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Front Cover: Las Vegas News Bureau photographer taking shots of the Copa Girls performing their fan dance in the desert in the 1950s. *(University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Special Collection Library)*

Unveiling the Black Rock
A History of Exploration in Nevada's Remote Northwest Corner

JEROME L. LOHRY

INTRODUCTION

In the American West, frontier expansion was closely followed by the need to acquire intimate knowledge of the land. A land gained had to become a land known, so that its settlement might be organized and its geologic wealth exploited. Once known, the indelible stamp of the Rectangular Land Survey could be imprinted, creating the unmistakable mark of an American landscape. The finished survey would then promote privatization and the American Empire.

The Black Rock Desert is located in the northwestern corner of Nevada, about one hundred miles north of the city of Reno. The region is remote and harsh, and home to a small population supported by a few mines and isolated ranches. Offering a wide variety of recreational opportunities, the Black Rock has become a popular destination for hunters, campers, and those seeking solitude. The main attraction is the dry lake bed that makes up the heart of the Black Rock Desert; it is the largest playa of its kind in North America. In order to preserve the Black Rock Desert and evidence of the historical role it played in the settlement of the West, the United States Congress in 2000 designated it a National Conservation Area.[1]

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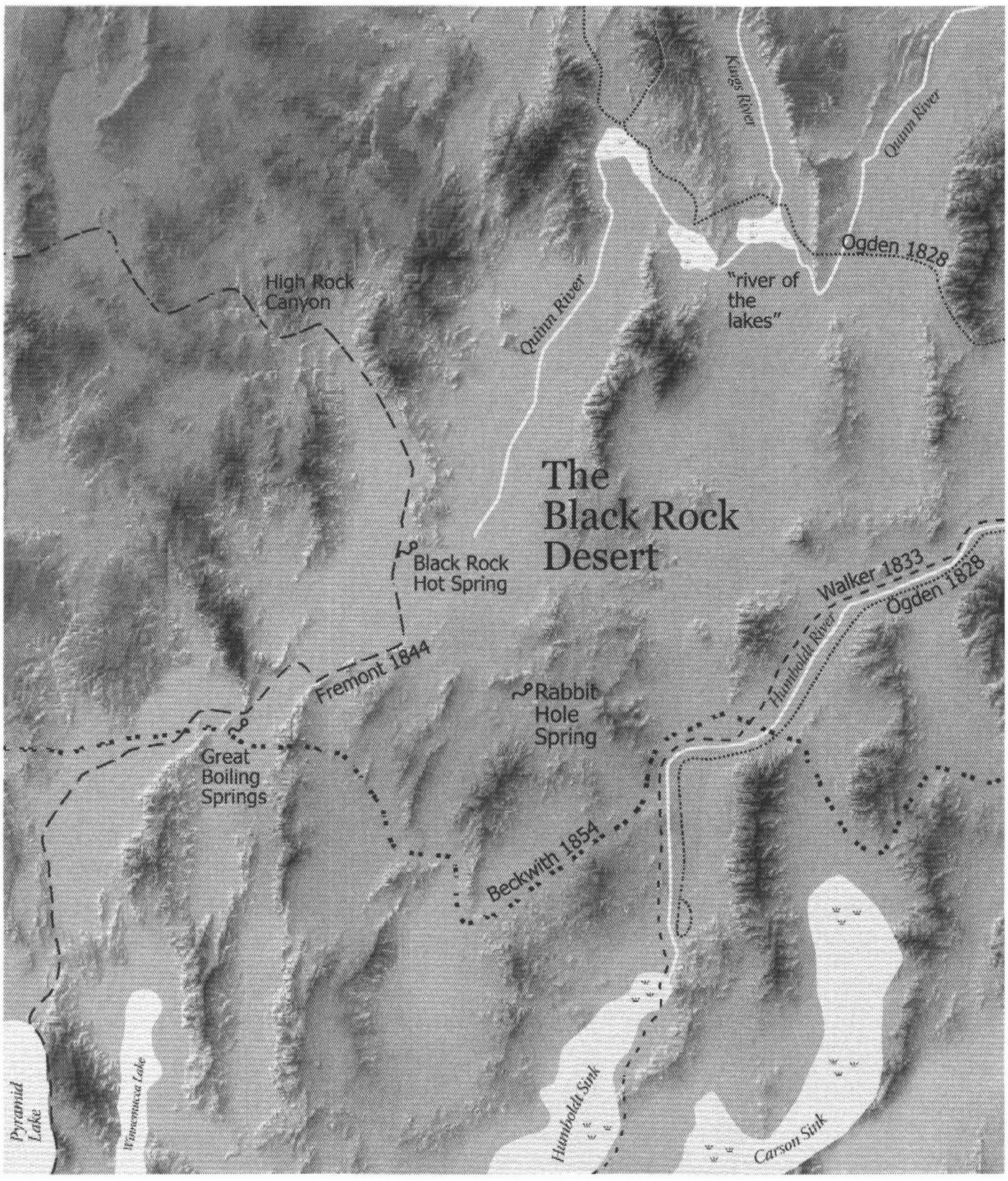


The Black Rock Desert. *(Map by Jerome L. Lohry)*

Visiting the Black Rock Desert makes it easier to understand why early visitors wished to avoid it. Widely separated water sources, highly alkaline hot springs, little forage, and extreme weather discouraged the hardiest of people in a time when overland travel was already difficult. Travel through the Black Rock today may lead one to wonder how a place like this becomes known, and what resources, destinations, or information led to its discovery and subsequent placement on the map.

Terra Incognita

An important part of the story of how the Black Rock Desert came to be known is why it remained unknown for as long as it did. In late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century North America, a general lack of knowledge about the Great Basin's geography discouraged exploration from all sides, whether it was the British from the north, the Americans from the east, or the Spanish from the south and west. Each of these nations sought different kinds of wealth from the land, and this would determine when and by whom the area would be explored.

The Black Rock Desert was once within the Spanish claim of Upper California. Because the Spanish explored little of the intermountain West, their claim was tenuous, and other colonizers were bound to challenge it. Not until the Adams-Onís Treaty of 1819, the same treaty that ceded Florida to the United States, was the northern boundary of Spanish Territory established as the forty-second parallel.[2] Today, this parallel still serves as the northern boundary of California, Nevada, and part of Utah.

While Spanish authorities worried about trespasses into their claims, they did little to prevent incursion or to settle the region themselves. Their permanent interior settlements moved as far north as Santa Fe, and the California missions moved as far north as San Francisco. The pleasant environment and large population of Indians for conversion may have encouraged Spanish expansion around the southern and western periphery of the Great Basin, but barriers like the Grand Canyon, the Sierra Nevada, and the Great Basin Desert itself kept the region hidden from Spanish view.

The Fur Trappers

After winning independence from Spain in the mid 1820s, Mexico retained possession of Upper California. The Adams-Onís Treaty of 1819 established this territory's northern border, but only the United States and recently expelled Spain agreed to this. This left the northern border of Mexico legally undefined and the vast, empty region open to those willing to trespass.[3] Into this role stepped the legendary mountain man of the West: the fur trapper.

One of largest of the fur companies, the British Hudson's Bay Company, pushed farther west into the continent's interior in an effort to find Indian trading partners and fresh trapping grounds. Finally, after consolidation with the Northwest Company, Hudson's Bay Company made its way to the mouth of the Columbia River, and established Fort Vancouver across the river from present day Portland, Oregon.[4]

It was only a matter of time before American trappers, moving west from the Missouri River frontier to the trapping grounds in the Rocky Mountains, found

their way into the unknown western interior and threatened the Hudson's Bay Company's western fur monopoly. Under the Treaty of 1818 between Britain and the United States, the two countries agreed to leave Oregon open to the settlement and trade interests of both nations. As hostilities of the Blackfoot Indians prevented the American trappers from traveling west through the plains of Montana, the trappers were required to approach from a more southerly position.[5] Pushing west from Wyoming and Colorado, American trappers would have to cross the Wasatch Range, and into the then unknown Great Basin.

Hudson's Bay Company had no intention of allowing the Americans to gain access into Oregon. The company's executives doubted that Britain would ultimately retain possession of the areas south of the Columbia; they devised a plan designed to discourage American trappers who were crossing the Rockies and the Wasatch Range from proceeding farther west, and to preserve their own sustainable stocks of beaver north of the Columbia. They enacted an informal scorched-earth policy for the areas south of the Columbia.[6] A letter from the Governor and the Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company advised that the Snake Country Expedition:

> be made as respectable as possible, as well as any others on the North side of the River, and as we cannot expect to have a more Southern boundary than the Columbia in any Treaty with the Americans (altho' we are entitled to it from occupancy) it will be very desirable that the hunters should get as much out of the Snake Country as possible for the next few years.[7]

Thus began Peter Skene Ogden's Snake River expeditions of the 1820s. Ogden's first two Snake River expeditions kept him well north of present-day Nevada, but the third expedition, in 1826-27, brought him close enough to the northwestern corner of the state to judge his perception of the place. This expedition brought the trappers from Fort Vancouver to the east side of the Cascade Range. They ventured as far east as Malheur Lake, then crossed a few miles into northern California, which was their first trespass into Mexican territory. They stayed in northern California briefly before returning to Malheur Lake, taking a path that came within a few miles of present-day Nevada's northwestern corner. While traveling through this area, Ogden noted in his diary, "I may say without exaggeration Man in this Country is deprived of every comfort that can tend to make existence desirable if I can escape this year I trust I shall not be doomed to endure another."[8]

Ogden's fifth expedition, of 1828-29, began on the Columbia at Fort Nez Percés, on September 22, 1828. Eight days later, Ogden's crew crossed the forty-second parallel into Mexican territory near present-day Denio, Nevada, and continued south until coming across Bilk Creek, a tributary of the Quinn River. Ogden and his party followed Bilk Creek for ten miles upstream and set up camp

Peter Skene Ogden's map of the Snake River Country. The Humboldt River is the arch-shaped river in the bottom center of the map. The oval Hudson's Bay Company Seal is placed in the cartographic void of the Black Rock Desert. (The Hudson's Bay Record Society Volume XXIII, G. Williams, editor, *Peter Skene Ogden's Snake Country Journals 1827-1828 and 1828-1829* [London, 1971])

for the night. The following morning, they went back downstream and tried to cross the Quinn River, but found it too swampy to cross. Ogden considered the alkaline Quinn of little use and named it River of the Lakes because of its tendency to form large stagnant pools midstream. These pools forced the party to travel along the muddy north side of the Quinn until they came across local Indians willing to point the way to the Little Humboldt River.[9]

It was where Bilk Creek flows into the Quinn River that Ogden came as close as he ever would to discovering the Black Rock Desert. Looking to the southwest from this point, Ogden would have seen the Quinn River meandering its way between the Jackson Mountains and the Black Rock Range, on its way to a terminal sink at the heart of the Black Rock Desert. The great distance of the valley would have made it difficult to perceive where the river was going, although even knowing what lay at the valley's end was not likely to have lured him in.

There are several reasons why discovery of the Black Rock would be further delayed. First, foremost among Ogden's objectives was to find beavers. The alkaline waters of the Quinn were unlikely to contain any fur-bearing animals, and even if they did exist, the river's high, swampy nature made trapping them out nearly impossible. The waters upstream held out a better possibility for clean tributaries, while downstream promised only more bitter, swampy waters. Second, the men were tired and hungry. They had found no beaver in nearly two weeks, which in addition to pelts had been the source of a steady food supply. Several horses had already ended up in the stew, and Ogden could ill afford extraneous explorations while food supplies were short.[10] The final reason was that Ogden had a history of trusting the knowledge of local Indians. When they told him to head east to find rivers with beavers in them, he heeded this advice and was not disappointed.

From this point, Ogden's party traveled east to the Little Humboldt River, and followed it to its confluence with the Humboldt River. They briefly trapped near present-day Winnemucca before heading east to the Great Salt Lake for winter quarters, where they could be sure of finding buffalo to sustain them throughout the colder months. In May of the following year, they returned west from winter camp and proceeded down the Humboldt, successfully trapping along the waterway. They slowly followed the river south and west, wary of the possibility that this river, like so many others in this region, would end in a terminal sink.[11]

On May 29, the band reached the Humboldt Sink. The forward scouts returned to camp and reported a lack of wood ahead and, therefore, no more beaver. The group set up camp here, and after some small clashes between individual trappers and local Indians intent on acquiring the novel iron traps, Ogden managed to communicate with a large group of the Indians. They told of a large river teeming with salmon a week's walk to the southwest, clearly referring to the yet undiscovered Truckee River. The Indians also spoke of a river to the north, which was probably a reference to the Quinn, but Ogden believed them to be describing the Pit River, on the western side of the Sierra Nevada.[12]

In all of his explorations, Ogden passed to the northwest, east, and southeast of the Black Rock Desert, nearly encircling it, but avoiding it entirely. The geographic products of Ogden's work in northern Nevada are in his diary descriptions and a hand-drawn map of the 1828-29 Snake Country Expedition. On this map, in the great void between the Humboldt Sink and Malheur Lake—the location of the Black Rock Desert—a Hudson's Bay Company clerk found an ideal space to stamp the company's official seal.

A group of American fur trappers crossed the Great Basin not long after Ogden's journey. In 1833, Joseph Walker led a group along the Humboldt River, seeking beaver fur for Captain Benjamin Bonneville's company. This party followed the Humboldt to its sink, where the nervous group slaughtered about thirty Indians to prevent them from surrounding the trapping party.[13] Walker's party then headed south across the Carson Sink, made a difficult crossing of the Sierra Nevada, and wintered in California. The following spring they again crossed the Sierra Nevada, and made directly for the Humboldt River. Again, they killed Indians they believed were threatening them, near the location of their earlier skirmish on the Humboldt Sink.[14] Walker's trapping expedition was a failure, largely because they were working, unaware, in a region that Ogden had trapped out five years before. Several fairly accurate maps resulted from this expedition, and Walker's route soon became the California Emigrant Trail.[15] Parties searching for fur yet again had missed the Black Rock Desert. Its discovery would have to wait for another time and explorers with different motivations.

The Frémont Exploration

The first known exploration party to enter northern Nevada and the Black Rock Desert was the Frémont Expedition of 1843-44. John Charles Frémont had completed one expedition to the Rocky Mountains a few years earlier and was selected to lead another expedition into the Pacific Northwest to explore alternative routes for the Oregon Trail and passes through the Rockies. This group of thirty-nine *voyageurs* headed west with the full support of Frémont's father-in-law, Thomas Hart Benton, a powerful United States senator from Missouri, who was eager to extend the United States to the Pacific Ocean, as long as Missouri became the main transportation hub with the East.[16] Armed with carbine rifles, a twelve-pound howitzer, and little over a dozen survey instruments, the party headed west.[17]

This expedition led Frémont to Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River, via the Oregon Trail. The group explored alternative routes parallel to the Oregon Trail, and gathered topographic information about the natural features adjacent to the trail. Once he finished the topographic work on this route, Frémont reassembled his band at The Dalles of the Columbia and began a circuitous return journey on November 18, 1843.[18]

With supplies packed into side bags and the howitzer as the only wheeled conveyance remaining, the party moved south. In just over three weeks they arrived at Klamath Lake, then headed southeast into the Abert Rim.[19] When they crossed the forty-second parallel on December 26, 1843, Frémont, an accomplished surveyor, was well aware that he had crossed into Mexican territory.

On December 30, the band came across High Rock Canyon by following a stream into the chasm. High Rock Canyon was a surreal experience for the survey team after crossing the winter desert of southern Oregon and northwestern Nevada. Frémont describes the canyon as a lush oasis enveloped by high walls of "stupendous and curious-looking rocks." In places, the canyon narrowed sufficiently to allow the party to proceed in only a single column. Willows protected from the winter winds by the high canyon walls grew in patches along the canyon. Grasses growing at the bottom of the canyon provided ideal camp conditions for the pack animals, even in late December.[20]

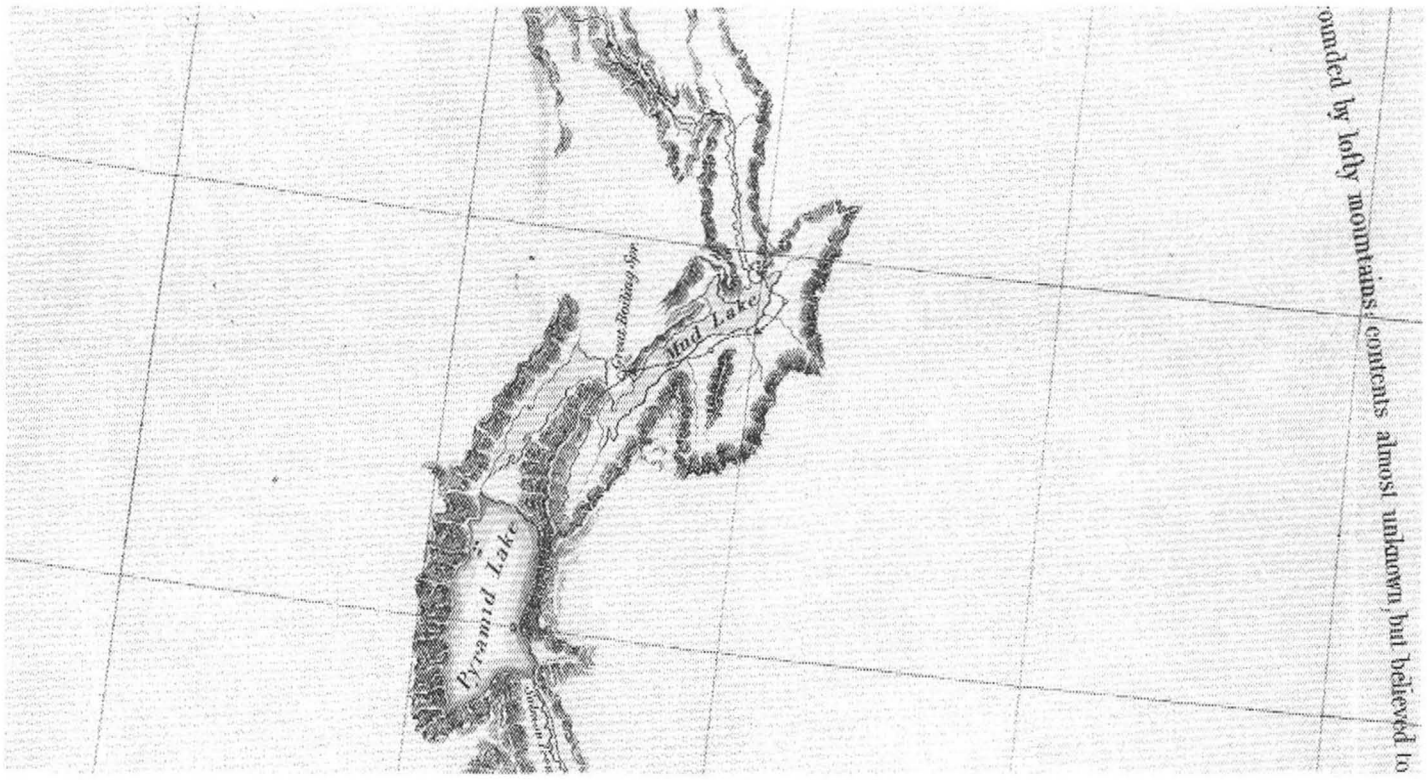
On New Year's Eve morning, the band emerged from High Rock Canyon expecting to find Mary's Lake, a large lake rumored to exist in this location. The canyon opened into a small, north-south trending valley. They followed a fresh water creek through the narrow canyon where it emptied into High Rock Lake—a usually dry, alkali basin. The expedition's topographer, Charles Preuss, shows the band passed right through the middle of the basin. Just to the northwest of the small dry lake, they found an outlet leading into a short ravine now known as Fly Canyon.[21]

Once they emerged from Fly Canyon that night, Frémont's party would have had their first view of the Black Rock Desert. About five miles north of their location, the Black Rock Range and Trough Mountain converge, and sagebrush and low salt grasses gray with winter filled the valley between them. Directly across the valley, the long black ridge of the Black Rock Range faced them. To the south, their path ahead lay in a long, wide valley that stretched to the horizon. At the southern end of the Black Rock Range, they were able to see steam rising from hot springs.[22]

Moving south, the band spent New Year's Day just outside of the north arm of the Black Rock Desert's dry lake bed. As they approached the playa, the vegetation changed from sagebrush to salt bush to thorny greasewood. Once they reached the edge of the ancient lake bed, the salinity and alkalinity of the ground increased to the point where nothing would grow, leaving a vast, barren plain ahead of them.

Frémont's crew had difficulty making their way down the imperceptibly sloping valley. As they progressed, they took care to stay near the valley's low point so that water would be available for the pack animals, but eroded gullies traversed this same low spot, making straight-line travel difficult. Grass was completely absent below the snow and ice on this alkali plain and on the nearby hills of sand.[23]

It was usual when the outfit set up camp for Frémont and Preuss to climb to the tops of nearby peaks so they could create sketches for inclusion in the map survey. On the final map, several areas show surrounding mountain ranges, peaks, watersheds, and other features visible from a great distance. Just before



Published to accompany his official *Report of the Exploring Expeditions to the Rocky Mountains in the Year 1842, and to Oregon and North California in 1843-44*, this portion of the Frémont's map documents the party's journey from High Rock Canyon to Pyramid Lake in early 1844. Thanks to Frémont's skills in determining latitude and longitude through astronomy, and Charles Preuss' skill as a topographer, cartographers of the Intermountain West finally had a credible foundation to base their work on. *(David Rumsey Map Collection)*

the band entered High Rock Canyon, they chose a high campsite, enabling Preuss to sketch the neighboring mountains. However, during their first few days in the Black Rock Desert, little would be visible. On January 2, heavy snow fell, obscuring all but the closest features and hiding the topography.[24] The resulting maps of this area show only the valley the explorers were within and the mountainsides facing them. The near featureless plain between the two mountain ranges urged them southward into the Quinn River's sink.

After stopping briefly at Black Rock Hot Spring, they crossed the dry lake bed in a southeasterly direction and camped on the southern edge of the lake bed near sagebrush. Several mules and a horse fell lame on this crossing, suffering as they were from heavy loads, cut feet, low-quality grass, and alkaline water.

At this point, Frémont had passed south of the latitude where he expected to find Mary's Lake. The stream he had followed from Fly Canyon to Black Rock Point had dissipated into the sink, indicating this was a terminal basin. Faced with the prospect of wandering lost on the dry lake surface, Frémont apparently decided that his efforts to find Mary's Lake were in vain, and he should move south in an attempt to locate the next item on his agenda, the San Buenaventura River.[25]

For the next few days, the Frémont party's efforts to characterize the surrounding topography were again stymied when a thick fog fell upon the desert. They spent days tracking down lost horses and became disoriented in the thick haze. The crew dismounted to ease the burden on their ailing pack animals, whose feet were cut and irritated by the alkaline surface. Preuss, the pessimistic German topographer who duly noted his suffering throughout Frémont's explorations, lamented in his journal the poor condition of the animals and the helplessness of the situation because of the fog.[26]

The *voyageurs* moved slowly southeast along the playa edge, feeling their way through the thick fog. When Frémont, Preuss, and Kit Carson climbed a mountain to survey the surrounding features, they could see only the tops of higher mountains around them. From the top of Old Razorback Mountain, looking south, the Selenite Range and Dry Mountain would have appeared to form a semicircular chain around Old Razorback, which is how he portrayed the area on his map of the Black Rock. In reality, there is a wide valley between the Selenite Range and Dry Mountain.

By the end of the day on January 6, the *voyageurs* had crossed the western arm of the muddy lake bed and arrived at Great Boiling Springs, which is now adjacent to Gerlach, Nevada. Frémont found the site to be a relatively "refreshing and agreeable spot," and spent some time examining the hot spring while the animals recuperated.[27]

Tempered by the loss of nine animals in the Black Rock Desert, the band was determined to find the next day's camp before pushing the animals forward. For several days, the explorers made camp at Great Boiling Springs while Frémont, Carson, and Alex Godey explored nearby for a better campsite. The band passed south into the San Emido Desert and camped near the northern end of the Fox Range. While encamped here, Preuss climbed to the top of the range and spent the day sketching the Smoke Creek Desert to the west and the Buffalo Hills beyond that. The group noted the occurrence of cedar trees on the Buffalo Hills and assumed that these trees suggested proximity to the great forests of Northern California. From this point, Frémont moved south, away from the Black Rock Desert, and within another day stumbled across one of the great wonders of the West, a vast sheet of blue water upon which he bestowed the name Pyramid Lake.[28]

Frémont's route from High Rock Canyon to Great Boiling Springs took him through the heart of Black Rock Country. The nature of Frémont's resulting map is that of a white-space illustration. That is to say that the map depicts only the features the party observed, with only lines of latitude and longitude representing unknown areas. The information collected was intended to be incorporated into other maps in order to correct their errors, and not to be used as a stand-alone guide to the West. The final map's portrayal of topography suffers only from problems of perception, such as the survey crew's inability to predict river courses hidden by labyrinths of mountains.

Frémont's crossing of the Black Rock was more of a quick reconnaissance than a full exploration. His initial desire was to make the major features of the place known, investigate the resources that might be available there, and prove or disprove the existence of certain rumored geographical features. The explorers were able to identify some of the terrain's key features and fill in some of the blank spaces on maps of the still unknown West.

By all accounts, it was the first time a non-native had set foot in the Black Rock Desert. Fog and muddy conditions made for a difficult winter crossing: The mules sank into the soggy lake bed and the winter fog created days of wandering and confusion. However, the season of their crossing did aid the explorers. The cold air condensed steam from the hot springs, showing them the way to drinkable water and grass, and the melted snow provided Frémont's crew with an additional water source. They were spared the suffering of a hot summer crossing, which, five years later in 1849, thousands would come to know, and pay its terrible price.

Emigrant Crossing

In the mid 1840s, most emigrants going west were headed to the Oregon Country.[29] News of the agricultural opportunities in the Willamette River Valley had spread east and lured west those seeking a fresh start on a new frontier. While the United States and Britain had agreed in 1818 to joint occupation of Oregon, both knew the time for a final decision was coming. Many in the United States sought to increase American emigration to Oregon and secure the region for American expansion to the Pacific Ocean. Among these emigrants was the Applegate family, who traversed the Oregon Trail in the year of 1843, the same year Frémont began his exploration of the Oregon Trail and the interior West.

The Oregon Trail was an emigrant trail that began in Missouri and followed the Platte River west. It cut across southern Wyoming's South Pass, followed the Snake River across southern Idaho and eastern Oregon, and then followed the Columbia River west to the confluence of the Columbia and Willamette rivers. The trail was a dangerous one: Early caravans had to search out clearings through heavy forest, cross deep gullies and rough rivers, and defend themselves from Indian raids.

As the Applegate party followed the Columbia west, winter was approaching and their animal teams were exhausted from the long trail. Probably aware that they would eventually need to take to the Columbia to get through the Cascade Range at The Dalles, the group constructed rafts from the driftwood lining the river banks and floated their caravan down river. The party made good time until reaching The Dalles, where one raft with six people aboard was caught in the rapids and overturned. According to the emigrant Lindsay Applegate, three members of his family drowned, while Frémont and his men, who had just begun their journey toward the Black Rock Desert, looked on helplessly from the opposite river bank.[30] The bodies were never recovered from the river.[31]

In addition to being a dangerous journey west, the Oregon Trail presented a military dilemma for the United States. The Oregon possession issue remained unsettled, and the possibility of war loomed with Britain once again. Rumors circulated around the United States that Great Britain could simply take possession of the Oregon Trail and deny the American military access to the Oregon Country. An American contingent blazing a new trail to Oregon would arrive exhausted and be little match for British forces arriving by ship. In addition, fleeing American emigrants would be at the mercy of British troops and Indians while escaping from Oregon.[32]

In 1846, the Applegates and thirteen others formed the South Road Company for the purpose of finding a southern route from the California Emigrant Road to the Willamette Valley of western Oregon. They consulted with Peter Skene Ogden, who was still with Hudson's Bay Company, and secured from him a map of the region to the south. Ogden warned them of the difficulties in crossing the deserts, as well as the problems they would have with the Indians.

In June of 1846, Applegate's company started out from the location of present-day Corvallis, and headed south into the upper Willamette Valley. Reaching the Rogue River by the end of the month, they then headed east, and crossed into northern California. On July 10, as they headed east from Goose Lake, the South Road Company came across a small stream leading into the mountain range to their east. This small stream led them into High Rock Canyon, and was the same stream that Frémont had found three years earlier. While the canyon narrowed considerably, they considered it wide enough for a wagon road and continued to follow it. Coming out from the other side of the canyon, they continued into Fly Canyon and emerged into Mud Meadows, just as Frémont had.

With their primary goal being a wagon road to the east, the group considered it best to try to go around the southern extent of Black Rock Range. Reaching Black Rock Hot Spring on July 12, they rested their animals and admired the flowing hot water and the several hundred acres of meadow it irrigated. On July 14, the group split into two parties, with some exploring to the east and the others heading south.[33]

Both groups struck out across the vast lake bed, although their experience was completely different than that of Frémont's muddy winter crossing. By mid May, the lake bed usually dries to a hard, flat surface, similar to that of a vast salt flat. The result is similar to that of a vast dusty flat. In a short time, Lindsay Applegate's group traveled fifteen miles across the playa.[34]

As the group approached the playa's southern edge, they noticed dim, narrow trails leading in the direction of their travel. As they progressed onto the saltbush plain adjacent to the lake bed, the trails became clearer and converged onto a single ledge of granite in the distance. Recognizing the narrow paths as rabbit trails, they followed them to the top of the ledge and found one small hole in the top with a small puddle of water near the surface. They dug a small trough, and by nightfall enough water had accumulated to water both the horses and the men.[35] The South Road Company had discovered Rabbit Hole Springs.

Heading southeast from Rabbit Hole, they followed the granite ledge formation in hopes of finding more water. The springs they did find over the next day were either insufficient to water the horses or highly alkali and therefore undrinkable. Their search for water took them far to the south, where they finally met up with the other members of the party from whom they had split at Black Rock. The groups found each other because they had both converged on the same alkaline spring, whose waters were good enough to keep them alive until they could find better water.

Because they had traveled so far south, Applegate's group came across the Humboldt Sink, which Ogden had described to them. They followed the Humboldt River north along the already established California Emigrant Road until they came to a large meadow near present-day Imlay, Nevada. Having been sidetracked by their search for water, they went about seeking a route from the meadow to Rabbit Hole Springs, which would complete the road to the Willamette Valley. Carrying only a powder horn of water, two of the party journeyed west and found Antelope Spring on the north side of Majuba Mountain. Continuing west, they again found Rabbit Hole Springs, thus completing a southern route from Fort Hall to the Oregon Country.

The South Road Company sent guides to lead people from Fort Hall to their new road, thus beginning a slow trickle of Oregon-bound emigrants through the Black Rock Desert. The Black Rock was a difficulty to endure on the way west, but it was a safer route than the Oregon Trail for reaching the Pacific Northwest. The few water sources were moderately improved, allowing the water slowly to accumulate so that occasional travelers could make use of the springs and the nearby grasses when they arrived.

During the next few years, some added their own connections to the Applegate Trail. Peter Lassen, a Danish blacksmith, had acquired a Mexican land grant for an area near present-day Chico, California, in the mid 1840s. In dire need of settlers to get his new town going, he scouted a route from his ranch to the Applegate Trail and followed it east. In 1848, he convinced an emigrant train to take his new route to California, which proved to be "holy terror," with Lassen groping his way through the mountains trying to find the way back to his ranch.[36]

In January 1848, an event near Sacramento completely changed the nature of western emigration in North America: the discovery of gold in a millrace near the American River.[37] Hordes of people thousands of miles away packed up their belongings and the westward overland migration to California was on. According to J. S. Holliday, "In one astonishing year the place would be transformed from obscurity to world prominence, from an agricultural frontier that attracted 400 settlers in 1848 to a mining frontier that lured 90,000 impatient men in 1849."[38] Forty-niners converged on Missouri and the California Emigrant Road like water rushing from a thousand drainage basins into a mighty river. Once the emigrants gathered supplies and information and the grasses began to grow on the prairie, this mass of humanity headed west.

The traditional California Emigrant Road followed the Humboldt River across Nevada. Where the river ended in a sink, there was a forty-mile dash across barren desert to the next water source at the Carson or Truckee river. Not far beyond that, the exhausted, weakened oxen and mules had to climb the Sierra Nevada, a mountain range with no known equivalent to the east of the South Pass over the Rockies. Encouraged by stories of a route avoiding the worst of the Forty-Mile Desert and the Sierra Nevada, many gold-seeking emigrants took the Applegate-Lassen Route, turning away from the Humboldt at its great southern bend near modern-day Imlay. The Applegate-Lassen Road was known to be difficult, but was advertised to have more evenly spaced water sources that made the route feasible. According to Applegate's Waybill:

> From Ogden's R [the Humboldt] to Black Rock, is known as "*the dry stretch*" and to perform the journey in safety, emigrants should send an advance party on 2 or 3 days ahead, to dig out large tanks for the water at the springs, which will supply their animals. At the 1st spring is some grass, at the 2d little or none, but at Black Rock probably plenty.[39]

Applegate never intended for his trail to receive heavy, continuous use. But with Lassen's publicity and the Gold Rush on, the water sources along the road through the Black Rock were rarely adequate for passing wagon trains. The emigrants dug deep holes in an effort to obtain water for their stock. One emigrant, George Keller, noted in his diary on September 15, 1849:

> We started this morning at 5:30 o'clock and traveled 19 miles across a barren undulating desert, when we came to a place known as the Rabbit Wells, where four or five wells, some 8 or 10 feet deep have been excavated by the immigrants in adva nce for the purpose of obtaining water for themselves and their stock. These wells with one or two exceptions were filled with dead animals. Having seen water at the bottom and being so eager to obtain it, they rushed head first into them, where they perished and could not well be extricated.[40]

Most emigrants, lacking the luxury of being able to send a team ahead to improve the failing water supplies, found the expected springs were trampled, muddy bogs. The trail through the Black Rock Desert became a waterless, grassless stretch of waste; its popularity destroyed its ability to sustain life.

As a popular route to the gold fields of California, the Black Rock Desert became well known among thousands of emigrant travelers, and stories of the suffering encountered there competed with tales of the Donner tragedy. Those who finished the journey wrote home to tell loved ones about the experiences they endured, making the realities of the trail and the Black Rock Desert better known for those who would follow later.

The Railroad Survey of the Forty-First Parallel

By the early 1850s, interest in permanently connecting the new riches of California with the rest of the United States ran high. Rail already tied together the East Coast, building commerce while also adding to tensions between the increasingly polarized industrialized north and agricultural south. States on the western frontier, such as Missouri, pushed hard to promote themselves as an eastern terminus for the proposed transcontinental railroad, further politicizing the issue. In March 1853, the Congress passed the Pacific Railroad Survey Act, which demanded a full report from the secretary of war on all practical routes for a railroad that would connect the East to the Pacific Ocean.[41]

The survey of the thirty-eighth parallel, headed by Lieutenant John W. Gunnison, set out from Fort Leavenworth in the soon-to-be-established Kansas Territory and worked its way west along the Arkansas River. Once the survey party reached the Sevier River that October, Indians attacked, killing Gunnison and seven others. This delayed the railroad survey of the thirty-eighth parallel, which was already proving to be impractical for a railroad route.[42]

The survey began again the following spring under the guidance of Lieutenant E. O. Beckwith, who had been a subordinate to Gunnison. Beckwith resumed the second phase of the survey on a more northerly route that he considered better suited to railroad construction. He began by surveying the route through Bridger's Pass in the Wasatch Mountains and found it practical for a railroad route. Then, receiving permission from Secretary of War Jefferson Davis in early 1854, he continued his survey to the Pacific.

With a minimal climbing grade as its primary goal, Beckwith's party followed the Humboldt River to Lassen's Meadow at present-day Imlay.[43] Just south of Lassen's Meadow, the survey party separated from the Humboldt River and passed south of Majuba Mountain. From there, they continued around the southern tip of the Seven Troughs Range near what is now Lovelock, and headed north to camp for the night at Porter Springs. The next day, they headed northwest, climbing into the northern end of the Selenite Range. While camping in the range, F. W. Egloffstein, Beckwith's topographer, climbed to the summit of Selenite Peak and sketched the surrounding area. His portrayal of this area would later be engraved into steel plates to produce panoramic prints of the Black Rock Desert.

After descending the western side of the Selenite Range, the party encamped at Great Boiling Springs and noted the passage of Frémont's party ten years earlier. Beckwith then focused on exploring the passes of the Sierra Nevada west of the Black Rock Desert, determined to find one suitable for a railroad.

Beckwith's final map depicts a strip of land that the party observed, with incomplete topographic sketches outside of the survey area. The description in Beckwith's official report would suggest that his final map would be similar to Frémont's—a narrow band of linear features with greater observations

Based on the sketches of Lt. Beckwith's topographer, F. W. Egloffstein, this panoramic print made in 1861 captures a view of the Granite Range from neighboring Selenite Peak. Present-day Gerlach, Nevada is located on the left at the base of the Granite Range. *(David Rumsey Map Collection)*

in locations where members of the party could ascend a mountain peak and make topographic sketches. But Beckwith's map covers an area of more than one-and-a-half degrees in latitude, which is a little more than a hundred miles wide. Curiously, features on Beckwith's map of the Black Rock Desert include meandering dashed lines, which appear to represent paths of survey crews exploring the area. The centermost of these lines correspond exactly with Beckwith's daily report and the locations of Egloffstein's panoramic sketches. Although the outside dashed lines seem to represent survey parties not mentioned in the final report, their survey allowed Beckwith to construct a detailed topographic map of nearly the entire Black Rock Desert.

Settlement and Development

Between 1850 and 1861, present-day Nevada had been a part of the Utah Territory and was technically under the administrative control of the Mormon-dominated government in Salt Lake City. Mormon settlers came to live in the outposts of Genoa and Las Vegas so as to secure a hold on the territory. In each of these outposts, they located fertile land, built irrigation systems, farmed, and formed tightly knit communities. Mormons considered other activities, such as mining, ancillary to the goals of establishing an outpost, dealing with the Indians, and generally making the desert bloom. In Las Vegas, where lead mining at the Potosi Mine interfered with these practices, the outpost failed.[44] The Mormons had no use for an area such as the Black Rock, and confined their activities to their irrigated, fertile settlements. But miners going to and from California sought new opportunities, and, with the Rush to Washoe beginning in 1859, the non-Mormon population grew more rapidly. By 1864, the state of Nevada was born.

During this time, the Black Rock continued to receive attention for its usefulness as a travel route, and some itinerant mining prospects developed as well. A new route through the Black Rock, following a pass found by William Nobles in 1851, considerably shortened the travel distance to California in comparison to Lassen's route. Convinced of his plan's soundness, Nobles approached the Congress for funding to improve the emigrant trail and his cutoff into a wagon road. F. W. Landers was appointed superintendent of the project, and during 1859-60 Landers and his men worked to improve the road and its water sources. They diverted Rabbit Hole Springs into a large culvert and channeled Trego Hot Spring to cool the water adequately for drinking.[45]

In 1862, news of a rich mineral strike in southern Idaho reached California, and a way was needed to reach it. The Nobles road and parts of the Applegate and Lassen trail were incorporated into a new wagon road to transport people, supplies, and mail east. This became known as the Chico, California, to Silver City, Idaho, Wagon Route.[46]

On April 1, 1865, a group of Indians attacked the Granite Springs stage station, just a few miles northeast of Great Boiling Springs. The Indians killed the station attendants and burned the station to the ground. Because this was both a transport and mail route, the federal government stepped up patrols to safeguard it. Military detachments arrived to protect the stage stations, and the United States Army established a post at Granite Creek, named Camp McKee, in June 1866. The military abandoned the camp in October of that same year.[47]

Another military post was established on the northern fringe of the Black Rock Desert, intended to protect a different segment of the same road. Camp McGarry was located on the Applegate route near High Rock Canyon. It consisted of buildings at Summit Springs and Soldier Meadow. The Soldier Meadow encampment featured large stone buildings, each connected by underground tunnels. The army abandoned the camp by December 1868, and eventually the remaining buildings were incorporated into a ranch.[48]

Small-scale mining and prospecting eventually became commonplace throughout the Black Rock region. William Nobles found his pass from Black Rock to California while looking for gold, and stories spread of emigrant children who picked up some rocks on their journey through the Black Rock, only to find out years later that they had collected precious metal. Peter Lassen met his end while searching for gold in the Black Rock; the circumstances were suspicious and remain unresolved.[49]

CLARENCE KING'S SURVEY

After the Civil War, the country's interest in the American West was high, but little was actually known about it. Except for the few who spent a considerable portion of their lives in the West, people generally were unable to describe accurately where the rivers went, the geology of the mountains, or what plants and animals lived there.

Clarence King, who studied geology at Yale, approached the Congress in 1866 with a plan to survey a cross section of the West at the fortieth parallel. The transcontinental railroad was under construction at the time, and the federal government had issued large land grants to help finance the mammoth project. King realized that although much of this area's topography had been charted, the geology, flora, and other characteristics of the lands adjacent to the railroad route they expected to develop were still unknown. Under the supervision of the United States Army Engineering Department, King and his complement of well-bred, educated surveyors headed west.[50]

Beginning at the eastern front of the Sierra Nevada at Truckee Meadows, King's men began their survey. Their method was to establish a camp, then work out of that camp on short excursions as long as it remained practical. They took extensive scientific notes on the region's geology, flora, fauna, fossils, hydrology,

and other natural phenomena.[51] During this exploration, King's survey took him at least 30 minutes of longitude north and south of the fortieth parallel. In the region between the Sierra Nevada and present-day Battle Mountain, he explored at least a full degree north of the fortieth parallel, taking him well into the Black Rock Desert.

While in the Black Rock, King made a thorough survey of the features found there. The surveyors noted the composition of the mountains, the presence of terrace lines indicating an ancient Lake Lahontan, and the nature of the area's vegetation. As a geologist, King specialized during this survey in tying the formation of this land together with other lands nearby, noting carefully the sedimentary formations and the ancient volcanic flows.

During King's survey of the Black Rock Desert in 1867, he was especially interested in a mining camp named Hardin City that had been established just a few miles north of Black Rock Hot Springs. The miners there were looking for silver and constructed a mill to process ore from a ledge that assays had suggested was rich with silver. King, a man of science and not prone to unfounded excitement, was unable to understand why the miners believed they had found silver. King's survey found a bed of decomposed basalt, forty-to-sixty feet thick, containing only trace amounts of iron.[52] After the mill was built and several loads of ore run through the stamps, the miners came to believe King and abandoned the project at short-lived Hardin City.[53]

Conclusion

After King's seven-volume survey report was published in 1877, the Black Rock Desert became much better known. The travel routes across the desert, the springs, and the geology became public knowledge, and a researcher in New York or Washington might come to know the Black Rock through reports and maps, much like a traveler passing through.

The Spanish found barriers to exploration of the Black Rock that their style of conquest could not overcome, and the inland flowing rivers with their unpredictable final directions confused them. The fur trappers built their familiarity with this land as they pursued beaver pelts, removing the area's only known resource in its entirety. The trappers passed on their knowledge to explorers looking to build a better trail west, and they in turn led tens of thousands of gold seekers into an empire-building migration. John C. Frémont, who sought to prove or disprove the existence of an elusive river originating in Spanish exploration, gave form to places on the map previously known only as latitude and longitude lines on white space. His official report was written for public consumption, and devoured by those looking to the West for religious freedom, land, and gold. The Pacific Railroad surveys created official reports with vivid western-landscape descriptions, accompanied by stunning sketches and high

quality engravings that could give eastern viewers the sense that they were in the West, on top of a mountain, looking at the vast desert below. Reports such as King's replaced the unknown with science and removed an element of mystery from the land. Finally, tens of thousands of new Californians and Nevadans were writing home, sharing their opinions and impressions, giving people thousands of miles away a picture of what their new homes were like, and how they had suffered in places like the Black Rock Desert.

As of 1870, fewer travelers and teamsters had a need to travel through the Black Rock. Local Indians had been suppressed and water sources improved, but the completion of the Central Pacific Railroad along the Humboldt and Truckee Rivers once again made the Black Rock into a seldom-traveled back road.[54] In the mid-to-late 1860s, ranching began to find its place in the Black Rock Desert, with the first small ranches soon swallowed up by large outfits like Miller and Lux.

In 1909, the Western Pacific Railroad founded Gerlach on the site of Great Boiling Springs. More than fifty years passed between Lieutenant E. O. Beckwith's railroad survey and the construction of the railroad he envisioned as running through the Black Rock Desert. About six miles south of Gerlach, a large gypsum mine continues to operate, sustaining an entire company town of 350 people. Just north of Gerlach, irrigated agriculture in Hualapai Valley supports several smaller ranches.

Today, the Black Rock Desert is a place for recreation. People come from nearby cities to enjoy the vast emptiness, history, and wonders of the desert. Those in four-wheel-drive vehicles speed over the playa at eighty miles per hour, heading to the rugged trails of the mountains or for a long soak in one of the many hot springs. Here, people can relive the feeling of exploring places that seem unknown, with few traces of human habitation to spoil the experience. In the possession of each traveler is a set of maps, whether paper, digital, or mental, showing them the way. These images, accumulated from nearly two hundred years of human effort, give these modern *voyageurs* power over the land.

Notes

[1][http://www.nv.blm.gov/Winnemucca/blackrock/BRHR_home.htm (accessed 26 December 2006).
[2]Gloria Griffen Cline. *Exploring the Great Basin* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press), 143
[3]*Ibid.*, 143.
[4]*Ibid.*, 80.
[5]*Ibid.*, 81-85.
[6]*Ibid.*, 91.
[7]*Ibid.*, 90.
[8]K.G. Davies, ed., *Peter Skene Ogden's Snake Country Journal, 1826-1827* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1961).
[9]Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Peter Skene Ogden's Snake Country Journals, 1827-28*, and 1828-29 (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1971), 105.
[10]*Ibid.*, 105.
[11]*Ibid.*, 151.
[12]*Ibid.*, 153.
[13]Zenas Leonard, *Adventures of Zenas Leonard Fur Trader*, John C. Ewers, ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959), 71.
[14]*Ibid.*, 131.
[15]Cline, *Exploring the Great Basin*, 179.
[16]William H. Goetzmann, *Exploration and Empire* (New York: History Book Club, 2006), 266.
[17] John Charles Frémont, *Narratives of Exploration and Adventure*, Allan Nevins, ed. (New York: Longmans, Green & Co, 1956), 189.
[18]*Ibid.*, 308.
[19]*Ibid.*, 319.
[20]*Ibid.*, 333.
[21]*Ibid.*, 333-334.
[22]*Ibid.*, 334.
[23]*Ibid.*, 334.
[24]*Ibid.*, 334.
[25]*Ibid.*, 335.
[26]Charles Preuss, *Exploring with Frémont: The Private Diaries of Charles Preuss, Cartographer for John C. Frémont on His First, Second, and Fourth Expeditions to the Far West*, Erwin G. Gudde and Elisabeth K. Gudde, eds. and trans. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), 103.
[27]Frémont, *Narratives*, 336.
[28]*Ibid.*, 337-338.
[29]John David Unruh, "The Plains Across: The Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-1860" (Ph.D. diss., University of Kansas, 1975), 173.
[30]Frémont doesn't mention witnessing this accident in his official report for that day.
[31]Lindsay Applegate, "Notes and Reminiscences of the Laying Out and Establishing the Old Emigrant Road into Southern Oregon in the Year 1846," *Overland Journal* 11:1 (Spring 1993).
[32]*Ibid.*, 2.
[33]*Ibid.*, 12.
[34]*Ibid.*, 13.
[35]*Ibid.*, 13.
[36]Robert Amesbury, *Nobles' Emigrant Trail* (Susanville, California: Lassen Litho, 1967).
[37]J. S. Holliday, *The World Rushed In: The California Gold Rush Experience* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981), 33.
[38]Holliday, *World Rushed In*, 26.
[39]Bruff's "Cherokee Guide," adapted from Applegate's Waybill, reprinted in Peggy McGukian-Jones, *Emigrant Trails in the Black Rock Desert: A Study of the Fremont, Applegate-Lassen, and Nobles' Routes in the Winnemucca District* (U. S. Dept. of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, 1978), 17.
[40]*Ibid.*, 30.
[41]William H. Goetzmann, *Army Exploration in the American West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 274.

[42]*Ibid.*, 284-285.

[43]*Ibid.*, 286.

[44]Stanley Paher, *Las Vegas: How It Began—How It Grew* (Las Vegas: Nevada Publications, 1971), 29.

[45]McGukian-Jones, *Emigrant Trails*, 10.

[46]*Ibid.*

[47]Col. George Ruhlen, "Early Nevada Forts" *Nevada Historical Quarterly*, 7:3-4 (Fall/Winter 1964), 41.

[48]*Ibid.*, 40.

[49]McGukian-Jones, *Emigrant Trails*, 59-60.

[50]Goetzmann, *Exploration and Empire*, 430-37.

[51]Richard A. Bartlett, *Great Surveys of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), 162.

[52]Clarence King, "Report of the Geological Exploration of the Fortieth Parallel" (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1877), 793-94.

[53]McGukian-Jones, *Emigrant Trails*, 60.

[54]*Ibid.*, 11.

"Never Accorded the Recognition He Deserved"
Al Freeman, Sands Hotel Publicist, 1952-1972

Larry Gragg

In its October 5, 1953, issue, *Time* magazine reported on what some observers came to call the wedding of the decade. "At Las Vegas' raucously elegant Sands Hotel last week more than two dozen Hollywood newspaper, magazine, TV and radio reporters gathered for an event: the wedding of Cinemactress Rita Hayworth and Crooner Dick Haymes." Everything was well choreographed. The hotel operator called each reporter on the morning of the wedding with a friendly reminder so they all had sufficient time to set up their cameras in the fabulous Gold Room of the Sands. Al Freeman, the hotel publicist, led the couple into the room "to give photographers a focusing point for their cameras," directing them to stand at chalk marks on the floor so that the cameramen could capture their profiles; and television soundmen gave them directions so that their vows could be heard. Freeman had persuaded the judge to arrive late so as to provide ample opportunity for photographs. After a two-minute ceremony the hotel provided a lunch for the couple and the press. Afterwards one grateful fan-magazine photographer said of the remarkably well planned event, "This was great. Ordinarily, we can't get new pictures of this babe for the fan books. But yesterday and today I got enough to last us for two years."[1] To insure that "his version of the romantic events" gained wide circulation, Freeman "set up a closed circuit teletype network" to several wire services.[2]

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The 1953 wedding of Rita Hayworth and Dick Haymes produced great publicity for the new Sands Hotel. Photographer unknown. *(University of Nevada, Las Vegas Special Collections Library)*

The publicist's transformation of the behavior of Rita Hayworth amazed syndicated columnist Erskine Johnson. "Rita Hayworth," he wrote, "was voted Hollywood's No. 1 Miss Nasty in the public relations department by the Hollywood Women's Press Club less than a year ago." According to Johnson the actress had told her studio bosses for years "Keep the press photographers away from me." Yet, she abided by Freeman's policy of "No Restrictions on Any Picture Taking." She even "sipped champagne and lunched with the press guys and dolls after the 'I do' lines." In Freeman's "deft hands" Hayworth "was glamorous putty." The publicity value of the nuptials for the hotel most impressed journalists like Johnson. "The Sands Hotel," he contended, "thanks to Rita, racked up more publicity than any of her expensive movies." *Time* magazine agreed: "Never in Hollywood history had there been such a sample of matrimony-by-pressagent."[3] A local paper noted that the assembled journalists were so impressed that they joined in a toast to Freeman after honoring the bride

and groom.[4] The Sands Hotel had been open less than a year and Al Freeman used the wedding to gain extraordinary national publicity for the property. In the *Time* article alone there were six mentions of the Sands, and in the *Los Angeles Times* story of the wedding the journalist Marvin Miles noted the "plush Sands Hotel."[5] The various wire services' stories of the wedding invariably included photos of the Sands.[6] Stunts, though few as elaborate as the Hayworth-Haymes wedding, became the stock-in-trade of Las Vegas public-relations men seeking to gain national attention for their properties in the 1950s and 1960s. Yet, the Sands's publicist Al Freeman did much more than stage publicity stunts. He developed excellent relationships with scores of journalists who covered Las Vegas, and he exploited the extraordinary publicity potential of radio, television, and movies. Freeman also became a fierce defender of the image of the Sands and Las Vegas. His efforts proved vital in the emergence of a national perception of the Sands as a premier resort destination.

Born in Philadelphia in 1924, Freeman was a veteran of World War II. He served three years in North Africa and Europe and the United States Army awarded him five battle stars, the Legion of Merit, a Purple Heart, and three clusters. After attending Temple University where he received a degree in marketing and journalism, Freeman developed his public-relations skills as a reporter for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, as head of his own advertising agency, his work with the celebrated public-relations firm headed by Steve Hannigan, and by becoming a partner with George Evans Associates. He handled stars like Dean Martin, Jerry Lewis, Frank Sinatra, and Mario Lanza. Freeman also promoted the Copacabana, the famed New York nightclub.[7]

His work with the Copacabana brought him into contact with Jack Entratter who was the club's co-owner. Entratter spent his entire career working and managing nightclubs and casinos. At age nineteen he began as a reservations clerk in Miami. From there he moved to New York where he was first a bouncer at the French Casino and then a host at Sherman Billingsley's popular Stork Club. He then became a managing partner of the Copacabana with Monte Proser.[8] In his rapid ascent to the top of the nightclub scene in New York Entratter was the subject of many journalists' and columnists' copy. Some focused on his size variously describing the six-foot-four two-hundred-and-fifty-pound Entratter as a "giant" or "the strapping boss of the Copacabana club."[9] Occasionally, they touched upon his connections with organized crime as in a 1944 story on an investigation that found Entratter linked to crime figures Joe Adonis, Jack Lansky, and Frank Costello, the "Copacabana crowd."[10] Most often, however, the stories on Entratter were filled with praise. Columnist Dale Harrison proclaimed in 1941 that the Copacabana, in only its second year, had become "the pleasantest" night club in New York "taking into account atmosphere, entertainment, cuisine, music and hospitality." Harrison also dubbed Entratter "one of the most competent night club hosts in New York."[11] Other columnists focused upon Entratter's discovery and cultivation of entertainment stars. According

to Jack Gaver in 1952, Entratter discovered or dramatically boosted the careers of Johnny Ray, Betty Hutton, Frankie Laine, Dean Martin, and Jerry Lewis.[12] In his dozen years heading the Copacabana, Entratter developed a loyal following of both entertainers and columnists, and Al Freeman, often working with Entratter, wisely exploited those connections.

The success of Las Vegas publicists was predicated on their working relationships with journalists, notably syndicated columnists. It helped that Freeman came to Las Vegas from a major entertainment market, one that had given him the opportunity to become acquainted with some of the leading entertainment columnists. Jim Seagrave, a publicist who arrived in Las Vegas in 1961, has explained that these relationships were critical to the city's most successful publicists such as Freeman, Harvey Diederich, Eugene Murphy, and Herb McDonald. "They could pick up a phone and have Walter Winchell out here on the next plane. They could have Leonard Lyons out here on the next plane. They could have Earl Wilson and Jim Bacon just to cite a handful of maybe a universe of fifty journalists who were syndicated."[13]

Drawing upon his and Entratter's connections with leading columnists, Freeman arranged to have, via charter aircraft, nearly a hundred and fifty newspapermen for the Sands opening on December 15, 1952. Two of them, Earl Wilson and Hy Gardner, enjoyed a cross-country flight on Howard Hughes's personal Constellation, and all received twenty-five silver dollars to gamble.[14] This royal treatment produced very favorable reviews. Earl Wilson wrote glowingly, "Here in what has become the most amazing part of America, a new high in hospitality was attained when the new Sands Hotel, gambling spot, held its magniloquent opening."[15] Another newspaperman was more effusive: "No opening in history . . . could match the curtain-raising ceremonies that attended the launching of . . . the fabulous Sands Hotel. There were more celebrities, radio, television and wire service men and Broadway and Hollywood correspondents around than one-armed bandits—and in this Wild Western showtown that's front-page news."[16] Charles Spangler of the *New York Telegraph* explained the impact of this remarkable coverage of the opening of the Sands: "every corner of the United States will soon be reading stories and viewing photos of celebrities inspecting the bar, the dining rooms, the snack bars and the beautiful bedrooms."[17]

Cultivating a consistently positive relationship with the press involved more than the grand gestures employed at the hotel's opening. Freeman had to work daily at maintaining good relations and developing new ones. Throughout his twenty years as publicist he "comped" rooms at the Sands for journalists or, at the least, provided them rooms at a much reduced "press rate." He, along with other Las Vegas publicists, participated in the annual Trans World Airlines Quickie Vacation for journalists. For example, in 1958, fifty-one of them flew in from across the country, and several of them stayed at the Sands enjoying rooms, meals, and shows.[18]

Often journalists contacted Freeman requesting the press rate or that their rooms be comped. A few boldly offered a quid pro quo. In 1960, Dixon Gayer

of *The Daily News* in Garden Grove, California, wrote to Freeman asking for the press rate for a family vacation. "I am page one columnist and television columnist for the *Daily News*," he explained, "and believe you could get some page one mileage out of any effort you might be able to make to oblige." Freeman eagerly accepted Gayer's terms even sweetening the arrangements, "We would also like you to be Mr. Entratter's guest for the dinner show in the Copa Room while you are here at the Sands."[19] Four years later, Vic Befera, the entertainment columnist with the *San Francisco Chronicle*, sent Freeman a clipping of an extended column which included material the publicist had sent about Jack Entratter. After expressing his hope that Freeman would "like it," Befera noted that a couple of his friends would be calling Freeman for show reservations. "You know how much I appreciate any red carpet treatment you accord my friends. Many thanks if you can comp him to a late show."[20]

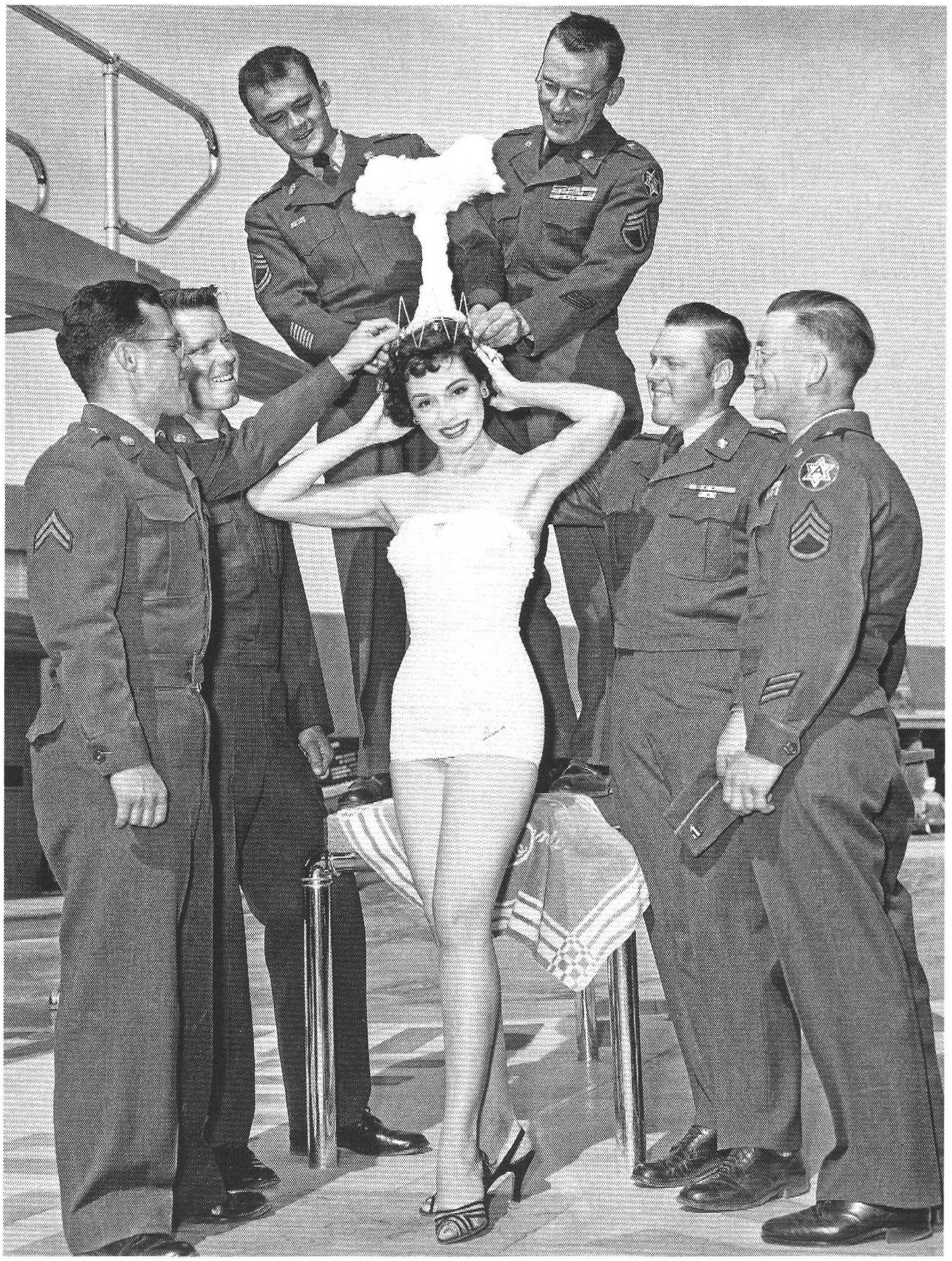
Freeman also had to deal with angry columnists. In 1960, Barney Glazer sent a sizzling letter to Freeman and Jack Entratter. Glazer had devoted some of his columns to the Sands and Entratter, and he felt they should thank him. "Can't understand you men at the Sands," he wrote. "I'm fighting for a simple appreciation for my stories. I've sent you these items and neither Al Freeman or Mr. Entratter has acknowledged them. Either you appreciate them and wish to say thanks, or you think they were written with poor taste." Then, he issued a threat. "Say something because I'm holding all future Sands mentions until I find if they will be appreciated. Look, I'm only asking for friendship, not money!" Freeman's response was a model of diplomacy. After emphasizing that "Mr. Entratter certainly does appreciate" Glazer's "mentions of the Sands," Freeman invited the columnist to have dinner at the Sands as Entratter's guest the next time he visited Las Vegas. Then, "perhaps we can sit down and start all over again and to work on some real news stories." After all, Freeman pointed out, he had kept all of Glazer's clippings and appreciated that Glazer had "been pretty nice to the Sands over the years . . . even though we haven't written 'gushy' letters or tried to 'soft soap' you in any way."[21] Whether healing wounded egos or offering extraordinary hospitality, Freeman succeeded in developing fruitful relations with the entertainment press. Harvey Diederich, another of the talented Las Vegas publicists and a contemporary of Freeman's, explained the key to the latter's success with newspapermen: "He basically was a journalist who knew their business and knew what they wanted and he was always very accommodating."[22]

These positive relationships let Freeman craft releases that many of those in the entertainment press willingly published. For example, in 1959, Freeman sent to Vernon Scott, who was the Hollywood correspondent for United Press International, a breezy press release about the success of Jack Entratter in getting most of the leading Las Vegas headliners under contract to the Sands. Scott published the article as drafted by Freeman, an article that pointed out that the Sands held the contracts of eleven of the "golden 20" stars of the Las Vegas

Strip.[23] Others, like Louis J. Wolf of the *Chicago Daily Tribune* asked Freeman for photographs. In 1957, Wolf wrote, "Perhaps you can send me a series of gag shots 7 or 8 from which I can make a strip for my syndicated column."[24]

For a dozen years beginning in 1951, the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) detonated more than one hundred nuclear devices in the desert just over sixty miles from Las Vegas. These atomic tests, particularly in the first few years, attracted many journalists who responded enthusiastically to the Commission's invitation to observe the tests from News Nob, a site several miles from ground zero. Freeman quickly moved to take advantage of such a large press presence knowing that there were often delays in the tests because of weather conditions and that journalists would have time to cover other stories in the city. Working closely with the hotel's owners, Freeman invited the major press figures and government officials to stay at the Sands. As Dick Odessky, a fellow publicist explained, "Once he'd booked enough press into the Sands, Freeman pronounced the hotel the 'official press headquarters' for the bomb tests."[25] He even persuaded Val Peterson, Administrator of the Federal Civil Defense Administration, to appoint him Consultant on Public Relations to the Civil Defense Administration. Peterson wrote to Freeman, "I know that your advice and counsel will enhance the effectiveness of my staff during this operation."[26]

In spring 1955 the Atomic Energy Commission scheduled, according to *The New York Times*, its "most elaborate atomic demonstration" ever. For Operation Cue, the Atomic Energy Commission invited about a thousand observers including over six hundred federal, state, and local civil-defense officials, as well as nearly a hundred members of the federal and state governments.[27] Once he learned the test would occur on April 26, Freeman scrambled to exploit the event. He organized an April 25 "Pre-Shot 'Good Luck' Party" in the Gold Room at the Sands. The invited guests included nineteen governors, twelve mayors, the National Civil Defense Advisory Council, the regional Federal Civil Defense Administrators, and a host of other government and military VIPs including White House Press Secretary James C. Hagerty, United States senators, and state directors of Civil Defense. The guests had cocktails and a dinner at the Danny Thomas show.[28] Beyond these distinguished guests, the Sands played host to reporters for *Life*, *Collier's*, and *Newsweek*; television luminaries Dave Garroway, John Cameron Swayze, Walter Cronkite, and Charles Collingwood; Pat Weaver, the president of NBC; and reporters for the *Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times*, *Minneapolis Tribune*, several wire services, and many newsreel services. Freeman reported to Jack Entratter that while the Sahara and the Flamingo had booked more government officials, "We have almost all of working national press here at Sands, who also must be here for briefings."[29] To accommodate the 385 reporters and government officials who remained at the hotel when the test was delayed for several days, the Sands extended their reservations and informed and cancelled those of more than 200 other customers.[30]



Copa Girl Linda Lawson as "Mis-Cue" during the delay in the atomic bomb test dubbed Operation Cue in 1955. Photographer unknown. *(University of Nevada, Las Vegas Special Collections Library)*

All of these efforts delighted the press corps although not all of them could linger in Las Vegas for ten days awaiting the test. Arthur De Titta, the Pacific Coast supervisor for Movietone News wrote to Freeman, "Just a note to thank you for all you've done for the newsreel boys. I know your reservations were extremely heavy. We appreciate you keeping the boys on at the hotel." Loudon Wainwright of *Life* magazine agreed, "As host, tip-supplier, idea man, mess sergeant, banker, good friend, you made the trip for us." *The New York Times* correspondent Gladwin Hill was most effusive. He thanked Freeman "as emphatically and heartily as possible for your boundless hospitality and assistance on the Battle of Operation Askew." "You did a triple-A public relations job in respect to everybody and I know made many friends both for yourself and for the Sands, particularly with the NYT contingent."[31]

Besides the good will of the press corps, Freeman reported to Jack Entratter on the great positive publicity resulting from this effort: There were ten-minute interviews on the Dave Garroway show and the Charles Collingswood show featuring discussions of "the gesture of the Sands in accommodating Press people during emergency postponements of the A-Bomb." Similarly, there were stories in both the *Los Angeles Times* and *The New York Times* and in the United Press Syndicate about the gesture. There were also several film clips of the Sands shown on network television news programs. Finally, the United Press wire service carried a photo of "Copagirl Linda Lawson as 'Mis-Cue,' wearing A-Bomb Crown, to illustrate another mis-firing of the Operation Cue Bomb."[32]

Freeman, as the above examples illustrate, did not rely upon just the print medium to advance publicity for the Sands. Working always with Jack Entratter, who had developed such an extensive network in the entertainment business, Freeman diligently pursued radio, television, and movie projects that would portray the hotel in a positive way to as large a number of listeners and viewers as possible. They attracted popular radio programs like those of Mitch Miller and NBC's weekend "Monitor" program of news, music, and interviews.[33] He even arranged a three-day remote airing of "Breakfast with Dorothy and Dick" in 1955. The long-running program produced by the husband-and-wife team of Richard Kollmar and Dorothy Kilgallen was on New York's WOR and had the highest morning ratings in that major market. They broadcast their chat show from the Sands between August 31 and September 2, 1955.[34] The couple expressed their amazement that there was so much "luxury in the middle of the desert," but they were critical of most of the shows they attended. While they both enjoyed Pearl Bailey at the Flamingo, and Kollmar gave high marks to the burlesque routines of Hank Henry at the Silver Slipper, he and his wife found little else to praise. Kollmar even complained that the showgirls at the Flamingo were unattractive. By sitting alongside the couple, however, Freeman prevented a complete disaster on the airwaves. Obviously aware of the publicist's presence, Kollmar, in the middle of some negative remarks, reminded the listening audience that the shows in Las Vegas were always changing. Thus,

A scene from an episode of the television adventure series "I Spy" starring Robert Culp and Bill Cosby, shot at the Sands in 1966. Photographer unknown. *(University of Nevada, Las Vegas Special Collections Library)*

simply because he and his wife appeared sharply critical of the shows, that did not mean that potential visitors would be frustrated in their quest for good entertainment. In fact, clearly seeking to appease the hotel's publicist, Kollmar reassured listeners that the Sands always had fine talent in their programs.[35]

Freeman and Entratter increased their attention to television from the mid 1950s to the early 1970s. They negotiated with the producers of situation comedies, variety programs, game shows, interview programs, dramas, adventure shows, and specials all to give the Sands access to the rapidly growing television audience. Freeman played a substantial role in these ventures. For most of the programs he arranged the rooms and meals for cast members and crew, helped production companies secure electrical and mechanical equipment as well making sure that they had adequate storage for all their production equipment. He negotiated with local government officials to shoot scenes downtown or along the Strip.[36] Freeman's memos to all departments at the Sands concerning the filming of television programs on the property inevitably included a reminder of the value of the production to the Sands. For example, in summer 1970, the NBC program "Julia," which starred Diahann Carroll, filmed three episodes at

the hotel. In summarizing the upcoming filming schedule, Freeman told the staff, "These three segments of 'Julia' have a family type theme and should be good for the image of Las Vegas and especially the Sands."[37]

Freeman's concern with the hotel's image is most evident in his review of scripts and the changes he persuaded producers to make in them. In a 1966 memo to Jack Entratter, Freeman explained revisions in the script for an episode of the adventure series "I Spy," which featured Robert Culp and Bill Cosby. In the original script one of the characters said, "Think about Las Vegas. If you don't gamble there's nothing to do." Freeman persuaded the show's executive producer, Sheldon Leonard, to delete that comment. Further, Freeman noted, Leonard "is also re-wording page 5 and 6 to delete what I thought was an innocuous but unnecessary 'dig' at Las Vegas."[38] Freeman also revised the script for Dave Garroway's "Wide, Wide World" in 1955. This ninety-minute Sunday program, which broadcast from throughout North America, Europe, and the Caribbean, often featured live segments. The December 4, 1955, program, which included a segment from Las Vegas, focused on the different genres of American music. Freeman endorsed most of the script. With directions for the cameras to take a variety of shots both in and outside the Sands, the script layered on the plaudits for the hotel and casino. Amid all the glittering hotels and casinos, the "Sands is the playground of the stars. You may not meet them face to face in Hollywood, but you will at the Sands." Guests will likely encounter entertainers as "they relax—in the sun, in the Lounge—and quite at home like mountain people at a playparty relaxed among their friends." Beyond the chances of bumping into stars one could expect a variety of music in the lounges twenty-four hours a day from rock and roll and "boogy-woogy" to "an offbeat improvisation of 'Humoresque.'" As one listened to the eclectic offerings of music an array of gambling options awaited, and the script suggested that patrons had a good chance at success. In just three years, gamblers had won sixty-two thousand jackpots at the Sands. When the director was to cut to an underwater shot at the pool Garroway was to say, "They tell me there's music under water in the Sands pool. Better believe it but it still can't hurt to look. Peel the girl a grape, somebody, but I'll take the lesser luxuries." Then, with cameras catching a fashion show on the bridge over the pool Garroway's line was to be: "Continuous passing of girls in review—I mean in a fashion show. Surprise? Everything is a surprise at the Sands." This was all too suggestive to Freeman and would diminish the positive image they were trying to project. Thus, the revised script eliminated the fashion show and all references to it as well as the line "Peel the girl a grape, somebody, but I'll take the lesser luxuries." The segment then ended with shots of the Sands's famous Copa Girls, Nat King Cole, and Frank Sinatra, "the modern minstrel of our times" in rehearsals.[39]

When the Sands provided vacations as prizes on game shows, Freeman found it much easier to get an upbeat description of the property as a great

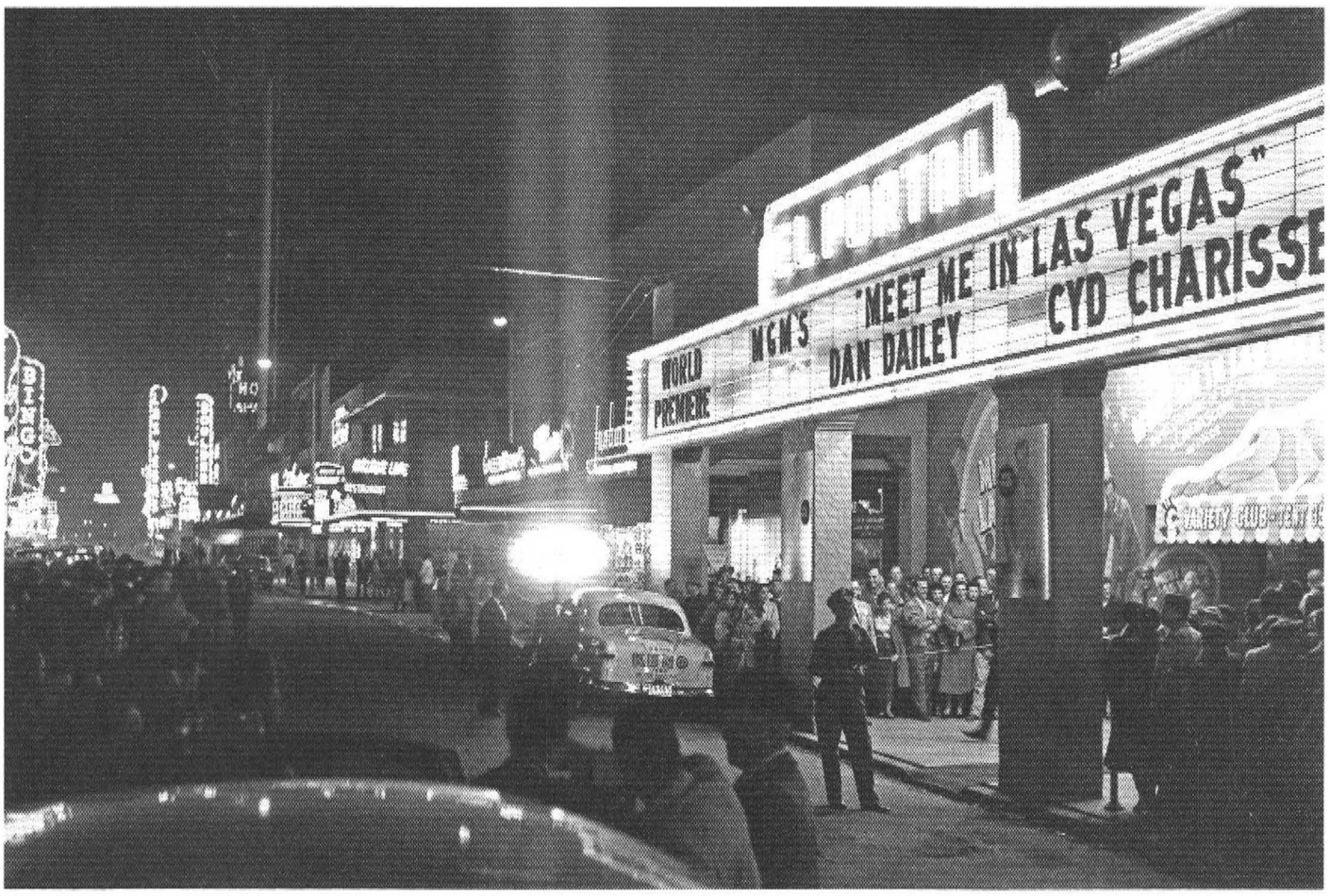
resort destination. Frequently, the hotel provided vacations for the winners on the popular "Queen for a Day" program. During the October 7, 1959, show, with photos of the Sands on the screen, host Jack Bailey explained that the woman selected to be Queen for a day would stay "at the beautiful Sands Hotel in Las Vegas." Her accommodations would be the best, "She'll have a spacious room, smartly appointed and as comfortable as a royal suite should be." Besides enjoying the "enormous pool" at the Sands and sightseeing to Hoover Dam and a visit to downtown Las Vegas the Queen would enjoy a "ring-side table for a show in the hotel's Clover Room." In all, the Queen was assured of being at "the center of a dizzy whirl of activities but we guarantee there won't be a dull moment for her majesty when she holidays in America's liveliest city, Las Vegas."[40]

When networks filmed specials in Las Vegas, Freeman was diligent in gaining air time for the Sands. In November 1957, NBC telecast "Holiday in Las Vegas" which originated on the stage of the New Frontier, however, the Sands, Desert Inn, El Rancho Vegas, Riviera, and Sahara agreed to provide accommodations for the stars of the show in return for "equal plugs" during the program. There was a "film montage of hotel fronts and marquees," and Freeman made sure in the negotiations for the program that "each hotel" would receive an "equal plug" in the script. Although Jack Gould in *The New York Times* called it "a sixty-minute bore," the program, starring Ann Southern, Vic Damone, the Will Mastin Trio with Sammy Davis, Jr., Tony Randall, and Jayne Mansfield, clearly won its time slot. Broadcast against "Country Music Jubilee" with Red Foley and a Perry Mason mystery, the special attracted over thirty million viewers.[41]

Freeman and Entratter did not neglect movies. They understood the impact of having a major motion picture filmed at the Sands and, as with the television productions, Freeman handled most of the arrangements for the filming. Preparing the Sands and its employees for days of filming, providing accommodations and meals for cast and crew members, and working with the sheriff's office to handle traffic along the Strip, in the parking lot, and in the front entrance were all worth the publicity value the films provided to the Sands and Las Vegas.[42] Several films , such as *Kiss Me, Stupid* with Dean Martin and Kim Novak released in 1964, have only short sequences set at the Sands, but three feature extended scenes or had most of the film's action at the Sands. *Meet Me in Las Vegas, Pepe,* and *Ocean's Eleven,* in the words of Mike Weatherford, each function as a "cinematic commercial" for the Sands. All three are light entertainment, and provide "generous CinemaScope tours of the Sands."[43]

Released in 1956, *Meet Me in Las Vegas* is a romantic musical starring Dan Dailey and Cyd Charisse. Dailey plays a likeable perpetual loser at the tables until he encounters a ballet dancer, portrayed by Charisse, who is performing at the Sands. Four years later, two movies, *Pepe* and *Ocean's Eleven* filmed extended sequences at the Sands. *Pepe* stars Dailey and the Mexican actor

Cantinflas, the star of the 1960 film *Pepe* shot at the Sands, on the set with entertainment director Jack Entratter who made a cameo appearance in the film. Photographer unknown. *(University of Nevada, Las Vegas Special Collections Library)*



The 1956 world premiere of *Meet Me In Las Vegas* at the El Portal Theater in downtown Las Vegas,which was filmed largely at the Sands. *(University of Nevada, Las Vegas Special Collections Library)*

Cantinflas, along with nearly thirty cameos by other Hollywood stars. The movie includes several lighthearted scenes of gambling at the Sands involving Cantinflas, Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Peter Lawford, Richard Conte, Jack Entratter, Caesar Romero, Joey Bishop, and Jimmy Durante, as well as a performance by Sammy Davis, Jr., as the lead character who seeks to regain ownership of a horse from Dailey's character. Many of those performing cameos in *Pepe* play starring roles in *Ocean's Eleven*, a lengthy film about World War II veterans carrying out a plan concocted by Danny Ocean, portrayed by Frank Sinatra, to rob five casinos, including the Sands, on New Year's Eve.

Although none of the three films met with great critical success, movie fans enjoyed them and reviewers acknowledged their publicity value for Las Vegas generally and the Sands in particular. *Variety,* in its review of *Meet Me in Las Vegas*, contended "Las Vegas has never had a better film showcasing or more valuable advertising, and the Sands Hotel particularly provides a glittering background for the romantic tale of how Dailey, the cowpoke . . . and Miss Charisse are first brought together because when he holds her hand he can't lose." The film critic Bosley Crowther, in *The New York Times*, agreed. "For the price of a ticket," he wrote, "the wary traveler can find himself taking a giant leap to the Monte Carlo of the West, putting up at the fantastic Sands Club and living like a Texas oil king." After describing the "expensive and sparkling production," Crowther concluded, "Oh boy—what an ad for the Sands!"[44] Although reviewers did not like the length of *Pepe* and its lethargic pace, they enjoyed the music and pageantry in the film and the humorous scenes at the Sands with "Cantinflas cleaning out Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Jimmy Durante and Jack Entratter."[45] Critics enjoyed *Ocean's Eleven* scarcely any more than *Pepe*, but acknowledged that the film presented Las Vegas and the casinos victimized in the caper in a glamorous setting. For example, Bosley Crowther of *The New York Times* did not like the film, but wrote that it put Las Vegas "and its flashy casinos before the audience in vivid, full-toned style." Whitney Balliett, in *The New Yorker*, noting the "innumerable shots of the innards" of casinos such as the Sands, described the film as "an admiring wide-screen color travelogue of the various effluvia—animate and inanimate—of Las Vegas." Margaret Harford, in the *Los Angeles Mirror*, argued, "*Ocean's Eleven* fields a cast almost as gaudy as the advertising it freely hands Las Vegas."[46]

Not satisfied simply to contribute to the crafting of a celluloid image of the Sands and Las Vegas as a "cool" resort destination, Al Freeman and Jack Entratter used the films to advance other publicity efforts. In 1956, in anticipation of the premiere of *Meet Me in Las Vegas*, Entratter persuaded NBC to telecast the Milton Berle show live from the Sands on the evening of the premiere, and left it to Freeman to develop an effective publicity plan. For local consumption, Freeman devised a large ad that appeared on page one of the local papers. Beyond listing all the stars who were in the film and those appearances MGM had scheduled to enhance the premiere, the ad also included a list of "Important

Members of the Press" who would cover the event.[47] He then gained Entratter's approval for his "Exploitation Plan":

1. A live telecast of the Milton Berle NBC color television show from the Sands Hotel on Tuesday, February 21, from 5 to 6 PM.

2. Show to tie in with World Premiere of *Meet Me in Las Vegas* to be staged later that night.

3. MGM to bring down stars for the Berle show, for appearances—shown as they enter the Sands in Premiere dress—shown as they [sit] ringside in the Copa Room during the Berle show.

4. Berle to show clip from the movie, tying appearance of Cyd Charisse and Dan Dailey onstage with him during the telecast.

5. Berle to promote the World Premiere of the movie, talking about MGM stars appearing on his telecast being present for the Premiere.

Following the program, the MGM stars rode in a sports-car caravan to the El Portal Theatre downtown for the premiere. As they entered the theater, they were interviewed by Shirley Thomas for NBC's "Monitor" program.[48]

The impact of Freeman's effort was impressive. More than forty million viewers saw not only Berle, Eddie Cantor, Jimmy Durante, Peggy Lee, and the Four Aces, who sang the theme song for the film, performing in the Copa Room and a clip of the movie, but they also viewed the hotel's marquee and Milton Berle interviewing celebrities as they entered the Sands.[49] Because he had persuaded seventy-six "newsmen and cameramen" to cover all of the evening's activities, Freeman claimed that it was "the most publicized evening in Las Vegas history."[50] The *Las Vegas Sun* agreed concluding it was "the biggest single day of pure publicity in its history (barring atomic bombs)."[51]

Given the print coverage of the event, it is likely that neither Freeman nor the *Sun* were exaggerating. The promotional material for the Berle show and advertisements that appeared in newspapers across the nation featured the Sands Hotel.[52] More important, major newspapers gave extensive and very positive coverage to both the Berle show and the movie premiere. The *Los Angeles Herald and Express* devoted a full page with several photos to the big event. Philip Scheuer, of the *Los Angeles Times*, besides noting that the Berle show had broadcast from the Sands, where "much of the action of the MGM musical is centered," called *Meet Me in Las Vegas* the "best movie yet made about the gambling mecca."[53] Most impressive, however, was the coverage provided by Sam Lesner of the *Chicago Daily News*. He praised the "colorful, delightful

Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr., Peter Lawford, Frank Sinatra, and Joey Bishop—The Rat Pack— performing at the Sands. Photographer unknown. *(University of Nevada, Las Vegas Special Collections Library)*

film," one he believed captured the magic of the fabulous Sands Hotel and the city. Indeed, he argued, "If you have even one drop of gambler's blood in your veins, it's going to be hard not to hop the next train or plane for Las Vegas after seeing M-G-M's lavish musical, 'Meet Me in Las Vegas.'" When he sent the clipping to Al Freeman, Lesner also added a quick note which demonstrated the value of the publicist's cultivation of entertainment writers, "As you see, the Sands is my favorite Las Vegas spot. The film is delightful and I hope it sends Chicagoans flocking to the luxurious Sands."[54]

As successful as Freeman and Entratter were in showing the premiere of *Meet Me in Las Vegas* to a huge television audience and generating saturation coverage of it in the national print media, this effort was only a prelude to their remarkable exploitation of the filming of *Ocean's Eleven*. Entratter understood the appeal of having the five stars of the movie—Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis, Jr., Joey Bishop, and Peter Lawford—appear in the Copa Room while they were making the movie. Known as the Rat Pack, they performed at the Sands from January 20 through February 16, 1960. The five performers

have come to symbolize a certain Las Vegas style, as the chief promoters of an era of "cool." To Mike Weatherford, they defined "cool" with "the casual swagger, the flick of a cigarette, the snappy patter."[55] A contemporary journalist argued they displayed "a wild iconoclasm that millions envy secretly or even unconsciously—which makes them, in the public eye, the innest in-group in the world."[56] The historian David Schwartz agrees. To Schwartz the Rat Pack's "unapologetically libertine lifestyle" appealed to postwar men in America because in both the film and on stage they "unabashedly chased women, drank liquor, and generally thumbed their noses at established social mores."[57] Yet, the Rat Pack reflected something more. For a brief moment they illustrated the multiethnic possibilities in America. Max Rudin described them as a quintet that redefined the nation's sense of class, one previously defined as WASP Americans: "one black, one Jew, two Italians, and one feckless Hollywood-ized Brit, three of them second-generation immigrants, four raised during the Depression in ethnic city neighborhoods."[58] Freeman, a Jewish American, certainly understood and appreciated the symbolism on display in the Copa Room and on the screen.

Entratter called their premiere performance in the Copa Room "The Summit," a humorous take on a planned summit meeting of American, British, French, and Soviet leaders. Indeed, Entratter sent a telegram to each member of the Rat Pack with an invitation, "You come to my summit meeting and I'll come to yours," and signed it "Khrushchev."[59] The stars filmed for a few hours during the day or very early morning, performed two shows each night, and tried to recover with plenty of time in the steam room. This remarkable combination of the filming of a major motion picture and the performances of these major stars at the Sands attracted widespread attention. The entertainment columnist Hedda Hopper noted in early February, "press and photographers winging in from all over the country."[60] A key role for Al Freeman in all this activity was to put together an advertisement to entice crowds into the nightly performances and to arrange the appearances of leading entertainers in the audience. In a large ad entitled "Star-Light Star-Bright, Which Star Shines Tonight?" Freeman placed photos of Sinatra, Martin, Davis, Lawford, and Bishop accompanied by enticing copy:

> It's a guessing game, and you'll be a winner at the show-of-shows any night . . . every night! Yes, there's magic in the Sands air. Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis, Jr., Dean Martin, and Peter Lawford! A galaxy of great stars . . . one-two-three or all four on stage at once! It's a Jack Entratter special, and it is special, even for the Sands. That's Jan. 20—Feb. 16 in the fabulous Sands Copa Room, America's No. 1 Nightclub![61]

He also delivered the stars. Ralph Pearl, columnist for the *Las Vegas Sun,* reported that on opening night:

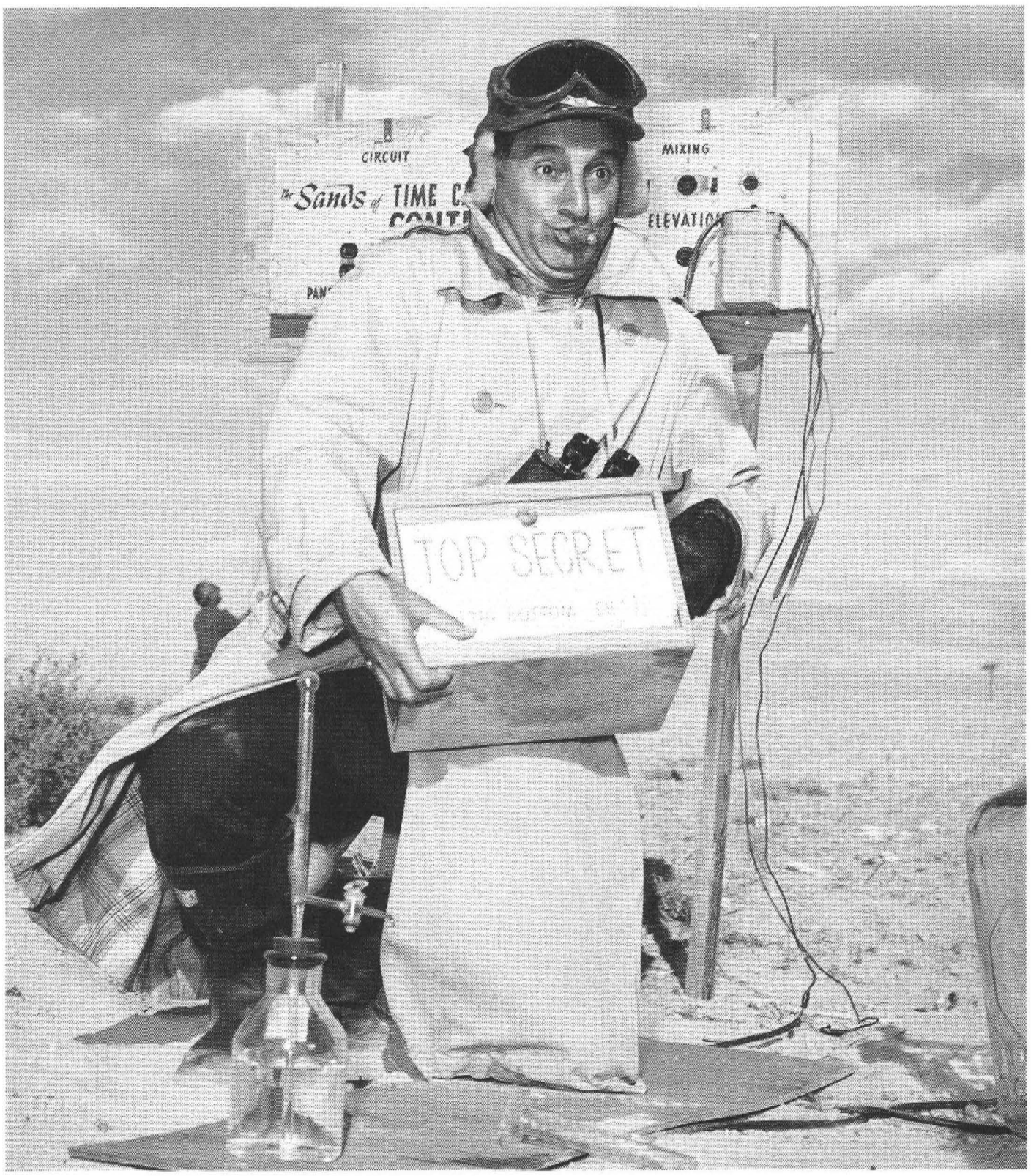
> Among the glamorous viewers at ringside were Heavyweight champ Ingemar Johansson, Dinah Shore, Cyd Charisse, Lucille Ball, Zsa Zsa Gabor, Jane Kean, Peter Lorre, Richard Conti, Ruth and Sidney Glick and finally the lady with the hysterical headpieces, Hedda "I love Sullivan" Hopper. Oh yes, also the Fabian of the Roaring Twenties, George Jessel, America's Toastmaster General.[62]

When producer and director George Sidney began filming *Pepe* at the Sands on February 1 excitement and attention for the property only grew.[63] The highlight of this extraordinary publicity event was the appearance of Massachusetts Senator John F. Kennedy at the Copa Room on January 29. A friend of Sinatra's, Kennedy was on a western swing in his campaign for the Democratic nomination for president. Sinatra introduced Kennedy as the "hottest personality in the political field," and the senator, according to the local press, "basked in the spotlight directed to his table by Sinatra's introduction and graciously accepted a warm ovation from the capacity audience on hand for the show."[64]

The publicity surrounding all these developments generated enormous interest in the Sands and Las Vegas in what was a typically slow period of the year for tourism. Many more requests for rooms at the Sands and a table in the Copa Room came in than could be accommodated, and many of those who secured rooms or access to the performances were the high rollers. Parking valet Carl Barschdorf remembers receiving great tips because the Rat Pack brought in "a real money crowd." Greeter Jackie Heller agreed: "The five or six bosses would fly in all the big players. All the big tables were sewn up." Comedian Buddy Lester said "it was nothing for a guy to slip the maitre d' a hundred for a table."[65]

When *Ocean's Eleven* premiered in Las Vegas in August the Sands and the city enjoyed another wave of national attention. Beyond more than fifty newspaper, television, and radio journalists covering the event, Jack Paar had special footage shot for broadcast later on his late-night show, and newsreels were made "at the request of television news editors around the country for showing in their respective areas."[66] Hank Greenspun, editor of the *Las Vegas Sun*, noted the significance of having a major motion picture about Las Vegas and in the process acknowledged the critical role that publicists and entertainment directors played in the tourist city. "Ocean's 11," he wrote, "will carry the story of this city to literally millions of people throughout the United States and around the world." Besides that impact, "thousands of words will be filed today and tomorrow by the scores of visiting writers and columnists who will be in Las Vegas for the premiere." All this publicity, "will mean dollars and cents to the hotels, merchants and residents of Las Vegas in the future."[67]

As they exploited all the publicity potential for major motion pictures, Freeman and Entratter also drew upon the popularity of Danny Thomas, their headliner when the Sands opened in 1952 for substantial publicity mileage. It



Long-time headliner at the Sands, Danny Thomas, as a mad scientist in charge of an atomic bomb test in the 1950s. Photographer unknown. *(University of Nevada, Las Vegas Special Collections Library)*

was Thomas and not Sinatra who was synonymous with the Sands through much of the 1950s.[68] Freeman typically put together a substantial publicity blitz in anticipation of each of Thomas's openings at the Sands. In spring 1957, besides sending copy to nearly seventy columnists and arranging for *Variety*, the *Hollywood Reporter*, and the Associated Press to cover the opening, Freeman was able to get an interview for Thomas on NBC's "Monitor" radio program, an extended plug on "Queen for a Day," and a plug from Nat King Cole on

NBC radio's "Nightline" program.[69] After the wife of Thomas's character on his popular television show died, the program producers decided to film his honeymoon with his new bride, played by Marjorie Lord, in Las Vegas. Thus, the first two episodes of the "Danny Thomas Show" in 1957 showcased the escapades of his family joining the couple on a trip to the Sands. This exposure on television's second-highest-rated program for the 1957-58 season led Entratter and Freeman to work with Post Cereals to film a series of eight commercials in the summer of 1958; filmed at the Sands and with Thomas's television family prominently displayed, the commercials featured the pool, the lavishly landscaped grounds, and the marquee which read "Post Cereals Proudly Present Alpha Bits."[70]

Besides such extraordinary time-consuming publicity efforts, Freeman carried out numerous other tasks. He helped lure high rollers to the Sands. In particular, he cultivated relationships with several Texans because of their wealth and their tendency to lose big at the Sands. For example, in 1960, he recommended to Jack Entratter that the Sands provide air fare, rooms, dinner, and a reception for forty couples from Dallas. According to his Dallas contact, all of the men who would be making the trip "are young prominent business and civic leaders in Dallas." There was a good bit of informed calculation involved in such a move. The total cost to the Sands would be nearly $20,000, while it was likely that "the potential gambling gross" for this new group of gamblers would be less than $5,000. Freeman urged that they go ahead because "this is the new, young blood of wealthy families—potential good customers for the Sands next year, and in a few years to come."[71] Freeman also helped Entratter select new Copa Girls. All of the Strip hotels had a line of attractive dancers in their shows: the George Moro Dancers at the El Rancho Vegas, the Flamingoettes, the Beauties at the Desert Inn, the Katherine Duffy Dancers at the Hotel Last Frontier, and the most famous, the Copa Girls at the Sands. Unlike famed choreographer Donn Arden who demanded talented ballet dancers, Entratter was primarily interested in the appearance of the girls. In a 1953 audition in Los Angeles he walked in and simply picked the first, third, and ninth of the dozen girls hoping for a position. When the bookers of the audition pointed out that the ones Entratter had selected were not the best dancers, the Sands entertainment director responded, "I don't care if they never dance. They're beautiful and I want beauty."[72] Entratter looked for enchanting females throughout the Southwest, and Freeman went along to help with travel arrangements for those selected, giving them instructions on rehearsals, advising them on contracts, and assisting them in securing accommodations in Las Vegas. In January 1959, Frank Sinatra assisted in the selection of new Copa Girls, and Freeman made sure there were many photographs taken of the event and distributed them to media outlets.[73]

Beyond his work on behalf of the Sands Hotel, Freeman served for many years as an active member on the Chamber of Commerce Promotion Committee which included the publicists from the major hotels and some employees of

the Las Vegas News Bureau, the Chamber's publicity division. Between 1958 and 1964, he chaired the committee. Members worked on issues of common concern such as coordinating the annual TWA Quickie Vacation, which brought several dozen journalists from around the country to Las Vegas for a three day visit; approving Chamber of Commerce brochures; working with the Clark County Fair and Recreation Board in promoting the new Convention Center to a national market; approving the News Bureau budget; and occasionally supplying editorial content for some periodicals and newspapers that were printing stories on Las Vegas.[74] For example, in 1961, the committee gave approval for the News Bureau to provide "editorial copy and pictures" for a *Denver Post* Sunday supplement.[75]

The Promotion Committee's most significant action in 1961 was its strong and successful stand against two network television projects dealing with crime in Las Vegas. Mark Goodson and Bill Todman, successful producers of series such as "I've Got a Secret," "To Tell the Truth," "Phillip Marlowe," and "What's My Line?" proposed a series entitled "Las Vegas Beat" for the 1961-62 NBC season. At the same time, Warner Brothers planned a series for ABC entitled "Las Vegas Files." After lengthy debates, with Freeman taking a leading role, the Promotion Committee decided to oppose both series.[76] As he had with all television, movie, and radio productions at the Sands or elsewhere in Las Vegas, Freeman kept in mind the image of the city projected in these media. His main concern with the pilot of "Las Vegas Beat" was its "concentrated violence." Among the half dozen murders shown in less than an hour was the "tommy-gunning of an innocent driver coming into Las Vegas" and "an armoured car bombing." Freeman believed that depictions of extraordinary violence would endanger all the hotel casino properties in Las Vegas. He argued "there would not only be a public reaction, but an official one, from Washington, as well as locally, if such a series went on the air."[77]

The context of Freeman's concern is important. He, and other publicists in Las Vegas, had spent a decade seeking to counter an image of their city as a gangster metropolis, an image that had emerged in the wake of the 1947 murder of Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel, the owner of the Flamingo Hotel and Casino. Siegel had opened the Flamingo amid much national fanfare, but he was deeply indebted to Meyer Lansky's syndicate. Most contemporary commentators concluded that the assassin who shot and killed Siegel did so on the syndicate's orders.[78] Photographs of Siegel's bullet-ridden body appeared in newspapers and magazines across the country. According to *Time* magazine, "the tabloids of Manhattan, the sensational papers of Los Angeles and, to a lesser degree, papers all over the U.S. played it high, wide and handsome."[79] The hundreds of articles in the nation's press about the notorious Siegel and his link with their city came at a bad time for Las Vegas. Postwar Americans were becoming increasingly concerned with organized crime's link to gambling. Several cities established crime commissions the most important of which was

in Chicago headed by a former FBI special agent, Virgil Peterson. A popular speaker and a prolific author, Peterson concluded that organized crime in America was indeed dominated by a "syndicate," an organization originally built by Al Capone and he eventually concluded that "elements of the mob of the late Al Capone have taken over at least partial control of a number of gambling houses in Las Vegas."[80]

More ominous for Las Vegas casinos was the investigation into organized crime in the early 1950s led by Estes Kefauver, the U.S. Senator from Tennessee. As head of the Special Committee to Investigate Organized Crime in Interstate Commerce, Kefauver spent over a year conducting hearings across the nation including in Las Vegas. Like Peterson, his committee concluded, "gambling profits are the principal support of big-time racketeering and gangsterism." As far as Las Vegas was concerned, committee members argued that "an interlocking group of gangsters, racketeers, and hoodlums" dominated the gambling business of the city.[81] Many Americans followed the investigation closely. The televised hearings in New York City attracted at least seventeen million viewers at a time when there were fewer than eight million television sets in the country.[82] Kefauver published a four-part series in the *Saturday Evening Post* and published a book about the investigations entitled *Crime in America*. Although the wide-ranging probe by Kefauver's committee did not lead to any legislation that threatened gambling interests in Las Vegas, the city faced another federal threat when Robert Kennedy became the United States Attorney General, in 1961. Kennedy, who had served as the chief counsel for the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations which had investigated the link between the Teamsters Union and organized crime in the mid 1950s, had accepted the Peterson-Kefauver view of a near monolithic syndicate fed by gambling, and quickly took action.[83] In August 1961 Nevada newspapers reported that "a number of federal officers, including, it has been learned, four FBI agents, are putting together a dossier on the state's unique cards and craps industry."[84] In November, the *Saturday Evening Post* published an article entitled, "How Wicked Is Vegas?" In the article, the *Post* claimed that "Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy has just ordered the first co-ordinated Federal investigation into Las Vegas and the forces that make it run." Specifically, the Justice Department was "curious about rumors that 'interest holders,' camouflaged behind licensed operators, call the shots in some casinos and that untaxed millions disappear 'off the top' of the gambling take in the ultra-private counting rooms where each casino empties its 'hold boxes' as they come from the green-covered tables."[85]

These investigations captured the attention of many journalists in the 1950s. On January 12, 1950, the *Oakland Tribune* reported that "the big combine—the old Capone gang of Chicago and the Cleveland Mafia—took over Las Vegas last weekend," and these "big-time racketeers" were planning to use their "newly established Las Vegas base" to move into California.[86] Four years later, Dan

Fowler, in *Look* magazine, following the Peterson-Kefauver theory, claimed that "the Vegas operation has been dominated by a loose organization known as the Syndicate," which "decides gambling policies, picks political candidates, controls the Nevada legislature and, when the need arises, metes out gangland justice."[87] In late 1960, only weeks before the Chamber of Commerce Promotion Committee met to discuss the two television programs, Fred J. Cook drew a similar conclusion in a special issue of *Nation* magazine entitled "Gambling, Inc.: Treasure Chest of the Underworld." Cook argued that Las Vegas had become "a haven" for "the American underworld." In Cook's view, the city, because of legalized gambling, had become "virtually the capital of American crime."[88]

Besides the abundance of articles in newspapers and mainstream magazines, there were plenty works of fiction and pulp-magazine stories using material on organized crime in Las Vegas. Several hard-boiled detective tales, short stories, and epic novels—for example, Irving Shulman's *The Big Brokers*—detailed the involvement of organized crime in Las Vegas.[89] Pulp magazines such as *Cabaret* had features like "Do Gangsters Run Las Vegas." Hollywood, in the form of "city or urban exposes" provided numerous accounts of crime in urban America.[90] Las Vegas was featured in one of these "syndicate films." *Las Vegas Shakedown*, released in 1955, told the story of mobster Al Sirago's efforts to gain control of the El Rancho Vegas following his release from prison.[91]

A decade of federal probes, investigative journalism, and works of fiction had created an image of Las Vegas as a gangster-ridden den of iniquity. Thus, Freeman and the other members of the Promotion Committee worried about any production that might further portray their city negatively. While they saw advantages to films like *Ocean's Eleven* "which played around the country and did a hell of a job for Las Vegas," they worried about films like *Las Vegas Shakedown* which was "terrible public relations for the city."[92] After much debate in meetings in February 1961, the Promotion Committee members concluded that television series of the type of the proposed "Las Vegas Beat" and "Las Vegas Files" would once again attract to Las Vegas the attention of federal officials. An examination of the committee's minutes reveals Freeman's pivotal role. Because he had a longstanding relationship with Warner Brothers, the producers of "Las Vegas Files," Freeman was less concerned with that program, but at the end of the discussions he was forthright in opposing both. He did not want Las Vegas "shown as a place where there's violence and crime to the exclusion of every thing else or overshadowing every thing else."[93]

The Promotion Committee's debate caught the attention of journalists in other cities. Hugh Russell Fraser, for example, in the *Los Angeles Times*, argued that the community should understand the danger it faced if television portrayed Las Vegas "as a focal point of violence, brutality, shooting, murder and general insecurity of life and limb."[94] Various members of the Promotion Committee also offered quotes to the wire services to advance their opposition. "It's like an Orson Welles thing," Freeman told the *Reno Evening Gazette*, a reference

to the famed filmmaker and radio personality's 1938 success in persuading people of an alien invasion in the radio drama "War of the Worlds:" "people might believe it if it's repeated to them over 39 weeks."[95] Once their Promotion Committee members united in opposition to the two series, the members of the Chamber of Commerce took action. Through their president, Sam Boyd, the Chamber, according to an April 1961 Associated Press story, "threatened legal action" to prevent the filming of the programs. The threat worked. The production companies dropped plans for the shows.[96]

Freeman remained unrelenting in his opposition to television programs he believed would portray his city and his hotel in ways that would endanger their business. In 1970, NBC approached Freeman about filming an episode of their series "The Name of the Game" at the Sands. The adventure-mystery series starred Gene Barry, Robert Stack, Tony Franciosa, and Susan St. James. Paul Mosher, NBC's director of program merchandise, requested sixty-five rooms for ten days for cast and crew in return for the program's promotion of the Sands. Specifically, he said that "a slide of a picture of the hotel will be shown at the end of the show, plus fifteen words of copy read over the slide." Freeman recommended that Jack Entratter reject the offer in part because "the amount of credit if the story line were good, is not comparable or commensurate to the kind of credit we should get if we were to cooperate with this show." But the story line of the projected episode was a more important consideration for Freeman. It featured "Las Vegas as the locale for a series of several derogatory scenes, including beatings, violence such as hotel doors being kicked in and finally an explosion in a hotel room which obviously would be the Sands, in an attempt to kill an entertainer." Among many other problems he had with the story, Freeman noted the story "also covers several gangster-type characters."[97]

In defending the Sands and his city, Freeman could be very combative, a trait that certainly contributed to his image as a tough guy. According to Don Payne, the longtime manager of the Las Vegas News Bureau, Freeman "was feared by people because he was perceived as being gruff." His reputation was so firm in the community that when Payne became manager of the News Bureau he was reluctant to take his first phone call from Freeman. However, the Sands publicist had only called to reassure him: "Don, if any of these bastards give you any trouble you just call me."[98] Bill Willard, long time observer of the entertainment scene in Las Vegas, explained Freeman this way, "He was often cantankerous, yet persuasively gentle at times."[99] Other employees at the Sands saw him as a very busy man, but who "was friendly with us."[100]

Whatever else publicists did, they had to have a good sense of what made for a great publicity shot. Freeman exploited virtually all opportunities for a publicity stunt or photograph to gain visibility for the Sands. During one of Danny Thomas's many runs at the Sands in the 1950s, Freeman "set up some control panels in the desert" with the Sands name prominently displayed and persuaded "Thomas to play the role of the scientist while the camera clicked."[101]

Louis Prima in a 1950s parody of the Tareyton Cigarettes ads after he "switched" from the Sahara to the Sands. Photographer unknown. *(University of Nevada, Las Vegas Special Collections Library)*

As he watched the Copa Girls perform their famed fan dance, he came up with an idea for another publicity shot. According to the News Bureau photographer Don English, the Copa Room featured "a number on the stage called the fan number, twelve or eighteen girls, and they did this thing with these huge fans that would weave around and he did a thing with an old prospector with a mule or a donkey out on the dry lakes on the desert. He's walking along the desert, he's delirious and he has this mirage and the mirage is the girls doing this fan number out in the desert."[102] In the 1960s, when the Sands persuaded Louis Prima to play in the Copa Room rather than at the Sahara, Freeman tapped an idea used in a popular advertisement of that decade. Herbert Tareyton cigarettes ran commercials featuring smokers with a black eye who said, "I'd rather fight than switch." Freeman told Don English to take a photo of Prima "with his glasses up on his forehead with a black eye and saying 'I'd rather switch than fight.'"[103] Occasionally, Freeman had to react quickly to gain a great publicity

The 1953 floating craps game; Al Freeman's signature publicity shot. Photographer unknown. *(University of Nevada, Las Vegas Special Collections Library)*

shot. In the early 1960s, as Red Skelton was performing in the Copa Room, a powerful thunderstorm struck Las Vegas. The seventy-mile-an-hour winds knocked out the power for a time along the Strip. Yet, Skelton continued on after asking patrons "to bring the candles from their tables forward and put them around the edge of the stage, like footlights, and he kept the show going." Freeman called English to come photograph the scene. "The next morning," according to English, "it was on the front page of the *Los Angeles Mirror*, two or three columns, with the caption, 'The Show Must Go On.'"[104]

Freeman's most famous publicity stunt, indeed the widely-acknowledged "greatest" Las Vegas publicity stunt, involved the Sands swimming pool in 1953. *Guys and Dolls*, the popular Broadway musical, featured a song about a "floating crap game," and, according to Don Payne, Freeman decided to have the Sands's version of a floating craps game. After having a real craps table placed in the pool, Freeman "found some patrons and costumed the stickmen in their eyeshades and arm garters and took everyone out to the pool to shoot the photo." Payne argued that because it got worldwide exposure "It became a signature photo for Las Vegas." Frank Wright, the former curator of the Nevada State Museum and Historical Society agreed: "It's one of those icon photographs; something catchy that captured American imaginations."[105] It is still widely reprinted. For example, it is on the cover of David Schwartz's 2003 *Suburban Xanadu* , a history of postwar Las Vegas.

Al Freeman's great success as a publicist and his frenetic work pace are all the more remarkable because he dealt with health challenges throughout his two decades at the Sands. During World War II, in addition to being wounded, Freeman suffered from "pneumonia, snowblindness, and trenchfeet all at the same time" ailments which may have contributed to his frequent hospitalizations in the 1950s. In August 1957, Freeman spent five days in an oxygen tent at Rose de Lima Hospital in Henderson. He explained he had "entered the hospital . . . to clear up a lung infection he had suffered in combat in Italy."[106] It is more likely, however, that his stay in the hospital was a consequence of his observation of an atomic bomb test. On July 5, 1957, the Atomic Energy Commission detonated, according to *The New York Times*, "the most powerful of the fifty-two atomic explosions set off on this continent since 1945." Freeman reported from one of the observation trenches, "the fireball seemed right on top of us. There were three seconds of light from the flash. Then we were enveloped in dust."[107] Within a month Freeman was in an oxygen tent. He probably was suffering from particulate pneumonitis. After the collapse of the World Trade Center twin towers in New York on September 11, 2001, those exposed to the dust reported symptoms of the ailment, like Freeman in 1957, about a month after the collapse.[108]

Freeman was also almost killed in an automobile accident, one that left him in great pain for over a year. On August 27, 1960, Freeman, David Ormont, president of Terminal-Hudson Electronics Corporation of New York, and Bernard North, chief engineer at the Sands Hotel, accepted an invitation from Jack Entratter to drive to Lake Mead for a cruise. On the way, Entratter ran a stop sign and collided with another vehicle. Ormont died in the accident and the others were taken to a hospital with various injuries. Freeman had head lacerations requiring "several sutures" and spent several weeks at home recovering. After returning to work, he endured continuing headaches. He later learned that the accident had shattered his supraorbital nerve requiring doctors at a Los Angeles hospital "to put needles into my eye and up into the

forehead bone each day."[109] Most important, he suffered from heart disease from the time he arrived at the Sands. When the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* reported his death on August 30, 1972, it noted "Freeman had a 20-year history of heart trouble and an open bottle of medicine was found in the apartment, a coroner's spokesman said."[110]

In reporting his death, the Las Vegas newspapers lauded the career of the great publicist. The *Review-Journal* contended that "aside from helping the Sands become one of the most famous establishments ever, Freeman also made vast contributions to building the image of Las Vegas. He alone was largely responsible for bringing in hundreds of thousands of tourists to boost the local economy." His fellow publicists said he was "responsible for the greatest publicity scores this town has ever known."[111]

Perhaps in 1972, the *Las Vegas Review Journal* was correct in adding that Freeman was "never accorded the recognition he deserved," but that is no longer true. Over time, the most admiring assessments of Freeman's abilities have continued to come from those who knew his business best, fellow publicists. They admired Freeman not because he was more innovative than they had been. Other successful publicists also had crafted a variety of publicity stunts and had worked hard at developing good relations with the print and electronic media. It was more a matter, in their minds, that Freeman had been the most successful in exploiting those tools. Dick Odessky, in his memoir *Fly on the Wall: Recollections of Las Vegas' Good Old, Bad Old Days*, said that Freeman was "the uncrowned king of Las Vegas publicists."[112] Bill Willard, in an article on the great Las Vegas publicists, called Freeman "the big daddy of all Las Vegas Strip publicists."[113] In a 2005 interview, Harvey Diederich, another gifted publicist of the 1950s and 1960s, concluded that Freeman "was a pro and a brilliant, brilliant press agent."[114] The plaudits truly were earned. Freeman set the standard for how a publicist could make a property and a city an attractive place for tourists. He successfully sold the Sands and his town as places of world-class entertainment, exciting gambling, and wonderful resort facilities, while defending those images by battling efforts to portray Las Vegas as a sinful place run by gangsters.

NOTES

[1]"An Unfrumptious Wedding," *Time* (5 October 1953), 45 and *Chicago Daily Tribune* (18 January 1955), 6.

[2]Colin McKinley, "Here's the Latest from Fabulous Las Vegas . . . ," *Nevadan* (11 March 1990), 5T.

[3]*The Portsmouth* [New Hampshire] *Herald* (2 October 1953), 9; "Unfrumptious Wedding," 45.

[4]*Las Vegas Sun* (25 September 1953), 2.

[5]"Unfrumptious Wedding," 45; *Los Angeles Times* (25 September 1953), 1.

[6]See, for example, *The Charleston* [West Virginia] *Gazette* (25 September 1953), 22; *Independent* [Long Beach, California] (25 September 1953), 2; *San Mateo* [California] *Times* (25 September 1953), 1.

[7]*Las Vegas Sun* (30 August 1972), 4; (31 August 1972), 6; *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (30 August 1972), 3.

[8]Freeman's account, Box 4, Folder 1, Sands Collection, Special Collections, UNLV Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas (cited hereafter as Sands Collection); *Independent* (20 July 1952), 34-A; *The New York Times* (12 March 1971), 40.

[9]George Ross column, *Ironwood* [Michigan] *Daily Globe* (14 September 1939), 4; Dale Harrison column, *Iowa City Press-Citizen* (4 April 1941), 4.

[10]*The New York Times* (13 September 1944), 21.

[11]*Iowa City Press-Citizen* (23 October 1941), 4.

[12]*Independent* (20 July 1952), 34-A.

[13]Jim Seagrave, interview by author, 1 April 2006, 17.

[14]Freeman's account, Box 4, Folder 1, Sands Collection.

[15]*The Delta Democrat-Times* [Greenville, Miss.] (26 December 1952), 4.

[16]*Long Beach* [California] *Press-Telegram* (25 December 1952), B-8.

[17]*New York Telegraph* (20 December 1952), Box 63, Sands Collection.

[18]See, for example, Box 7, Folder 1, Sands Collection.

[19]Dixon Gayer to Al Freeman, 19 August 1960, and Al Freeman to Dixon Gayer, 22 August 1960, Box 7, Folder 1, Sands Collection.

[20]Vic Befera to Al Freeman, 4 April 1964, Box 4, Folder 7, Sands Collection.

[21]Barney Glazer to Al Freeman and Jack Entratter, 19 March 1960, and Al Freeman to Barney Glazer, 22 March 1960, Box 1, Folder 5, Sands Collection.

[22]Harvey Diederich, interview by author, 10 August 2005, 6.

[23]Article draft and a clipping of the UPI story in the Jeannette, Pennsylvania, *News-Dispatch* (27 January 1959), Box 65, Sands Collection.

[24]Louis J. Wolf to Al Freeman, 21 June 1957, Box 4, Folder 1, Sands Collection.

[25]Dick Odessky, *Fly on the Wall: Recollections of Las Vegas' Good Old, Bad Old Days* (Las Vegas: Huntington Press Publishing, 1999), 86.

[26]Val Peterson to Al Freeman, 14 March 1955, Box 49, Folder 3, Sands Collection.

[27]*The New York Times* (17 April 1955), 42; (5 May 1955), 19.

[28]Guest list, 25 April 1955, Box 49, Folder 3, Sands Collection.

[29]Al Freeman to Jack Entratter, 4 May 1955, Box 49, Folder 3, Sands Collection.

[30]*Sands Times* (July 1955), 1; Jake Freedman to Sands Reservations, 26 April 1955, Box 49, Folder 3, Sands Collection.

[31]Arthur A. De Titta to Al Freeman, 3 May 1955; Loudon Wainwright to Al Freeman, 11 May 1955; Gladwin Hill to Al Freeman, 8 May 1955, Box 49, Folder 3, Sands Collection.

[32]Al Freeman to Jack Entratter, 11 May, 1955, Box 49, Folder 3, Sands Collection.

[33]Box 49, Folder 1, Sands Collection; Al Freeman to Jack Entratter, 3 January 1957; Jerry Gordon to Al Freeman, 5, January 1957, Box 65, Sands Collection.

[34]Richard Kollmar to Al Freeman, 5, 14 July 1955; Al Freeman to Dick Kollmar, 23 July 1955, Box 49, Folder 4, Sands Collection.

[35]"Breakfast with Dorothy and Dick," 31 August 1955, audio tape, Box 60, Sands Collection.

[36]Box 50, Folders 2 and 7; Box 51, Folders 5 and 6, Sands Collection.

[37]Al Freeman to All Departments, 15 June 1970, Box 50, Folder 2, Sands Collection.

[38]Al Freeman to Jack Entratter, 29 March 1966, Box 49, Folder 1, Sands Collection.

[39]"Wide, Wide World," NBC-TV, 4 December 1955, 60-64, 64a, Box 51, Folder 8, Sands Collection.

[40]Box 1, Folder 5, Sands Collection.

[41]Situation Report on "Las Vegas Spectacular," 26 October 1957, Box 49, Folder 8, Sands Collection, *The NewYork Times* (10 November 1957), 158; (18 November 1957), 55.

[42]Box 51, Folder 7, Sands Collection.

[43]Mike Weatherford, *Cult Vegas: The Weirdest! The Wildest! The Swingin'est Town on Earth!* (Las Vegas: Huntington Press, 2001), 208.

[44]*Variety* (8 February 1956), *Variety's Film Reviews*, vol. 10 (New York: R.R. Bowker, 1983), n. p.; *The New York Times* (14 March 1956), 39.

[45]*The New York Times* (December 22, 1960), 18; *Bridgeport* [Connecticut] *Telegram* (21 April 1961), 23; *Pasadena* [California] *Independent* (28 December 1960), 11.

[46]*New York Times* (11 August 1960), 19, (14 August 1960), 11; Whitney Balliett, "The Current Cinema," *New Yorker* (20 August, 1960), 72; Margaret Harford quoted in Gene Ringgold and Clifford McCarty, *The Films of Frank Sinatra* (New York: The Citadel Press, 1971), 167.

[47]*Las Vegas Review-Journal* (21 February 1956), 1.

[48]Box 50, Folder 10, Sands Collection; *Sands Times* (April 1956), 1-3.

[49]*Ibid.*

[50]*Sands Times* (April 1956) 1.

[51]*Las Vegas Sun* (22 February 1956), 1.

[52]See, for example, *Zanesville* [Ohio] *Signal* (21 February 1956), 7; *Post-Standard* [Syracuse, New York] (21 February 1956), 12.

[53]*Los Angeles Times* (22 February 1956), 20.

[54]Al Lesner to Al Freeman, no date, Box 65, Sands Collection.

[55]Weatherford, *Cult Vegas*, 147.

[56]Robert Legare, quoted in Anthony Summers and Robbyn Swan, *Sinatra: The Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 245.

[57]David G. Schwartz, *Suburban Xanadu: The Casino Resort on the Las Vegas Strip and Beyond* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 126.

[58]Max Rudin, "Fly Me to the Moon: Reflections on the Rat Pack," *American Heritage* 49, 8 (1998), 54.

[59]Earl Wilson, *The Show Business Nobody Knows* (Chicago: Cowles Book Company, Inc., 1971), 32.

[60]*Los Angeles Times* (8 February 1960), C10.

[61]*Las Vegas Sun* (19 January 1960), 5.

[62]*Ibid.* (22 February 1960), 4.

[63]*Ibid.* (1 February 1960), 1.

[64]*Ibid.* (30 January 1960), 1.

[65]Carl Barschdorf, interview by author, 10 May 2007, p. 14; Weatherford, *Cult Vegas*, 20.

[66]*Las Vegas Sun* (3 August 1960), 2.

[67]*Ibid.*, 1.

[68]Freeman reported to Entratter in May 1957 that Thomas had appeared in 161 shows at the Sands, "a record for Las Vegas entertainers." Al Freeman to Jack Entratter, 7 May 1957, Box 7, Folder 2, Sands Collection.

[69]*Ibid.*

[70]Box 51, Folder 4, Sands Collection.

[71]Al Freeman to Jack Entratter, 25 February 1960; Clifton W. Cassidy, Jr., to Al Freeman, 23 February 1960, Box 1, Folder 5, Sands Collection.

[72]Peter Michel, "Night Club Las Vegas," *University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Libraries 2001 Annual Report*, Barbara Stevenson, ed., 10.

[73]Box 23, Folders 2 and 10, Sands Collection.

[74]Promotion Committee meeting minutes, Box 46, Folder 8 and Box 47, Folders 9 and 10, Sands Collection.

[75]*Ibid.*, 6 November 1961, Box 47, Folder 9.

[76]*Ibid* , 2, 16 February 1961.

[77]*Ibid.*, 2 February 2, 1961, 3.

[78]John L. Smith, "The Ghost of Ben Siegel," in *Players: The Men Who Made Las Vegas*, Jack Sheehan, ed. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1997), 85; Robert Lacey, *Little Man: Meyer Lansky and the Gangster Life* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1991), 152-156.

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[81]Kefauver Committee Interim Report no. 3, 1 May 1951, parts 1 and 2, http://www.onewal.com/kef3.html and http://www.onewal.com/kef3b.html (accessed 22 May 2007).

[82]Lee Bernstein, *The Greatest Menace: Organized Crime in Cold War America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), 62.

[83]David G. Schwartz, *Cutting the Wire: Gambling Prohibition and the Internet* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2005), 85.

[84]*Nevada State Journal* (20 August 1961), 6.

[85]"How Wicked Is Vegas?" *Saturday Evening Post* (11 November 1961), 18.

[86]*Oakland Tribune* (12 January 1950), 1.

[87]Dan Fowler, "What Price Gambling in Nevada?" *Look* (15 June 1954), 50, 52.

[88]Fred J. Cook, "Gambling, Inc.: Treasure Chest of the Underworld," *The Nation* (22 October 1960), 301.

[89]Irving Shulman, *The Big Brokers* (1951); Richard Foster, *Blonde and Beautiful* (1955); Jack Waer, *Murder in Las Vegas* (1955); William R. Cox, "Las Vegas Trap," in *The Hardboiled Lineup*, Harry Widman, ed. (1956); W.T. Ballard, *Chance Elson* (1958); Steve Fisher, *No House Limit* (1958); and John D. McDonald, *The Only Girl in the Game* (1960).

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[91]*Las Vegas Shakedown*, directed by Sidney Salkow, 1955.

[92]Promotion Committee meeting minutes, 16 February 1961, 36, 38, Box 47, Folder 9, Sands Collection.

[93]*Ibid.*, 39.

[94]*Los Angeles Times* (19 April 1961), B5.

[95]*Reno Evening Gazette* (3 April 1961), 1.

[96]*Independent* (4 April 1961), 1.

[97]Paul Mosher to Al Freeman, 6 June 1970; Al Freeman to Al Benedict and Jack Entratter, 7 July 1970, Box 51, Folder 1.

[98]Don Payne, interview by author, 2 August 2005, 10-11.

[99]Bill Willard, "Puff, the Magic Braggin'," *Nevada* (1981), 30.

[100]Barschdorf, interview, 7.

[101]McKinley, "Here's the Latest" 11 March 1990, 5T.

[102]Don English, interview, 2 August 2005, 4.

[103]*Ibid.*, 8.

[104]K. J. Evans, "Harvey Diederich," *The First 100: Portraits of the Men and Women Who Shaped Las Vegas*, A. D. Hopkins and K. J. Evans, eds., 164; Box 31, Folder 2, Sands Collection.

[105]*Las Vegas Review-Journal* (1 July 1998), p. 1D; *First 100*, p. 164; and Odessky, *Fly on the Wall*, p. 86.

[106]*Las Vegas Review-Journal* (30 August 1972), 3; Al Freeman to Hubbard Keavy, 28 September 1961, and Freeman's account, 23 June 1958, Box 39, Folder 5, Sands Collection. During his hospitalization Freeman was unable to keep down any food until fed some bread by one of the Dominican nuns. Hailing it as "angel bread," Freeman, once he recovered, organized an effort to market "Angelita's Bread," named after the sister who baked it. See Box 39, Sands Collection.

[107]*The New York Times* (5 July 1957), 1; *Long Beach* [California] *Press-Telegram* (5 July 1957), A7.

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[110]*Las Vegas Review-Journal* (30 August 1972), 3.

[111]*Ibid.*, (31 August 1972), 4, (30 August 1972), 3.

[112]Odessky, *Fly on the Wall*, 85.

[113]Willard, "Puff, the Magic Braggin'," 32.

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Notes & Documents

The Manx in Nevada: Leaving "The Dear Little Isle of Man"

RONALD M. JAMES

The tiny Isle of Man has had a peculiar past with its own unusual manifestation in Nevada history. Rising from the Irish Sea between Ireland and Wales, the island was colonized by Gaelic speakers in the last half of the first millennium, making its inhabitants close linguistic relatives of the Irish and the Highland Scots and more distantly of the Brythonic-speaking Celts, the Welsh, Cornish, and the Bretons of France. Viking warlords controlled Man in the ninth century, instituting a unique brand of democracy that survives to this day. The island was known for lead, zinc, and silver mines, but its economy depended mostly on agriculture and fishing. Although the island owes allegiance to the English crown, it stands apart from the United Kingdom.[1] Man's tailless Manx cats are well known, but a limited human population of roughly sixty thousand in the nineteenth century made immigrants from the island rare. Although unemployment drove people to seek opportunities off the island, love for "The Dear Little

Ronald M. James, historian and folklorist, is the Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer, having administered the agency since 1983. He wishes to thank Mimi Patrick of Gold Hill, Nevada, a fourth generation descendant of Manx immigrants, who made voluminous records available to him and donated images for use in this article. Digital copies of her collection of historical photographs are available at the Nevada Historical Society. The author is grateful for Ms. Patrick's assistance and for her longtime commitment to the promotion of Nevada history and its resources. Part of this article is an adaptation of an entry by the author for the Online Nevada Encyclopedia at www.onlinenevada.org.

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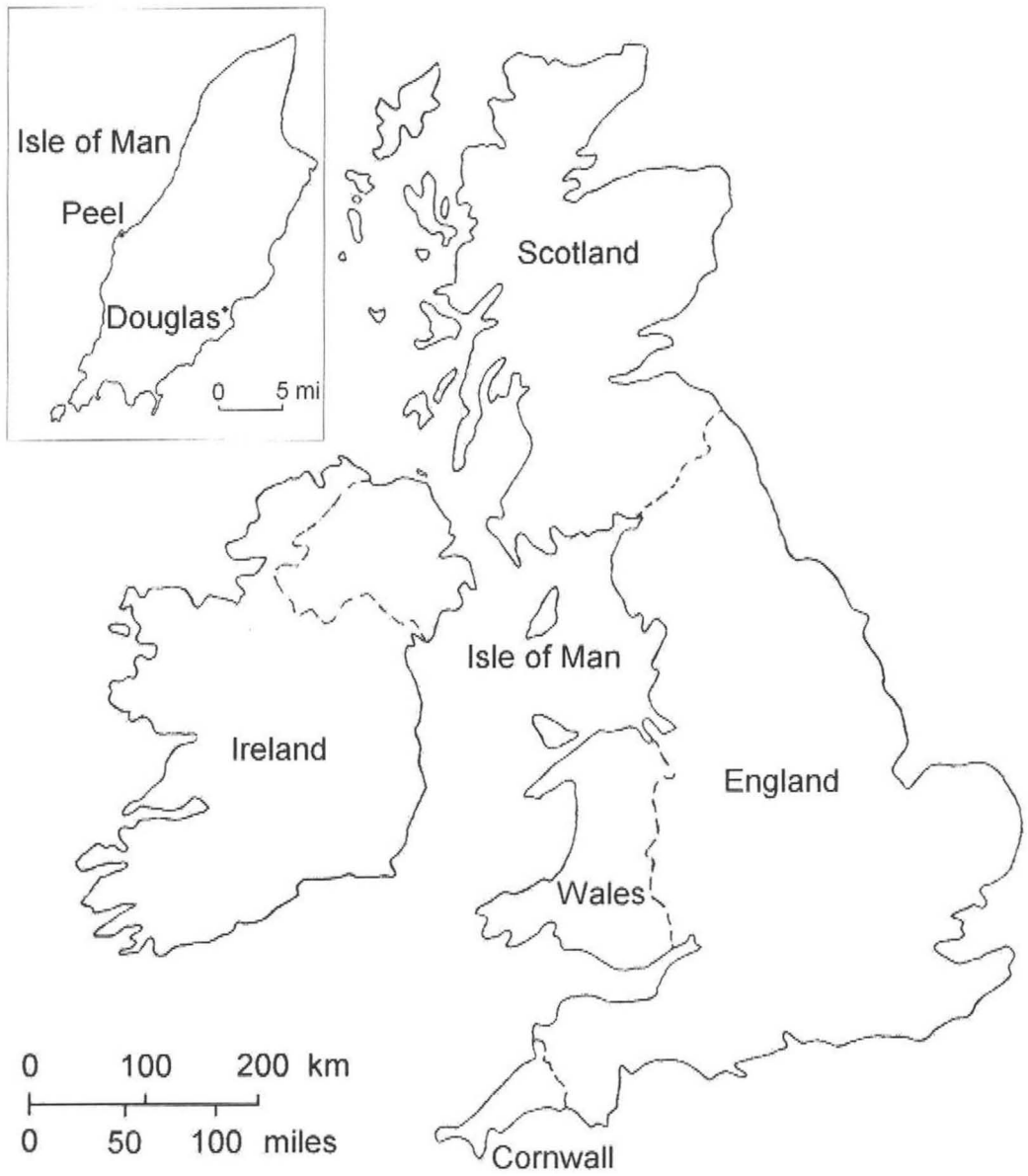


The Isle of Man rises from the Irish Sea between Ireland and England. *(Map by Ronald James)*

Isle of Man,"—"*Ellan Mannin Veg Veen*," as it is said in Manx Gaelic—made departing a painful thing for many.[2]

A search of the Nevada Online Census Database at www.nevadaculture.org reveals eighty hits between 1860 and 1920 for people who listed the island as their place of birth.[3] Five of these people appear more than once, for a total of seventy-five. With children, the Manx and their first-generation descendants can be counted as ninety-eight. This is not an overwhelming number. Chileans, Russians, Croatians, Finns, and any number of other groups with modest representation at the time were more numerous. In fact, of the six Celtic nations, Man ranks fifth—after Ireland, Cornwall, Scotland, and Wales—for the number of immigrants to Nevada. Among the Celts in the state, the Manx outnumbered only the Bretons.[4] In spite of their scarcity, natives of the Isle of Man had a significant effect on Nevada. In addition, the immigrants serve to demonstrate how

a handful of people could work together to carve out a political and economic niche while providing a conduit for further migration.

The vast majority of Manx in Nevada arrived after 1860 and before the turn of the century. The census hints at chain migration, the process of immigrants attracting fellow countrymen and women to opportunities and places. Not surprisingly, most Manx who came to Nevada were miners. As Ann Orlov points out in the *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, miners from Man, "except for those attracted by the California gold rush, came . . . a few decades later as Manx mines began to give out."[5] In other words, the Manx began coming to North America beginning in the 1870s, settling among other places, in Mineral Point, Wisconsin, which was known for its rich mines. Both the 1870 and 1880 manuscript censuses document an uneven distribution of the Manx in Nevada, and these clusters suggest that immigrants were identifying specific locations as gathering points.

During the 1870s and 1880s, Virginia City and Storey County were natural places for people of any origin to gather, but other smaller, communities attracted more than their fair share of Manx. In 1870, there were eighteen Manx in Nevada, and most were evenly distributed between Storey and White Pine counties. At the time, excitement centered on the new silver strikes around White Pine's Hamilton and Treasure Hill, which had attracted attention throughout the eastern part of the state. It is no surprise that Manx immigrants settled in that area.[6] Unfortunately, the scarcity of these people prohibits meaningful statistical analysis. All that can be said reliably of the group is that most were men and miners.

Because of the failure of mines on the Isle of Man, the 1870s proved to be the most dynamic period for Manx immigration to Nevada. At the end of the decade, the federal census recorded fifty-one of these immigrants, only ten of whom were living in heavily populated Storey County. Twelve men, all but one a miner, worked in Candelaria in Esmeralda County. In Eureka County, most of the twenty Manx, again all but one a miner, were clustered in Fish Creek Valley and Prospect Mountain to the south of Eureka. A handful of others were scattered throughout the county (Table 1).

TABLE 1
Population of Manx in Nevada (1880)

Place	*Total Population*	*Manx Population*	*Manx as percentage of total population*
Statewide	62,256	51	0.08
Esmeralda County	3,218	13	0.4
Eureka County	7,073	20	0.3
Storey County	16,014	10	0.06%
Other counties	35,951	8	0.02%

Source: Nevada Online Census Database

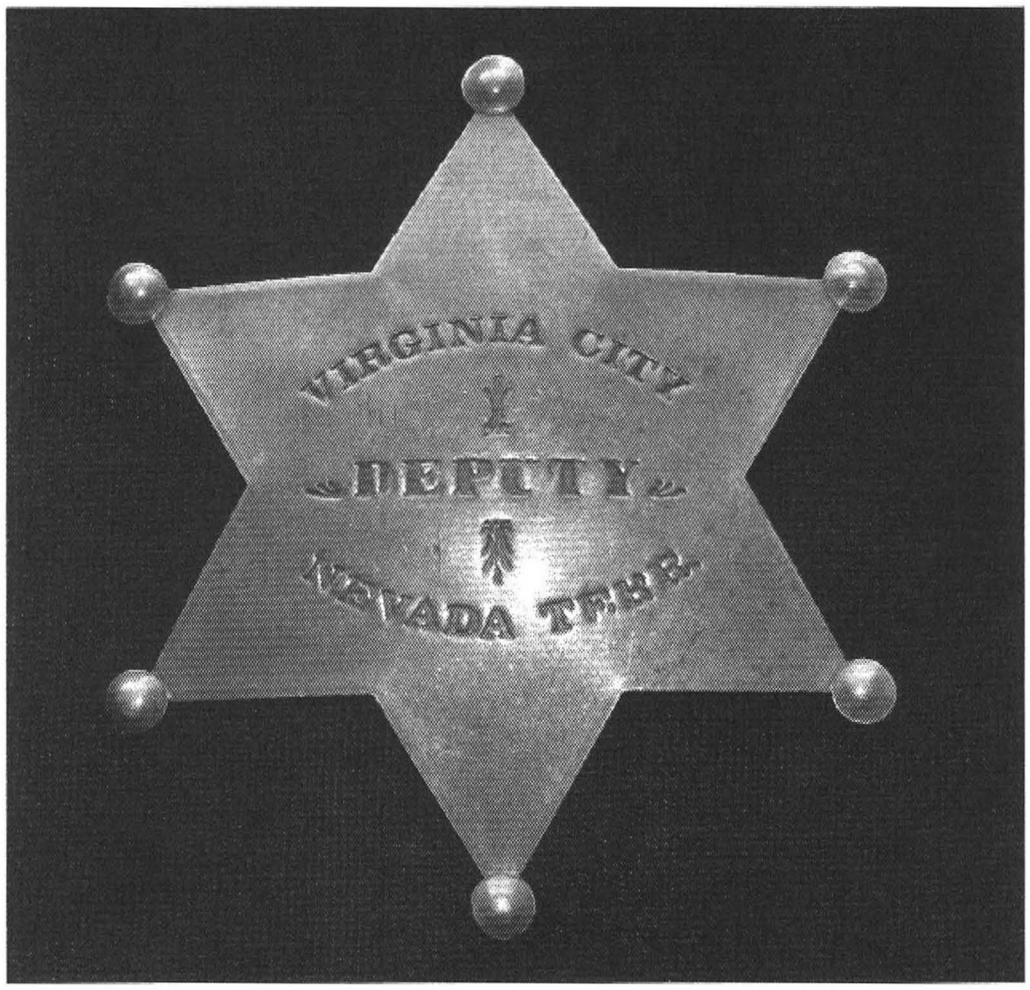
Table 1 shows the uneven distribution of Manx immigrants in 1880. The Manx were still too few for reliable statistical analysis. Nevertheless, there is evidence of clustering, underscored by the fact that the 1880 census recorded 753 people living in Candelaria, of whom twelve, or nearly 2 percent of the community, were Manx. The small mining camp had sprung into existence only four years before the census, and peaked shortly after it, but for some reason lost to history, it became a magnet for a disproportionate number of Manx in 1880.[7] The statistical profile in Eureka County is even more remarkable. Only 179 people lived on Prospect Mountain and in nearby Fish Creek Valley. Thirteen, or more than 7 percent of them, were Manx. Clusters like these apparently resulted from group decisions to migrate to specific places. By moving to less-populated areas, a few Manx could become an important part of the community, where in a larger place they would have been lost in the mix of diverse immigrants and North Americans.

Perhaps also as a group decision, the Manx left as quickly as they arrived. The 1900 census records only two immigrants from the Isle of Man. Those documented in 1880, mostly single miners, had apparently left the state looking for other opportunities. These were the restless strangers that the Nevada historian Wilbur Shepperson described, immigrants who came to the state looking for the chance to make money, then left when the failing mines and harsh landscape proved too unforgiving.[8]

The issue of gender also deserves mention in regard to Manx immigrants. Ethnic groups arrived in Nevada with varying ratios of men to women. Reflecting an international trend, Irish men and women came to Nevada in nearly equal numbers. The same can generally be said of Germans. Not surprisingly given prejudicial laws, Chinese men far outnumbered Chinese women in the West, and so can serve as the extreme examples of the distribution of the two genders. Of the Celtic groups, the Scots and Welsh tended to immigrate to Nevada with something of a gender balance, but Cornish men—usually miners—far outnumbered Cornish women. The Manx followed the Cornish pattern, sending far more men, who were, again, often employed in mining.[9]

Although the Comstock did not attract the largest number of Manx immigrants, that mining district was the location of one of the more permanent and important expressions of Manx ethnicity in Nevada. The island's immigration to the area was first documented in the 1860 federal census of western Utah. Four Manx appear in that record. Two are clearly brothers and the other two may also have been brothers, but they resided in different communities. Three of these young men lived in Carson Valley, where they worked at a mill. Because of the location and early date, the mill likely processed lumber rather than ore. The fourth Manx immigrant was a miner living in Silver City.

That same year, Thomas and Robert Gracey arrived, coming from Downieville, California, to serve as volunteers during the Pyramid Lake War. The Gracey brothers, twenty-one and eighteen years old, answered the call in response to news of



A brass badge for the Storey County office of deputy assessor, Nevada Territory, was worn by one of the Gracey brothers, immigrants from the Isle of Man. Photograph by Ronald M. James. *(Artifact courtesy of descendant Mimi Patrick)*

the first battle of the war, which proved a total defeat of the attacking force from Virginia City. The second battle, which resulted in the Northern Paiutes retreating into the desert north of Pyramid Lake, ended the conflict. In a 1911 recollection of the events, Robert Gracey noted that he knew many of the people who came from Downieville to Virginia City, including Dr. E. C. Bryant, the first husband of Marie Louise Hungerford, who later married the Bonanza king John Mackay. Coincidentally, Gracey also noted that he knew Mackay in Downieville as well as Major Daniel R. Hungerford, the father of Marie Louise.[10]

The Gracey brothers stayed in Virginia City to help build the community into an internationally famous capital of mining. Perhaps because they were moving between Nevada and California, the census did not record their presence in 1860. Beginning in the territorial period, 1861-64, Thomas Gracey held public office including Storey County assessor and Virginia City constable. In 1875, he was in charge of Storey County's 1875 state census. In the 1860s and 1870s, the brothers owned several prestigious saloons, placing them at the core of business

and society in Virginia City.[11] Understanding the Comstock's opportunities, they encouraged friends and relatives to immigrate. Eventually, their mother, their Manx wives, and their sister and her Manx husband all called Virginia City home. The way the Gracey family settled and grew reveals a great deal about the immigrant experience.[12]

Thomas Gracey was born in the Manx port of Peel in 1839. His brother, Robert, was three years younger. They were in California at least by 1859, when they were twenty and seventeen, respectively. Naturalization papers indicate that Robert became a citizen by 1866. Other documents indicate that Thomas was a Freemason. The family had attended the Anglican Church in Man, and so they generally attended the Episcopal Church in Virginia City.[13]

On June 22, 1870, the census enumerator recorded a household, which included Thomas (age thirty-one) and Robert Gracey (age twenty-eight) and Emma, their younger sister (age twenty-one), as well as fellow Manx immigrant Edward Corris (age twenty-three). Three months later an enumerator recorded Robert as living apart from the others. It is, nevertheless, significant that the three siblings had been living together with a man named Corris, a last name shared by Thomas Gracey's future wife.

Robert Gracey was married in St. Nicolas Church, Liverpool, to Manx immigrant Theresa Keig in 1872 during one of his many trips home. The marriage certificate identifies him as a thirty-year-old ship's steward, the occupation, no doubt, which paid his way across the Atlantic. At age twenty-two, Theresa was listed as a spinster. Robert's mother, Catherine Gracey, and Robert Keig, also of the Isle of Man, were witnesses. At some point, Catherine, the family matriarch, also immigrated to Virginia City. By the time she died in 1899 at the age of eighty-six, however, she had returned to her dear little isle.

Thomas married Elizabeth Corris in 1873. He was thirty-four and she was twenty-three. They had at least two children. Her last name recalls the name of the man who was living with the Graceys during the 1870 census, and perhaps they were brother and sister.

By 1871, Emma Gracey had married Thomas Keig from the Isle of Man, with whom she was to have at least five children. It is likely that he was related to Theresa Keig, the wife of Robert Gracey, and to Robert Keig, the witness of the wedding in Liverpool. Perhaps they were all siblings. Thomas was four years older than Emma and worked in Virginia City as a miner. The 1880 census records Emma and her family living next door to her brother Robert and his family on South A Street.

In celebration of the New Year in 1876, and in recognition of the year's importance as the nation's centennial, several Manx families gathered in Virginia City for a group baptism of six children. The Reverend T. H. McGrath of Ireland presided. He was initially a Methodist, but he left that church in 1873 to become a Unitarian. The children who were baptized included those of Emma Gracey Keig and her Manx husband, Thomas Keig, as well as those of Mr. and

Mrs. John Davis and Mr. and Mrs. Waterson. It appears, therefore, that Kate Gracey Waterson, the fourth Gracey sibling, was either visiting Virginia City or settled there for a time. The group sang traditional Manx songs and those of their new home.[14]

Sometime after 1880, Thomas Gracey gave up on the failing Comstock economy and moved to Butte, Montana, where the mining industry was on the rise. As did others, he traveled to places with people he knew, not following an industry but rather flowing with the tide. He died in Butte on August 17, 1910, at age seventy-one. His obituary appeared in Nevada newspapers, a testament to his importance in his former Comstock home.[15]

What emerges from this tangle of Graceys, Corrises, and Keigs is evidence of tightly bound neighbors who intermarried and immigrated as a group. It is also clear that travel between Virginia City and Man was relatively common despite the expense and time it took. The Gracey family returned several times to visit relatives and to marry fellow Manx.

The pattern exhibited by the Comstock Manx is distinct from those who appeared elsewhere in Nevada. While nearly all the immigrants from the Isle of Man in White Pine and Eureka counties and in Candelaria were miners, most in Virginia City were not. Wherever they were in the state, single Manx miners followed the pattern shown by their Cornish counterparts: When the mines failed, they moved on and frequently left the state. Similarly, the non-mining Manx, particularly when they married and lingered, again made choices comparable to those made by people from Cornwall; but as in the Cornish case, married Manx who remained in Nevada were a minority. Although the Manx came from a Gaelic-speaking nation, their choices involving occupation, marriage, and transience followed the non-Gaelic Cornish pattern much more than its Irish counterpart.[16]

By the turn of the century, most Manx had left Nevada following the failure of the state's mining industry in the 1880s. They never resumed their numbers or the influence they enjoyed in the nineteenth century. Still, descendants folded into the makeup of the state in ways that may never be fully understood. At least in the case of the Gracey family, it is possible to know that descendents of Robert Gracey did, in fact, remain and continue to reside in northern Nevada.

Notes

[1]R. H. Kinvig, *The Isle of Man* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1975).

[2]George Broderick, "Manx Traditional Songs and Song Fragments: II," *Béaloideas: Iris an Chumainn le Béaloideas Éireann*, 50 (1982), 26.

[3]The Nevada Online Database has more than 310,000 files for the census years 1860 through 1920. The 1890 census is not included because a warehouse fire destroyed most of those records for the entire nation. The total of Manx presented here does not consider those who listed England as their place of birth. This certainly occurred, but it was probably rare.

[4]Bretons come from the French province of Brittany. Not all Celtic groups recognize the so-called seventh Celtic nation of Galicia in northern Spain. Identifying immigrants from Brittany and Galicia is problematic, although one individual in the census did in fact claim Brittany as the place of birth. For Cornish in Nevada, see Ronald M. James, "Defining the Group: Nineteenth-Century Cornish on the North American Mining Frontier," in *Cornish Studies Two,* Philip Payton, ed. (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1994). For the other Celtic groups see Wilbur S. Shepperson, *Restless Strangers: Nevada's Immigrants and Their Interpreters* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1970); and see Ronald M. James, *The Roar and the Silence: A History of Virginia City and the Comstock Lode* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1998), 43-66.

[5]Ann Orlov, "Manx," in *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups,* Stephan Thernstrom, ed.(Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1980), 696.

[6]See Russell R. Ellliott, *The Early History of White Pine County, Nevada: 1865-1887* (M.A. thesis, University of Washington, 1938), and W. Turrentine Jackson, *Treasure Hill* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1963).

[7]Hugh A. Shamberger, *Candelaria and Its Neighbors* (Carson City: Nevada Historical Press, 1978).

[8]This is Shepperson's principal thesis in his book *Restless Strangers*. But many if not most nineteenth-century immigrants to Nevada did not follow the pattern he describes.

[9]For the analysis of gender and immigration see various articles in Ronald M. James and C. Elizabeth Raymond, *Comstock Women: The Making of a Mining Community* (Reno: University of Nevada, 1998). Analyses of specific groups can also be found in James, *Roar and Silence,* and James, "Defining the Group."

[10]"Recollections of Virginia City from May, 1860," by Robert Gracey, presented at the Twentieth Century Club on February 10, 1911. A copy, donated by Mimi Patrick of Gold Hill, is on file at the State Historic Preservation Office, which furnished a copy to the Nevada Historical Society. For the Pyramid Lake War, see Myron Angel, *Reproduction of Thompson and West's History of Nevada, 1881, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Its Prominent Men and Pioneers, introduction by David F. Myrick* (Berkeley, Calif.: Howell-North, 1958), 149-63; Ferol Egan, *Sand in a Whirlwind, The Paiute Indian War of 1860* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1985); and Sally Zanjani, *Devils Will Reign: How Nevada Began* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2006).

[11]Perhaps the Manx saloon mentioned by Wilbur Shepperson in *Restless Strangers*, 134, is a reference to the Sazarac, operated by the Gracey brothers. This was not, however, an exclusively Manx establishment, as Shepperson characterized it. Instead, it served a diverse clientele. No other Manx saloon appears to fit Shepperson's description. See Virginia City's *Territorial Enterprise* (16 September 1868), 2:6; (12 January 1869), 2:6.

[12]Another sister, Kate Gracey Waterson, settled in Benton, California, on the border with Nevada. It appears that she and her husband were also in Virginia City, but it is unclear whether their presence was to visit or live. See *Territorial Enterprise* (2 January 1876), 3:1. Material on the Gracey family comes from the private papers of Mimi Patrick, a descendant of Robert Gracey, with additional information provided by the Nevada Online Census Database at www.nevadaculture.org.

[13]This and the following information is derived from the papers made available to the author by Mimi Patrick.

[14]*Territorial Enterprise* (2 January 1876), 3:1.

[15]Newspaper clippings of unclear specific provenience in Mimi Patrick's collection clearly indicate a Nevada origin.

[16]Ronald M. James, "Erin's Daughters on the Comstock: Building Community" in James and Raymond, *Comstock Women,* and see James, "Defining the Group."

Book Reviews

Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Nevada. By Ted Floyd, Chris S. Elphick, Graham Chisholm, Kevin Mack, Robert G. Elston, Elisabeth M. Ammon, and John D. Boone (Reno and Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2007)

This may be the ultimate coffee-table book for dedicated Nevada birders, an encyclopedic volume describing the 275 species that breed in the state. But it doesn't read like an encyclopedia. Indeed, it is the most enjoyable scholarly work I have read since H. L. Mencken's *The American Language* (Knopf, 1919). The *Atlas* runs to 581 pages with appendix, bibliography, and index, and is well illustrated by Ray Nelson. It is a project of the Great Basin Bird Observatory (GBBO). The introductory paragraph to each species alone is worth the price of the book: $60. Here is the introduction to a bird known to all, the American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*): "its loud caroling is a sure sign of spring . . . early everyone with a lawn is acquainted with its entertaining routine of hunting and capturing earthworms" (400).

The *Atlas* cites distribution, habitats, and sighting records. Locator maps note where the species has been found. Introductions to my favorite birds follow: American Avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*): "With its black and white body, orange head and neck, blue legs, and oddly recurved bill, the avocet is one of our most stunning breeding shorebirds . . . its delicate beauty seems strangely out of place in the sinks, sewage ponds, and stinking seeps that it calls home" (174). Greater Roadrunner (*Geococcyx californianus*): "Perhaps the most beloved bird in the American Southwest. This large, comical bird has an undeniable mystique . . . . In the scrublands of southern Nevada the sighting of a roadrunner always elicits a smile" (210). Common Raven (*Corvus corax*): "In many cultures the common raven is considered a trickster, and now there is scientific evidence to prove it! . . . Ravens have been observed peeling identification labels off toxic waste drums, pecking holes in airplane wings, and stealing golf balls . . . ravens reflect in many ways the human spirit in Nevada: bold, quirky, resourceful, desert-loving, and rugged" (332). [Bird lovers are urged to read *Ravens in Winter* by the biologist Bernd Heinrich (1989). He describes ravens as "the most intelligent bird in the world," and suggests that ravens are "socialists" for their food sharing. Birders might also reread Poe's alliterative immortalization of "The Raven." Oh, and the Latin name, *corax*, comes from the Greek word, *korax*, croaker.] Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottus*): "The repertoire of

an individual mockingbird easily may exceed a hundred song elements, each a near-perfect transcription of the song or call of another species . . . it is [also] interesting for . . . its vigorous defense against all comers." (402). American Dipper (*Cinclus mexicanus*): "Dippers are among the most popular birds in the western United States. Their unique use of rocky streams and dare-devilish underwater foraging antics can be observed all year long, and they are not shy about displaying their considerable vocal talents" (380). Black-billed Magpie (*Pica hudsonia*): "strikingly plumaged and improbably proportioned, talkative and highly sociable" (328). Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia currucoides*): "Nevada's state bird is a thing of beauty—washed all over in azure as if a bit of sky had fallen to earth" (392).

On an ominous note, Richard Tracy, a biologist at the University of Nevada, Reno, writes in a foreword: "When Walker Lake no longer has fish (a likely outcome within the next decade), there will be no loon festival in...Hawthorne . . . [and] American white pelicans will not travel there from Anaho Island to feed" (xii). [In an e-mail, Tracy wrote that the lake water level "continues to drop at an alarming rate . . . . It is enough to bring tears to think this jewel is dying."]

About the *Atlas* authors: Floyd was project coordinator for the *Atlas* from 1999 to 2002; Elphick is a conservation biologist at the University of Connecticut; Chisholm co-founded the GBBO and was its first director; Mack, of Reno, worked on community conservation projects; Elston is cartographer for the Biological Resources Research Center at UNR; Ammon is bird-monitoring coordinator and science director at GBBO; and Boone is an assistant research professor at UNR (pp. 577-78).

Among the 398 field workers listed, some star birders of northern Nevada are the late Jack Walters, David Worley (raptors), Alan Gubanich, Bob Goodman, Rose Strickland, and Dennis Ghiglieri (pp. 550-51). Other outstanding Nevada birders can be found on the bird alert, observations, and query line: nvbirds@list.audubon.org. [No offense to Nevada birders in the south of the state, or to other good birdwatchers in the north. I just don't know them.]

Jake Highton
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The Multicultural Southwest: A Reader Celebrates Southwestern Diversity. By A. Gabriel Melendez, M. Jane Young, Patricia Moore, and Patrick Pynes (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2001)

A. Gabriel Melendez and M. Jane Young, are well credentialed in the area of American Studies. Melendez is the chair of the Department of American Studies at the University of New Mexico, and Jane Young is a folklorist in the

department. Patricia Moore and Patrick Pynes were graduate students when *The Multicultural Southwest* was compiled. The principal responsible authors remark in the introduction that they undertook this project because they "had come to the conclusion that a satisfactory reader on the Southwest was unavailable on the market" (xi). They comment on the dialogue and enjoyment they gained as they discussed these materials with the graduate students. Unfortunately, they did not produce a satisfactory reader on the Southwest because they did not unite the materials with a particular discipline in a coherent package.

They put together seven major sections with a variety of readings to support their major diversity approach. And if the purpose was to point to the diversity of the region through these readings, they succeeded well. Not only is the diversity of the region addressed, so too is a diversity of disciplines used to accomplish this fact. Poetry, sociology, history, anthropology, literary contributions, and a slew of very eclectic selections fill these pages. The publisher asserts that this is a "montage of differing perspectives demonstrating that there is no single, definitive description of the Southwest," and this is an excellent description of this work.

Cultural geography begins the collection with D. W. Meinig's definition of the Southwest, and John Chavez's well-received book *The Chicano Homeland* has an excerpt in the first section, entitled "Ethnic Angles." But a single excerpt with a historical approach only tantalizes the reader, and history beyond this single selection is missing throughout the work. The second major section is entitled "Perceptions of the Other," with "Native America" being the third major section. The sections seem to indicate that a focus will prevail, but once again the reader is disappointed. The section on perceptions does not really address how various cultures began to perceive each other, and Native American views do not address the variety of different Indian cultures. One is left wishing the editors had included some classic excerpts from Angie Debo, or from David Weber. "Hispano-Mestizo America" follows with "Borderlands America," including diverse topics such as "Lent in El Paso, Texas," by Alicia Gaspar de Alba, and "Sunday Mass" by Maria Herrera-Sobek combining with "Legal Alien," by Pat Mora. And again, one wishes they had included a discipline approach to the Borderlands and included Herbert Eugene Bolton or John Bannon.

The last two sections are entitled "Environment, Technology, and the Peoples of the Southwest" and "Making Culture: The Future Southwest." These two sections continue the approach of gathering very unusual materials to address major areas such as the environment with tales of Albuquerque and the swamp cooler.

The editors do not address each of the selections, but rather prepare the reader for the collection through an abbreviated discussion of the works to follow. For example, part one is explained in two paragraphs, while part two has a single paragraph, three has two paragraphs, four has two paragraphs, five has three paragraphs, and six and seven also have two paragraphs each. Perhaps the edi-

tors thought that their selections would speak for themselves in a coordinated fashion, but they do not. The reader of this text is left disappointed because a hodge-podge of selections does not reach the goal of creating a satisfactory reader on the Southwest.

David A. Sandoval
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Selected Letters of Bret Harte. By Gary Scharnhorst, ed. (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997)

Best known as a writer of California local color, Bret Harte introduced readers to such picturesque staples of the American West as chaos-filled mining camps, saloons populated with gamblers and bar girls, and the dusty trails of the Sierra Nevada. In addition to his own writing, Harte also served as editor of the *Overland Monthly*, a San Francisco-based literary magazine from which he mentored other writers of the American West, including Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain). Compared to the popularity he enjoyed early in his career, Harte's fame has largely waned, and he is commonly remembered for only a handful of short stories (most notably "The Luck of Roaring Camp" and "The Outcasts of Poker Flat") and for his infamous feud with Clemens. Although Harte's literary reputation may never be fully restored, Gary Scharnhorst's compilation of Harte's private letters is certainly worth a read-through, particularly for scholars and general readers interested in Harte's life and times.

Assembled with an eye toward providing a detailed portrait, Scharnhorst's *Selected Letters of Bret Harte* spans the period 1866-1902, chronicling the early years of Harte's career as editor of the *Overland Monthly* until his death in Camberley, England, in 1902. Of particular interest to scholars, previously unpublished letters are included, as well as corrections of mistakes made on earlier transcriptions of Harte's letters. For readers less familiar with Harte's life and works, Scharnhorst has included bibliographic information with each letter, allowing the general reader to follow the progression of the letters without becoming lost. Scharnhorst has arranged Harte's letters chronologically and, for better or worse, has decided to combine Harte's business correspondences with his private ones, a decision that only serves to reinforce Harte's image as a man who placed business before his craft. Not only did many of Harte's exchanges with his publisher involve asking for large advances on his publications, but Harte often also combined business with his private correspondences, particularly with Clemens and William Dean Howells, from whom Harte frequently requested favors. Had only the personal letters been included (or had they been separated from his professional correspondence), a very different portrait of Harte might have surfaced.

Nevertheless, whether in his personal or his public life, Harte emerges as an engaging and complex figure. Alternately arrogant, sarcastic, and humble, Harte proves himself to be a ruthless (if often misguided) businessman, solicitous friend, and caring family man. In letter eleven, he curtly rejects Walt Whitman's poem "Passage to India" on the grounds that it is "too long and too abstract for the hasty and material minded readers of the *Overland Monthly*" (33). Yet, in letter eighteen, Harte turns his incisive wit to comedic effect as, by way of apology for having to postpone a visit to Howells, he jokes that he will send "two sun-flattered pictures of myself. I am told by disinterested friends that they are infinitely better looking than I am" (41). Harte was also a man who was seemingly incapable of finding contentment in any one place. In his letters he complains of California's provinciality, then, after leaving it, bemoans the East Coast's snobbishness. As a member of the United States consulate in Germany and later in England, Harte has few positive remarks about Europe, always proclaiming America's over-all superiority. However, despite his complaints, he never returned to America, instead choosing to retire in England.

Scholars drawn to Harte's European letters as examples of late nineteenth century travel literature may be somewhat disappointed. In addition, scholars of the American West may also be disappointed as no letters prior to 1866, when Harte was still gathering the subject material for his stories, have been included. However, readers interested in textual scholarship and publishing in the nineteenth century will find much of value here. Meticulously edited and compiled, Scharnhorst's *Selected Letters of Bret Harte* succeeds in giving readers a glimpse into Bret Harte's life during the most active part of his literary career.

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Barbara F. Vucanovich: From Nevada to Congress, and Back Again. By Barbara F. Vucanovich and Patricia D. Cafferata (Reno and Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2005)

For more than a century, Nevada's lone seat in the United States House of Representatives was occupied by men. Although Nevada women became eligible to run for the office in 1916, only four attempted it during the next six decades. In 1982, however, the creation of Nevada's second congressional district led to a first in Nevada politics: All of the candidates—Republican, Democrat, and Libertarian—were female. The winner, Republican Barbara Vucanovich, was consistently re-elected to represent that district, which covered most of the state, until she retired in 1997. Of all the men who preceded her as Nevada's congressional representative, only the Democrat Walter Baring was re-elected

more times, serving eight terms to her seven. Congresswoman Vucanovich's popularity in Nevada has had few equals.

For this reason alone, her position in Nevada history is secure. Yet Vucanovich's full and interesting life has been larger than that one office, which she carefully relates in *Barbara F. Vucanovich: From Nevada to Congress, and Back Again,* written with her daughter Patricia Cafferata. Vucanovich was persuaded to dictate her memoirs to her daughter as a way to preserve family history for her many offspring and, in the process, has provided a tremendous resource for Nevada historians, political scientists, and enthusiasts.

Vucanovich was born in New Jersey in 1921 and spent her school years in New York, mostly in Albany. She credits her father, Major General Thomas Francis Farrell, with instilling in her the importance of "integrity, honor, loyalty, and love of country" (12). Clearly, however, her talent for electoral politics came from her mother's side of the family. Ynez White Farrell's ancestors include the first mayor of Los Angeles and an elected treasurer of Los Angeles County. Indeed, it is the women in Vucanovich's family who continue the political tradition: Cafferata was elected to the Nevada Assembly in 1980, and was subsequently elected as Nevada's first female state treasurer in 1982. Vucanovich's granddaughter Elisa Maser recently ran for the Washoe County Commission.

Like thousands of other women, Vucanovich was drawn to Nevada for "Renovation," settling into a house on Hill Street for the length of time necessary to be granted a divorce in 1949. Although she returned to her parents' home in New York, she soon came back to Nevada to marry Ken Dillon, who also had come to Reno for a divorce and decided to stay. In this regard, Vucanovich's life is very much a quintessential Nevada story.

Political activities were a vital part of Vucanovich's life in Reno from the beginning. Although reared as a Democrat, she registered as a Republican because her new husband was a Republican. She describes her involvement with the Young Turks who challenged the Washoe County Republican establishment, her work on various campaigns, and her leadership with Republican women's organizations. It was through Republican political activities that she met George Vucanovich after Dillon's sudden death in 1964. Barbara Vucanovich may not have held any public office before she ran for Congress, but she was most assuredly not a political neophyte.

During Vucanovich's first campaign, she adopted the motto "Tough Grandmother" to indicate that she "was assertive and firm in my beliefs and not afraid to express myself" (81), a theme that is continued with this book. With plain language tempered by discretion (much like many a grandmother), Vucanovich expresses her opinions about the issues of the day and her colleagues, providing rich portraits of people, processes, and places.

One of the most valuable contributions of Vucanovich's memoir is her description of the female network that was an integral, yet often unacknowledged, part of Nevada politics for much of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. Vucanovich clearly

illustrates the essential nature of women's political work with her recitation of the activities conducted by Hazel Gardella and herself during Senator Paul Laxalt's campaigns, as well as the work of the numerous women involved in Vucanovich's own campaigns and in her D.C. and district offices. Through this story, Vucanovich has made it difficult for scholars to analyze twentieth-century Nevada politics without considering the women.

Vucanovich and Cafferata recount Vucanovich's experiences through a framework of family weddings and births, using the tenure in Congress as a constant touchpoint. Although Vucanovich's experiences in Congress are an understandably large part of her memoir, this book is much more about a life in Nevada than a life in Washington. Vucanovich and Cafferata have contributed an important Nevada narrative about a woman who came to Reno for a divorce, stayed because she fell in love with a man, and left a lasting mark because she fell in love with the state.

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Storming Caesars Palace: How Black Mothers Fought Their Own War on Poverty. By Annelise Orleck (Boston: Beacon Press, 2005)

This is an important book and a great story. By placing women at the center of the story, Annelise Orleck adds a new dimension to the growing body of historical literature on the War on Poverty of the 1960s and early 1970s. Much previous work on the War on Poverty pushes women to the periphery. This scholarly disregard is unfortunate because the majority of the poor during the period were women and children. Women also often formed the leadership and rank and file of local anti-poverty efforts. That Lyndon Johnson's Office of Economic Opportunity virtually ignored their unique needs was a fundamental weakness of the program. The impoverished black women whose story Orleck tells were painfully aware of this neglect.

Storming Caesars Palace is also an important addition to the body of scholarship on Las Vegas history. While Orleck's compelling description of the migration of African Americans from the cotton south to Las Vegas will be familiar to local historians or even to students in Nevada history classes, the story will be a revelation to readers from outside Clark County. Black Las Vegans suffered from open segregation well into the 1960s. The basic sanitation and infrastructure of black neighborhoods on the city's Westside remained dilapidated for at least another decade. Orleck's work complements the efforts made by local scholars to move the history of the city away from tired legends of mafia kingpins, Elvis impersonators, and prostitutes.

The book introduces readers to genuine heroines who overcame entrenched poverty and racism to improve their community. The central character is Ruby Duncan, a native of Tallulah, Louisiana, a Mississippi Delta town that was a source of much of the black migration to Las Vegas in the 1940s and 1950s. Orleck traces the lives of Duncan and several of her compatriots from the Delta to the Mojave Desert, building a convincing case that these women ended up as welfare mothers through circumstances largely beyond their control. Little education, the virtual slavery of the plantation system, discrimination, abusive and neglectful husbands, poor health care, and limited access to birth control all shared more of the blame for their poverty than did a few bad choices. Though all agreed that life in Las Vegas was better than life in the cotton South, the Westside projects remained a tough place to rear children. Orleck also exposes the shocking cruelties and humiliations of the welfare system in the state. She draws an effective parallel between welfare handouts in Nevada and the paternalism of life on the sharecropping plantations that Duncan and her friends fled the South to escape.

The title is taken from the climax of the story. In 1971, fifteen hundred protesters from the Clark County Welfare Rights Organization marched into Caesars Palace on the Las Vegas Strip to protest recent severe cuts in welfare spending by George Miller, the Nevada state welfare director. The closing of the Strip by welfare mothers drew national attention. Actress Jane Fonda and civil-rights organizer Ralph Abernathy marched through the casino with the welfare mothers. One aspect of the story that shines a positive light on Las Vegans is the fact that the Caesars management authorized the march.

The dramatic event provides a catchy title, but most of the book addresses events before and after the 1971 marches. The extraordinary women who stormed Caesars Palace built the Clark County Welfare Rights Organization from the ground up in the late 1960s. They also created Operation Life—a nationally recognized anti-poverty effort for the city's black Westside. Primarily with federal dollars, Operation Life provided services to poor families that seemed beyond the capacity of government bureaucrats. From offices in the abandoned Cove Hotel, Operation Life offered health and dental services, childcare, job training, senior citizens programs, financial counseling, various food programs, legal services, and other projects to address the many needs of Westside families. They also marshaled money for housing projects and other community services away from the headquarters. At its peak, the program had an annual budget of more than $3 million, cobbled together from an ever changing and complex federal bureaucracy by black welfare mothers with little education. Although Operation Life's successes allowed it to survive through the early years of the Reagan Administration, cuts in federal spending on welfare and urban development programs gradually dismantled the effort through the 1980s until its final demise, during the Clinton administration.

Orleck's research is impressive. She completed extensive oral interviews with federal and state officials, local and national civil-rights activists, and

welfare-rights advocates. The compassion in her writing suggests that the author developed an intimate personal relationship with the women who created Operation Life. But Orleck gives a fair hearing those portrayed as the villains of the story, including George Miller and Governor Mike O'Callaghan, with whom she spoke before his death in 2004. The book also employs several underused local manuscript collections found at the Lied Library on the UNLV campus. Minor geographical errors may leave southern Nevada locals scratching their heads, but anyone who is interested in the history of Las Vegas should pick up a copy of this book.

William Clayson
College of Southern Nevada

Cutting the Wire: Gaming Prohibition and the Internet. By David G. Schwartz (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2005)

In 1940, the state of Nevada held a tight monopoly on legalized gambling. A reading of the extensive press coverage of Nevada's unique industry at that time is not unlike visiting a musty time capsule. Nevada was excoriated from coast to coast as the "sin state," and political leaders were quick to distance themselves from any thought of seeking to replicate the unique Nevada experiment. How times have changed. Today every state in the Union but Utah and Hawaii has a major stake in gambling; politicians eager to increase state revenues without having to raise taxes have embraced lotteries, slot machines, riverboat casinos, landlocked casinos, off-track horse-betting parlors, and even (in three states) convoluted sports parlay systems.

Beginning in 1988, the wave of gambling already engulfing the United States intensified exponentially when the United States Supreme Court ruled that Indian tribes could operate full-service casinos on their tribal lands. In the subsequent two decades, from sea to shining sea, some 223 Indian tribes now operate more than 400 casinos in twenty-eight states. This year, an estimated one-of-four adult Americans will visit a casino at least once, and nearly 200,000 retail stores in thirty-seven states and the District of Columbia will sell government-sanctioned lottery tickets totaling approximately $50 billion (state governments will realize about 31 percent of those dollars in revenue). Other gaming revenues are expected to reach $60 billion by 2010, netting state and federal governments nearly $10 billion in taxes.

Such impressive figures, David G. Schwartz argues, confirm the fact that gambling is a major component of contemporary American society. But the best is yet to come, he suggests, because projections of future gambling activity

point inexorably upward. In *Cutting the Wire* Schwartz contends that the current numbers "represent only the tip of the larger iceberg of America's apparently unquenchable desire to bet" (175). And, as his narrative clearly implies, efforts by anti-gambling pressure groups and their political allies to curtail the gambling impulse are almost certainly doomed.

This is an important book for students of American gambling because it provides an up-to-date and thoughtful interpretive history of gambling in the United States from colonial times to the present, although its major strengths rest in his exploration of the period since the Second World War II. Those interested in the formative years of the nineteenth century might also want to refer to the standard works by Ann Fabian (*Card Sharps and Bucket Shops: Gambling in Nineteenth-Century America* (1999), and Jackson Lears (*Something for Nothing: Luck in America* (2003), but Schwartz's work should become a standard bibliographical entry. Schwartz is an energetic and enterprising young historian who heads the Center for Gaming Research at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He has written in a surprisingly brief span this and two other books on the history of gambling: *Suburban Xanadu: The Casino Resort of the Las Vegas Strip* (2003) and an exhaustive survey of worldwide gambling from ancient times to the present, *Roll the Bones: The History of Gambling* (2006). Students familiar with the profound ambivalence that Americans and their policy makers have always revealed regarding the role of gambling will find nothing to argue with in Schwartz's narrative. Although the issues and themes that he develops have appeared elsewhere in the academic and popular literature, readers will find in this new study a richness of detail, a coherent synthesis, and a nuanced treatment of traditional issues that make the publication of *Cutting the Wire* an event of importance.

Schwartz focuses his extensive narrative around two major efforts that have sought to curtail gambling activities that operated beyond the purview of state and federal regulators and tax collectors. The first target was the collection of gambling syndicates that operated telegraph lines serving illegal horse parlors, such as the one romanticized in the classic 1973 film *The Sting*. Efforts by the federal government to shut down these operations actually began during the Progressive Era of the early twentieth century, shortly after the first horse wire systems appeared, but it was not until 1961 that Congress finally acted, producing the Wire Act under extreme pressure from attorney general Robert F. Kennedy. The crusading Attorney General had previously stalked the same enemy when he served as chief counsel for the anti-crime investigations of the McClellan Committee, seeking to connect the dots between rogue unions and organized crime. That Kennedy had zeroed in on a sport that had already peaked and begun a slow decline—horse racing—escaped him and his supporters at the time. It was apparent to anyone close to the sports gambling scene, however, that Kennedy was flailing a dead horse, so to speak, because the real sports gambling action was already being shifted away from eastern syndicates

to the legal sports books that operated in the grimy horse-and-turf clubs in Las Vegas. Much acclaimed initially, the Wire Act was soon marginalized, but it remained on the books. When Congress in 1974 lowered the prohibitive 10-percent federal excise tax on sports wagering to 2 percent (and ten years later to just .025 percent) Nevada casinos opened sports books because they could now operate along a small profit margin (at best, efficiently run sports books can turn a modest 5-percent profit when their expert handicappers set lines that attract equal monies on both sides of a game). In these posh new casino books, horseplayers could sit in comfortable surroundings and watch the action from tracks around the country on large television screens and not fear that a federal agent was peering over their shoulders.

A similar effort to cut the communications lines of uncontrolled gambling gained a modicum of momentum during the 1990s, when offshore internet-gambling sites began popping up in the Caribbean (and to a lesser extent in London, Mexico, and Australia), like so many mushrooms in the springtime. This time the wire was more elusive because it existed in cyberspace, but once again policy makers seemed intent on the same objective as were their predecessors in 1961: protecting legalized domestic gambling venues and the tax revenues they produced. By the dawn of the new millennium, it was estimated that each day one million Americans placed a wager online at the estimated eighteen hundred offshore cyber-betting sites; much to the consternation of legislators, those dollars were going offshore before being visited by the tax collector.

As internet gambling boomed, traditional anti-gambling moralistic themes that had been articulated as early as colonial times were once again resuscitated to condemn the new gambling scourge that knew no national boundaries. But the computer-based medium also led to new forms of criticism: Youngsters were merely a credit card and mouse click away, it was said, from losing money to faceless gambling moguls lurking in cyberspace. With the cashless system of credit cards in play, compulsive gamblers would have even fewer constraints upon their behavior than before. One of the leading opponents, Senator Jon Kyl of Arizona, claimed that it would be easy for those casually regulated companies to skate when they owed a big payoff to an American gambler (although the credibility of established sites has proved to be reliable). Behind the opponents' moralistic rhetoric, Schwartz makes clear, lay the major but seldom mentioned concern that offshore sites were beyond the reach of state and federal tax collectors; in addition, gaming operators in the United States were seeking to use the federal government to protect them from an inspired new form of competition. Since Schwartz published this book, a few spectacular arrests of internet-gambling operators have been made in American airports, with the now reborn Wire Act providing a quaint legal foundation. Attempts have also been made to forbid credit-card companies from transferring funds from American cardholders to gambling interests offshore. Thus far, however, a growing army of American online gamblers—bingo, poker, and twenty-one

players, sports punters, and horse players—have yet to be "protected" by the unfocused and generally futile efforts of the United States government to bring the internet to bay.

The notorious betting wire that Bobby Kennedy sought to silence a half-century ago has now reinvented itself in the cyberspace age. Far from being snipped, it is flourishing. Future political battles obviously remain to be fought, but the ultimate victor, as Schwartz's convincing narrative implies, is already apparent.

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