good for the efficient raising of livestock. The Miller and Lux firm also felt pressure from large Midwestern meat-packing firms and acquired some large debts, while the family fought bitterly over the distribution of the estate. In addition, a general depression for agricultural goods started around 1921,[30] and shifts in land-use patterns interfered with the California operations.[31] These factors prompted Miller and Lux to begin selling off its land holdings shortly after World War I.[32] The company started divesting itself of its Nevada holdings in 1926.[33] Much of the Nevada property sold quickly, with many of the Washoe ranches under contract shortly after being put on the market, but the final title transfer often took several years. The firm sold the Washoe County properties mostly to northeastern California or northern Nevada cattle and sheep ranches owned by individuals such as Virginia Johnson, L. L. Herren, Martin Espil, Lena Harkey Scott, and Franklin J. and Harold J. Powers, or to firms such as the Thousand Creek Livestock Company.[34] While many of these families or firms continue to operate in northern Nevada, the Miller and Lux firm finally ceased to exist as an entity in the 1960s.[35]

In 1915, as the Pacific Live Stock Company was reaching its maximum acreage in Nevada, dryland-farming homesteaders began moving into the area in significant numbers. Some of these homesteaders came into direct conflict with Pacific Live Stock. If the High Rock's earlier history had involved increasingly commercial and corporate agriculture, the next part of the story would involve the time-honored issue of land speculation and the more recent issue of policy and land disputes between citizens and government.

Homesteading in the High Rock

One of the federal government's main goals early in the twentieth century was to transfer federal lands to private ownership in order to generate income for the government and provide land and a means of livelihood to citizens. This desire to dispose of government lands led to a series of homesteading laws that were not repealed until 1976. One of the first such laws, the Homestead Act of 1862, allowed a homesteader to claim up to 160 acres of land by living on it continuously for five years and clearing, planting, and irrigating a portion of it

for at least four years. Alternatively, a homesteader could purchase or directly "commute" the claim for $1.25 or $2.50 per acre, depending on the size of the claim.[36] Homesteading was intimately linked with the rectangular land-survey system of the United States, developed in the Land Ordinance of 1785 to dispose of federal lands efficiently and equitably.[37] Federal officials sought to increase the number of acres procurable and decrease the requirements needed to prove up a claim. This was an effort to reward military service, offer citizens more options during hard economic times, and make farming viable in marginal areas by providing additional land.[38]

One of these variations, the Desert Land Act of 1877, allowed settlers to acquire up to 320 acres of desert with the provision that they "reclaim" part of the land through irrigation.[39] Another, the Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909, doubled the amount of land that could be acquired under the original Homestead Act to 320 acres, removed the requirement for irrigation, and required that only 80 acres be cultivated. By removing the irrigation requirements, this law, also known as the Dry Farming Homestead Act, allowed entry onto lands that would not have previously been open. Congress further modified the measure in 1912 by reducing the residency requirement from five to three years, allowing residents to be absent for up to five months a year, and further reducing the cultivation requirement to 40 acres.[40] In 1916, Congress passed the Stock-Raising Homestead Act, which allowed entry on 640 acres of non-mineral, non-irrigable, non-timbered land valuable only for grazing.[41] These changes in the homesteading laws were partly responsible for a series of dryland-farming rushes throughout the arid West during the 1910s and early 1920s.

Although many homesteaders honestly wanted to pursue a career in farming, some sought to take advantage of the liberalized homesteading laws for purposes other than agriculture. Some low-income homesteaders saw it as a way to acquire land and homes without having to devote a lot of time to actual farming. Others detected an opportunity for quick acquisition of cheap land that could be sold for a profit, thus introducing a high level of speculation into dryland homesteading.[42]

Many of the twentieth-century dryland farmers moved into areas where there were existing ranches. Little about the friction between dryland homesteaders and ranchers appears in the available literature, but in Montana, dryland farmers who could not afford to fence their fields lost crops to roaming cattle. The ranchers benefited from liberal open-range laws that left the farmers little recourse.[43] A dryfarm homesteader's letter also states: "There are several big ranchmen near here. Some are friendly and some went to Fort Benton and tried to get the merchants to promise not to sell to the dryland farmers as they call them."[44]

Nevada was not deaf to the dryland siren song. Most of the studies completed to date have focused on northeastern Nevada,[45] but northwestern Nevada also experienced dryland homesteading after the Enlarged Homestead Act passed. General Land Office plats and survey notes, federal census data,

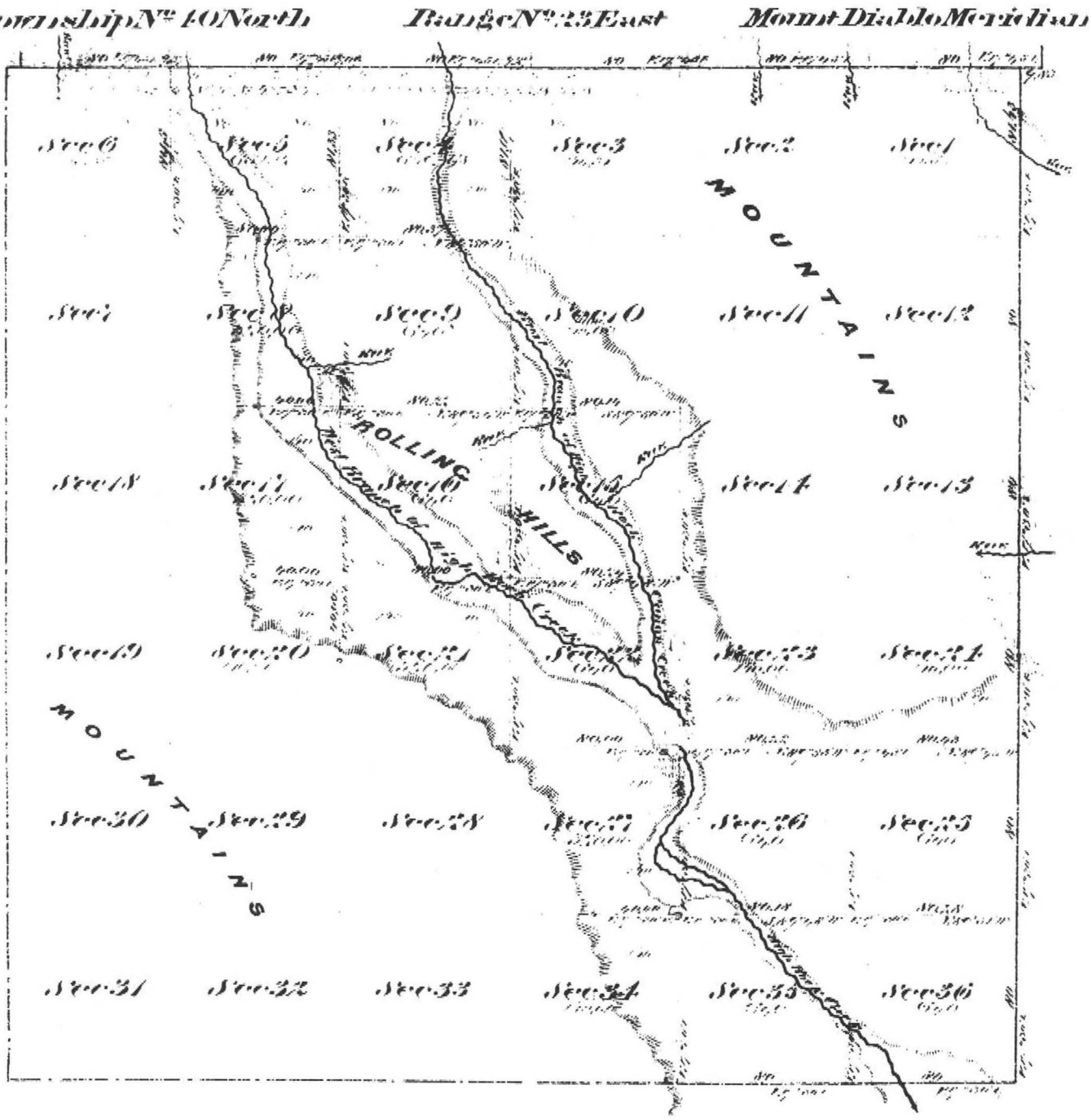
federal homestead records, county tax and deed records, state records, period newspaper articles, and court records provide clues to homesteader activity in the region. They reveal that the homesteader experience in the High Rock Canyon country was similar to others elsewhere in Nevada and the arid West. They also suggest that in High Rock Canyon a strong speculative element brought the homesteaders into conflict with existing ranches.

Speculation and Conflict in the High Rock

Some homesteaders who moved into High Rock Canyon suspected that the Pacific Live Stock Company lacked clear title to lands that it claimed in the area.[46] Several factors relating to the rectangular survey contributed to this notion. Nevada's remoteness and harsh deserts had made it difficult to complete the needed surveying. Each western state was supposed to receive two sections from each surveyed township for the development of schools. Impatient for school lands, Nevada officials requested that their state receive acreage of its choosing as soon as possible instead of waiting for completion of the surveys. Twice, Congress complied, with lands totaling 2,723,647 acres.[47] These lands are often referred to as State Select lands. Nevada then sold the lands it had selected to raise money to support schools. But the state chose the lands in conjunction with the ranchers that bought them, and selected lands that had good access to water.[48] By 1936, the state retained only 126,587 acres.[49] High Rock Canyon had its fair share of State Select lands, with 1,200 acres selected and sold.[50] Eliot Crutcher and his representatives bought this acreage and transferred it to the Pacific Live Stock Company when Miller and Lux purchased the Black Rock Ranch.

The second contributing factor was a problem with fraudulent or incomplete surveys. In many western states, Congress contracted out the drawing of the rectangular surveys. Some of the contractors were crooks, drawing up survey plats in bars instead of actually conducting the surveys, or only partially fulfilling the terms of their contracts by just surveying the exterior lines of a township.[51] A contractor named Garside surveyed the township encompassing most of High Rock Canyon in 1873. He incorrectly mapped or completely missed many prominent features (such as Yellow Rock Canyon), his notes are skimpy and repetitive, and he reportedly constructed corner monuments that cannot be relocated. The descriptions of the lands that Nevada selected and sold were based on this potentially fraudulent or incomplete survey. The survey did, however, result in a legal plat of the township that was the basis for the state land sales.[52]

In late 1915, during northern Washoe County's dryland homestead rush, Jean Bernard (in August), Maggie and Fred Messner (in September), and George Wimer (in October) filed homestead applications within High Rock



A portion of the 1873 Government Land Office Plat created by Garside. Note the lack of interior section lines and prominent geographic features, such as Yellow Rock Canyon. *(Bureau of Land Management)*

and Pole canyons and began to prove up their claims. A fourth homesteader, Lena Wilcox, filed in June 1917, but relinquished her claim in December 1918. Six other homesteaders were more lax about the paperwork requirements and left no readily traceable paper trail. These homesteaders built fences, homes, and outbuildings; cleared fields or harvested the natural hay growing in the canyon bottoms; and brought in their own livestock.[53]

The lands these settlers chose were the Pacific Live Stock Company lands they believed to be lacking clear title. Why they took the risk is open to several interpretations. The first is that the lands in question were the best in the area,

with permanent water and deep, fertile alluvial soils, and the settlers may have thought that it was worth taking a chance to acquire them. Another possibility is that the homesteaders hoped that Pacific Livestock would buy them out in order to make them go away. Perhaps these particular settlers were owners, employees, or representatives of a rival cattle firm trying to horn in on the Miller and Lux operation.

In December 1916, the Pacific Live Stock Company struck back at the homesteaders by filing a complaint in the United States District Court for the District of Nevada. The complaint named Fred G. and Maggie Messner, George W. Wymer [*sic*], Del Smith, and Thomas Fox[54] as defendants, along with five other defendants with fictitious names: John Doe Bernard, John Doe (later identified as John Conlin), Richard Roe (later identified as M. J. Messner), Mary White, and Jane Black. The presiding judge was Edward Farrington; he was a veteran of twenty years of private law practice in Elko, in the heart of northeastern Nevada's cattle country, when Theodore Roosevelt appointed him to Nevada's United States District Court in 1907.[55]

Pacific Live Stock's complaint argued that it owned certain parcels in the area, and had the rights to graze and water its livestock and harvest hay from those parcels. In addition, the company claimed the right to move its cattle unhindered through the canyons to adjoining properties and public grazing lands. The defendants, "without right and with force and arms," harmed the plaintiff by denying the firm access to their land and water, by blocking its access through the canyons, and by using up its grass and wild hay. The complaint claimed that Pacific Live Stock had suffered $5,000 in damages, and requested a writ directed to the defendants to cease all activities, remove all drift fences and other obstructions, and pay the plaintiff damages.[56] The defendants were subpoenaed the following January. The court appointed George Bodin and later Charles Cronin, both Pacific Live Stock Company foremen who were stationed in the area, to serve the subpoenas, which was done by January 19, 1917.[57]

F. G. Messner and Del Smith hired F. J. Hallock as their attorney. Hallock filed a Motion to Dismiss on January 29, 1917, stating that the only due process the defendants had received was a Subpoena in Equity, which provided too little information about the charges for them to mount a defense. Hallock quickly followed this motion on February 9 with a Motion for Additional Time to Answer."[58] Cronin delivered another round of subpoenas in March. The only response from any of the defendants was from George Wimer, who mailed in a notarized letter without legal representation, claiming that he had in no way interfered with the plaintiff's ranching operations. He also said that the only fences he had constructed were lawful fences specified on his lawful Homestead Application.[59]

Edward Treadwell, attorney for the Pacific Live Stock Company, filed a motion to enter judgment against the defendants. The court filed a decree on October 6, 1917, stating that Wimer's response was no defense against the action, and that the lands under question belonged to the plaintiff. It also noted that Del

Smith had sold his interests in his homestead to Frank Conlin, who was aware of the ongoing dispute with Pacific Live Stock and who became a party to the proceedings by purchasing Smith's interests. Furthermore, the court ordered the defendants to remove all fences and obstructions and otherwise not interfere with Pacific Live Stock Company's operations.[60]

The defendants ignored the court's decree; consequently, on June 17, 1918, the Pacific Live Stock Company filed an Affidavit and Order to Show Cause stating that the defendants were still at their homesteads with their fences in place, still interfering with the Pacific Live Stock Company's operations. The court once again authorized Cronin to deliver subpoenas, which he did between June 22 and 24.[61] After a hearing on July 5, 1918, the court found the evidence insufficient for determining the exact locations of the homesteaders' premises and fences, and was thus unable to rule on their legality. The court then ordered a survey. Three surveyors were selected: Seymour Case by the court, T. K. Stewart by Pacific Live Stock, and D. H. Updike by the defendants. The court ordered copies of homestead entries and the plats and notes from the original survey to support the new one.[62]

The surveyors headed for the field by car on August 3, 1918, spending a night in Gerlach and beginning their survey work on August 5. Unfortunately, Case became ill with stomach trouble. He was hauled back to Gerlach and shipped to Reno by train for treatment. The surveyors filed a report with the court stating that Case's illness limited their field work, but they were able to determine that the original survey was "very carelessly done." They recommended a complete resurvey of the township to determine the definite locations of the lands in question.[63] In November of 1921, Emil Voigt, a United States cadastral engineer (a federal employee specializing in completing the rectangular survey), completed the resurveys, including metes-and-bounds surveys of the homesteaders' plots.[64] (A metes-and-bounds survey is one that is used to describe an irregular plot of land that does not conform to a legal subdivision of a township. The plot is tied to a regular township corner and is described by bearings and distances between the corners.)[65]

The legal wrangling continued through 1919, and it became clear that the defendants' decision to homestead where they did, and their defense against Pacific Live Stock, was based on a resurvey of the adjoining southern township that was also initiated because of an incomplete or inaccurate prior survey. This resurvey, completed by Walter Hoffman in fall 1914, included the southern boundary of Township 40 North, Range 23 East, which was the township where the homesteaders settled.[66] Hoffman found a basalt stone marked with six notches on its south and east edges that he presumed was the common corner of Townships 39 and 40 North, Ranges 23 and 24 East. Hoffman destroyed this stone and replaced it with a brass cap mounted on an iron post. When Hoffman's attempt to find additional markers associated with the southern boundary of Township 40 North, Range 23 East proved largely unfruitful, he resurveyed the entire line.[67]

Hoffman's resurvey made it appear that the original 1873 survey was 1.25 miles too far west and 2,198 feet too far north. This meant that the legal descriptions that the homesteaders entered would differ from the legal descriptions of the State Select lands owned by the Pacific Live Stock Company. The homesteaders claimed that this difference in the legal descriptions made their homestead entries valid.[68] The survey notes from Garside's original 1873 survey, however, indicate that the common corner was a "granite" stone marked with six notches on the north, east, south, and west sides,[69] not just the south and east edges as described by Hoffman. Hoffman might have had the wrong corner, adding weight to the necessity for Voigt's resurvey.

In addition, Judge Farrington disagreed with the homesteaders' defense. He completed an opinion in May of 1919 in which he stated that, in the absence of any identifiable fraud, the 1873 survey and 1874 plat were valid for passing the title of the State Select lands to Nevada, meaning that the Pacific Live Stock Company's possession of the land was valid. He continued:

> The true lines and corners of a government subdivision of land are where the United States surveyors in fact located them, whether the location was right or wrong. The question is not where a corner should have been located, but where it was actually placed, and when that point is found and identified, it is controlling, and cannot be altered or corrected by the court.[70]

The opinion went on to say that any retracements or resurveys should not impair the "bona fide rights of any claimant, entryman, or owner of lands," and should be used only to mark boundaries of undisposed-of public lands. Thus, the Hoffman monument was moot, as was the homesteaders' defense. Judge Farrington once again ordered the homesteaders to remove their fences and other obstructions, not to interfere with the Pacific Live Stock Company's operations, and to pay fines ranging from $125 to $250.[71]

Because they continued to ignore the court, the homesteaders soon faced arrest warrants. The court sent Deputy F. G. Sawyer to arrest Conlin, Fox, and Wimer in March 1920. A severe storm thwarted Sawyer's attempt, and he doubted that the road into High Rock Canyon would be open before late May or early June.[72] But when the road opened by early May, Deputy George L. Lammon apprehended Conlin and Fox but was unable to find Wimer. Defendants Wimer, Conlin, and Fred and Maggie Messner paid fines totaling $500, which were distributed to the Pacific Live Stock Company.[73] The homesteaders finally complied with parts of the court's order and vacated their homesteads.[74]

In the meantime, the government surveyors completed the resurvey of the township's interior lines. On November 3, 1921, the Pacific Live Stock Company surveyor, T. K. Stewart, met with Voigt's survey team in High Rock Canyon. He pointed out the approximate locations of the company's holdings, which closely

corresponded to retracements that Voigt had completed. Thus, Stewart waived a metes-and-bounds survey of the State Select parcels, but the crew completed a metes-and-bounds survey of several homestead filings and found portions of several parcels—labeled 51, 52, and 53—open for entry. The homesteaders with the potential for acquiring land were Jean Bernard, Maggie Messner, and George W. Wimer.[75]

Most of the 160-acre Wimer homestead was brought to patent. Wimer apparently was a patient man, willing to deal with the bureaucratic nonsense and paperwork required for a homestead patent, and with the extra complications brought about by the legal battle. One example of his commitment is that, in 1920, he filed a Notice of Beginning of Absence from Homestead Entry when finally complying with Judge Farrington's orders.[76]

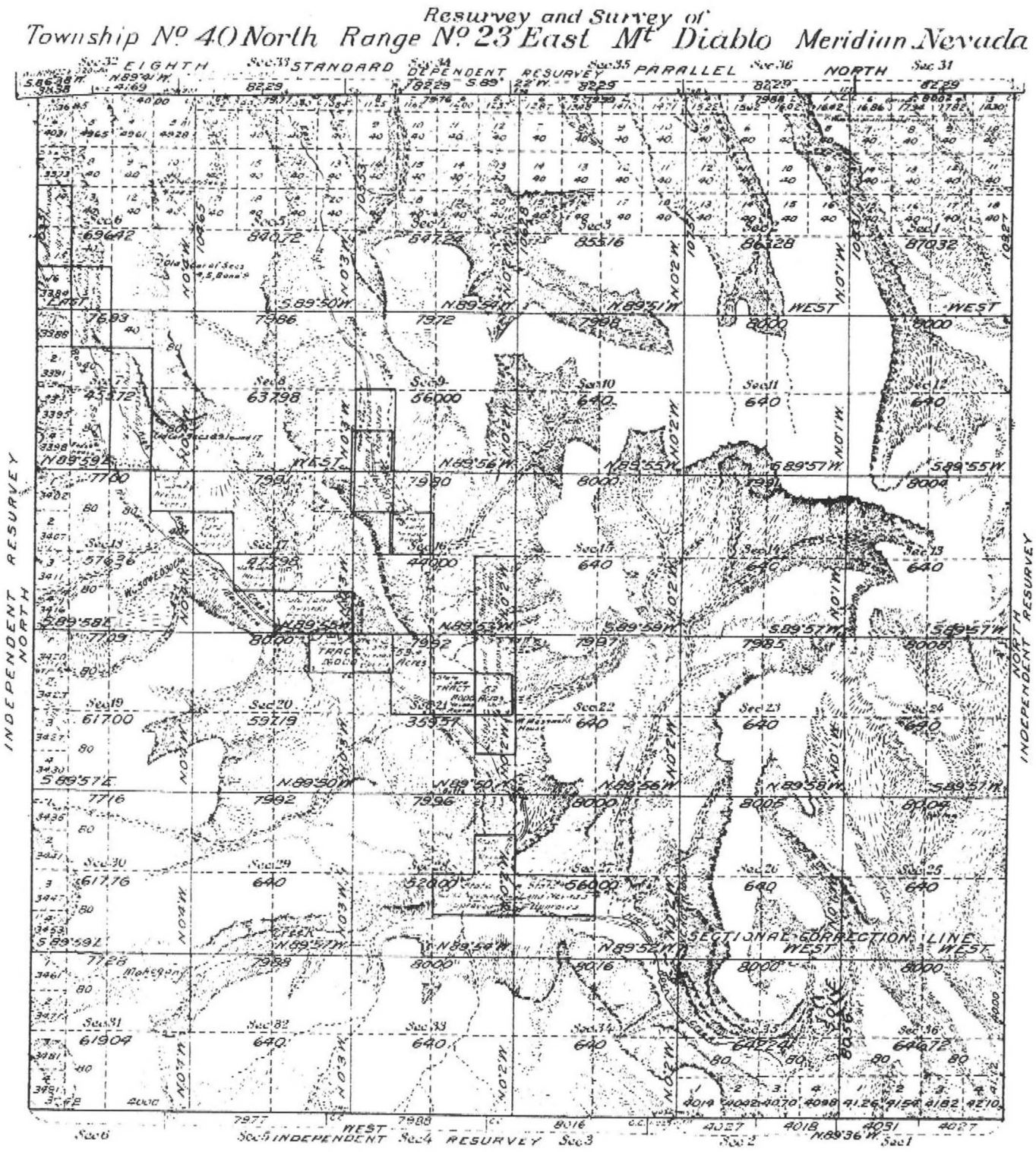
The field work for a resurvey of the interior lines of the township was finished in 1919, and in 1920, Wimer tried to amend his homestead entry to reflect what he thought the resurvey would indicate. Although the resurvey had been filed with the General Land Office, it was not yet accepted, and no new plat had been drawn up, resulting in the rejection of his amendment.[77]

The survey, which included the metes-and-bounds surveys of the homesteads, was accepted and a new plat was drawn up in 1923. Wimer's homestead was now described as Tracts 53 A, B, C, and D. There were conflicts in Tract 53 A (2.2 acres) and Tract 53 B (37.8 acres) with Pacific Live Stock Company land. The General Land Office notified Wimer that he had thirty days to prove why his entry should not be canceled and to file an amendment.[78] Wimer started to file the paperwork to prove that his mistake was based on the earlier survey, but he died before he could complete it. Lizzie Wimer, his widow, pressed on and on December 3, 1925 received a patent for 157.41 acres in Tract 53 C and Lot 3, Sec. 20 and Tract 53 D and Lot 2, Sec. 21, Township 40 North, Range 23 East,[79] although she did not pay county taxes on the land until 1927.[80] Lizzie Wimer held onto the property for a few years, then sold it to Franklin J. and Harold J. Powers on December 4, 1929.[81]

Maggie Messner's homestead proved to be mostly in conflict with previous State Select lands, with only 2.06 acres available for entry. Apparently this was too little acreage to justify continuing with the process, and she pursued the matter no further. Her homestead application was canceled on March 13, 1925.[82] Jean Bernard's homestead also proved to be in conflict, with just 37.98 acres open. Although the number of acres available to him was greater than those open to Messner, he dropped the matter and the application was canceled on May 20, 1929.[83]

Even before the dust from the court case settled, it was apparent to many that farming was not a viable occupation in the High Rock country. Those who had started out as dryland farmers either began to shift their focus to cattle and sheep ranching or left the area.

Local ranchers were also using the homestead laws to acquire land to broaden their holdings. John Z. Van Riper and his brother Leslie Elmer Van Riper were two ranchers who did acquire acreage in the High Rock area. John Z. Van



A portion of the 1921 General Land Office Plat showing the resurvey. Note the lots created to describe homestead sites. *(Bureau of Land Management)*

Riper acquired 160 acres in sections 5 and 8 on April 23, 1929, in Pole Canyon, a tributary of High Rock Canyon, using the homestead laws.[84] Using a Desert Land entry, Leslie Van Riper acquired 80 acres adjacent to his brother.[85] He also acquired 591.3 acres outside of High Rock Canyon. A third ranching Van Riper brother, Edwin E., acquired patent on 320 acres east of High Rock in 1923.[86]

Leslie Elmer Van Riper had filed for 80 acres in Hanging Rock Creek (also known as the East Fork of High Rock Canyon, but now designated as Pole

Canyon) in May of 1920. His application site was visited in July 1921 by a General Land Office special agent, Ord Lantz, who reported about 40 acres of land irrigated and producing a good hay crop.[87]

Since it was a Desert Land Entry, Leslie Van Riper had to file proof of irrigation. He submitted a copy of an Application for Permit to Appropriate the Public Waters of the State of Nevada, which indicated that he would build a series of dams and ditches to irrigate 60 acres with the flood waters of Hanging Rock Creek. This conflicted with the information in his final proof in May 1926. There, he claimed that he had cleared and leveled 16 acres, which supported a mix of tame and wild grasses from which he harvested twenty tons of hay for three years. The year before filing the proof, he reported that the land had been used only for pasture. The patent was issued, after final payment of $80, on October 12, 1926.[88] Leslie eventually relocated to Elko, and sold his 80 acres and all associated water rights and ditches to Franklin J. and Harold J. Powers on June 19, 1928.[89]

John Z. Van Riper's case is a strange one. Apparently, he filed for a 160-acre homestead in sections 5 and 8 in the East Fork of High Rock Canyon (Pole Canyon) in 1920. This filing was rejected because of the court-ordered resurvey. He re-filed a homestead entry in August 1923. The General Land Office recommended against accepting this application, since it was known that Van Riper had been committed to a hospital in May because of insanity, and was not competent to make the homestead entry.[90]

On September 8, 1928, John's brother Edwin sent a letter to the land office. In this letter he reported that he was John's guardian, that John had lost the homestead papers, and that he wished to make final proof on the homestead for John. The land office replied to Edwin, stating that it needed certified copies of John's judgment of insanity, of the order appointing Edwin as guardian, and of a certificate from the county clerk attesting that John had not been restored to competency.[91]

When Edwin submitted the paperwork, his brother's sad story became clearer. John was twenty-five years old when he was committed, in early 1923. He smoked and had been drinking "jackass brandy" excessively for two years prior to his commitment. He suffered from the delusions that spirits were putting dope in his cigarettes and that his name was appearing in all the newspapers. These delusions made him excitable, causing concern that he could injure himself, especially since he hinted at suicide "at times when the spirits feed him dope."[92]

The land office allowed Edwin to proceed with patenting the homestead. He filed the final proof, showing that in 1921 John had harvested thirty-five tons of wild hay from 15 acres of land. In 1922, he harvested ten tons of hay and used some land as pasture. In 1923, the year that John was committed, all the acreage was used for pasture. The listed improvements include a house, other buildings, fences, a dam, and ditches.[93]

Modern photograph of the Van Riper place by the author. *(David W. Valentine)*

The General Land Office issued the patent for the homestead in 1929.[94] The land remained in Van Riper's name for many years. A diligent search of the deed file index through 1975 in the Washoe County Recorder's Office failed to find the exact date that another party bought the land. The last Van Riper transaction found was in 1946, when Edwin and his wife sold their holdings to Mr. and Mrs. Davis and Mr. and Mrs. McKnight.[95]

Conclusion

Although it may be less entertaining than Louis L'Amour's tale of cattle rustling, the story of High Rock ranching illustrates some of the problems with the surveying and disposal of public lands and the unsuitability of Nevada's high desert for agricultural pursuits beyond ranching. The survey of the public lands in Nevada proceeded at a slow rate, and the contract system further reduced its accuracy and completeness. The slow pace of the survey influenced the creation of Nevada's State Select system, which was corruptly administered

and favored land acquisition by large corporate ranching concerns such as Eliot Crutcher's Black Rock Ranch. After buying the Black Rock Ranch, the Pacific Live Stock Company continued with these practices for its own further growth.

The inadequacy of the acreage offered also affected the State Select process. The state's offerings were patterned after the federal land laws, which were created before the United States expanded into the arid West. A suitable acreage in the well-watered East is simply not adequate for Nevada's deserts, which forced many to abuse the system in order to acquire sufficient acreage for survival.

The original 1873 surveys of the townships in and adjacent to High Rock Canyon were incomplete. Forty years later, when the adjoining township on the south was re-surveyed, the incompleteness of the earlier work resulted in a misidentification of a corner, which caused the laying out of a township boundary to be in the wrong location. Cagey homesteaders then attempted to use this surveying error to their advantage when they settled on well-watered bottom lands that already belonged to someone else. The resulting legal battle raged for four years, and was responsible for strengthening legal decisions pertaining to the rectangular survey and the disposal of federal lands, as well as for the ultimate failure of most of the High Rock Canyon homestead attempts, and for several resurveys of the township and interior parcels.

The experience in the High Rock Canyon also illustrates how difficult it is to pursue any kind of agriculture beyond ranching in Nevada's high country. Nevada's aridity, short growing season, and cyclic rodent and insect populations simply do not allow for raising non-irrigated crops; the homesteaders who were successful in High Rock were those who engaged in ranching.

Notes

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[3]Myron Angel, ed., *History of Nevada* (Berkeley: Howell-North, 1958; Oakland: Thompson and West, 1881), 564.

[4]Giles French, *Cattle Country of Peter French* (Portland: Binfords and Mort, 1964); Terry G. Jordan, *North American Cattle-Ranching Frontiers: Origins, Diffusion, and Differentiation* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993), 253, 280.

[5]French, *Cattle Country*, 61.

[6]Ralph G. Parman, *Land of Bunch Grass, Sage, and Sun* (Reno: Ralph G. Parman, 1990), 90-91.

[7]Humboldt County Assessment Roll (1872) (Humboldt County Assessor's Office, Winnemucca).

[8]Parman, *Land of Bunch Grass*, 92.

[9]Marion Clawson, *The Western Range Livestock Industry* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1950), 86.

[10]John M. Townley, "Management of Nevada's State Lands, 1864-1900," *Journal of the West*, 17:1 (Spring 1978), 63-73.

[11]http://www.lands.nv.gov/patents

[12]State of Nevada Land Patent Records, Volume 4 (1884) (Carson City: Nevada State Library and Archives), 356, 368.

[13]Parman, *Land of Bunch Grass*, 95.

[14]Ben Hazeltine, Charles Saulisberry, and Harry Taylor, "A Range History of Nevada," manuscript, 1960 (Carson City: Nevada State Library), 10.

[15]French, *Cattle Country*, 103.

[16]Humboldt County Deed Records, Book 25, (1883-1885) (Nevada: Humboldt County Assessor's Office, Winnemucca), 40-46.

[17]David Igler, *Industrial Cowboys: Miller and Lux and the Transformation of the Far West, 1850-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

[18]Igler, *Industrial Cowboys*; Edward F. Treadwell, *The Cattle King* (Santa Cruz: Western Tanager Press, 1981).

[19]*Ibid.*

[20]David Valentine, "A Brief History of Miller and Lux in Northwestern Nevada," *The Humboldt Historian*, 24 (2005), 19-45.

[21]For example, John Stephens of Cedarville (Washoe County Deed Records, Book 20, Part 2 (1899-1900) [Washoe County Assessor's Office, Reno], 475-78) and the Ward Land and Stock Company (Washoe County Deed Records, Book 25 (1903-1904) [Washoe County Assessor's Office, Reno], 89-93).

[22]Washoe County Assessment Rolls (1885-1930) (Washoe County Treasurer's Office, Reno).

[23]Valentine, "Brief History," 23-24.

[24]Treadwell, *Cattle King*, 375.

[25]*Humboldt Star* (Winnemucca) (30 May 1917), 4; (20 September 1918), 1.

[26]David Igler, personal communication, 21 April 2004.

[27]Treadwell, *Cattle King*, 272.

[28]*Humboldt Star* (17 February 1909), 1.

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[31]Igler, *Industrial Cowboys*, 170-74.

[32]*Ibid.*, 180.

[33]*Humboldt Star* (21 June 1926), 1; (22 June 1926), 4; (30 June 1926), 1; (15 July 1926), 1; (2 August 1926), 1.

[34]Washoe County Assessment Rolls (1926-1930); Washoe County Deed Records, Book 93 (1933); Book 99 (1935); Book 101 (1935); Book 106 (1936).

[35]Valentine, "Brief History," 35.

[36]Igler, *Industrial Cowboys*, 180.

[37]Barbara Allen, *Homesteading the High Desert* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987), 31-35; Pat H. Stein, *Homesteading in Arizona, 1862 to 1940: A Guide to Studying, Evaluating, and Preserving Historic Homesteads* (Arizona: Arizona State Historic Preservation Office and Arizona State Parks, 1990), 2-7.

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[39]Allen, *Homesteading the High Desert*, 33-35; Stein, *Homesteading in Arizona*, 2-7.

[40]Clawson, *Western Range Livestock Industry.*

[41]Allen, *Homesteading the High Desert*, 33; Stein, *Homesteading in Arizona*, 5.

[42]Stein, *Homesteading in Arizona*, 5.

[43]Allen, *Homesteading the High Desert*, 136; Marshall E. Bowen, "The Desert Homestead as a Non-Farm Residence," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 31:3 (Fall 1988), 198-211.

[44]K. Ross Toole, *Twentieth-Century Montana: A State of Extremes* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), 65.

[45]Seena B. Kohl, "'Well I have lived in Montana almost a week and like it fine': Letters from the Davis Homestead, 1910-1926," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, 51:3 (Fall 2001), 36.

[46]Marshall E. Bowen, *Utah People in the Nevada Desert: Homestead and Community on a Twentieth-Century Farmers' Frontier* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1994). See also Mary D. Panelli, "An Ethnoarchaeological Study of Homesteading in Central Nevada" (M. A. thesis, University of Nevada, Reno, 1984), and Marion W. Salter, "Tin Cans, Bottles and Mason Jars: The Economic Diversity of Homesteads in Ruby Valley, Nevada" (M. A. thesis, University of Nevada, Reno, 1998).

[47]Parman, *Land of Bunch Grass*, 119-20.

[48]Clawson, *Western Range Livestock Industry*, Table 7.

[49]Townley, "Management of Nevada's State Lands," 63-73; Maxine F. Shane, *Indelible Rectangular Imprint: Nevada, a Part of 200 Years of Public Land Surveys* (Reno: Bureau of Land Management, Nevada State Office, 1986).

[50]Clawson, *Western Range Livestock Industry*, Table 7.

[51]General Land Office Plat and Survey Notes (cited hereafter as GLO) for Township 40 North, Range 23 East, Mount Diablo Meridian (cited hereafter as MDM), 1922.

[52]Shane, *Indelible Rectangular Imprint.*

[53]GLO for Township 40 North, Range 23 East, MDM, 1874.

[54]Bill of Complaint, Pacific Live Stock Company v. Messner *et al.*, Equity Case File A-68; General Case Files; United States District Court for the District of Nevada (Carson City); Box 28, Shelf 1032A; National Archives and Records Administration—Pacific Region (San Francisco) (cited hereafter as United States District Court for the District of Nevada).

[55]Crazy like a Fox? In most of the legal documentation initiated by the Pacific Live Stock Company this homesteader is identified as Thomas Fox, although he is also referred to as Michael Fox. The 1920 census enumerated only one Fox in the High Rock—a David B. Fox. The only Thomas Fox identified in the 1920 census was a railroad conductor living in Winnemucca. Perhaps because of the shady nature of the homestead endeavor, Mr. Fox was not forthcoming with his true name, or had relatives fulfilling the residency requirements for him.

[56]http://www.fjc.gov/history/home.nsf.

[57]Bill of Complaint, Pacific Live Stock Company v. Messner *et al.*, United States District Court for the District of Nevada.

[58]Order and Affidavit of Service of Subpoena, Pacific Live Stock Company v. Messner *et al.*, General Case Files; United States District Court for the District of Nevada (Carson City); Box 28, Shelf 1032A; National Archives and Records Administration—Pacific Region (San Francisco).

[59]Motion to Dismiss and Motion for Additional Time to Answer, Pacific Live Stock Company v. Messner *et al.*, United States District Court for the District of Nevada.

[60]Answer of Defendant George W. Wimer, Pacific Live Stock Company v. Messner *et al.*, United States District Court for the District of Nevada.

[61]Decree, Pacific Live Stock Company v. Messner *et al.*, United States District Court for the District of Nevada.

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[65]GLO for Township 40 North, Range 23 East, MDM, 1923.

[66]United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, "Manual of Instructions for the Survey of the Public Lands of the United States," *Bureau of Land Management Technical Bulletin 6* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Land Management, 1973) 160-161.

[67]Shane, *Indelible Rectangular Imprint*.

[68]Opinion by Judge E. S. Farrington, Pacific Live Stock Company v. Messner *et al.*, United States District Court for the District of Nevada.

[69]GLO for Township 39 North, Range 23 East, MDM, 1914.

[70]Opinion by Judge E. S. Farrington, Pacific Live Stock Company v. Messner *et al.*, United States District Court for the District of Nevada.

[71]GLO for Township 40 North, Range 23 East, MDM, 1874.

[72]Opinion by Judge E. S. Farrington, Pacific Live Stock Company v. Messner *et al.*, United States District Court for the District of Nevada.

[73]*Ibid.*, 5-10.

[74]Order and Return of Service of Writ (F. G. Sawyer), Pacific Live Stock Company v. Messner *et al.*, United States District Court for the District of Nevada.

[75]Return of Service of Writ (George L. Lammon), Pacific Live Stock Company v. Messner *et al.*, United States District Court for the District of Nevada.

[76]GLO for Township 40 North, Range 23 East, MDM, 1923.

[77]*Ibid.*

[78]Notice of Beginning of Absence, Wimer Homestead, Patent Case File 976,459, Post-1908 General Land Entry Files, National Archives Building, Washington, D. C. (cited hereafter as National Archives).

[79]Letter "C," Wimer Homestead, Patent Case File 976,459, Post-1908 General Land Entry Files; National Archives.

[80]Letter "G," Wimer Homestead, Patent Case File 976,459, Post-1908 General Land Entry Files; National Archives.

[81]Washoe County Assessment Roll (1927).

[82]Washoe County Deed Records, Book 79 (1929-1931), 262.

[83]Serial Register Book, Box 8, Folder CC09306, Record Group 49, Bureau of Land Management; National Archives and Records Administration—Pacific Region (San Francisco).

[84]*Ibid.*, Folder CC09257.

[85]Record of Patents, Number 1026586, available at www.glorecords.blm.gov.

[86]Washoe County Land Patented Book D (n.d.) (Nevada: Washoe County Assessor's Office, Reno), 371; www.glorecords.blm.gov.

[87]Washoe County Land Patented Book D, (Nevada: Washoe County Assessor's Office, Reno, n.d.), 267-68.

[88]Special Agent Report, Leslie Van Riper Desert Land Entry, Patent Case File 987,259, Post-1908 General Land Entry Files, National Archives.

[89]Declaration of Applicant, Leslie Van Riper Desert Land Entry, Patent Case File 987,259, Post-1908 General Land Entry Files, National Archives.

[90]Washoe County Deed Records, Book 74, 192-93.

[91]Notice of Intention to Make Proof and Note to File, John Z. Van Riper Homestead, Patent Case File 1,026,586, Post-1908 General Land Entry Files, National Archives.

[92]Edwin Van Riper Letter of 11 September 1928, Register Letter of 12 September 1928, and C. S. Baldwin Letter of 2 October 1928, John Z. Van Riper Homestead, Patent Case File 1,026,586, Post-1908 General Land Entry Files, National Archives.

[93]Affidavit of Insanity, John Z. Van Riper Homestead, Patent Case File 1,026,586, Post-1908 General Land Entry Files, National Archives.

[94]Final Proof, Testimony of Claimant and Witnesses, John Z. Van Riper Homestead, Patent Case File 1,026,586, Post-1908 General Land Entry Files, National Archives Building.

[95]Register's Final Certificate, John Z. Van Riper Homestead, Patent Case File 1,026,586, Post-1908 General Land Entry Files, National Archives.

[96]Washoe County Deed Records, Book 186, 552-53.

Notes & Documents

Remembering Robert Cole Caples

Russ Lindsay

Shortly after Robert Cole Caples died in 1979, the *Reno Gazette-Journal* published an article titled "Animal Letters" that told how the artist had come to correspond with Reno resident Norinne Buck and her three grandchildren.[1] As the story goes, it all began when Norinne and her husband, Kenneth, were robbed, in 1965. Among the missing items was a photograph of a work by Caples called "Hands at the Bar."[2] Some years later, a friend wrote to Caples about the Bucks' loss, and the artist responded by sending a replacement print. This gesture was followed by some hundred letters from Caples to the Buck's grandchildren, written as though they were drafted by various animals from the artist's imagination.

Robert Caples exchanged letters with Norinne Buck in 1977 as he struggled to cope with his greatest disappointment. After a series of rejections from publishers, Caples realized he would not see a second publication of his book *The Potter and His Children*.[3] Influences for the book date back to the 1930s, when Caples spent a significant amount of time drawing his now famous charcoal portraits of Indians. Thus, it should be no surprise that the story told in the Potter book, with its many fanciful talking animals, has strong parallels with Indian creation stories. Though the book was eventually published in 1971, Caples worked in vain to convince several large publishing houses to run a second printing.

Russ Lindsay is a volunteer at the Nevada Museum of Art. He became an intern at the museum while completing a Graduate Certificate in Art Gallery and Museum Studies from California State University, East Bay. In 2006, he successfully nominated the Dayton, Nevada home and studio of Robert Caples to the Nevada State Register of Historic Places. He recently co-curated the traveling exhibit *Robert Cole Caples: Rooted in Nevada.*

The story and the characters were deeply personal to the artist, possibly more important than the eloquent and beautifully rendered drawings interspersed throughout the book.[4] While several publishers deemed the story "unsalable" and "labored,"[5] they universally praised the quality and appeal of the drawings. Yet Caples doggedly refused to abandon the story—that is, until he received a detailed critique in a letter from the Scott Meredith Literary Agency in 1978.[6] The letter methodically explained the numerous shortcomings of the story as seen by the experienced eye of Meredith, a colorful and outspoken writer and editor. Meredith's case proved too much to bear and Caples finally accepted the fate of Potter and the animals.

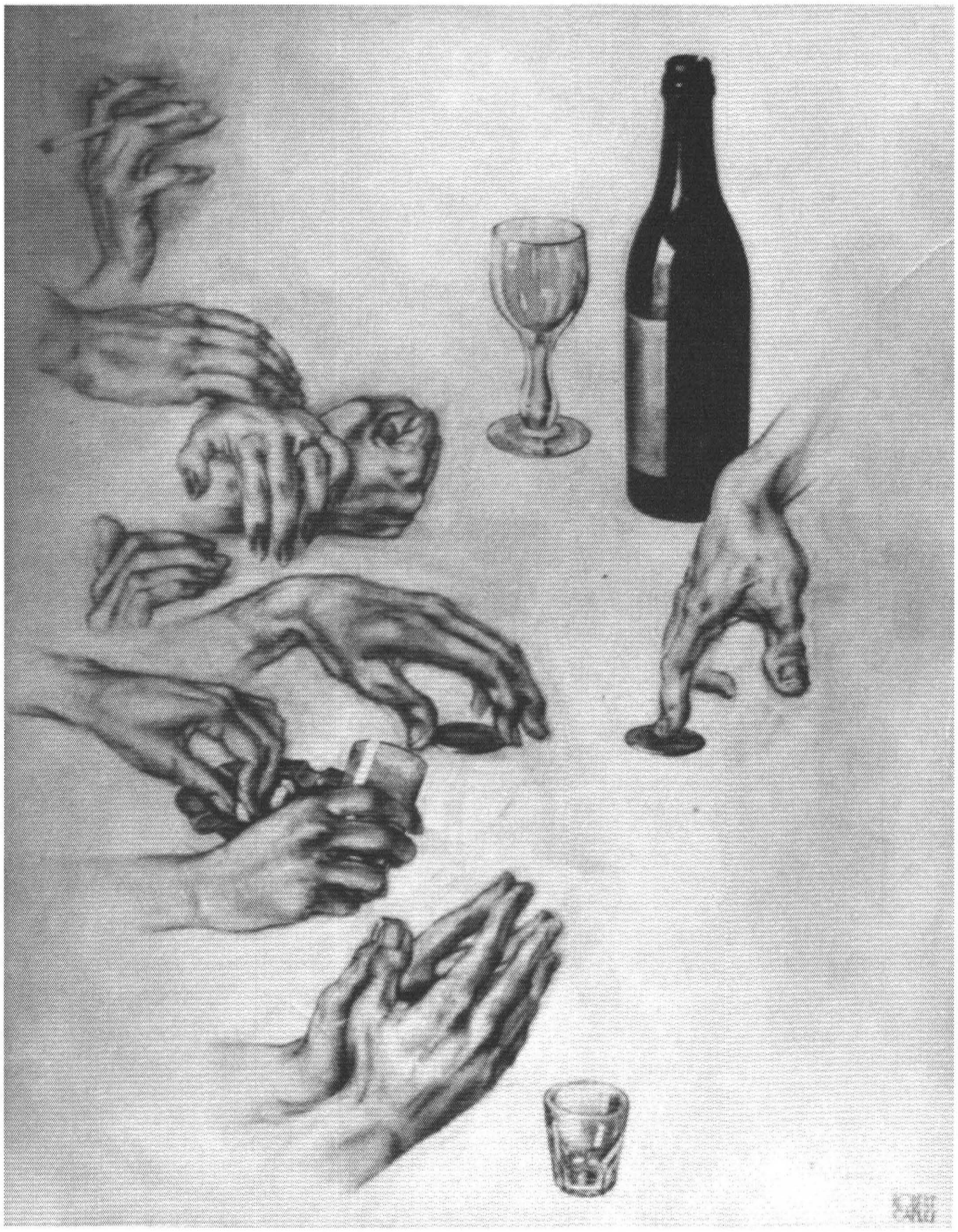
Enter Norinne Buck and her grandchildren—Brien, Erin, and Jennifer. Here, Caples the author found a receptive and appreciative audience for his make-believe world of animal characters. This undoubtedly provided him with a great degree of satisfaction and solace, especially given his extreme disappointment with the outcome of the Potter book. The letters from Sutro the groundhog, the Rabbits, and other characters Caples invented for the Buck family had no need for a publisher's approval. They spoke through the letters with a natural and believable quality that clearly appealed to the children.

No one who knew Robert Caples would ever doubt his extraordinary capacity for imagination and make-believe. He was a romantic thinker, clearly moved by things that evoked adventure and heroic ideals. This aspect of Caples's character is evident in a story he told to Norinne Buck about an eagle feather war bonnet[7] that he drew in the 1930s:

> I remember that I was enormously pleased that Pete Winnemucca would let me have the magnificent object for an entire week so that I might make some sketches of it. And, as you can well imagine, I would put it on reverently now and again and go bouncing around in my Reno studio, just to make the feathers toss and fall—it was like having a great bird on one's head. I never enjoyed a drawing more.[8]

In his studio, Caples surrounded himself with inspirational notes, newspaper and magazine clippings, and other items having special meaning. An undated article by Neil Millar titled "Fancy is a Fact"[9] must have been particularly significant since Caples kept numerous copies on hand. Millar makes a case for imagination, stating:

> My own slender understanding of [imagination] derives from certain powerful simplicities which children know and which adults are supposed to forget. These are the bedrock of our civilization. The first simplicity is that imagination is a fact; the second is that things made of imagination must be taken even more seriously than things made of concrete, cash, or carbohydrates.[10]



Robert Caples, *Hands at the Bar*, black and white photograph of the original drawing, not dated, 13 7/16" x 10 3/8". *(Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art, Bequest of Rosemary Riley Caples)*

Robert Caples connected with the Buck children—and many others over the course of his lifetime—because of a shared appreciation for imagination. The serendipitous event that sparked the long-running correspondence with Brien, Erin, and Jennifer—the Bucks' loss of the photographic print of "Hands at the Bar"—was an unforeseen path to the audience that Caples dearly desired to touch with the Potter book.

During an exchange of letters with Norinne about the lost print, Caples reflected on his experience in Nevada and revealed the most powerful source of his creativity. While discussing the original title for the work "Hands at the Bar,"[11] he was curiously prompted to a momentary digression on the proper place to divide the word *connection*. Somehow, this odd chain of thoughts prompted Caples to recall the deep sense of loss and sorrow he felt after leaving Nevada in the late 1950s: "I now remember that I originally comforted myself by calling (to myself alone) our present address 'dePreston, disConnecticut.'"[12] Using a play on words, as one would expect of a man known for his wit and humor, Caples alluded to the state of "depression" and the sense of "disconnect" that he felt after leaving the source of awe and inspiration he had known for thirty-five years. In closing the letter to Mrs. Buck, Caples left no doubt about his intense feelings for Nevada and the landscape that spurred his imagination for so many years: ". . . I so love Nevada that ten thousand Connecticuts couldn't budge its well-remembered mountains from my spirit—a weightless but imperishable memory."[13]

Neil Millar and Robert Caples shared a common belief about the power of imagination. Thus from Millar we can begin to understand how Caples was able to capture the intangible qualities of Nevada's mountainous landscape and dramatic atmosphere on canvas and board: "If we decline to lift our vision to the airy pinnacles of the imaginary, we shut out the most practical of all human talents: the power to see the invisible, feel the impalpable, hear the silence."[14]

In January 2007, the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office announced that "Lizard Hall," the Dayton residence of Robert Cole Caples, had been listed in the Nevada State Register of Historic Places.[15] Keni McKenzi, Norinne Buck's daughter, responded to an article about Lizard Hall in the *Reno News and Review*,[16] sharing the story of the letters and drawings that her family had cherished for the past thirty years.[17] Aside from the beautiful quality of these materials, they offer a unique glimpse into the life and character of a man properly remembered as the most important painter in the history of Nevada.

Keni McKenzi recently lent the Buck family's letters from Robert Caples to the Special Collections Library of the University of Nevada, Reno, where they will be copied and cataloged as part of the university archives. As a tribute to Caples, the Nevada Museum of Art is currently preparing a touring exhibition of works by the artist from the museum's permanent collection. The exhibition is tentatively scheduled to begin touring in the fall of 2007.

NOTES

[1]Velda Morby, "Animal Letters," *Reno Gazette Journal*, "Art in the Silver Circle" (23 December 1979).

[2]The location of the original work is not known, but several photographs of the piece are held by the Nevada Museum of Art.

[3]Robert Caples, *The Potter and His Children* (New York: Carlton Press, 1971). Though the book is out of print, copies are available from online sources such as Abebooks.com and Biblio.com.

[4]The original drawings from the Potter book, as well as numerous unpublished preliminary and finished sketches, are held in the Caples Archive at the Nevada Museum of Art.

[5]Ashley Famous Agency to Caples, 24 March 1967, Caples Archive, Nevada Museum of Art. The writer opined that Caples had refined the story to the point where it had become "self-conscious" and "labored."

[6]Scott Meredith to Caples, 1978, Caples Archive, Nevada Museum of Art.

[7]A photograph of this work is held by the Nevada Museum of Art.

[8]Caples to Norinne Buck, 5 August, private collection of Keni McKenzi, Reno, Nevada. References in the letter suggest it was written in 1979.

[9]Neil Millar, "Fancy is a Fact," undated newspaper article, Caples Archive, Nevada Museum of Art.

[10]*Ibid.*

[11]Caples stated that the piece "Hands at the Bar" was first exhibited under the title "Bar Sinister," but that title proved "too bookish" and "too foreboding" to find acceptance.

[12]Caples to Norinne Buck, 10 September, private collection of Keni McKenzi. References in the letter suggest it was probably written in 1977.

[13]*Ibid.*

[14] Neil Millar, "Fancy is a Fact."

[15]Terri McBride, "Artist's Residence in Dayton Added to Nevada State Register of Historic Places," Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs, 11 January 2007, http://dmla.clan.lib.nv.us/docs/dca/press/2007/01-11.htm (accessed 27 May 2007).

[16]Kat Kerlin, "House Hunter," *Reno News and Review*, "Local stories – 15 minutes" (18 January 2007), http://www.newsreview.com/reno/Content?oid=269035 (accessed 27 May 2007).

[17]Keni McKenzi, e-mail message to Kat Kerlin, arts editor, *Reno News and Review* (20 January 2007).

Notes & Documents

New Acquisitions at the Nevada Historical Society

NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY STAFF

LIBRARY

ROY FRISCH.

The relatives of Roy Frisch have made two donations to the Nevada Historical Society. Roy Frisch's disappearance is still one of Reno's great unsolved mysteries. He vanished in the era of gangsters, submachine guns, and organized crime. The case received national exposure because it was associated with the names of Baby Face Nelson, J. Edgar Hoover, and George Wingfield, the Nevada power broker.

At the time of his disappearance, Frisch was a forty-five-year-old bank cashier at the Riverside Bank owned by George Wingfield. He was scheduled to be a government witness against William J. Graham and James C. McKay on federal charges of mail fraud and conspiracy. Frisch lived at 247 Court Street in a house that he shared with his mother and two sisters. On the night he went missing, he left the house at 7:45 P.M. to walk to the Majestic Theater to see the movie *Gallant Lady*. After the film, a friend saw him on the corner of Sierra and Court streets. Frisch never made it home and was never seen again, dead or alive.

After all of these years the question still remains: What happened to Roy Frisch on the night of March 22, 1934? Theresa Frisch of Reno donated photocopies of newspapers, magazine articles, and correspondence concerning Roy's disappearance. In addition, Marilyn Fuetsch of Reno has donated newspaper articles from around the country relating to Roy Frisch, Bill Graham, and Jim McKay. With these additions to our collection you can read up on this exciting murder mystery . . . .

Michael Maher
Librarian

MANUSCRIPTS

Among the manuscript collections recently added to our research library are records from a number of mining concerns. We have received significant correspondence and operational and financial records of the Cole-Kirchen Syndicate, a Tonopah-based company that controlled several mines and leased property to the Manhattan Gold Dredging Company near Manhattan, Nevada, during World War II. Also, we have added to our collections a volume of correspondence from the Christy Mill and Mining Company which operated at Mineral Hill, Nevada, in the early 1880s, and have received from William Metscher a group of records from early twentieth century mining companies at Manhattan and Tonopah, among them the White Caps Mining Company, the Manhattan War Eagle Mining and Milling Company, and the Grimes Divide Mining Company.

Sarah Harrison Brown, Reno's first policewoman.

Lt. Sarah Brown in Reno's official policewomen's uniform. Photographer unknown.

In the area of organizational materials, we have acquired the records of the Brookside Women's Golf Club, which was located at the Brookside municipal golf course in Reno from 1987 until its closure in 2006, and we received records from the Dale O. Smith Chapter of the Nevada State Air Force Association. Active in Reno from 1972 until 2004, this chapter was named after U. S. Air Force Major General Dale Orville Smith, who was a Reno native.

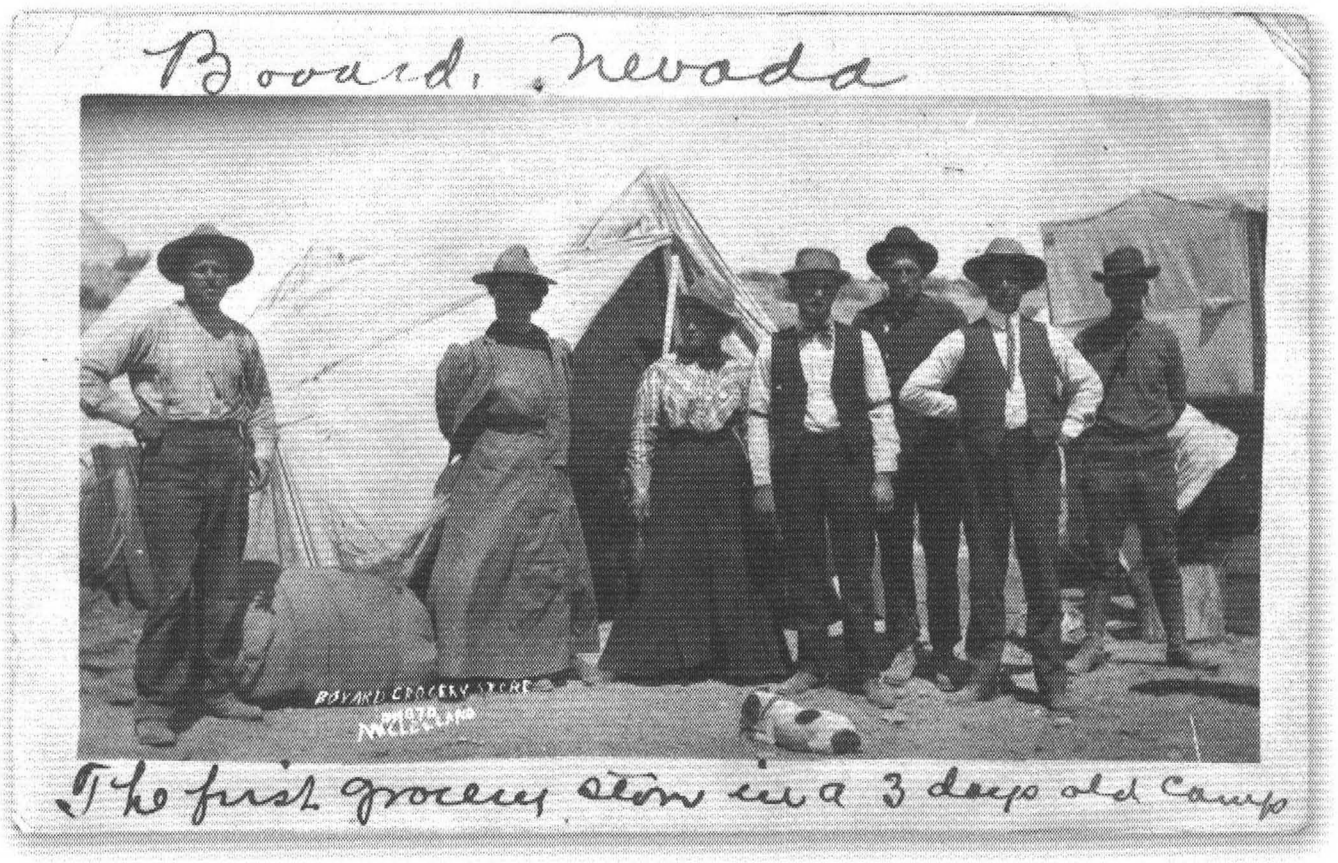
Newly added collections of personal papers include those of Hattie Mae Kilpatrick (1903-1983), who taught business classes at Reno High School for three decades beginning in the early 1930s; Sarah Margaret Harrison Brown (later Selin), who was with the Reno Police Department for many years and, in the 1940s, was the first woman to serve as a regular officer on that force; and the oral historian Sylvia Arden. The Arden papers consist of files of correspondence and notes compiled by her in the early 1990s when she was director of—and interviewer for—the Lander County Oral History Project.

Eric N. Moody
Curator of Manuscripts

PHOTOGRAPHY

The Nevada Historical Society recently received one of the most important donations in its long history. E. F. ("Al") Mueller, longtime resident and businessman of Las Vegas, donated his extensive collection of Nevada postcards. The collection comprises more than three thousand early postcards documenting the history of the entire state. Most of the cards are those termed "real photo postcards," or actual photographs printed in the darkroom on special postcard paper. The more common and generally less expensive picture postcards are actually ink reproductions of an original photograph. Besides being the rarest and most collectable type, real photo postcards provide the clearest historical information and reproduce well in books and other publications.

Although Mr. Mueller, now seventy-seven, modestly claims to have "led a somewhat dull life," he was part of some of the most interesting times and events in Nevada history. One of Mr. Mueller's first jobs was as a floor manager at the Desert Inn, back when casinos on the Las Vegas Strip were mob controlled. Mr. Mueller worked for such famous or infamous individuals as Wilber Clark and Moe Dalitz. In Al's view, these men were at the time the only people with the knowledge and skills necessary to revitalize Las Vegas. Mr. Mueller suggests that Dalitz deserves a statue on the Strip for all he did "in getting this town



Bovard Grocery Store, May 1908. Photograph by McClelland. *(Mueller Collection)*

Remick's Garage, Beatty, Nevada c. 1927. Photograph by "Northeast" Johnson. *(Mueller Collection)*

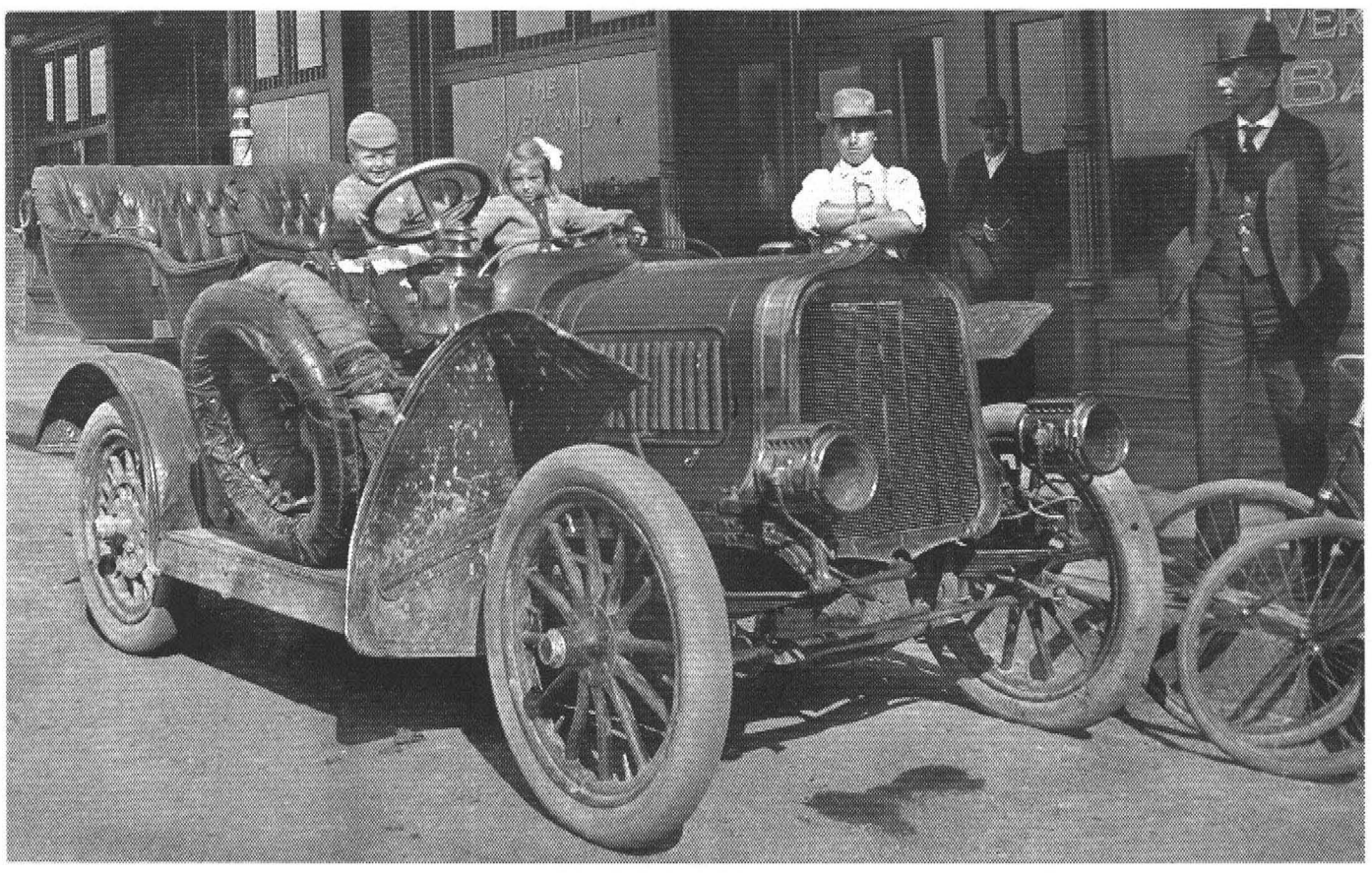
going." Mr. Mueller served as floor manager at the Desert Inn. In his varied career, Mr. Mueller also held a job at the Atomic Test Site and served as a Clark County sheriff's deputy for two years.

Born in New Jersey and trained as a stone mason in Vermont, Mr. Mueller never expected to leave the Green Mountain state for the parched deserts of Nevada. One of Al's first contributions to history was in helping to build the well-known Field House on the lushly beautiful Middlebury College campus. However, while visiting his parents, who had moved to Las Vegas for two years, Al fell in love with Nevada, one of America's driest and least-green states.

In his business travels, like many newcomers, Mr. Mueller discovered that Nevada's history began long before the birth of the Las Vegas Strip. As part of the process of learning Nevada's history, he began collecting old photographs of the towns and sites he visited. Among his finds, he recalls, were stereo and cabinet cards of Eureka and Austin in the 1870s and 1880s. Al says that besides reading about the places he went, he decided that "photographs were the way to go" for someone who wants to really get a feeling for Nevada's past. Most publishers now agree with Mr. Mueller, and photographs from his collection undoubtedly will be widely used in today's heavily illustrated history publications.

After collecting the nineteenth-century mounted photographs, or "hardbacks," as they are called by collectors, Mr. Mueller began to seek out the postcards that

Poker game, Blair, Nevada, c. 1905. Photographer unknown. *(Mueller Collection)*



Auto stage in front of the Overland Hotel, Carlin, Nevada, c. 1908.
Photographer unknown. *(Mueller Collection)*

document Nevada's major early nineteenth-century mining camps. These include Tonopah, Goldfield, Rochester, Rhyolite, Rawhide, Seven Troughs, and a host of lesser camps that spread out across the state during America's last great silver-and-gold rush. By now an avid postcard collector, Mr. Mueller sought out the equally rare postcards of Nevada's railroading and ranching communities, as well as those showing the early days of its still-growing metropolitan centers.

Most of the cards in Al Mueller's collection are so uncommon that they do not duplicate the Society's already extensive postcard collection. For historians and publishers, the Mueller collection will be a treasure trove of rare and previously unknown images, providing new insights and windows on the past. Longtime associate of the Nevada Historical Society, Dave Stafford helped to arrange for this important donation.

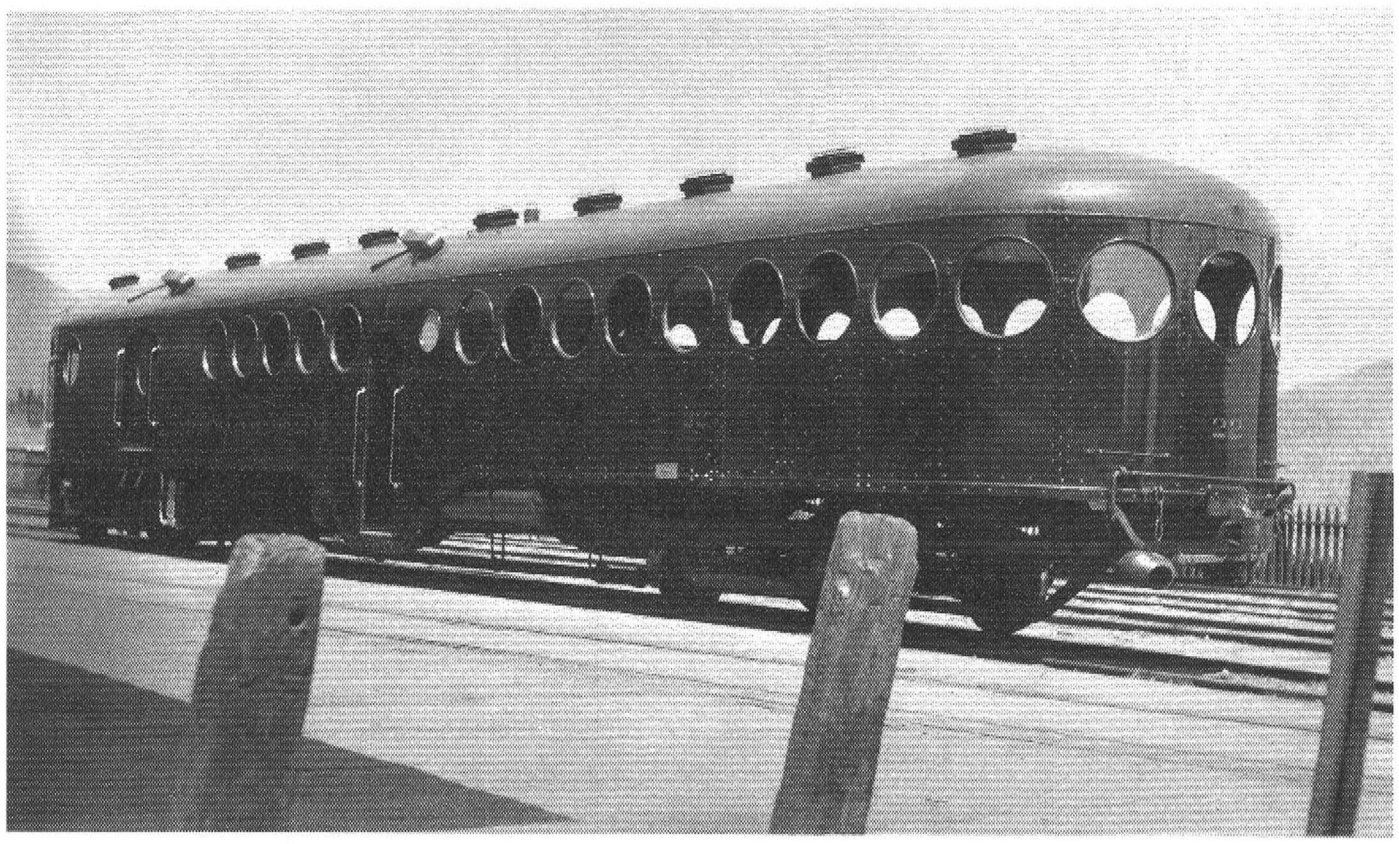
A few examples to give a small sense of the breadth of the collection follow. One card, which seems to depict dance-hall girls and possibly sometime sex workers, is titled "Sadie's Girls." It was taken in Mina, around 1907. An extremely rare postcard shows the first grocery store or grocery tent in the small mining camp of Bovard, near Hawthorne. It was taken on the third day of the camp's existence, in May 1908. Another unusual card shows the McKeen motor car, a self-propelled railroad car, which is currently being restored at the Carson

Eureka, Nevada Decoration Day, c. 1908. Photographer unknown.
(Mueller Collection)

City Railroad Museum. A card from Eureka shows a procession of dressed-up school children and their teachers in a Decoration Day parade around 1908. By 1907, nearly every town had a commercial photographer who made postcards for sale to tourists. One great 1908 card of this type from Carlin shows a small boy pretending to drive the large open touring car that probably served as the auto-stage for the Overland Hotel. Moving forward in time, the famed postcard photographer, "Northeast" Johnson captured the important role of local automobile garages during the 1920s, with his portrait of Remick's garage and "tourist headquarters" in Beatty. Photographers sometimes reprinted earlier images in the popular postcard format. A most uncommon 1905 image of this kind shows miners at Blair posed in a tent with their favorite games, including two poker players at a table with a pistol and cards. Despite their ubiquity in the western film genre, early-day poker players were seldom depicted on postcards. Faro, which is generally unknown today, was a much more common subject.

On behalf of the Society and anticipated generations of researchers, we wish to express appreciation to Al Mueller for this remarkable donation. Not to leave anyone out, the next installment in the new-acquisition series will feature a sample of the smaller, but also historically valuable, photography donations that come in to the Society on a near daily basis.

Lee Brumbaugh
Curator of Photography



McKeen motor car, V & T Railroad, c. 1910. Photographer unknown.
(Mueller Collection)

Sadie's girls, Mina, Nevada, c. 1908. Photographer unknown. *(Mueller Collection)*

In Memoriam

Marjorie Lee Mortensen

1934-2007

Lee Mortensen was the Nevada Historical Society's respected and beloved research librarian from 1973 to 2000. Photographer unknown. *(Nevada Historical Society)*

Among the individuals who came to the Nevada Historical Society in the 1970s to form its first professional staff, none had more lasting impact on the institution than Marjorie Lee Mortensen. Lee, as she preferred to be called, was the society's librarian for almost three decades, becoming so intimately identified with our research function, among both members of the public and Nevada's library community, that her name and that of our library were nearly synonymous. The research library, as it exists today, is a testament to her abilities, foresight, and many years of selfless dedication.

Lee's journey to the Nevada Historical Society, with which so much of her life was associated, began in Reno on November 4, 1934, when she was born at St. Mary's Hospital. The daughter of Hjalmar and Marjorie Ohman Mortensen (he was a Danish immigrant; she was of Danish descent), Lee spent her childhood in a number of Nevada and Utah communities where her father was a salesman and manager for the Standard Oil Company of California. Just after World War II, the family moved to Reno where Lee attended Reno High School and then went on to the University of Nevada. After graduating in 1956 with a degree in home economics, she taught school and was a school librarian in Lovelock from 1956 to 1959. In 1959, she enrolled in the University of Denver library school, graduating with an MLS degree the following year. For the next decade, 1960-1970, she was a field consultant with the Wyoming State Library, traveling extensively throughout the state (in her 4-wheel-drive Jeep Wagoneer she called "Olaf," accompanied by her pet skunk, Sparkle) and becoming active in the Mountain Plains Library Association.

Returning to Reno in 1970 to care for her aging parents, Lee engaged in consultant work for the Nevada and Wyoming state libraries. In 1972, in what proved to be a momentous professional step, she began doing volunteer work for the Nevada Historical Society's research library. The following year she was hired as the society's first full-time professional librarian, a position she would hold for twenty-seven years. During this time she provided unparalleled assistance to a countless number of researchers working in the field of Nevada history, was prominently involved with professional library association committees and workshops, supervised newspaper indexing projects, oversaw the creation of directories of Nevada's historical political figures, initiated the compilation of state "directories" of individuals for the 1890s (a decade for which none had been published), began the conversion of the library from Dewey cataloging to Library of Congress cataloging, and co-authored a *Checklist of the Manuscript Collections at the Nevada Historical Society* (1974), the first comprehensive description of the society's extensive manuscript holdings. She personally indexed a number of major Nevada

history books as well as numerous issues of the *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, and was involved with the establishment of the Nevada Corral of Westerners International and the Washoe County Historical Society. For thirty years she was a partner in the Great Basin Press, which published books on Nevada history and literature. In 1973, in recognition of her exceptional work organizing and cataloging the society's library collection, she was presented a Governor's Merit Award.

It must be noted that everything Lee was able to accomplish at the Nevada Historical Society she did with a single library assistant—sometimes with none—and a handful of loyal volunteers. Everything was done, also, in spite of lifelong physical problems that limited her mobility and breathing, and eventually, toward the end of her time at the historical society, forced her to use a portable oxygen pack. (Lee, of course, always blithely ignored her limitations, doing as much work—and lifting of heavy objects—as anyone else on the staff. She always maintained that she was too stubborn to let anything get in the way of what she wanted to achieve.)

After retiring from the historical society in 2000, Lee spent time gardening —she had long been a grower of flowers that won awards in Reno garden shows—and with her two beloved dogs, Heidi and Kylie—who admirably coexisted with feral cats that Lee had rescued. Lee also continued to volunteer in the society's library, helped to finance the acquisition of books and important research collections, funded a cataloger's position on the staff, and in 2003 established the Mortensen Nevada Historical Trust Fund (within the Community Foundation of Western Nevada), which continues to support the purchase of books and collections for the library. She died, unexpectedly, on September 25, 2007, in Reno at the same hospital where she had been born almost seventy-three years earlier.

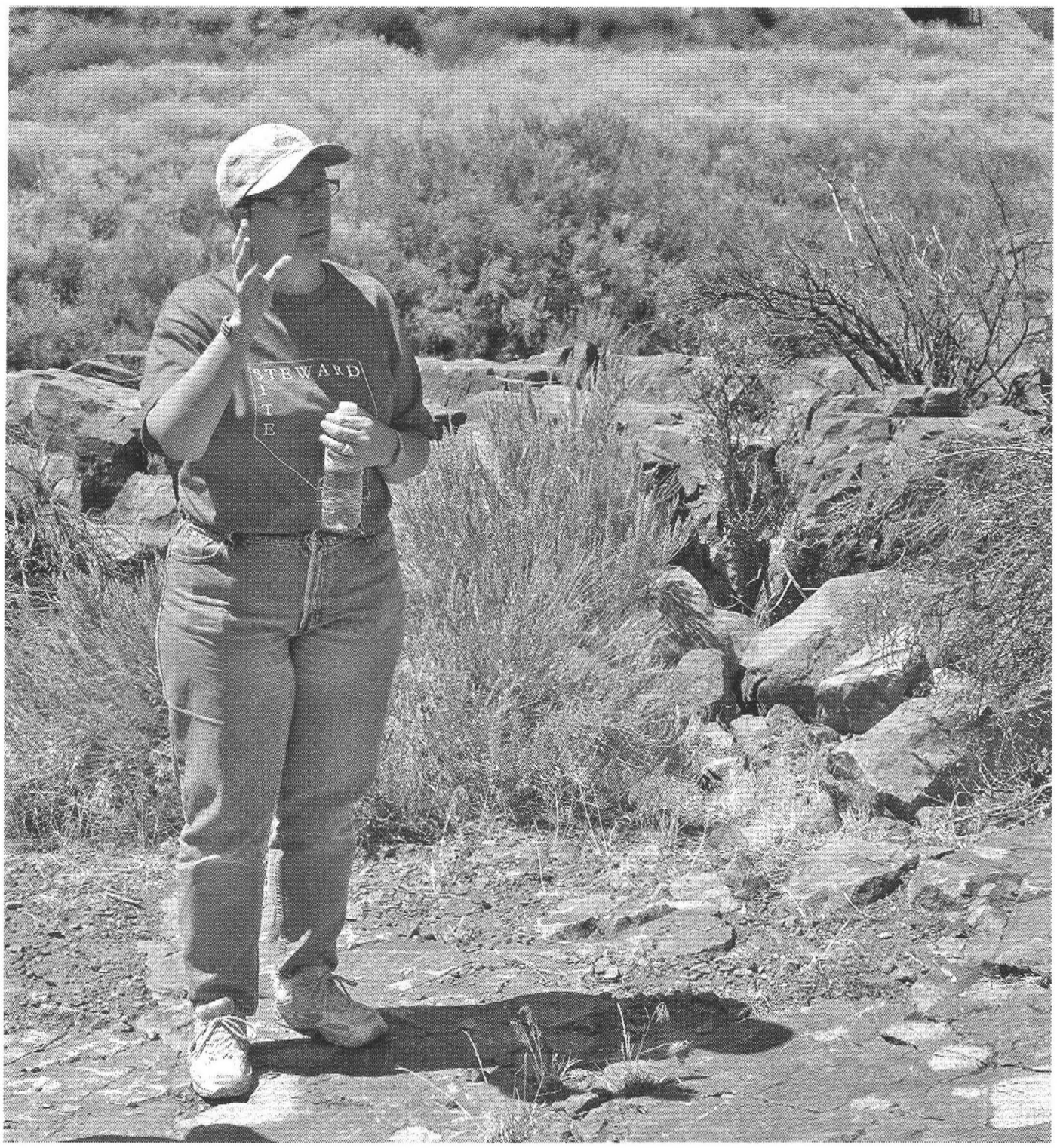
Lee was such an important and affectionately regarded member of Nevada's extended community of librarians, archivists, and historians that it is taking time to adjust to her absence. We are poorer without her detailed knowledge of our research library's holdings, her vast store of information about the state and its history, and her special dedication to serving the public. Lee, who we remember with an ever-present twinkle in her eye and a mischievous smile, will be missed by everyone at the Nevada Historical Society, and by all who knew her.

Eric N. Moody and Michael P. Maher

In Memoriam

Alanah Woody

1956-2007



Alanah Woody leading a tour for the Nevada Museums Association at the Court of Antiquities, August 2006. Photograph by Lee P. Brumbaugh. *(Nevada Historical Society)*

Nevada rock art lost its staunchest supporter on July 19, 2007, with the death of Alanah Woody, executive director and co-founder of the Nevada Rock Art Foundation. Alanah grew up a world traveler, which fed her later interest in anthropology. From 1989 to 1996, Alanah studied anthropology at the University of Nevada, Reno, receiving a bachelor's and master's degree there. Her interest in rock art began while conducting her master's degree work, studying with Professors Catherine and Don Fowler.

Alanah took her Nevada rock art work with her to a Ph.D. program at the University of Southampton, England. Her doctorate focused on Nevada rock art and provided the first synthesis of existing data for 40 years, as well as a critical review of rock art theory. Alanah met her future husband, Angus Quinlan, at the University of Southampton.

On completing her Ph.D. in 2001, Alanah returned to Nevada and accepted the position of Collections Manager in the anthropology department of the Nevada State Museum in Carson City. While working full-time at the museum, Alanah co-founded the Nevada Rock Art Foundation, a 501 (C) 3 organization with the mission of preserving and documenting Nevada rock art sites. In 2006, Alanah left the museum to work full-time as executive director of the Rock Art Foundation. In this role, she was tireless in her efforts to establish the foundation as a lasting preservation institution. Alanah was also a well-published authority on Nevada's rock art and contributed to international debates regarding rock art's past and present cultural uses.

I first met Alanah when she was searching for funding for the Court of Antiquity, a rock art site along the Truckee River, east of Sparks. The site is slated to become a county park through a partnership among NRAF, Washoe County Parks Department, and the Nevada Department of Transportation. Once completed, the park will be a lasting legacy of Alanah's devotion to Nevada rock art.

Alanah was generous with her time and boundless energy. She accepted every request I made of her to speak on rock art or to lead a tour of the Court of Antiquity. The last time I saw her she was guiding a busload of elementary school teachers to the Court of Antiquity and to various Native American cultural sites near Pyramid Lake. I had planned to go along, but my workload that day seemed overwhelming and I begged off. A few short weeks later she was dead. I will forever regret not spending that last day with her. To me, Alanah was the perfect balance of professionalism and passion.

In Alanah's memory, the Nevada Rock Art Foundation has created the Alanah Woody Memorial Fund, which will be used to further the goals of the Foundation and to support field projects that cannot be covered from

other sources. The fund is a fitting tribute to Alanah's memory and to the causes she cherished. Donations to the Alanah Woody Memorial Fund can be sent to the Nevada Rock Art Foundation, 226 California Avenue, Reno, NV 89509.

Mella Rothwell Harmon

Book Reviews

Bold Spirit. Helga Estby's Forgotten Walk Across Victorian America.
By Linda Lawrence Hunt (Moscow: University of Idaho Press, 2003)

As I was reading this book I told my students, college undergraduates, about Helga Estby, an amazing woman who walked across the country. They were spellbound. And one young woman asked, "Why don't we read about these types of people in our textbooks? This is fascinating." That says it all. . . .

Helga Estby typified frontier America. Born in Norway, she traveled to Michigan and later to Minnesota, with her family in its search for a better life. In 1876, sixteen-year-old, pregnant Helga married Ole Estby, who had arrived in America in 1873. Their life was always hard, battling the weather as they tried to farm on the northern prairie of Minnesota. As a frontier woman, Helga struggled to rear her children and keep up with the endless household chores. It was these early hardships and challenges that created within Helga strength of character and an awareness of her importance to the maintenance of her family.

Isolation, blizzards, prairie fires, and cyclones convinced the Estbys to move. Influenced by advertisements sponsored by the Northern Pacific Railroad and newspaper stories describing jobs and wages available on the Spokane and Idaho Railroad, the family moved west. Educated and nurtured in a city, Helga relished all the offerings of Spokane Falls and the advantages it would offer her children, but she chose to live a few miles outside of town in order to protect them from urban vices. Spokane Falls, like most cities, was divided into rich and poor sections, and economic circumstances forced Helga's family into the poor side of town. So 160 acres in Mica Falls became their new home.

All hopes of a prosperous future ended in 1893, when depression hit the nation and Ole's skills as a carpenter were no longer in demand. The family faced bankruptcy and the loss of their home. Helga never lost faith in the ideal that America was a land of opportunity for those who worked hard and were willing to take risks. Her own life experiences had made her a strong woman, both physically and emotionally.

This is when an unnamed "wealthy woman" in New York offered to pay Helga and her daughter Clara $10,000 if they walked across the United States. Helga knew that this money would pay back taxes and the mortgage, allowing her family to keep their home. Ole, who had suffered a back injury, was unable to

support the family, and Helga wanted to do whatever she could, so she accepted the challenge. She and Clara were required to wear a bicycle skirt (introduced at the 1893 World's Fair) and to earn their way across the country. Helga planned to keep a diary and then publish a book about their adventures.

Helga and Clara followed the railroad tracks across the country and met an assortment of American characters, both good and bad. Stopping at state capitols, they gathered letters of recommendation that seemed to add credence to what they were doing. Helga was violating the social mores of Victorian America. In 1896, it was unheard of for an unescorted woman to travel on foot, in what some considered scandalous clothing, and to leave her family for months while she pursued an elusive goal. Few people recognized the earnest devotion to family that drove Helga to take up this venture. It was society's misunderstanding and the perception of unacceptable behavior that caused Helga's story to almost disappear from history.

In December 1896, Helga and Clara reached New York City. Their jubilance was short lived when they learned that the mysterious sponsor refused to honor their contract and pay the promised $10,000. Homeless and penniless and thousands of miles from home, Helga and Clara had to find jobs and save money for return tickets to Mica Creek. Tragedy struck the family back home when a diphtheria outbreak killed two of Helga's other children. Partial blame was placed on Helga, who was not home caring for her children, a mother's responsibility.

More than twelve months after starting on the great trek, Helga returned to Spokane, but was received as "more a villain than a heroine" (229). Her family and her community resented her absence and her unwillingness to accept her "place" as a woman. In the eyes of many, she had abandoned her family and brought shame upon her husband by publicly acknowledging that he could not support his family financially.

Helga's story became taboo within the family. There was no book, no lectures about the walk across America. Helga's family "silenced her." Her heroic adventure was never discussed, and the only documentation of the trip consists of a few newspaper clippings discovered in 1968. But a new generation vowed to keep Helga's story alive and pass it on.

This is a bewitching story. Not only is it a tale of women's rights but it unfolds during the 1896 presidential election, a lynchpin in an America changing politically, socially, and economically. Helga's story is America's story—and should be included in those history textbooks to fascinate and inspire.

Patricia Ann Owens
Wabash Valley College

William Clark and the Shaping of the West. By Landon Y. Jones (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004)

Traveling along the Lewis and Clark Trail, one always wonders, "Which one of those fellows pictured on that sign is Lewis and which is Clark?" We could also ask ourselves how much do we know about these co-captains who led the Corps of Discovery. The Lewis and Clark Bicentennial produced a plethora of books, and *William Clark and the Shaping of the West* is a much-welcomed biography. Not only does it relate the details of his life, it fixes Clark into the happenings of his lifetime. Clark lived a lot of history; he was the embodiment of westward expansion.

The Clark family moved to the frontier of Kentucky from their Virginia plantation. William's older brother, George Rogers, fought to protect their lands from Indians and British during the American Revolution. George Rogers Clark led a band of Kentucky frontiersmen to capture Cahokia and Kaskaskia, and then marched across flooded Illinois in February of 1779 to capture the British fort at Vincennes. It is widely believed that this victory assured the transfer of the Northwest Territory to the United States when the peace treaty was signed. George Rogers Clark had an eventful life, but in his old age he was troubled by mounting debts and alcoholism. William, always a loyal and loving brother, did all he could to ease his burdens.

William Clark saw military action on the Kentucky frontier, and it was here that he met and began a friendship with Meriwether Lewis. When President Thomas Jefferson asked Lewis to lead an expedition to explore the Louisiana Purchase, Lewis asked William Clark to accompany him as a co-captain.

The expedition is the topic of one chapter in this biography. What intrigues the reader is the life Clark led after 1806. Centered in Saint Louis, Clark served in a number of government appointments as governor of the Missouri Territory and superintendent of Indian affairs, thus witnessing America's expansion to the west.

Of special interest is Clark's relationship with Native Americans. Jones writes: "In the span of his public life, Clark had been a primary architect of a form of what is now called ethnic cleansing. He personally signed thirty-seven separate treaties with Indian nations, more than anyone in American history. A total of 81,282 Indians were moved from the eastern United States to the lands west of the Mississippi; thousands more were moved out of Missouri, farther west" (325-326). Clark was a man of his time, believing that Euro-Americans were destined to occupy the land and that Native Americans had to accept the white man's agricultural society in order for their race to survive.

Jones's biography reveals Clark as a complex man: adventurer, cartographer, politician, diplomat, family man, and friend. He died in 1838. A lot of history passed before Clark in Saint Louis, and this volume is a most welcome guide to that history and to Clark.

Patricia Ann Owens
Wabash Valley College

The Environmental Justice Reader: Politics, Poetics, Pedagogy. Edited by Joni Adamson, Mei Mei Evans, and Rachel Stein (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2002)

In *The Environmental Justice Reader*, Joni Adamson, Mei Mei Evans, and Rachel Stein have gathered nineteen essays that at once define the emerging scholarship of environmental justice while at the same time pushing it in new directions. The essays are interdisciplinary, international, and cover topics ranging from the literature of the urban American ghetto to the legacy of nuclear testing in the Pacific islands. The stated goal of the collection is to "document the efforts of local groups to organize, mobilize, and empower themselves to take charge of their own lives, communities, and environments" (5). The anthology succeeds admirably in this task, and will serve to educate and inspire teachers, students, and activists concerned with environmental justice.

The editors have divided the volume into three parts. Section one, "Politics," includes four scholarly case studies of environmental-justice movements in action and two entries that allow environmental-justice activists to speak about their work in their own terms. The editors encouraged "proactive" scholarship that points toward solutions to environmental-justice dilemmas. Section two, "Poetics," presents nine essays on environmental-justice art and literature that expand the canon of environmental literature to include writing about urban and workplace environments and equity issues. The last section, "Pedagogy," provides four essays on methods of teaching environmental justice in college classrooms.

The editors use a very light hand, contributing only a brief introductory essay. Still, the essays speak wonderfully to each other, and several themes appear consistently throughout the volume. Many of the entries expand traditional definitions of the environment. In the editors' words, this means considering the environment as "the places in which we live, work, play and worship" (4). For the authors of the essays, this becomes a focus on toxicity rather than a typical "environmental" subjects like wildlife or wilderness. It also means a critique of mainstream environmental groups for their unwillingness to address the issues faced by people and communities of color. The conflict of knowledge systems—traditional indigenous knowledge of salmon lifeways or local observations of the link between a superfund site and high cancer rates in contrast with a "truth" reported by scientific experts representing governments or corporations—emerge in locales as distant and different as Point Hope, Alaska, and inner-city Memphis. The tendency of globalization to obscure environmental degradation and social injustice while at the same time exacerbating these problems constitutes another recurrent theme. Finally, the idea of empowerment courses through these essays. By becoming active in the fight against the many guises of environmental injustice, the activists, scholars, artists, and writers discussed here enhance their own sense of identity, and their ability to defend this identity. As the activist Teresa Leal explains, "What this movement is really about is people speaking for themselves" (51). Collectively, these themes define the vibrant and diverse environmental-justice movement.

Mixed with these themes are some tremendously powerful and instructive stories. There are personal, individual, and community battles with cancer; struggles against indifferent government organizations and obfuscating multinational corporations; and evidence of community renewal through art and literature. Stories like these make the environmental-justice movement more tangible and easier to understand.

The section on pedagogy deserves a special mention. On the one hand, these four essays seem out of place in a volume devoted primarily to original scholarship. Unlike the other essays, these would not be assigned in a classroom. On the other hand, this section will be invaluable to those trying to build environmental-justice classes of their own. Two essays are particularly strong: Robert Figueroa reveals the intellectual architecture of his course as he explains how and why he introduces his students to different readings, concepts, and components of the environmental justice movement. Steve Chase discusses some of the problems and opportunities he finds in teaching environmental justice to largely white, middle-class students, and suggests some classroom strategies to try (and others to avoid).

I have very few criticisms of this anthology. Some of the essays could have been written in a more accessible, less-academic style—especially if an expected primary use is as an undergraduate text. As in any collection, some of the essays are stronger than others. But over-all, this is a powerful, thoughtful anthology that expands the field of environmental-justice studies and points toward a powerful and inclusive environmental critique.

Jim Feldman
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The Culture of Tourism, the Tourism of Culture: Selling the Past to the Present in the American Southwest. Edited by Hal K. Rothman (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003)

In the final sentences of *Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (1987), Patricia Limerick writes, "Indians, Hispanics, Asians, blacks, Anglos, businesspeople, workers, politicians, bureaucrats, natives, and newcomers, we share the same region and its history, but we wait to be introduced." Since the late nineteenth century, and especially during the last decades of the twentieth century, cultural tourism sites have provided potential venues of interaction among different cultures and ethnicities in the American West. Most of the contributors to *The Culture of Tourism, the Tourism of Culture,* edited by Hal Rothman, argue that the results have been disappointing.

Most of the essays argue that cultural tourism transformed the representations of Hispanic and American-Indian cultures to fit the desires of a middle-class Anglo

tourist population. As local groups were given little agency, American Indians and Hispanics were forced into an economy that stripped them of their history and culture, and sold a modified version to a traveling public. In these venues of cultural tourism the inauthentic representation of ethnic life passed for authentic, and a middle-class tourist population happily consumed the experience.

Chris Wilson and Sylvia Rodriguez focus on the ways in which cultural tourism has transformed the cultural representations of the Southwest to fit tourists' desires. Chris Wilson criticizes *Sidewalk Society*, a sculpture produced in 1990 that stands in downtown Albuquerque. According to Wilson, the sculpture reflects the idea of triculturalism—Native Americans, Hispanics, and Anglos living together in harmony—that the state and tourism promote through the arts. Despite the best efforts of the Chicano movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s to confront these representations, the tricultural images continue, Wilson argues, because tourists want to escape the realities of the modern world. Sylvia Rodriguez maintains that the state and tourism industry are the two major forces that perpetuate ethnoracial difference. According to Rodriguez, because tourists travel to see "otherness," tourism "depends upon, fosters, and intensifies the ethnoracial boundaries that demarcate difference and differential access to resources" (202). Other authors look more specifically at material representations of southwestern cultures and question their authenticity. Rina Swentzell describes how uncomfortable she felt when she moved to Taos, New Mexico, and saw the material representations of her Indian group. Ignoring problems like alcohol, the artistic representations made Swentzell feel that "we were not good enough or could not measure up to how we were represented" (68).

Rothman attempts to provide a more balanced view of cultural tourism by including essays written by representatives of the cultural tourism industry. Susan Guyette and David White, owners of consulting firms that help communities plan for appropriate and desirable cultural tourism, concede that poorly planned tourist sites have produced negative results; however, they argue that positive results are possible through proper planning. They add that cross-cultural planning provides methods that allow host communities to anticipate potential effects of tourism development, and it incorporates the cultural considerations of local groups. Guyette and White's essay offers a brighter outlook on cultural tourism than the preceding authors.

Hal Rothman's essay on Las Vegas concludes the collection and complicates the organization of the book. Although Rothman might view the inauthentic representations of Hopi culture in Arizona as negative, he views the inauthentic cultural representations of New York and Paris on the Las Vegas Strip as something applaudable: "Give me purposefully inauthentic in a heartbeat! New York, New York. . . creates a New York experience that is almost bearable for me" (231). Here lies the dilemma in *The Culture of Tourism* that Rothman complicates rather than resolves. He suggests that inauthentic cultural tourism is not always negative but never defines the differences between appropriate and inappropriate cultural representations.

The Culture of Tourism reflects a growing interest in tourism among academics. Many scholars have accepted Rothman's critical view of tourism in the American West in *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century West* (1998). Few of these scholars, including Rothman, have asked about tourism's positive effects on communities. For a more balanced view of tourism, readers should consult David Wrobel and Patrick T. Long's edited book *Seeing and Being Seen: Tourism in the American West* (2001).

Matthew Johnson
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The Infamous King of the Comstock: William Sharon and the Gilded Age in the West. By Michael J. Makley (Reno and Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2006)

Bucking the pro-corporate fashions that rule among business historians today, Michael Makley has penned a good, old-fashioned robber-baron portrait of the Comstock mining mogul William Sharon. In so doing, Makley reminds readers that the robber-baron motif of Matthew Josephson and other early twentieth-century Progressive historians remains compelling because, like most stereotypes, it captures much that is true. This is especially so in the case of William Sharon, whose life, says Makley, "seems to have gained meaning solely from the acquisition of material wealth" (209). Unguided by any discernable moral compass and "desperate to succeed," Sharon "did little to avoid public disdain" in the ruthless pursuit of his personal aggrandizement. "His actions reflected a desire for power, not popularity" (26 and 70).

Because he left behind no personal letters or papers, Sharon, despite his great significance, has never before received the attention of a biographer. Makley, however, succeeds as Sharon's first Boswell by diligently combing through numerous Nevada and California newspapers, along with a cluster of four lawsuits that generated a trove of revealing primary documents. The result is a comprehensive reconstruction of Sharon's career and a damning assessment of his personality.

Born in Smithfield, Ohio, in 1821, the well-educated and ambitious Sharon journeyed overland to California during the great gold-rush migration of 1849. Following brief stints as a storeowner in Placer County and Sacramento, Sharon landed in booming San Francisco, where he quickly struck it rich by shrewdly speculating in real estate. Ironically, the prospective "King of the Comstock" lost this initial fortune in 1864 by not so shrewdly speculating in Nevada mining stocks. Suddenly broke, Sharon recovered only because of the remarkable confidence placed in him by the San Francisco financier William C. Ralston,

founder of the newly launched Bank of California. Undaunted by Sharon's failure, Ralston promptly dispatched the chastened stock-market gambler to Nevada where, for the next eight years, he presided over Bank of California branches in Virginia City and neighboring Gold Hill.

The Sharon-Ralston partnership proved spectacularly successful. Together with Darius Ogden Mills and five other Bank of California heavyweights, they forged what became popularly known as the Bank Ring. As the Ring's resident agent, Sharon exercised a largely free hand in directing the flow of the bank's enormous financial resources throughout the Comstock region. Consequently, Sharon swiftly became the most powerful and influential man in the newly admitted Silver State.

He was also among its most aggressive. Not content simply to play the role of prosperous banker, Sharon was an empire builder who, as a lender, preferred to foreclose on collateral rather than collect mere interest. Thus, he and his partners collected mines and mills instead. Within just three years of Sharon's arrival, the Bank Ring gained control of the richest mines on the Comstock, including the Yellow Jacket, Kentuck, and Crown Point. More important, Sharon's clique also took over seven key ore-reduction mills, which they consolidated in June 1867 as the Union Mill and Mining Company.

Deploying the classic corporate strategy of vertical integration, Sharon went on to assemble an autarkic dominion that commanded the local mining industry. In addition to their controlling interests in banks, mines, and mills, Ring members and their associates, always following Sharon's lead, organized the Carson and Tahoe Lumber and Fluming Company, the Virginia and Gold Hill Water Company, and, most critical, the Virginia and Truckee Railroad Company, which linked the Comstock to the outside world.

Although Sharon's eight bullish years on the Comstock ended in 1872 when he returned to San Francisco, his power and influence within the Silver State remained so pervasive that, in 1875, the Nevada legislature elected him to the United States Senate. Unlike his son-in-law Francis G. Newlands, who was later to serve Nevada well in the Senate, Sharon absolutely disgraced his high office. Much more interested in possessing the title than doing the job, Senator Sharon rarely bothered to drop in on Washington during his six-year term and managed to achieve distinction only by setting one of the worst attendance records in the entire history of the upper house.

Serenely confident that Nevada's best interests were identical to those of the Bank Ring, Sharon believed that his Senate service was best performed by remaining home in San Francisco tending to business. Granted, there was much to be done. In August 1875, the Bank of California suddenly collapsed, and Ralston, who bore chief responsibility for the calamity, just as suddenly died, a likely suicide. Stepping immediately into the breach, Sharon, in a dazzling display of financial wizardry, miraculously resurrected the shuttered bank, which re-opened to great public fanfare just five weeks later, on October 2.

That same day, the triumphant Sharon also hosted the grand opening of his deceased partner's Palace Hotel, which, along with the rest of Ralston's vast private estate, now belonged to Nevada's absent junior senator. For the rest of his life, Sharon was to shuttle back and forth between his plush residential suite in the Palace and his magnificent new suburban mansion south of San Francisco at Belmont, yet another prize that he managed to wrest from Ralston's bereaved family while rescuing the bank.

Unfortunately for Sharon, his remaining time proved brief and troubled. From September 1883 until his death, on November 13, 1885, the aging and widowed plutocrat found himself embroiled in a bitter feud with Sarah Althea Hill, a devious former mistress who claimed to be his second wife and who now demanded a divorce, along with considerable alimony. Among the most celebrated of Gilded Age celebrity scandals, the sordid case of "Sarah and the Senator" provided a windfall of salacious fodder for a gleeful press. The ugly details of the suit humiliated Sharon's family, disgusted his friends, and no doubt helped drive Sharon into his grave.

It also exposed Sharon as a cold, narcissistic, and narrow man. Aside from cockfighting, poker, and fornication, Sharon had few interests other than business. As Makley observes, "Sharon's feats—conquering the Comstock, building an empire, and bringing the failed Bank of California back to life—are the stuff of legend. But in achieving those ends, he ignored his family [and] acquired few friends." Throughout his life he remained a largely self-absorbed individual who "exhibited little spirituality" and "championed no ideal," even when serving in public office (209).

While arguing on behalf of Sarah Hill before the San Francisco Grand Jury, her attorney, George Washington Tyler, proclaimed Sharon a "financial and erotic giant but an intellectual and moral pygmy" (166). Though his stinging summation earned a contempt citation, it is difficult to close Makley's well-researched book without concluding that Tyler was right on target.

Michael Magliari
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Believing in Place: A Spiritual Geography of the Great Basin.
By Richard V. Francaviglia (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2003)

Surveying the Interior: Literary Cartographers and the Sense of Place.
By Rick Van Noy (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2003)

Both of these works from the University of Nevada Press consider issues of place, though at different scales and with varying levels of immediacy for Nevada readers. Richard Francaviglia's "spiritual geography" is the sprawling product of more than forty years' engagement with the specific landscapes of the Great

Basin. Informed by his longstanding passion for and broad knowledge of that terrain, it is a generous work of broad-ranging insights. Rick Van Noy's book, by contrast, is more confined in its approach, although it covers much more territory physically. Van Noy explores the ways that four different writers—Henry David Thoreau, Clarence King, John Wesley Powell, and Wallace Stegner—have depicted the landscape in their work. Using the central metaphor of literary cartography, Van Noy considers the ways in which these men map the landscape with words, in addition to maps. *Surveying the Interior* refers to the personal world of experience that Van Noy's writers attempt to communicate, not to the literal interior West of geographer Francaviglia.

In *Believing in Place*, Francaviglia sets himself a daunting task, "to tell the story of how the Great Basin's environment resonates in the spiritual lives of all people, Native and non-Native, Mormon and non-Mormon, resident and traveler" (xiv). In this quest he proves to be a well-informed guide. Francaviglia is a life-long student of the region who is familiar with its geography and with Mormon culture, though he is not himself a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, nor does he live in the Basin. He takes spirituality seriously and defines it broadly, extending from Native American animism through traditional Judeo-Christian theology to modern paganism as practiced by New Age adherents. Similarly, he defines the Great Basin broadly, using hydrographic boundaries that extend it into California and Oregon as well as the core areas of Utah and Nevada. Within this capacious framework, he pursues an idiosyncratic path. The book is structured in thematic chapters, each sparked by some physical attribute of the landscape, such as sagebrush, or by the contours of specific places in which the peripatetic geographer finds himself. He explains his procedure in an early chapter, when he describes the Great Basin as a good place to look for the answers to metaphysical questions about the beginnings of life because here "the hand of nature is visible as the most elementary of the universe's forces—heaven and earth—are in constant contact" (22). So Francaviglia begins by looking up at the sky.

What he finds there, characteristically, is his own sense of wonder at the elemental beauty of the landscape, but also the creation stories of other peoples. He takes these seriously, noting the way that Native American creation stories "resonate with ancestral memories of water that was more plentiful than it is today" (44), which he correlates with scientific accounts of the prehistoric lakes that once covered much of the present Great Basin. His point, however, is not to prove or disprove the accuracy of particular creation stories, but to point out the ways in which "the scenery of the Great Basin is a repository of imagination" (53). What we see in the landscape, in other words, tells us about ourselves, as well as about the physical attributes of the terrain.

Throughout, Francaviglia is attentive to the role of culture. He notes the way that the Mormon religious diaspora moving into the Great Basin resulted in the creation of a distinctive landscape that "converted topographical features into

spiritually charged icons" (152). Turning to Nevada, he systematically compares its casinos to Catholic churches, both of them "serene yet animated, with souls fervently seeking redemption, bells ringing, and candles flickering . . . both the casino and the church are structural elements in humankind's enduring quest to affect, even ensure outcomes" (166). Similarly, Francaviglia links his analysis of Nevada's nuclear landscape to the anticommunism of the mid-twentieth century, which he characterizes as a religious quest as well. Predictably, he discusses the Burning Man Festival of northern Nevada's Black Rock Desert in terms of religious pilgrimage and spiritual encounter.

In many ways the title of this work misrepresents its content. *Believing in Place* is not a personal profession of belief, but a thoughtful and well-informed exploration of the ways in which many different belief systems have intersected with the Great Basin landscape. Indeed, Francaviglia's thesis is that life in the region has been characterized by "one factor in particular—the search for something beyond normal experience" (xix). In this book, that search takes a multiplicity of forms, and the author is a catholic guide to them all. The book concludes on a personal note, with the writer's own daredevil driving and his wife's breast cancer. Each is an occasion for further contemplation, as Francaviglia takes "comfort in the thought that out of our failings and tragedies we construct places that endure" (248). In an epilogue, he depicts himself on one last flight over the Great Basin, taking notes for this book but at the same time glancing constantly out the plane's windows, "for fear I'll miss something of interest" (248). This image aptly characterizes his method throughout this richly rewarding book.

In *Surveying the Interior*, Rick Van Noy sets himself a more limited task. While Francaviglia explores the impact of place by starting on the ground, Van Noy begins, instead, with particular explorers. He describes his four writers as literary cartographers, men who both physically map the terrain and conceptually explore the ways that places are experienced. His conceit, that his subjects are both scientists and writers, applies well to King and Powell, less so to Thoreau and Stegner. Throughout, Van Noy's contrast is between scientific representation of the external landscape and emotional apprehension of an interior landscape.

Clearly more intrigued by the latter than the former, Van Noy emphasizes his subjects' recognition of the ways that maps "failed to represent the places they experience" (5). The map, in other words, is not equivalent to the territory. While this fact is hardly a revelation, the ways in which it plays out for the individual writers are Van Noy's principal concern in this book. As he observes of Thoreau, for whom—after a frightening encounter with the unknown on a trip to Maine—the weaknesses of maps loomed large: "They can't represent the intelligence and sense of place on the one hand, and can't capture the sense of time and change on the other" (56). After that recognition, Van Noy tells us, it was Thoreau's quest to maintain the mystery even in the well-known landscape around Concord, to explore a place thoroughly and yet keep it at the same time "wild and alive" (65).

For Powell and for King, there was no such necessity. Each of them encountered genuinely new places, and struggled both with the challenges of mapping them and with the need to comprehend them. Clarence King's sense of place begins to emerge in the Sierra Nevada as he fights against being overwhelmed by the vastness of the chaotic space around him. John Wesley Powell, by contrast, found sublimity in the geological scale of the Grand Canyon landscape that he both mapped and (inadvertently) mythologized for the larger culture. Both men, according to Van Noy, managed to reconcile objective science with a subjective experience of the natural world (141).

The inclusion of Wallace Stegner in this study is problematic. Van Noy concedes that the twentieth-century writer is not even remotely a cartographer, but claims that he qualifies because Stegner conducts a different kind of survey, "a denizen's survey, which also seeks an order, but one closer to the way an insider knows the landscape, perhaps even belongs to it, and is subjective and qualifiable" (142). While this may be true, and Stegner is surely a most insightful guide to the intricacies of western sense of place, his inclusion here undermines any overarching argument about the similarity of the four writers' projects. Better instead, perhaps, to have included Frederick Hayden and George Wheeler (two nineteenth-century western cartographers explicitly omitted by Van Noy because their reports "are interesting mostly to scientists" (25), and left Thoreau and Stegner for another essay. Certainly the cartographers King, Powell, Hayden, and Wheeler have more in common with each other than they do with the "interior surveys" of Thoreau and Stegner.

Van Noy's discussion of Stegner offers a heartfelt appreciation of the layered nature of the writer's sense of place in *Wolf Willow* and *Angle of Repose*, especially. Van Noy admires the way that Stegner's writing incorporates history, fiction, and memoir. Ultimately, Van Noy seems to suggest, Stegner is to be admired because his stories don't simply "write the interior landscape" (146), but conform instead to the deeply experienced contours of the external world. Stegner already possesses the resident's sense of place that Thoreau, King, and Powell are all struggling in different ways to develop in their travels.

Ultimately, Van Noy concludes that no one of his literary cartographers fully succeeds in representing the landscape he explores, though each creates a particular version of sense of place (179). As he puts it: "Beneath the smooth surface of the maps was a land of infinite variety and complexity" (176). Though no cartographer would disagree, Van Noy's two central chapters on King and Powell come closest to exploring and illuminating this observation by examining in detail the work of two men who struggled to do both things.

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