Nevada

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The *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* solicits contributions of scholarly or popular interest dealing with the following subjects: the general (e.g., the political, social, economic, constitutional) or the natural history of Nevada and the Great Basin; the literature, languages, anthropology, and archaeology of these areas; reprints of historic documents; reviews and essays concerning the historical literature of Nevada, the Great Basin, and the West.

Prospective authors should send their work to The Editor, *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly,* 1650 N. Virginia St., Reno, Nevada 89503. Papers should be typed double-spaced and sent in duplicate, along with a copy on disk (in MAC© or IBM© compatible form-WordPerfect© 5.1, 6.0, or Microsoft Word©). All manuscripts, whether articles, edited documents, or essays, should conform to the most recent edition of the University of Chicago Press *Manual of Style.* Footnotes should be typed double-spaced on separate pages and numbered consecutively. Submission guidelines are available on request. Correspondence concerning articles and essays is welcomed, and should be addressed to The Editor.

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Contents

Front Cover: The Wrangler National Finals Rodeo Fiftieth Anniversary was December 5-14, 2008. Over the past five decades, the NFR evolved from a regional event to a nationally televised sport, making the Finals and the rodeo industry big business. *(Courtesy the ProRodeo Hall of Fame)*

Book Reviews

The National Finals Rodeo
The Evolution of an Urban Entertainment Phenomenon

Leisl Carr Childers

There were no more than a handful of empty seats on any given night in the Thomas and Mack Center for the 2005 National Finals Rodeo (NFR). The packed arena on the University of Nevada, Las Vegas campus held up to 16,500 spectators for the event, which suggested the immediate popularity of the NFR in Las Vegas. Crowds of cowboys and cowgirls filled the display area outside the Thomas and Mack, and their cars spilled out into the too-small parking lot and beyond, in a line of traffic that extended west all the way to the Strip. In their hats and boots they congregated around displays of various vendors crowded into the small porch of the arena, and three miles away they packed the massive exhibition hall in Mandalay Bay. Some of this western flavor must have been reminiscent of Las Vegas as it once was, a railhead that grew into a town with numerous ranches nearby.

But the rodeo at Thomas and Mack was not the rodeo of the Old West. No prairie or pines served as a backdrop, and the livestock and horses were specially bred for their roles as athletes. In the twenty-first century, cowboys and cowgirls donned Kevlar vests, helmets, and their sponsors' logos. Barbeque and beer were still the mainstay, and boots, hats, and denim were standard attire for both competitors and spectators. So the essence remained, but the smooth organization of the events, the flawless timing of the transitions, and the polished announcer's voice indicated that, somewhere along the line, rodeo

Leisl Carr Childers is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Her work on rodeo includes curating a lobby exhibit on Gene Autry's Flying A Ranch Rodeo at the Autry National Center's Museum of the American West in Los Angeles. Funding for research on this article was provided by the Charles Redd Center at Brigham Young University.

changed from being a quaint community-sponsored event to a national professional competition. A once largely rural phenomenon had become, at the NFR, an urban entertainment industry.

The transformation of rodeo during the late twentieth century pivoted on the creation of the National Finals Rodeo. Organized in the late 1950s, the NFR reoriented the rodeo industry around a year-end championship event. From its inception, the rodeo industry tailored the Finals specifically to urban venues and urban audiences. After its birth in Dallas and a rough time in Los Angeles, Oklahoma City became the NFR's home in 1965, and for twenty years the two were intertwined. Then in 1985, the NFR moved to Las Vegas at the beckoning of the city's events planners and the casino owner Benny Binion. The NFR's transfer from Oklahoma City to Las Vegas reflected changes in the nature of tourism and the expanding urban character of rodeo. Las Vegas Events, a non-profit that promoted tourism, imported the Finals to fill a wide gap in the city's year-round events schedule and as part of reorienting the city toward entertainment tourism. Las Vegas put on boots and hats during the NFR and returned to its cowboy roots: Along with the rodeo came country music acts, major sales venues, and a host of other events that attracted a market of tourists who consumed western-themed commodities. The purse money, attendance, and media coverage available in Las Vegas increased the economic viability and fan base of the NFR and of the entire rodeo industry. In Oklahoma City, the Finals had been the most significant local event of the year, but in Las Vegas, whose industry was entertainment, the NFR became the seminal event its creators had envisioned.

ENVISIONING THE NATIONAL FINALS

The rodeo industry began in earnest at the turn of the twentieth century. The first cowboy competition had been held at Deer Trail, Colorado, in 1869, and many rural communities soon saw financial opportunity in hosting similar events. The awarding of prize money, in addition to saddles, buckles, chaps, and other tack, provided a regional draw and attracted competitors beyond areas where events were held. When combined with the celebration of Independence Day and held in conjunction with county fairs beginning in the 1880s, rodeos attracted plenty of spectators as well. Soon rodeos were scattered all over the West, from Pecos to Prescott, Cheyenne to Pendleton. William F. Cody took the idea of cowboy competition and made it a part of his national show, Buffalo Bill's Wild West, which toured major United States and European cities and popularized the idea of cowboy sport. By the time Canadian promoters organized the Calgary Stampede in the century's second decade, a North American rodeo calendar had developed. Cowboys could make a living off the ranch by competing on the rodeo circuit as well as by working long, grueling hours on

The Miller Brothers of Ponca City, Oklahoma, owned the 101 Ranch and operated a Wild West show in competition with Buffalo Bill Cody. The 101 Ranch featured both performance and competition, and showcased African American cowboy Bill Pickett. *(ProRodeo Hall of Fame)*

the range. Given a choice between the two professions, ranch hand or rodeo hand, many cowboys preferred the rodeo circuit to the daily grind on the range. By the 1950s, rodeo was big business for communities willing to host annual events and a potentially profitable venue for cowboys willing to participate.[1] For growth in the rodeo industry, the obvious avenue was to produce an event big enough to attract all the top rodeo hands with the most prize money in the country, and to hold that event in a location that could both accommodate such a large event and draw an audience big enough to support it.

Discussion of a finals rodeo had been going on since the creation of the first cowboys' association in the 1930s. The Madison Square Garden rodeo in New York, though erroneously billed as the World Series of rodeo and World Championship rodeo, functioned as a de facto finals rodeo in the 1930s and 1940s because it was held late in the year. Typically, only the top competitors attended, though any cowboy could compete if he could get there and afford the entry fee. The New York rodeo offered the richest pot of prize money of any rodeo on the cowboys' association circuit and came late enough in the year to affect the final championship standings, important qualities for a bona fide championship rodeo. However, despite its prestige among cowboys, the Madison Square Garden rodeo was not centrally located within the rodeo industry, either geographically or culturally. It was more show than competition, more akin to Hollywood than Cheyenne. A finals rodeo needed to be an event that offered big prize money, an entertaining show at the end of the year, and a seminal event within the industry.[2]

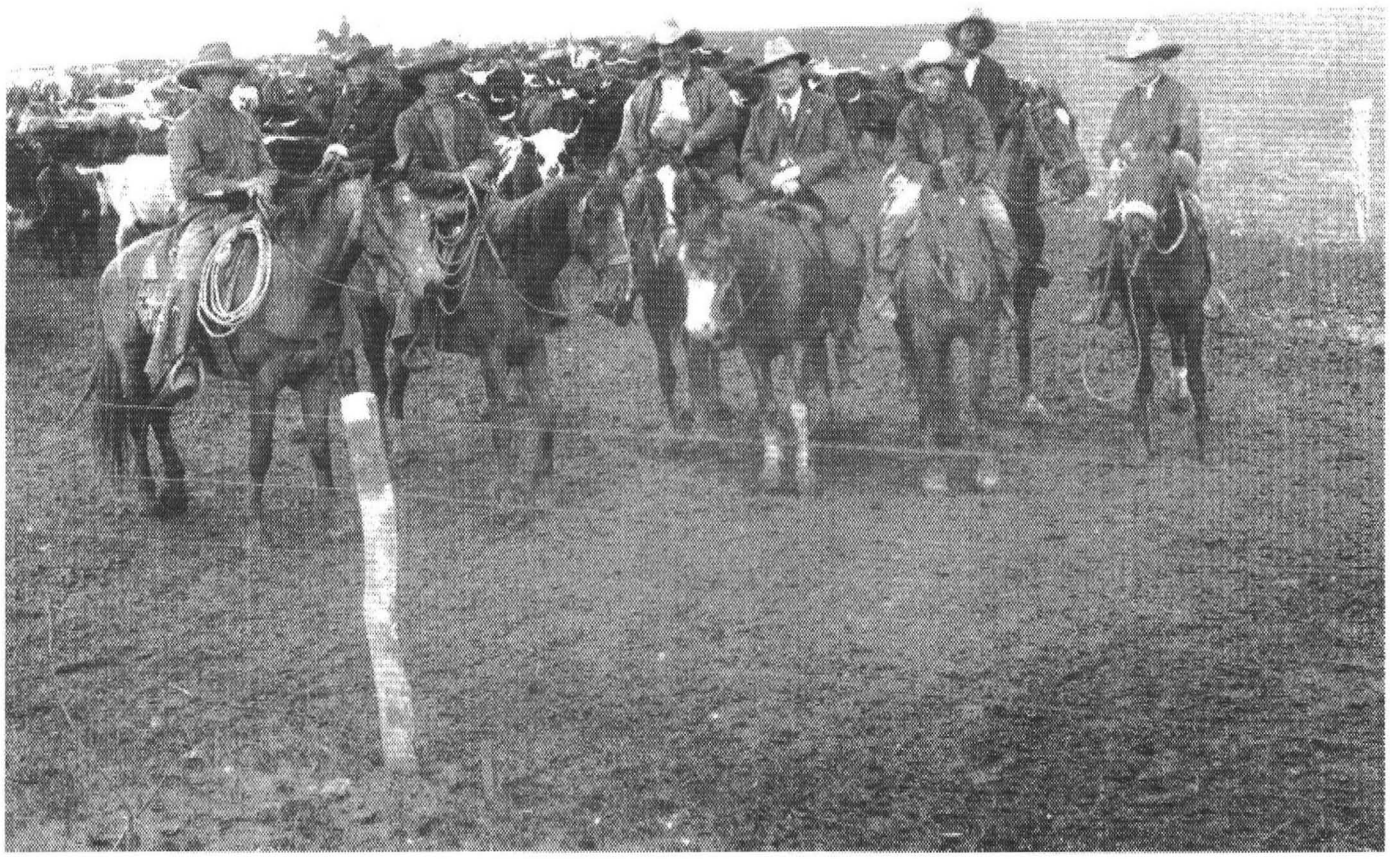
The move to establish an official year-end rodeo championship marked a significant change in rodeo association policy as the rodeo industry had consistently resisted the idea. The Madison Square Garden rodeo in New York held in late October and early November was considered the traditional season-ending rodeo, but like all rodeos held during the year, none of the competitions was featured as a season-ending finale.[3] The Rodeo Cowboys Association (RCA), the industry's governing body, named cowboy champions in each rodeo event and an all-around champion at the end of every rodeo season based on the dollar amount each competitor had won. A finals rodeo meant that not only would year-end champions be named, but there also would be a venue to choose the champions through competition instead of totaling prize money won at the end of the year.[4]

The RCA's discussion of the national finals was designed to ensure that rodeo, then one of the nation's leading spectator sports, was recognized as such. By the 1950s, other sports had culminating championships that encouraged spectators to watch either in the stands or on television: Since baseball had the World Series and hockey the Stanley Cup Final, so rodeo needed to have a national finals. A true finals rodeo would bring the rodeo community together for one culminating rodeo to determine the champion in each event, create a competition worth more in prize money and prestige than any other rodeo, and create an event big enough to draw national attention to the sport of rodeo and "improve the general status of *all* rodeo."[5]

The first participants' rodeo organization, the Cowboys Turtles Association, was formed in 1936. Rodeo competitors in New York and Boston organized against promoter William T. Johnson, protesting Johnson's withholding of the gate receipts from the pot of prize money. By 1945, the former Turtles had become the Rodeo Cowboys Association. *(ProRodeo Hall of Fame)*

The RCA, later renamed the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association, created the National Finals Rodeo in 1958 to be the World Series of rodeo.[6] Designed to draw national attention to the sport, the culminating championship rodeo was to feature the fifteen best competitors in each of the major rodeo events: Three rough-stock events, two roping events, and steer wrestling. Later, the RCA added barrel racing to allow cowgirls to participate. The rough-stock events featured cowboys attempting to ride a bull, a bareback bucking horse, or a saddled bucking horse for eight seconds, using the correct form. Competitors and spectators considered roping events the most traditional of rodeo elements. In tie-down roping, a cowboy chased a calf out of a chute, roped the calf, and dismounted to drop and tie the calf. In the other roping event, team roping, two cowboys, a header and a heeler, chased a steer out of a chute. The header roped the head of the steer and the heeler roped both of the steer's rear feet.

Bill Pickett, a famous African American cowboy of the 101 Ranch, invented the steer wrestling event in the 1910s. The competition involved a mounted cowboy jumping off his running horse onto a running steer, pulling the animal to a stop and rolling it onto its side. Pickett famously brought the steer to the ground by biting the animal's ear. Photographer unknown. *(ProRodeo Hall of Fame)*



Bill Pickett rode for the 101 Ranch brand as a regular hand in addition to competing in rodeos. He is shown here (second from right in the rear) with other range hands. Photographer unknown. *(ProRodeo Hall of Fame)*

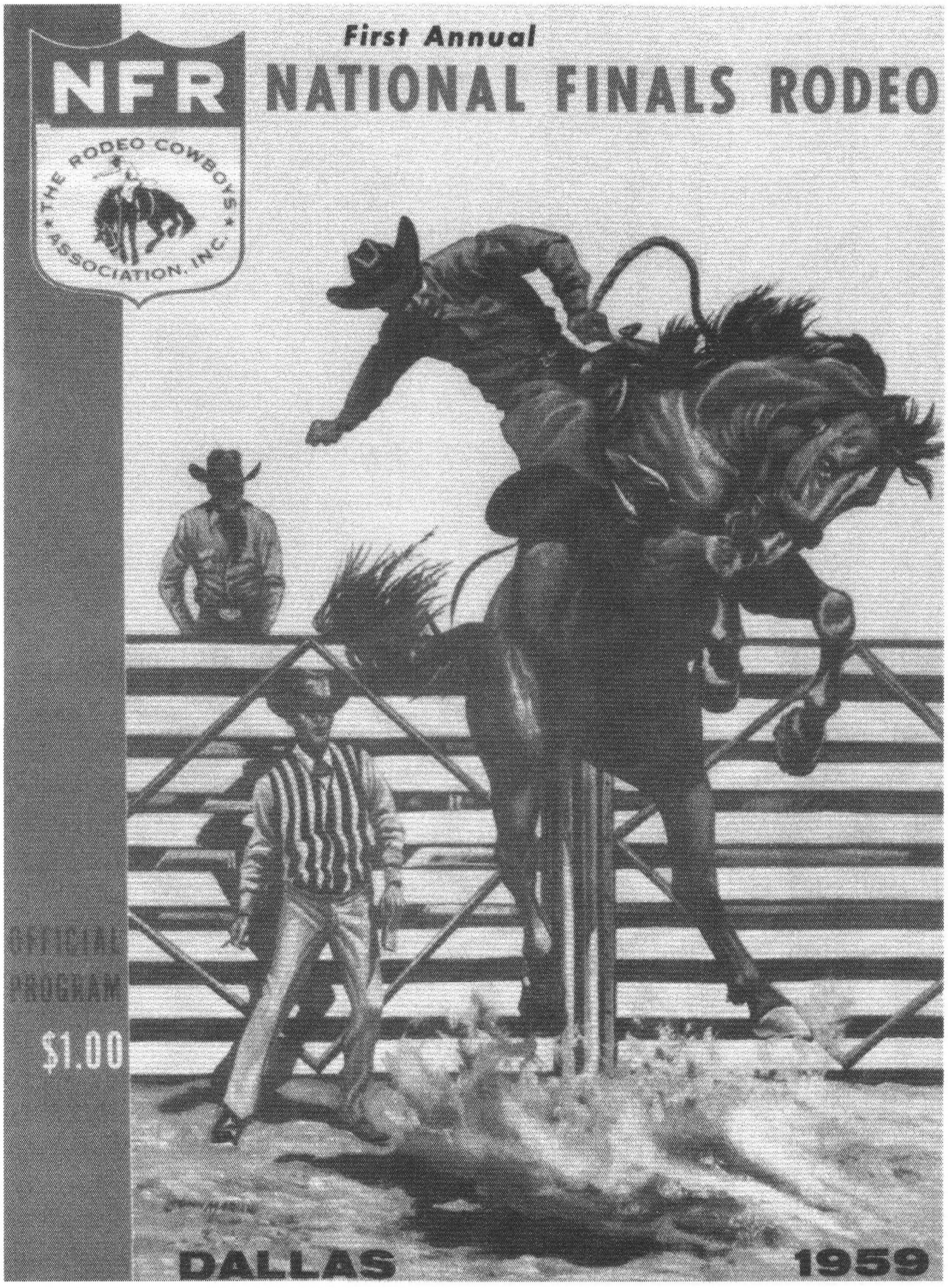
Invented by the African-American cowboy Bill Pickett in the early 1900s, steer wrestling involved a mounted cowboy jumping from his running horse onto a running steer, pulling the animal to a stop, and rolling it onto its side. Barrel racing was the only cowgirl event; women rode sprinting horses around three barrels equally spaced across the arena in a clover pattern. These seven events became standardized through competition at the Finals. (An eighth event, steer roping, similar to tie-down calf roping but with larger animals, was also held as part of the NFR, but often in a separate location.)

Unlike other rodeos, but using the earliest Madison Square Garden rodeo in New York City as a model, NFR competitors had to earn a place at the Finals. At the NFR, only the top fifteen ranked contestants were eligible to compete. Although winning an event at the finals rodeo did not guarantee competitors the world championship—still determined by the total dollars won over the course of the rodeo season in that event—the amount of money offered to the winners of each of the seven events over the ten performances at the NFR often made the difference. In addition, all major stock contractors were eligible to bring their best animals to the NFR so that no single contractor supplied the championship rodeo, but the best stock of all contractors were eligible to compete against the cowboys.[7]

The initial arrangement the RCA intended for the Finals was to hold a national championship and conduct it so as not to favor any one rodeo location over another, so that all rodeo towns would benefit. The RCA authorized the creation of the National Finals Rodeo Commission (NFRC) as a non-profit organization under its patronage to organize and promote the event in various cities that applied to host it. The NFR would be held in a different location every fourth year and late enough in the year so that it would not conflict with any other rodeo.[8] As the year's seminal rodeo event, the finals were well publicized inside and outside the rodeo industry, and organizers hoped that the host community would fully support its success.[9]

Growing Pains of the Early National Finals Rodeo

Dallas, Texas, hosted the first National Finals Rodeo at the end of December 1959, just after Christmas. With all the planning and coordination among the RCA, the stock contractors, and the Dallas State Fair Commission, the first NFR went off like a rocket in the rodeo industry. The trade magazine *Hoofs and Horns* called it not only great, but "sensational, tremendous, outstanding and beautifully organized from top to bottom." Listed among the reasons for success was that the NFR was a competition among the "world's greatest cowboys," the rodeo stock were "the best in the world," and when the best came together, the result was "atomic." The ten performances over five days were held in conjunction with the Cotton Bowl Festival Week and drew attendance from the same crowd of tourists as well as from the local community.[10]



The 1959 National Finals Rodeo program cover was the first of fifty that featured the iconic saddle-bronc event. The rodeo industry added other events over the years, but saddle-bronc riding and tie-down calf roping have remained the classic core of rodeo competition. *(ProRodeo Hall of Fame)*

By the NFR's second year, newspapers around the country covered the rodeo industry more than they had before the first true championship rodeo. The same was true of radio and television, but to a lesser degree. Yet, the prize money offered in the first two NFRs amounted to a meager $50,000, several thousand less than Madison Square Garden had offered. If the Finals were to truly take the top spot in the rodeo industry, organizers had to round up enough guaranteed prize money to be able to outdo any other rodeo. Television rights to the NFR could potentially bring a substantial amount to the RCA and the stock contractors. CBS Sports executive Tex Schramm, the future general manager of the Dallas Cowboys, bought the first television rights, boosting the prize money. Although many rodeo promoters feared that television would hurt rodeo attendance, the cash added to the pot was irresistible.[11]

After a three-year run in Dallas, the Finals moved to Los Angeles. The Los Angeles Sports Arena offered the NFR a central urban venue, but the city provided no community sponsorship or civic backing. When H. Werner Buck, the president of Show Management, Inc., brought the NFR to Los Angeles, it was out of his personal interest in rodeo, and it was purely Buck's entrepreneurship that made the NFR happen there. Although Los Angeles had good weather in December and offered shopping and entertainment along with the Finals rodeo, attendance at the Finals declined. The NFR suffered its worst attendance in 1963: Three days before the rodeo, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. The three years the Finals spent in California did not compare to its first three in Dallas.[12] Community participation had become a key to the championship rodeo's success in addition to the sale of television rights. The NFR organizers took the lesson to heart and in 1964 sought an urban host that would embrace the Finals wholeheartedly.

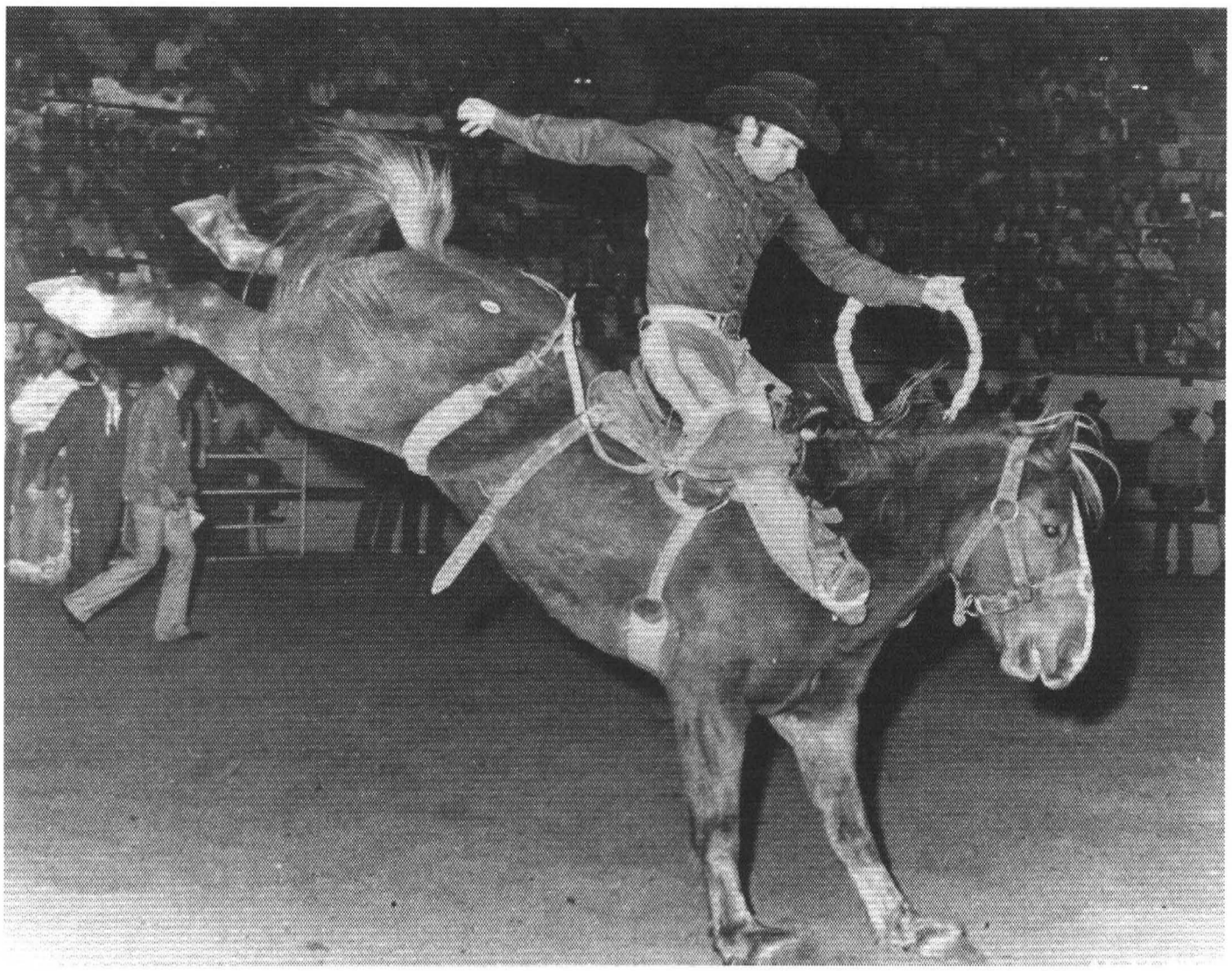
The Finals at Oklahoma City

Oklahoma City won its bid for the Finals in 1965. Whereas state fair organizations or corporate entrepreneurs had sponsored previous NFRs, Oklahoma City's Chamber of Commerce and the newly created National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum became the sponsors of the NFR in the Sooner State. The presence of the National Cowboy Hall of Fame, the largest rodeo museum in the country and home to the Rodeo Hall of Fame, provided a "fitting permanent institution" in which to honor rodeo. It somehow seemed appropriate "that Oklahoma City should build a tradition of championship rodeo"; the city was "an ideal Western area for such a show as the National Finals."[13] Since rodeos were featured from coast to coast and Oklahoma City was geographically central, the city was in the middle of the rodeo industry's traffic pattern. With Oklahoma City as home to both the museum and the NFR, the city became identified as the home of rodeo. Only the RCA headquarters in Colorado lay outside Oklahoma City's purview.

The first NFR in Oklahoma City coincided with the dedication of the Rodeo Hall of Fame, in 1965. The Chamber of Commerce, the museum, and the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association signed a contract to hold the Finals in the newly constructed Fairgrounds Arena, completed in 1964 and built especially for rodeo and equestrian events. The arena had a capacity of nearly nine thousand and tickets, sold by the Chamber of Commerce, were available well in advance. In its first year, the Finals brought nearly $1.5 million into Oklahoma City's economy.[14] The NFR finally seemed to be in a location that would support the level of success, carry the appropriate cachet within the industry that its creators envisioned for the event, and draw greater national attention to the sport. After three successful years, the RCA contracted again with Oklahoma City in 1968 to host the NFR for another three. By 1970, the RCA decided that no city was more enthusiastic than Oklahoma City about hosting the NFR.

In this seemingly permanent location, the Finals rodeo developed into the industry's national event. Incorporating a women's event for the first time, the RCA added barrel racing to the schedule in 1967. Organizers experimented with the format to give audiences a better chance of seeing their favorite champion compete: The top fifteen competitors in each of the seven events would compete in each performance, with ten total performances in ten consecutive days. The 1978 NFR added a sudden-death competition in which the winners at the Finals became the PRCA champions in their respective events.[15] Though this format lasted only a couple of years, it signaled the increasing importance of holding an exciting championship rodeo to draw spectators. Oklahoma City closely followed the competition of rough-stock-riding champions and all-around cowboys, including the iconic Larry Mahan. The charismatic Mahan was the sport's biggest star, one of the only national rodeo personalities in the late 1960s, and the highest-earning cowboy. As the virtual "ambassador for the sport," Mahan's style in and out of the arena marked a change in the way cowboys rodeoed. With his tie-dyed chaps and long hair, Mahan was one of what the singer Chris LeDoux dubbed the "new breed" of cowboy. As the bull rider Johnny Quintana commented in the early 1970s, "these cowboys today are athletic; they work out, they practice. They've constantly got riding on their mind."[16]

During the NFR's run in Oklahoma City from 1965 to 1985, the purse money grew, the RCA added corporate sponsorship, and the Finals received increased television coverage. The Winston Rodeo Awards program inaugurated corporate sponsorship. Several clothing manufacturers, such as Wrangler and Justin Boots, had already joined forces with the RCA to outfit competitors, but these companies contributed little in the way of prize money. Winston cigarettes offered $105,000 in awards for the 1972 rodeo season, but only RCA-approved rodeos would qualify cowboys for the awards program. Dave Stout, the RCA executive secretary-treasurer, observed that the Winston Awards program was "the biggest single boost ever given professional rodeo." The awards



Larry Mahan saddle-bronc riding at the National Finals Rodeo in Oklahoma City. Mahan was one of the greatest rodeo cowboys of all time. His talent for competing in all three riding events—saddle bronc, bareback bronc, and bull riding—won him a total of six All Around Cowboy titles. Photographer unknown. *(ProRodeo Hall of Fame)*

program offered bonus money to top contestants three times a year, including at the NFR. The program was so successful that Winston announced plans to continue the awards for the 1973 season. Coming after the 1971 national ban on televised tobacco advertising, this relationship proved mutually beneficial. The PRCA's general manager, Bob Eidson, encouraged R. J. Reynolds and the Winston brand to allocate promotional monies to rodeo sponsorship in lieu of other advertising.[17] Winston became the first and largest corporate sponsor of rodeo to provide additional prize money for the Finals.

At the National Finals Rodeo in 1978, the PRCA and the John Blair and Company announced their plans to develop a schedule to broadcast rodeo on national television throughout the year. According to PRCA statistics, in 1978 the rodeo industry drew 14 million viewers while the National Football League drew only 10.6 million. The popularity of rodeo prompted several national networks to feature events in 1979. The "Wide World of Sports" program on

Larry Mahan and his All Around Cowboy trophy saddle at the 1970 National Finals Rodeo in Oklahoma City. Between 1966 and 1970, Mahan dominated the rodeo industry, winning the All Around Cowboy title for five consecutive years. From his clothes to his athleticism, Mahan became the industry's most charismatic figure. Photographer unknown. *(ProRodeo Hall of Fame)*

ABC broadcast the Prescott and Cheyenne rodeos and NBC profiled several rodeo stars during the hectic Fourth of July holiday—called The Cowboy's Christmas—on their "Prime Time" news magazine. Culminating the rodeo television coverage for that year, NBC featured the Finals in Oklahoma City. By 1981, television coverage, as handled by Blair Rodeo Enterprises of John Blair and Company, had increased to 72 percent of the nation, compared with 46 percent the year before.[18] More prize money, corporate sponsorship, and television coverage brought rodeo to the nation's attention. More specifically, it drew attention to the Finals and Oklahoma City.

Oklahoma City's burgeoning economy gained more than $2 million annually during the Finals by the end of the 1960s. The PRCA gave profits from the rodeo to the National Cowboy Museum, and the amount increased each year. Tickets for the Finals sold out regularly in the mid 1970s, and by 1979 the competition had outgrown the state fairgrounds and moved to the Myriad Arena in Oklahoma City's downtown convention center. The Myriad's audience capacity was almost double that of the state fair, and tentative dates were set for the NFR at the Myriad through 1984. Ticket prices did not have to increase to accommodate the relocation and ranged between six and ten dollars, relatively affordable for most spectators. The guaranteed prize money included the entry fees provided by the museum, television rights, and a donation by the city. Stock was housed to the east and west of the arena at the convention center, with other exhibit-hall space reserved for the newly created National Finals Rodeo Exposition. Everything at the Myriad for the NFR was under one roof and just a block from Interstate 40.[19]

According to Paul Strasbaugh, an original member of the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce that brought the Finals to town, the NFR was the "largest single event of a national nature" in Oklahoma City. Strasbaugh equated the NFR in Oklahoma City with the Indianapolis 500, the Super Bowl of the mid 1970s, and the Stanley Cup. Though not a first-tier sport such as baseball or basketball, rodeo, especially bull riding, had a strong regional draw and was developing into a national sport. By the mid 1970s, the NFR was drawing between $5 million and $8 million into the city's economy. Besides the Finals, the exposition at the fairgrounds, and the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum, Oklahoma City offered city tours, the State Capitol, the Oklahoma City Zoo, and major shopping centers such as the Crossroads Mall and Shepherd Mall. The Oklahoma City University Theatre, the Oklahoma Theatre Center, and the Civic Center Music Hall featured dinner theater, Broadway musical revues, and concerts. The city also offered a variety of restaurants, nightclubs, and discos. Only the weather in Oklahoma City seemed to be a problem: Snow and freezing rain in December often affected attendance and kept people at home.[20]

So it came as a surprise in 1985 when the Finals moved to Las Vegas. With the NFR's success in Oklahoma City, it seemed unlikely that the Finals would ever change locations. The PRCA and the city had a strong, mutually benefi-

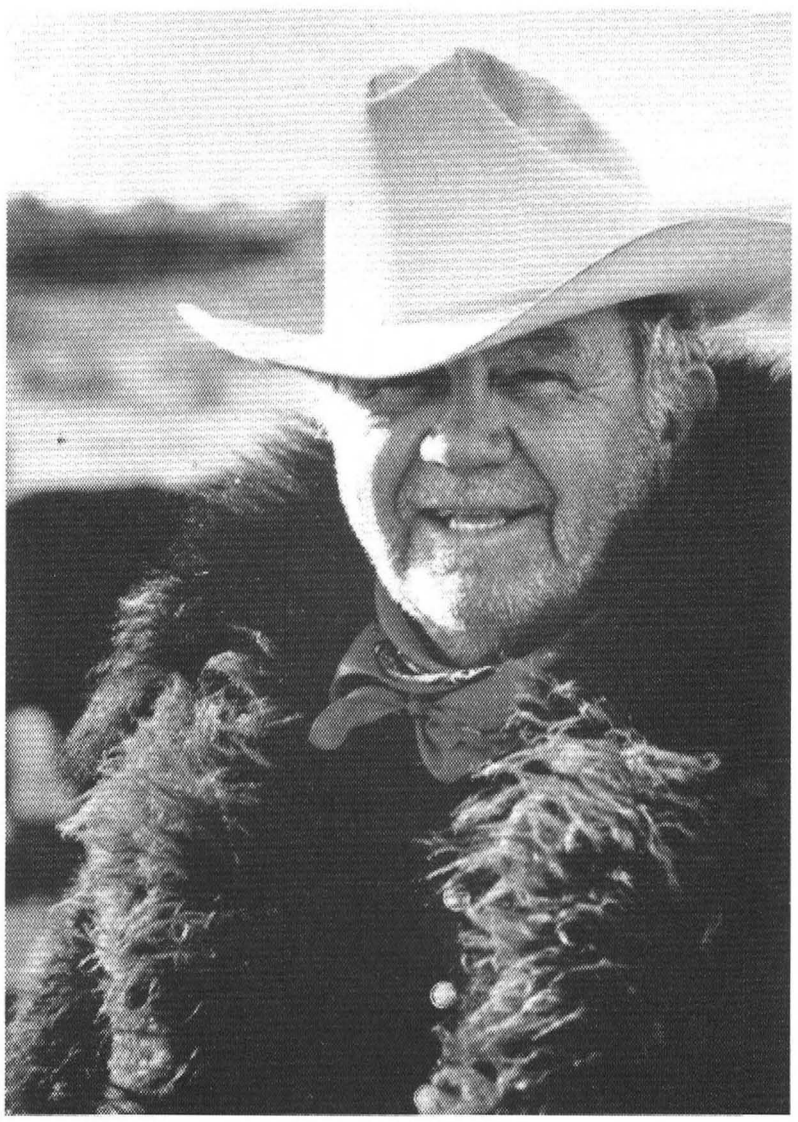
cial relationship, and ensuring the NFR's success in Oklahoma had become a matter of state pride. Buying a ticket gave you a chance to see the best rodeo cowboys in the world, but it also meant that you were doing something good for Oklahoma, a state that ached for anything that could generate some revenue or could raise its profile in the eyes of the rest of the country. The NFR brought Oklahoma just the sort of national attention it craved.[21]

The connection of the Finals to the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum gave it a historical and cultural grounding that the championship rodeo would not necessarily have elsewhere. In Oklahoma City, the NFR had increasing television coverage, growing corporate sponsorship—Coors Brewing Company, Dodge, and Coca Cola joined in the early 1980s—prize money that amounted to more than $900,000, and sell-out attendance. Despite all the NFR's success in Oklahoma City, when in 1984 Las Vegas wanted to woo the NFR away, it made an offer that the PRCA could not refuse.[22]

THE NATIONAL FINALS IN LAS VEGAS

Like Oklahoma City, Las Vegas had a history of rodeo. Similar to many other western towns with ranching industries nearby, Las Vegas had hosted rodeos beginning in the 1920s. In the 1930s, wide-open gambling in Nevada and the influx of population from the construction of Hoover Dam brought much-needed revenue into the Las Vegas area. As the dam neared completion in 1935, Las Vegans became concerned about losing population and revenue and organized the first Helldorado festival, a name borrowed from the 1880s rodeo in Tombstone, Arizona. Run by the Elks Lodge, Helldorado Days became a several-day festival held in May or June and included a colorful parade and a professional rodeo. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, Helldorado was the city's most popular western event and a major tourist attraction. Western celebrities such as Roy Rogers, Dale Evans, Hoot Gibson, and actor-turned-Nevada-politician Rex Bell attended the festivities. After being held on the site of Cashman Field, the rodeo moved to the Convention Center in the 1960s, and then in 1985 to the Thomas and Mack Center. "Cattle rustling, roundups, rodeos and other images of America's Wild West of the late 1800s" were as indigenous to Las Vegas as gambling on the Strip.[23] Las Vegas carefully cultivated its image as a "frontier town," so it was no wonder that even a Texas cowboy would feel at home there—especially one who liked to gamble.

Benny Binion, the operator of Binion's Horseshoe on Fremont Street in Las Vegas, was an old horseman from the Dallas area who loved rodeo. A controversial figure, Binion was the virtually illiterate son of a horse-trader and he made his living in Texas bootlegging and gambling. In the mid 1940s, after being linked to several murders and under pressure from authorities for racketeering, Binion packed up his family and moved to Las Vegas for a fresh start. He chose the right city for his trade and



Las Vegas casino owner Benny Binion worked for fifteen years to bring the National Finals Rodeo to the neon city. A horseman, breeder, and rodeo fan, the former Texan established the relationship between Las Vegas casinos and the National Finals Rodeo, catering to the cowboys when the Finals came to town. Photographer unknown. *(ProRodeo Hall of Fame)*

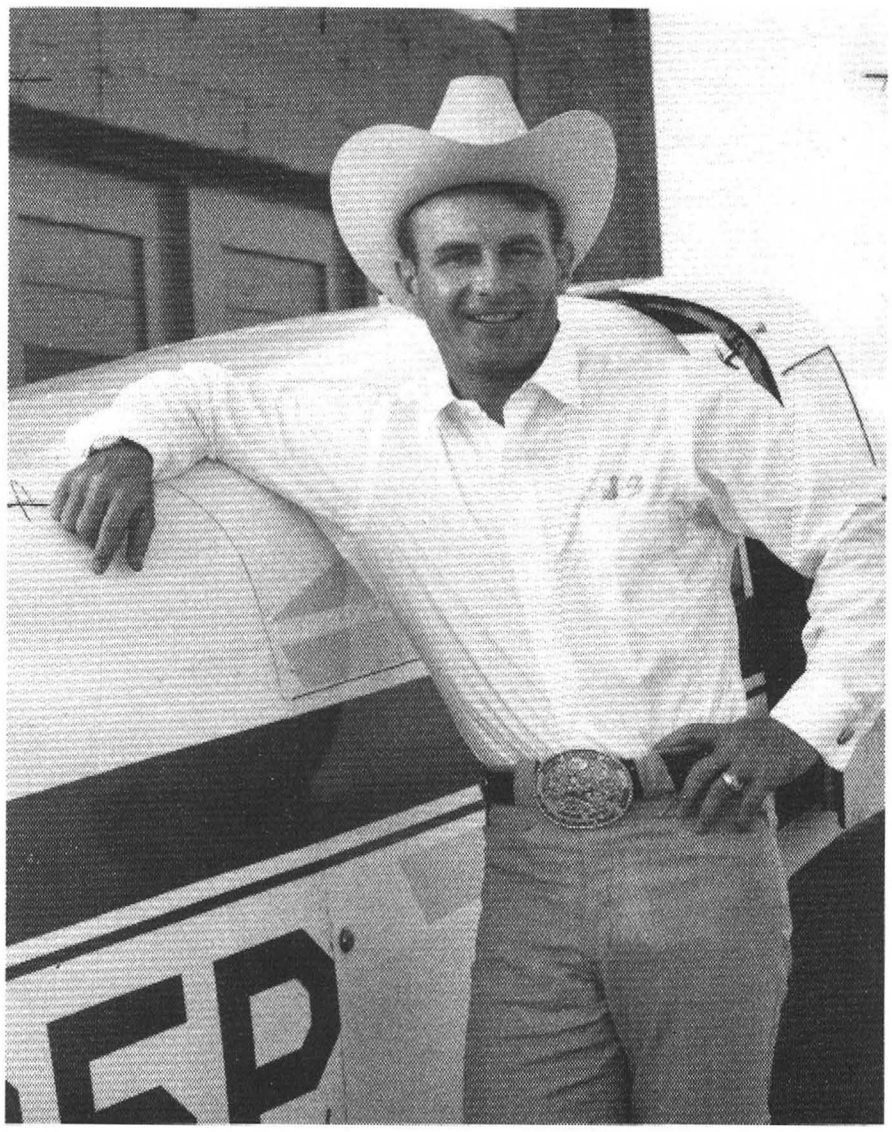
revolutionized gambling in Las Vegas, gaining a reputation for running high-stakes games and tournaments. Part thug and part entrepreneur, Binion bridged the gap between the Las Vegas that was coming out of the mob era and the one then being created in the corporate age. But Binion had another major interest: his ranch in Montana, where he raised horses and cattle. His affection for ranch life spilled into his casino operations; Binion, according to rodeo cowboys, always made it a rule that his casino catered to their business.[24]

As a horseman and rodeo fan, Binion had for fifteen years continuously lobbied the city of Las Vegas to bid on the NFR. His efforts eventually attracted the attention of Herb McDonald, the president of a newly created organization designed to promote an increasingly tourist- and entertainment-oriented Las Vegas. McDonald, a longtime executive in both the gaming industry and the

Chamber of Commerce, had tirelessly promoted Las Vegas as a major tourist attraction.[25] He founded Las Vegas Events, Inc., in 1983 as a not-for-profit organization that sought to attract and host special events that promoted tourism and increased the city's national profile. Funds supporting the group came from the state hotel-room tax. The founding of Las Vegas Events corresponded to the trend in the 1980s in which Las Vegas began selling entertainment as well as gambling. By the late 1980s, the city began the process of, according to the historian Hal Rothman, transforming itself from "idiosyncratic gaming town to themed destination resort." In this transformation, "Las Vegas came to represent the America that people believed was disappearing elsewhere," especially with reference to economic opportunity. The city developed an exemplary service economy rooted in tourism, reinventing itself from the renegade sin city into mainstream America where corporate-owned casinos offered popular American entertainment. This reorientation produced a certain malleability of place that gave promoters and consumers the opportunity to make Las Vegas into whatever they wanted the city to be, to meld the past with the present.[26]

The factors behind this shift were twofold: The population of Las Vegas had increased dramatically in the 1980s and gambling restrictions in the rest of the country had been relaxed. The population of Las Vegas grew from more than 273,000 to 463,000 between 1970 and 1980, and by 1990 it had increased to 770,000. By 1995, the population had grown to just over a million, with a growth rate sustained by migration unparalleled in the post-war period. The growing population of Las Vegas needed entertainment facilities that were oriented more toward families. Competition from casinos in other locations across the country prompted increased efforts to draw more and varied kinds of tourists. Casinos upped the ante by offering not just gaming opportunities but non-gambling games, movies, and shows. Combined with other forms of entertainment, gambling lost much of its stigma and became less associated with immorality and crime. Community leaders both in Las Vegas and around the country hoped to "certify their city's metropolitan status, create a positive attitude for tourism and commerce, and enhance their own civic image" by attracting franchises and building stadiums to house sports events. In Las Vegas, constructing the Thomas and Mack Center in the early 1980s was part of this trend.[27] In this context, Binion's decade-long dream to bring the NFR to Las Vegas became not just possible, but probable.

The first major endeavor of Las Vegas Events was to draw the NFR away from Oklahoma City. Acquiring the Finals would plug a large hole in the year-round Las Vegas events calendar: December was the time of year when everything slowed down, a month for maintenance and a "disaster for business." If the PRCA was willing to move the NFR to Las Vegas, the event could be just the "shot in the arm" Las Vegas needed. McDonald, prompted by Binion, took an offer to the PRCA in 1984 that he was certain the organization could not refuse. Las Vegas Events guaranteed $1.8 million in prize money to the Finals and



Former rodeo cowboy Shawn Davis was instrumental in bringing the National Finals Rodeo to Las Vegas, Nevada in 1985. Most rodeo industry professionals have also been competitors. Davis was a three-time world champion saddle-bronc rider in the mid 1960s. He has been the general manager of the National Finals Rodeo since 1986. Photographer unknown. *(ProRodeo Hall of Fame)*

$700,000 to stock contractors in the first year and an increase every year after that—amounts that doubled and quadrupled the payday produced by Oklahoma City at the 1984 event. The Finals would be held just off the Strip in the newly constructed Thomas and Mack Center, a venue with nearly twice as many seats as the Myriad. The offer also included free hotel rooms for contestants and event officials.[28] To the PRCA, Las Vegas had the potential to increase the prestige of the Finals and of rodeo as an industry in one geographic relocation.

The PRCA's president at the time, Shawn Davis, a former rodeo champion, had focused his tenure on increasing the prestige of rodeo on a national scale. Binion was a friend of Davis, as was the longtime Caesars Palace executive Harry Wald. As the negotiations took place between the PRCA and Las Vegas, Oklahoma City was doing its best to make counter offers. The personal connec-

tions between Davis and the Las Vegas promoters prompted members of the Oklahoma City contingent to accuse Davis of wrong dealing. Their allegations were strong enough that at the 1984 Finals FBI agents searched his room the night before the vote on moving the event was taken. Oklahoma City almost matched the offer from Las Vegas, but the annual increase in the purse was more than Oklahoma City could guarantee. When the PRCA board of directors voted, it was a 6-to-6 split. Davis broke the tie and cast his ballot to move the Finals to Las Vegas. Davis believed that Las Vegas was in a better position to promote the NFR than Oklahoma City. He said that "Oklahoma City had done a lot to make the Finals happen," but Las Vegas was more capable of supporting the NFR's growth than any other city that had approached the PRCA. Davis told the rodeo industry's major periodical, *ProRodeo Sports News*, that "the [PRCA] board is confident that this most difficult decision will carry the PRCA and the sport of professional rodeo to new levels of recognition and success." Besides guaranteeing the full budget of the Finals, Las Vegas offered better media coverage through the Las Vegas News Bureau, greater audience capacity at the Thomas and Mack Center, and better accommodations for contestants and spectators. The PRCA and LVE approved the move of the championship rodeo to Las Vegas for five years.[29]

The National Finals Rodeo moved from Oklahoma City, as journalist Dirk Johnson put it, "as the oil boom was going to bust and the ranch economy was biting the dust." Alongside the construction of a waterslide park on the Strip, a new minor-league baseball stadium, a new indoor shopping mall, a tropical-island swimming complex at the Tropicana, a spectacular trapeze act at Circus Circus, and the Thomas and Mack Center, the NFR helped Las Vegas move beyond gambling to bring in tourists. A 1984 marketing campaign resulted in an 8.4 percent increase in tourists, with another 12 percent in 1985, and even greater growth was expected with the opening of a new terminal at McCarran International Airport in 1986. Between the mild winter weather and the exceptional level of entertainment, Las Vegas offered tourists the time of their lives.[30] Bringing the Finals to Las Vegas helped draw the tourists who had always made the Finals part of their annual vacations. For many Finals fans, the trek to Las Vegas would be far easier than it had been to Oklahoma City.

Nearly every casino in Las Vegas adopted a western theme for the first National Finals Rodeo. It was "cowboy all the way," from the attire of casino employees to the booking of country acts such as Tammy Wynette and Lee Greenwood. During the three weeks of the NFR, the latest fashion became jeans, boots, and cowboy hats, and like Oklahoma City, Las Vegas became the rodeo capital of the world. Only Caesars Palace, already decorated in the style of imperial Rome, avoided a strong cowboy theme. Don Guglielmino, public relations director for Caesars said that the NFR crowd would just enjoy Caesars being what it was. Binion's Horseshoe proudly paid contestants' entry fees. Casinos from the Tropicana and the Dunes to the Hacienda and the Sands gave them

free accommodations. Along with the rodeo, an entire entourage of western vendors arrived at Cashman Field for the accompanying convention. Sam Boyd, head of the Boyd Group and owner of Sam's Town, a major off-Strip property with a strong Old West theme, even commissioned a bronze statue. The noted cowboy artist R. M. Skip Glomb of Laramie, Wyoming, designed his sculpture "The Spirit of Rodeo" for the first Las Vegas NFR, at a cost of $500,000. The champions in the seven NFR events received miniature statues made from the work as trophies. In addition to the saddles, buckles, spurs, and bridles given to rodeo champions, the statues were unique artistic pieces.[31]

It was no accident that the Finals worked well near the glittery Las Vegas Strip; rodeos had "become show business, and big business at that." What Las Vegas offered the NFR crowd that Oklahoma City could not was a chance to gamble and drink twenty-four hours a day. Yet, it took Las Vegas Events three to four years before it made a profit from the event. The prize money may have gone up, but the attendance did not follow suit for a while. It took time to convince tourists that Las Vegas was open in December. In Oklahoma City, the Finals was the event of the year, but in Las Vegas, the championship rodeo was just another convention, albeit one that filled an important void. When it finally did get going, "people began coming to town because the lights were turned back on." As Ty Murray put it in 1989, "there's electricity in the air at the NFR that you don't feel at other rodeos. Cheyenne, Denver, and Houston are big, but nothing like this. The NFR is our Super Bowl."[32] By 1990, the NFR in Las Vegas was sold out for the ten-day event. More than $80 million was pumped into the city's economy. Of the people who attended the NFR, around forty thousand—more than 80 percent—came from out of town, which was why Las Vegas Events was easily able to guarantee an increase in the purse every year. In addition to the NFR itself, the three-week event featured the annual PRCA Convention and the Cowboy's Christmas and Gift Show. The NFR became so large that, for the first time, it was featured in the premier sports magazine, *Sports Illustrated*.[33]

After the first five years of Las Vegas as host of the Finals and with the continued growth of the entertainment industry there, the NFR both drove and reflected changes occurring within the rodeo industry. Las Vegas casinos featured the upper echelon of country music acts, including Alabama, Clint Black, Dolly Parton, George Strait, Randy Travis, and Dwight Yoakam. Las Vegas almost became their home away from Nashville; nearly every major country star played Las Vegas at some point during the NFR. A Nevada assemblyperson introduced a bill into the legislature that would have permitted wagering on timed rodeo events such as barrel racing and team roping. However, legislators removed that portion of the bill after much debate about maintaining a traditional and informal betting system in rodeo. Elko's Republican assemblyman John Carpenter stated that he would rather rodeo remain as it was, "out of professional sports," but the mere introduction of the bill signaled signs of change. A schedule of rodeos appeared on cable sports television

along with the major sports of baseball, football, and basketball. The interest in rodeo was especially prominent among people in urban areas and at least in part could be attributed to "a romantic yearning for Old West culture." Unlike the cowboys of the past, many rodeo cowboys grew up far from the ranch, often in cities.[34] Laser light shows and rock-and-roll music became part of the NFR's opening ceremonies, and the rough stock was bigger and better fed than would be found on any ranch.

As the Finals and the rodeo industry evolved, they were leaving behind more traditional events: Helldorado, Las Vegas's original rodeo, faced its demise with the NFR's arrival. Held for sixty-five years, Helldorado was squeezed out by the championship rodeo because the NFR's draw was national instead of primarily local. Helldorado lost its parade and festival and was whittled down to just the rodeo by the mid 1990s. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the NFR supplanted the University of Nevada, Las Vegas basketball team for the first three weeks in December, leaving the Runnin' Rebels without a home for part of its 1989-90 national championship. Filled with three thousand yards of dirt inside, and surrounded by six hundred head of livestock and horses outside, the Thomas and Mack Center looked less like a basketball arena or concert venue and more like a ranch. However, although Las Vegas was ideal for the NFR, problems began arising with the venue and its location on the UNLV campus. The Thomas and Mack Center was too small for timed events, especially roping. The steer-roping competition had to be held elsewhere because it required a larger arena. The seating capacity was too small for spectator demand and by 1991 individuals either had to know someone who already had tickets or had to purchase scalped tickets at the door at an enormous mark-up in price. Even parking became a problem between the university and the NFR; held in the first several weeks of December, the Finals fell squarely amidst final exams. The question for southern Nevada was whether the NFR had outgrown the Thomas and Mack. "If Las Vegas does not begin planning for the future of the NFR, someone some place such as Houston, Dallas, Oklahoma City or Denver will," observed the Las Vegas journalist Greg Bortolin. Any city that promises a bigger arena and more prize money could woo the NFR; not even Las Vegas will be able to hang on to the Finals forever.[35]

CONCLUSION

In Las Vegas, the National Finals Rodeo made the transition from being a local event, as it was in Oklahoma City, to becoming the national championship it was designed to be. Las Vegas was well equipped to sell the championship rodeo to the general public and make the three-week event into a major tourist attraction. But old-timers in the rodeo industry miss the Finals as they were in Oklahoma City. The flavor of the NFR changed in Las Vegas. Held in a major multipurpose arena, the NFR in the Thomas and Mack Center had the imper-

sonal professional polish of a big-time entertainment experience; only in Las Vegas would there be an Elvis impersonator working the aisles at a rodeo. In Oklahoma City, rodeo champions signed autographs as celebrities, but in Las Vegas, the world champions go unrecognized in casinos. When the NFR came to Oklahoma City, "Oklahoma City partied as hard as Oklahoma City could." Hotels and restaurants were full, and business was better than it was all year. The NFR in Oklahoma City was the event of the year.[36] Rodeo competitor Dee Pickett said that the first couple of years the NFR was in Las Vegas, the atmosphere was not what it was in Oklahoma City, though the money was significantly more. According to PRCA's spokeswoman Sherry Compton, "It's not like the Old West anymore. Cowboys have gone Hollywood. They're like celebrities who promote themselves; it's show business and big money." The historian Michael Johnson writes that the sport "has gotten softer in the postregional era—and otherwise changed in ways that don't please the diehards." He argues that today's rodeo has "increasingly questioned, contradicted, attenuated, and inverted the values affirmed by traditional rodeo."[37]

Still, in the context of the rodeo industry's growth, the NFR's move to Las Vegas was a smart business decision. Prize money doubled, media exposure significantly increased, and the NFR became accessible in Las Vegas, a major tourist destination, in ways it never was in Oklahoma City. In Las Vegas, the National Finals Rodeo became the biggest, loudest, and most professionally staged of all rodeos. Las Vegas reshaped the Finals into a financially lucrative and sophisticated entertainment event designed to showcase the best rodeo talent in the country. The city pushed the rodeo industry to the next level of entertainment. Not only did the rodeo industry benefit from this move, but Las Vegas filled a major gap in its year-round entertainment schedule. Instead of December being a month for lay-offs and maintenance work, it emerged as the month when the city became so packed with entertainment that the university had no room for its own basketball team.

As some nostalgic rodeo fans have said, rodeo may have been taken away from its roots in the move of the Finals to Las Vegas, but that is the direction the industry has gone, regardless of the location of the championship. Market forces drove the change through endorsement deals and corporate sponsorships. Rodeo competitors have been backed by corporate sponsorship—"riding the brand," so to speak—since the mid twentieth century. Before that, cowboys rode the brand on ranches for the company that owned the land and cattle. Rodeo cowboys of the late twentieth century came from different backgrounds than their late-nineteenth-century predecessors. These new competitors were as likely to originate from the suburbs as from ranching backgrounds and more often than not to have gone to rodeo school to learn the skills necessary to compete. Some bull riders hail from the Bronx or Watts and wear face guards and Kevlar vests, despite the perception of most rodeo fans who imagine them in ten-gallon hats. Roping competitions are the only rodeo events that carry a connection to

the ranching past. Most rough-stock events (the exception being the saddle-bronc event) bear little or no resemblance to real ranch work. Modern rodeo uses different skills than those historically needed for ranch work. The rodeo cowboy is an athlete and a professional competitor who specializes in one or maybe two events and can earn millions of dollars from winning at them. The commercialism behind rodeo might have changed the game, but it created more jobs in the "cowboy" industry than ranching ever did.[38]

Rodeo is all business, and big business at that. Supplied by corporate sponsors who sell the iconic western image—companies such as Coors Brewing Company, Wrangler, Dodge, Justin Boots, and Jack Daniels—the prize money available annually to rodeo contestants swelled to more than $35 million in 2004, a total $20 million more than just twenty years earlier. The parent organization of rodeo competition, the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association is home to more than six thousand members, and hosts nearly seven hundred rodeos annually in forty-one states and four Canadian provinces. The fan base that rodeo has acquired exists not just in rural ranching towns in the heartland of America, but also in the hearts of America's biggest cities.[39] The attraction for fans and competitors alike is the unique challenge presented in rodeo: Cowboys compete not just against each other but against the animals they ride. Featuring this challenge in its finest form has been the goal of NFR organizers, as is sharing the excitement with a national audience. Las Vegas has molded the NFR into an urban entertainment phenomenon, and the Finals transform the city in its own image for three weeks in December.

Notes

[1]Kristine Fredriksson, *American Rodeo: From Buffalo Bill to Big Business* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1985), 4-7; Wayne S. Wooden and Gavin Ehringer, *Rodeo in America: Wranglers, Roughstock, and Paydirt* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996), 9-14; Willard H. Porter, "The American Rodeo: Sport and Spectacle," *American West* 8 (July 1971): 40-47.

[2]Clifford P. Westermeier, *Man, Beast, Dust: The Story of Rodeo* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1947), 404; "A Sport, Not a Show," *Newsweek* (26 October 1953), 99-100; "Jim Shoulders Wins Big New York Money," *Hoofs and Horns* (November 1958), 14; "Are They All World Championship Rodeos?" *Rodeo Sports News: Rodeo Annual* (1958), 114.

[3]For a brief period, the organizers of the Madison Square Garden rodeo also held a rodeo in the Boston Gardens just after the event in New York ended. Though both were billed as World Series or Championship rodeos, neither was an official finals competition. Westermeier, *Man, Beast, Dust*, 404-6.

[4]Fredriksson, *American Rodeo*, 83-85; Lex Connelly, "Rodeo 1958," *Rodeo Sports News: Rodeo Annual* (1959), 36-37.

[5]Connelly, "Rodeo 1958," 36-37; John Vancronkhite, "What the National Finals Rodeo Will Mean to the Sport," *Rodeo Sports News: Rodeo Annual* (1959), 39.

[6]The Rodeo Cowboys Association (RCA) became the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) in 1977 in an effort to further solidify the professional athletic status of rodeo competitors. Fredriksson, *American Rodeo*, 97-99, 104.

[7]"Champion Cowboys Arrive for Rodeo," *The New York Times* (24 October 1926); "What Will Be Needed to Get Full Benefit from the First 'World Series' of Rodeo," *Rodeo Sports News: Rodeo Annual* (1958), 39, 101; Fredriksson, *American Rodeo*, 101.

[8]Connelly, "Rodeo 1958," 36-37.

[9]*Ibid.*

[10]"Dallas," *Hoofs and Horns* (February 1960), 6-7, 19; Gary Vorhes, "National Finals Rodeo: From Struggle to Sell Out," *ProRodeo Inside* (16 November 1977), 3-7.

[11]Gene Pruett, "The Finals," *Rodeo Sports News: Rodeo Annual* (1961), 14-17; "Rodeo Opens Run at Garden Here," *The New York Times* (25 September 1959). The Madison Square Garden Rodeo in New York City offered $85,000 in prize money in the mid to late 1950s. Gene Pruett, "The Best Ever," *Rodeo Sports News: Rodeo Annual* (1960), 12-16; Lex Connelly, "Founding and First Years of National Finals Rodeo," *Persimmon Hill* (Winter 1974), 10-15; Fredriksson, *American Rodeo*, 96-97.

[12]Gene Pruett, "The Finals," *Rodeo Sports News: Rodeo Annual* (1962), 11-12; *idem*, "The Finals," *Rodeo Sports News: Rodeo Annual* (1965), 13-15; Connelly, "Founding and First Years," 10-15.

[13]Vorhes, "National Finals Rodeo," 3-7; Robert Freedheim, "The Best of Everything at the National Finals," *Hoofs and Horns* (November 1969,) 12-15, 44; *idem*, "The Magic Moment of 1967," *Hoofs and Horns* (January 1968), 6-7, 10, 27, 30-32.

[14]"Rodeo Hall of Fame, National Finals Rodeo: Oklahoma City 1965," *Rodeo Sports News: Rodeo Annual* (1966): 13-15; Vorhes, "National Finals Rodeo," 3-7.

[15]"Freedheim, "Magic Moment," 6-7, 10, 27, 30-32; "National Finals Sold Out," *Hoofs and Horns* (October 1978), 12; "Record Setter: NFR Figures Point to Success," *Hoofs and Horns* (February 1970), 16.

[16]Douglas Kent Hall, *Let 'Er Buck: The Daring World of Rodeo* (New York: Saturday Review Press, 1973), 91-92.

[17]"Rodeo Gets $$ Boost," *Hoofs and Horns* (January-February 1972), 26; "Winston Awards," *Hoofs and Horns* (March-April 1973), 22; Bob Eidson, "Lots of Rodeo on Television," *Hoofs and Horns* (September 1979), 14.

[18]"Television and the PRCA," *Hoofs and Horns* (February 1979), 9; "PRCA Increased 35 Percent," *Hoofs and Horns* (February 1979), 9; Eidson, "Lots of Rodeo on Television," *Hoofs and Horns* (September 1979), 14; Philip H. Dougherty, "Advertising," *The New York Times* (10 October 1980); "'81 National Finals Rodeo," *American Cowboy Magazine (Hoofs and Horns)* (September 1981), 9. The Fourth of July holiday was the traditional time for most communities to host rodeos. As rodeo associations were organized, competitors became more mobile through better transportation and communication, and the sport of rodeo became a way to earn a living, events became spread out over the calendar year. Even so, the Independence Day holiday still hosts more rodeos than any other time during the year.

[19]Vorhes, "National Finals Rodeo," *ProRodeo Inside* (16 November 1977), 3-7; "NFR World Champions," *Hoofs and Horns* (February 1979), 15, 35.

[20]Sandy Teague, "Profile of Oklahoma City: Its Own Brand of Hospitality," *ProRodeo Inside* (16 November 1977), 9-11; Gayle Phillips, "Lyne Rewrites Record Books," *Hoofs and Horns* (March-April 1973), 18-19.

[21]W. K. Stratton, *Chasing the Rodeo: On Wild Rides and Big Dreams, Broken Hearts and Broken Bones, and One Man's Search for the West* (Orlando: Harcourt, Inc., 2005), 2.

[22]www.prorodeo.org; "$1,000,000 Coors Program," *Hoofs and Horns* (May 9, 1980); *ProRodeo Sports News* (8 August 1984), 1; *ProRodeo Sports News* (26 December 1984), 5.

[23]Jeff Wolf, "In Depth: Rodeo History, Rodeo Roots," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (9 December 2001); Eugene Moehring, *Resort City in the Sunbelt: Las Vegas 1930-2000* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2000), 29, 87.

[24]Gail Hughbanks Woerner, *Belly Full of Bed Springs: The History of Bronc Riding* (Austin, Texas: Eakin Press, 1998), 170.

[25]Jack Sheehan, *The Players: The Men Who Made Las Vegas* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1997), 48-67; James McManus, "The Baddest Good Guy You Have Ever Seen," *San Francisco Chronicle* (1 January 2006); Moehring, *Resort City in the Sunbelt*, 52; Hal Rothman, *Neon Metropolis: How Las Vegas Started the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 80-82. Michael Green, "Nevada Yesterdays," KNPR, 13 December 2004. Further information on Benny Binion is available through the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Special Collections Library.

[26]www.lasvegasevents.com; Jefferson Graham, "Look Out Disneyland; New Vegas Resorts Want to Have Fun; Fantasy Becomes a Headliner," *USA Today* (20 November 1989); Bruce Chadwick, "Vegas Looks for Sure Thing by Becoming a Resort for the Family," *The Chicago Tribune* (13 July 1986); Hal Rothman, *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 313-37.

[27]Rothman, *Devil's Bargains*, 313-37; Robert Reinhold, "Las Vegas Transformation: From Sin City to Family City," *The New York Times* (30 May 1989); Steven A. Reiss, *City Games: The Evolution of American Urban Society and the Rise of Sports* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 239.

[28]Jeff Wolf, "Roping the Rodeo," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (5 December 2004).

[29]Dirk Johnson, *Biting the Dust: The Wild Ride and Dark Romance of the Rodeo Cowboy and the American West* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), 212; Jeff Wolf, "20 Years in Las Vegas: NFR Making Itself at Home," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (3 December 2004); Pete Peters, "Silver Bowl Sale Ok'd; National Rodeo Approved," *Las Vegas Sun* (13 February 1985); Woerner, *Belly Full of Bedsprings*, 180; *ProRodeo Sports News* (26 December 1984), 5.

[30]Bruce Chadwick, "Vegas Looks for Sure Thing."

[31]Jeff Wolf, "Rodeo History, Rodeo Roots," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (9 December 2001); Lisa Godwin, "Yeee-Haaa! Casinos Turn Country for Rodeo," *Las Vegas Sun* (12 December 1985); *ProRodeo Sports News* (27 November 1985), 3. "'Spirit of Rodeo' Statue Unveiled in LV," *Las Vegas Sun* (23 November 1985).

[32]Robert Reinhold, "The National Finals Rodeo," *The New York Times* (18 June 1989); Ty Murray, *King of the Cowboys: The Autobiography of the World's Most Famous Rodeo Star* (New York: Atria Books, 2003), 128.

[33]Wolf, "Rodeo History, Rodeo Roots"; *idem*, "Ropin' the Rodeo"; Greg Bortolin, "National Finals Rodeo Enjoys Record Sales Again," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (11 December 1990).

[34]Mike Weatherford, "Country Acts Keep Cowboys Entertained during the National Finals Rodeo," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (6 December 1991); Ed Vogel, "Lawmakers Lasso, Hogtie Bill Allowing Bets on Rodeo Events," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (6 February 1991); Dirk Johnson, "Boom Times for Rodeo, Broken Bones and All," *The New York Times* (8 September 1991). Opposition to the bill included concerns that it would outlaw traditional cowboy "jackpots," pools of money that cowboys collect before roping events in which the winner takes all. This portion of the bill was removed and wagering was not permitted on "cowboy sports."

[35]Jeff Wolf, "Rodeo Revolution," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (12 December 1999); Greg Bortolin, "Make Way Folks, Here's the Rodeo," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (5 December 1991); Greg Bortolin, "Las Vegas Should Attempt to Lasso the NFR for Good," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (11 December 1991); Rob Ollikainen, "Rodeo Fans Flock to Vegas: Sin City is Popular Place for Cowboys,"

kvnews.com (13 December 2004); "New Events Center Subject of Study by Task Force," *Sandstone Online: Clark County's Official Newsletter* (May 2006); Steve Carp, "Commissioner's View: Stern: Once Is Enough," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (19 February 2007).

[36]Stratton, *Chasing the Rodeo*, 290-3.

[37]*Ibid.*; Dee Pickett, "1984," in *The Finals: A complete History of the NFR* (Colorado Springs: PRCA, 1998), 112-14; Robert Reinhold, "The National Finals, Las Vegas," *The New York Times* (18 June 1989); Michael Johnson, *Hunger for the Wild: America's Obsession with the Untamed West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 328.

[38]Willard H. Porter, "The Rodeo Report of Cowboys' Demise Exaggerated," *The Chicago Tribune* (3 July 1988); Stratton, *Chasing the Rodeo*, 294-95.

[39]"PRCA Annual Statistics 1953-2004," www.prorodeo.org; Wooden and Ehringer, *Rodeo in America*, 33-48.

Operation Hospitality
Las Vegas and Civil Defense, 1951-1959

ANGELA MOOR

In 1953, *Parade,* the magazine supplement to Sunday newspapers, featured a description of an atomic test at the Nevada Test Site written by a twenty-one-year-old Las Vegas housewife. The blast aroused strong feelings in the young woman and she described the mushroom cloud floating away from the Nevada Test Site as a "stairway to Hell . . . and it made me cry." The article captured many of the contradictory attitudes toward nuclear testing and civil defense that defined America during the early years of the Cold War. Her intense feelings did not cause her to question the prudence of atomic testing, but instead renewed her faith in civil defense. This faith colored her memory of the blast. "I'll remember knowing what to do if an attack comes can help save your life. The way to find out what to do is to join the Civil Defense organization in your town. If you had seen what I saw, you'd realize how important civil defense is." *Parade*'s narrative of atomic testing in the Nevada desert and its connection to civil defense—the notion that an atomic attack could be survived through proper planning and the suppression of panic—illustrates many of the complicated feelings toward national policies of civil defense and politics during the early years of the Cold War.[1]

The use of the atomic bomb to end World War II drastically altered the meaning of warfare. Suddenly, horrible and instantaneous destruction became the definition of war. As the Soviet Union developed its own atomic weapons, new

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An early 1950s Las Vegas Helldorado parade float celebrating the detonation of Nevada's first atomic bomb. Photographer unknown. *(Nadine Tobin Collection, University of Nevada, Las Vegas Special Collections)*

ideas about defense on the home front emerged. Civil defense became ingrained in American peacetime culture as citizens developed fears of possible attack. During the Cold War, such preparation, previously practiced only during wars, became an important part of American politics and culture.

Las Vegas offers an important revision to the history of civil defense in the 1950s. Its small size and lack of militarily identified targets made civil defense exercises a low priority for the city, but its close proximity to the Nevada Test Site connected it to the politics of atomic weaponry. Civil defense tests at the Nevada Test Site intimately linked Las Vegas residents to the policies of the Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA). The response of Las Vegas to civil defense can best be described as hospitable, as local officials focused on the city's important role in national security by providing support to the Atomic Energy Commission and the FCDA at the Nevada Test Site. Actual preparative exercises for the city concentrated on minor programs such as blood typing and school tags and ignored larger drills like the mass evacuations that took place

in other cities. The city's boosters also appropriated the Nevada Test Site as a unique tourist destination. The importance of the test site, federal monies, and tourism marked Las Vegas's complicated response to the policies of preparedness during the early years of the Cold War.

The experience of civil defense in Las Vegas challenges existing scholarship on the subject and makes for a more complex understanding of Cold War culture. Many earlier works have focused on the Atomic Age as a whole, with only a chapter or two devoted to civil defense policies; these include Paul Boyer's engaging book *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age*, and Allan Winkler's *Life under a Cloud: American Anxiety about the Atom*. In recent years, a few authors have developed more detailed studies of civil defense, but have ignored the experiences of cities outside the urban East; included among these are Andrew Grossman in *Neither Dead nor Red: Civilian Defense and American Political Development during the Early Cold War*, and Kenneth D. Rose in *One Nation Underground: The Fallout Shelter in American Culture*. Other works such as Elaine Tyler May's seminal book *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* and, more recently, Laura McEnaney's *Civil Defense Begins at Home: Militarization Meets Everyday Life in the Fifties*, challenged the conventional history of the period and focused on the intersection of American women and Cold War policies. The existing scholarship, while fragmented, offers a study of civil defense that overlooks the real ambivalence of most Americans toward such policies by focusing too much on the relatively few participants in civil defense exercises. This article, by centering on the experience of Las Vegas, points to the very complicated relationship between Americans and civil defense in the early years of the Cold War.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FEDERAL CIVIL DEFENSE ADMINISTRATION

The beginning of the Korean War in 1950 propelled the civil defense debate to the forefront, and President Harry Truman established the Federal Civil Defense Administration in January 1951 to quell American's fears about a Soviet attack.[2] A three-part objective, captured in the motto "Survive, Recover, and Win," energized this new unit.[3] Two important concepts about civil defense guided the FCDA: An official line that claimed Americans could indeed survive nuclear attack, and a privately held recognition of the futility of civil defense efforts.[4] The FCDA carefully cultivated an optimistic message for public consumption and worked with state and local agencies to create a coordinated civil defense plan for the United States. Despite the much touted importance of its mission, the administration received little funding in its beginning and had no success in implementing any large-scale changes, such as urban dispersal or a shelter program in its early years.[5] Instead, it developed as a mediating institution for the Truman presidency as it linked the government with "major media outlets

(print, broadcast, and film)."[6] Built into the policies of the FCDA was a reflection of the changing role of the federal government in the 1950s. The political scientist Andrew Grossman argues that the FCDA "was part of a new postwar institutional and administrative architecture for long-term Cold War mobilization that was based on a public policy of national civic education regarding all facets of the Cold War."[7] The family-centered defense policy reflected the larger cultural trends of the 1950s as civilians in family units were imagined to be the targets of the ruthless Soviets. Domestic ideology and a return to family not only represented a defense against the Soviets, but a defense against the new liberal forces sweeping America.[8] The policies and practices of the FCDA reflected the changing nature of American politics and culture during the postwar years.

The suppression of panic represents one of the most interesting aspects of FCDA policy. Moving beyond policies that emphasized shelters or actual forms of defense to those aimed at the emotional management of the American citizenry, the FCDA attempted to convince Americans that "they could be trained to protect themselves from a nuclear attack."[9] The administration worked with scientists and researchers at American universities on "Project East River," a behavioral study meant to analyze civil defense and its connection to "fear management and panic prevention."[10] Experts predicted that Americans, especially women, would panic should a nuclear attack occur, and new policies attempted to control panic. The main policies reflected the FCDA's place in Truman's nuclear strategy, and its efforts were concentrated on "emotion management."[11]

Policymakers worked with the Psychological Strategy Board to create propaganda that would mentally prepare people for the possibilities of attack, the assumption being that this project represented a possible opportunity for the manipulation of Americans.[12] Civil defense training would help Americans learn self-control and thus would "eliminate the moral deficits that made them such unsatisfactory weapons in the struggle against communism."[13] Experts postulated that the discipline inherent in civil defense would therefore "cultivate the toughness they needed to meet the demands of the Cold War" and that an American victory against the Soviets would be guaranteed by the superior morality of the American public.[14] A concurrent policy called conventionalization sought to reconceptualize nuclear weaponry as normal weapons of warfare. It proved crucial in convincing the public that it could indeed survive an atomic bomb and thus made civil defense efforts worthwhile.[15] The mass media played an important role in this strategy.

Mass media including radio, television, and popular magazines spread much of the information about civil defense to the American public. The FCDA never received large governmental appropriations to spread its message because of tension between President Truman and the Congress, and instead relied on private media in getting its message out. The public-service-oriented Advertising Council "handled the civil defense campaigns throughout the 1950s, soliciting free space in newspapers, in bus and subway advertising placards,

in radio station breaks and so forth, and filling the space with messages crafted by Madison Avenue experts."[16] Civil defense, therefore, entered the national consciousness in a big way because of the collaboration between the FCDA and the mass media. From its inception in 1951 through most of the Cold War, the FCDA established relationships with national print media that blurred the line between propaganda and news.[17] They offered ready-made promotional materials that often appeared as editorial content.[18] The reach of the administration moved beyond print media and into the private reaches of American homes as television networks showed movies and television shows that promoted civil defense.[19] Television programs emphasized the possibility of survival given proper preparation. One example entitled "Survival, If You Think a Falling A-bomb Means the End of Everything, This Remarkable Report May Change Your Mind" aired on NBC in 1951.[20] Private industry, particularly filmmakers, also recognized an opportunity in the new policies of civil defense to prove their loyalty to the United States during the period of McCarthyism. Businesses realized that the doctrine of self-help that defined most civil defense efforts in the 1950s left a door open for them to market survivalist products to Americans and to produce educational pamphlets or films that schools and groups across the country would purchase. The influence of the FCDA moved beyond its limited governmental reach, and into the homes of the average American family.

Many civil defense efforts centered on American schoolchildren, found appealing by civil defense officials because they offered an opportunity to reach not only the children, but their parents as well.[21] The laughable image of Bert the Turtle and instructions to duck-and-cover may have survived as part of the nostalgia of the 1950s, but intense civil defense efforts in schools transformed students into pint-sized soldiers in the Cold War. Educational materials for schools made up a large portion of FCDA publications.[22] Education journals of the period emphasized the importance of civil defense in the education of young people during the Cold War.[23] The 1952 *Civil Defense in Schools* described the roles and duties of schools in case of attack, and emphasized the "training of students to react properly," much as the efforts at panic suppression did for adults.[24] The metaphor of students as soldiers continued with the issuance of identification tags to students. Schoolchildren across the United States received metal tags from local school districts meant to identify victims in case of an attack. Manufacturers worked hard to convince buyers and parents that the tags were not grim reminders of the possibility of an attack, that instead they involved children in the preparation for nuclear war, and made them feel important.[25] Promotional materials for the tags featured grinning youths with their tags, and newspaper articles lauded the tag program. The civil defense efforts in schools closely followed the psychological policies that guided much of the FCDA's programs in the early Cold War.

Psychology provided one prong of civil defense, but the FCDA also offered practical advice. The early years of the administration corresponded to the growth of suburbs in the United States. Suburbs and the concept of urban dis-

persal provided important areas of interest for the FCDA. Experts identified urban cores as targets for the impending World War III and advocated policies of urban dispersal. Politics also played a role in policy making, and an emphasis on suburbia as the site of survival developed as important groups of voters relocated from urban cores to the suburbs in the years following World War II.[26] Not only did the suburbs contain important voters, but it remained possible to protect them. The FCDA considered large cities containing industrial centers to be Critical Target Areas likely to face an attack. Yet, as the rhetoric of the administration touted protection through preparation, in reality such protection was impossible for most of these areas.[27] The FCDA recognized the danger posed to large cities and recognized that a redistribution of industry and population was the defense needed, but such large-scale dispersal proved incredibly expensive.[28] As large cities faced the future with little options beyond duck-and-cover, policies focusing on the suburbs developed. The message supporting home fall-out shelters appealed to suburbanites engaged in the 1950s craze of home improvement and do-it-yourself.[29] The information directed at suburban Americans offered another normalization of the Atomic Age and offered tools for survival.

The information generated by the FCDA reflected the conservative politics that defined the 1950s. Public information campaigns focused on the white American family living in a nameless suburb. In this manner, the FCDA offered a comforting message that affirmed the American way of life. The Alert America campaign, staged by the FCDA and the Advertising Council in 1952, included a traveling exhibit that toured the country promoting the message of civil defense.[30] Alert America aligned its message with Cold War patriotism claiming that "nuclear weapons were manageable."[31] The thought inherent in these campaigns helped Americans "make peace with the bomb through defense" and "made military preparedness a family affair."[32] The FCDA promoted the ideal American family and affirmed traditional gender roles as it made homemaking a crucial part of American civil defense.[33] In official rhetoric women were seen as having special skills necessary to face atomic war.[34] By 1953, the same year *Parade* published the young housewife's encounter with the mushroom cloud, the FCDA had a fully functioning women's division focused on family preparedness, with housewives at the center of domestic defense policy.[35] Women's work became reconceptualized for the Atomic Age as "routine chores, such as housecleaning, cooking, and consumption became a matter of life and death."[36] This equation of home maintenance and survival gave women, while remaining in their "traditional" roles, a place in the fight against the communists in the Cold War.[37] The FCDA also used women's clubs to promote its message regarding civil defense and the special role of women in protecting the nation.[38] Certainly, the FCDA and its policies did not engineer the gender relationships of the Cold War, but they played an important part in affirming the narrow gender relations of the 1950s.

The policies and rhetoric of the FCDA were crucial in defining the political debates over atomic weapons in the 1950s. Ideas about consumption, self-help, and anti-communism determined FCDA policy and reflected its position in the conservative 1950s. Civil defense encouraged consumption on patriotic grounds. The very concept of civil defense insinuated that each citizen bore the responsibility for his or her own defense, and the FCDA further promoted this concept through the doctrine of self-help. Self-help placed the burden of preparation squarely on the shoulders of individuals by "mandating that citizens purchase the tools of survival."[39] This emphasis on consumption went beyond the simple purchase of objects meant for survival or stocking the family shelter; as FCDA literature explicitly also encouraged homeownership, arguing that "the responsible homeowner was already well on the way toward preparation for atomic war."[40] Not only did the home offer protection, but the personal automobile also functioned as a rolling shelter in case of attack. In *Four Wheels to Survival,* the FCDA cited evidence from civil defense tests at the Nevada Test Site that cars provided the unexpected bonus of shelter and could also be used for evacuation and then as a living space.[41] The policies and propaganda of the FCDA in the 1950s not only shaped attitudes toward atomic weapons, but also reflected the larger trends of the era.

NATIONAL CIVIL DEFENSE EFFORTS

Despite the intense propagandizing by the FCDA, American cities exhibited varying levels of participation in civil defense efforts. The ranking of target areas by the administration offers one explanation for the uneven intensities of war preparedness. In reports published annually throughout the 1950s, the FCDA identified critical target areas that were likely to be attacked by the Soviets. The 1953 *Annual Report* named seventy critical target areas; it included cities having large populations or serving as centers of industry, such as New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Diego.[42] Consequently, these cities formed "the focal points for the development of civil defense operational programs."[43] Communities less likely to fall victim to enemy action served in the important role of providing support, aid, and hospitality to evacuees of targeted cities. The bulk of civil defense efforts in the 1950s concerned major urban areas, with little attention paid to cities outside of targeted areas.

Targeted cities engaged in ongoing civil defense activities because of their perceived vulnerability. Newspaper articles in the *Los Angeles Times* and the *New York Times* indicate heightened apprehension in those cities during the early years of the Cold War. Newspapers ran leading articles on civil defense activities and published FCDA informative materials. Magazines also engaged in doomsday predictions, running stories on the chaos that would accompany an attack. Following a labor strike in the port of New York, *Life* magazine ran

an article that claimed that the "vital US asset is vulnerable to strikes—and bombs," and compared the impact of the labor strike to the potential devastation of an atomic attack.[44] Pittsburgh faced similar treatment in a 1951 issue of *Look* magazine that proclaimed, "We're wide open for disaster," and touted the need for civil defense in the city.[45] *Newsweek* profiled New York's civil defense in 1951 and claimed that New York led the world in preparedness.[46] The focus on targeted cities and their assured survival through appropriate preparation waned in the late 1950s. By the end of the decade, magazines had moved away from articles on the possibility of civil defense for protection and instead focused on the absurdity of such practices.[47]

Operation Alert, a full-scale evacuation activity staged by the FCDA throughout the 1950s, permeated the experience of American urbanites. Operation Alert reflected the psychological aims of official policy in its attempt to prove the possibility of survival.[48] Actual Operation Alert activities met with limited success, as many residents failed to participate. It also created an interesting paradox for civil defense planners as it encouraged civil defense activities: Its enactment of evacuation showed that major urban areas would likely face catastrophic tragedy in the event of actual attack.[49] These cities, with their dense urban cores, were met with significant challenges in the planned evacuations, a situation guaranteed to grow exponentially with the panic and chaos of attack. Yet, these cities prepared for yearly Operation Alert activities, and the nation's newspapers widely reported the mock attacks with great fanfare.[50] The actual participation in and reaction to Operation Alert, however, presents a much more complicated scenario of Americans' engagement in such activities.[51]

Women in cities across the country experienced civil defense in a particular manner. A variety of factors joined to create a special status for women in the trenches of the Cold War. *The Women's Civil Defense Council: A Guide for Its Organization and Utilization*, published by the FCDA in 1957, offered a rationalization for the significance of women in preparedness efforts, arguing that women "have a vital role in civil defense."[52] Another pamphlet, *Civil Defense: Your Government and You*, claimed women's traditional responsibility for family welfare gave them a "special responsibility for home preparedness." [53] Magazines reinforced this unique role of women in civil defense. *Ladies' Home Journal* editorialized on the importance of women in home preparedness, calling on housewives to be "ready to act in a practical matter."[54] Local civil defense agencies offered special opportunities for women to engage in such efforts and argued that traditional duties such as housecleaning, mothering, and home economics formed the core of civil defense. In Los Angeles, organizers marketed a home-nursing course as "a 'must' for housewives desiring to cooperate in the national civil defense preparation."[55] Women responded to such calls with a sense of awareness of their special roles in civil defense.

Civil defense made its mark on the national consciousness in its impact on consumer products. Businesses sprang up to market survival products to Americans, but they met with little success because most Americans failed to

purchase these products. As early as 1951, the *New York Times* ran an article on the failure of a "would-be shelter mogul" whose business failed without selling a single model.[56] In the early 1960s, *BusinessWeek* published an article about the "Hazards of Selling Survival Products."[57] Recognizing the limitations in marketing its own products, the FCDA entered into an agreement with Sears, Roebuck, and Company to merchandise civil defense items in its catalog in late 1954.[58] The Spring/Summer catalog for Sears in 1955 did feature one FCDA product, but placed it on the bottom of a page filled with uranium detectors marketed to the weekend uranium hunter.[59] Civil defense policies encouraged the consumption of goods for survival and the construction of things like fall-out shelters, but in reality most Americans chose to purchase the other new and innovative consumer goods available in the postwar years.

The lukewarm response to civil defense consumer goods suggests American ambivalence toward civil defense; opinion polls by Gallup offer evidence of an even more complicated response. Polls conducted during World War II had indicated a faith in the necessity of civil defense, but by the close of the 1950s, Americans began to see the futility of such efforts. Nearly thirty percent of those polled in 1945 favored a mandatory one-year training period for young women in "civilian defense or other work that would be useful in wartime."[60] In 1953, not even five percent of respondents identified themselves as doing "any work in the civilian defense program," and only two percent planned to construct a shelter in the next year.[61] Americans did not completely reject civil defense, however. In 1956, sixty-five percent of those polled approved of a "plan to require every man and woman to spend an average of one hour a week in Civil Defense work."[62] The seeming disconnect between the two polls indicates the public zealousness Americans quickly afforded government programs during the conservative postwar period, as well as the personal ambivalence many Americans harbored for civil defense. These, and other Gallup polls, reflect a wide gap between the narrative of civil defense that appeared in government and popular media publications, and the behavior of Americans in actual practice. In reality, Americans expressed an attitude toward civil defense that was more complicated than the exuberance claimed by FCDA officials.

By the end of the 1950s, Americans' lackluster response to civil defense became clear. National magazines began to focus on the futility of preparedness. Even as President John F. Kennedy called for the construction of private home shelters in 1961, most Americans ignored the calls.[63] Women, once the key to civil defense, started rejecting such policies. In 1955, women in New York City acted out against the evacuation drills of Operation Alert by employing the "image of enraged motherhood."[64] The women, using their traditional role as mothers, protested the government policy and rallied for an end to "atomic testing, the arms race, and civil defense efforts."[65] Although civil defense formed an important part of the political discussion in the 1950s and early 1960s, the historical record indicates most Americans had a much more ambivalent relationship with the program than previously thought.

"Good Commercial Use": Civil Defense in Las Vegas

The experience of civil defense in Las Vegas illustrates much of the ambivalence that defined the national response in the 1950s. Las Vegas allows us to analyze preparedness efforts outside of critical target areas. In addition, the practice of civil defense in Las Vegas developed in a unique way because of the city's proximity and relationship with the Nevada Test Site.

Civil defense officials praised southern Nevada in 1953 not for its preparedness, but for the "hospitality" and the "calm and cooperative attitudes of Nevadans" toward civil defense officials and the testing program at the Nevada Test Site an hour away.[66] Las Vegas found itself excluded from the lists of critical target areas despite its proximity to the Nevada Test Site and the Basic Magnesium plant in nearby Henderson. The experience of civil defense in the city during the 1950s cannot be separated from the story of the test site because of the close working relationship of the FCDA and the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC). Southern Nevada's limited interest in civil defense activities differed greatly from the large efforts in major cities. The experience of Las Vegas, much like other small and medium sized cities, complicates the narrative of enthusiastic preparation that dominated the national media.

Following World War II, Las Vegas emerged with a new image and possibilities as postwar affluence made the resort town a national phenomenon. Local government and city planners had a stake in defining Las Vegas as a vibrant, safe community. In addition to its attempt to brand itself as vacation hotspot in the 1950s, Las Vegas had a relatively small number of citizens to defend. Although the population of Clark County tripled in the 1940s, by 1950 the county still had only 48,289 residents. Clark County's population was thus smaller than the estimated number of victims in targeted cities.[67] As other cities were preparing for atomic attack through full-scale evacuation drills and other civil defense activities, Las Vegas put little effort into war preparedness. Clark County and Las Vegas instead focused community efforts toward improving the area's image with visitors.

The Atomic Energy Commission notified Nevada residents of the establishment of the atomic testing site through a press release in January 1951.[68] Newspapers across the country carried the press release in the following day's papers with great praise for the federal government and the AEC.[69] Las Vegas newspapers showed particular enthusiasm and emphasized the economic aspects of the construction of the test site and the added tourist draw, while denying any possible health problems as the result of tests only sixty-five miles away.[70] The FCDA provided important support for the atomic testing program as they constantly attempted to convince Americans that a real enemy existed and that testing offered one path to national defense.[71] Newspaper editorials focused on the role of the tests as a deterrent to Soviet attacks.[72] During the tests, the FCDA measured the effectiveness of civil defense products and attempted to estimate the impact that an atomic bomb would have on homes and cities. Las Vegas, therefore, engaged with national civil defense as part of the testing program.

Mannequin being outfitted in donated clothing from the local J. C. Penney store to take part in a civil defense exercise at the Nevada Test Site, ca. 1955. Photographer unknown. *(Las Vegas News Bureau)*

The Nevada Test Site shot off Operation Annie on March 17, 1953, in an attempt to study civil defense efforts and preparations. Scientists created a Doom Town to identify the effects of an atomic blast on a city. The Doom Town population consisted of mannequins outfitted by the local J. C. Penney store; the town was complete with automobiles, and even a school bus.[73] The test site played host to a few thousand spectators including civil defense experts. The next day's *Las Vegas Morning Review-Journal* reported the spectacular colors of the test's mushroom cloud.[74] The *Las Vegas Sun*, the city's other major newspaper, published similar reports following the blast. During the next month, the *Sun* ran articles about the subsequent return of the blast mannequins to J. C. Penney's for display and exhibition to the public.[75] The FCDA's annual report for 1953 judged the test to have been a great success, and one that spurred the public's interest "in the practicability of civil defense preparedness."[76] Reports following Operation Annie attempted to apply the knowledge gained from the blast to civil defense. One article in the *Review-Journal* advised that "the safest place to be in case of an atomic blast is in the basement behind a home made bomb shelter!"[77] The article went on to indicate that no one place was entirely safe from atomic attack, but that there were "places where the general public could escape the fury of the searing atomic blasts and that place was in the confines of one's own home."[78] The article's treatment of radiation is also noteworthy for it indicated that the ordinary citizen could receive exposure to radiation and "be able to continue on his regular duties."[79] The author, in a seeming afterthought, addressed the lack of basements in most Las Vegas homes, saying that the FCDA could study blasts later on to determine where Las Vegans should go in case of attack.[80] The article's treatment of Operation Annie indicated the relationship between atomic attack and the importance of protecting the home through civil defense. Operation Annie exhibits the cooperative relationship among the Nevada Test Site, the FCDA, and the people of Las Vegas.

Las Vegas not only participated in national civil defense efforts as host to the scientists and civil defense officials who visited the Nevada Test Site, but emerged as a site of refuge for victims of possible nuclear attack. A *Sun* article from 1950 identified handling the refugees as the number-one role for Las Vegas in any atomic attack.[821] The *Review-Journal* speculated that the Pahrump Valley could be used to house refugees should an atomic bomb strike Los Angeles.[82] The 1954 plan, Operation Second Phase, identified Nevada as a second step in civil defense preparation. Rather than preparing for a direct attack, cities in the state were to communicate to nearby states, especially California with the nearby targets of Los Angeles and San Diego, what resources it could provide.[83]

Las Vegas's nonchalant attitude toward civil defense is also evident in the position of the county civil defense director. Cy Crandall, who served in a similar capacity during World War II, assumed the responsibility for Clark County during the early years of the Cold War. Crandall, a local insurance agent, took the job on a part-time basis and went unpaid for his duties.[84] While other cit-

The National Automobile Dealers Association oversaw the donation of automobiles to the tests in civil defense exercises. Students from Las Vegas High School drove the cars to the Nevada Test Site. This car was used in Operation Annie on March 17, 1953. *(Nevada State Museum, Las Vegas)*

ies maintained large bureaucratic agencies devoted to civil defense, Las Vegas seemed content to operate with a part-time volunteer director. Crandall worked with the FCDA and civil defense officials from other cities during tests at the Nevada Test Site. In 1952, he took a group of civil defense workers to watch a detonation from Lee Canyon in what the *Review-Journal* called Operation Unofficial.[85] The local Red Cross served coffee and doughnuts to the approximately two hundred spectators.[86] This exercise embodied Las Vegas's feelings of good-natured support and hospitable entertaining toward civil defense exercises at the test site. Crandall molded Clark County's civil defense program into one that emphasized the importance of the Nevada Test Site work to the national policy of deterrence against the Soviets, and also recognized Las Vegas's important role in the nation's civil defense through providing hospitality and cooperation with the test site.

Clark County began planning for civil defense in 1950 and continued coordinated planning with the state civil defense agency located in the state capital of Carson City. The majority of civil defense preparations and exercises in

Las Vegas corresponded with detonations at the test site. In 1952 and 1953, officials created weeks devoted to civil defense that were timed to coincide with tests at the test site.[87] Activities in 1952 included a poster campaign and newspaper alerts, a far cry from the evacuation exercises of other cities.[88] Las Vegas offered only minor civil defense preparation, mainly limited to ID tags for school children and blood-typing programs. Identification tags did not escape association with the atomic testing program. Brochures about the tags claimed they were offered to Las Vegas schoolchildren because the "community is so closely associated with our country's defense program."[89] The identification tags cost fifty cents, but hardship cases, mainly residents in the predominantly African-American West Las Vegas, received tags without charge.[90] Blood-typing programs, sponsored by the local Red Cross, determined the blood types of local residents and facilitated blood donations, both in case of attack and for general community welfare.

Las Vegas's response to civil defense took the shape it did not only because of the city's proximity to the Nevada Test Site, but also because of its development as a tourist site in the postwar years. National magazines reported on and described the detonations at the site. Articles routinely mentioned it as a place of interest. Articles about tourist opportunities around Las Vegas often featured a trip to the test site or the viewing of an infamous mushroom cloud.[91] *Nevada Highways and Parks*, a free promotional magazine published by the Nevada State Highway Department, also described the Nevada Test Site and Operation Annie.[92] The article described not only the blast, but also the curious spectators. And it let travelers in Nevada know that the blasts caused no danger to individuals traveling on Nevada highways.[93] *Las Vegas: Playtown USA*, a 1955 book on Las Vegas, described the relationship between Las Vegas residents and the test site. The authors argued, "Peaceably and fearlessly does Las Vegas put the atom bomb to good commercial use."[94] Las Vegas casinos even printed photographs of the blasts and gave them out as souvenirs. One such set from the Horseshoe Club in downtown Las Vegas described them as "Actual Photos of Dreaded Atomic Bomb Blasts . . . courtesy of Benny Binion's Horseshoe Club."[95] One of the most famous photos associating an atomic test with Las Vegas showed Vegas Vic, a neon-cowboy marquee for a Las Vegas casino, with a mushroom cloud in the background. This photo circulated throughout the nation, and *Life* magazine selected it as the photo of the week.[96] It went on to later become a best-selling postcard, cementing the relationship between Las Vegas promotion and the Nevada Test Site.[97] This photo, like the promotional ones from Binion's Horseshoe Club, indicates the symbiotic relationship between Las Vegas and the Nevada Test Site. Casino operators were not concerned with the potential harmful effects of fallout; instead, they were concerned that the actual detonations and the shockwaves would frighten tourists away.[98] The Chamber of Commerce provided visitors to Las Vegas with calendars of scheduled tests and tips on the best vantage points from which to watch them.[99]

The marquee at the Royal Nevada welcomes soldiers from Camp Desert Rock at the Nevada Test Site. Photographer unknown. *(Las Vegas News Bureau)*

The Nevada Test Site offered Las Vegas free publicity, and the casinos played it up, welcoming the test site as a neighbor. The city embraced the atomic bomb detonations as an opportunity to promote tourism to southern Nevada.

Civil defense in Las Vegas during the 1950s in many ways reflected the ambivalence of the nation as a whole toward civil defense, but the Nevada Test Site and Las Vegas's development as a tourist destination mediated civil defense efforts in the city. Further, western state development, because of the lack of natural resources in the West, often relied on the federal government for financial support and benefits, an example of which was the establishment of the Nevada Test Site and its subsequent economic benefit to Nevadans.[100] The appropriation of the mushroom cloud and atomic culture occurred across the country, but Las Vegas especially recognized that important economic gain could be had by embracing the Atomic Age and rejecting the hysteria of civil defense.

Conclusions

The unique position of Las Vegas in the 1950s complicates the existing narrative of civil defense. While people undertook modest efforts to protect themselves against the effects of atomic attack, such efforts never existed to the levels that many scholars would have readers believe. The story of Las Vegas during these years offers an understanding of how one city struggled to face the threat of nuclear attack while developing rapidly. Las Vegas's hospitable reaction toward civil defense developed because of the confluence of unique factors in the desert during the 1950s. As time passed and new technologies such as the inter-continental ballistic missile developed, civil defense died a slow death across the country. It became painfully obvious that no preparation would provide protection in case of nuclear attack. Shelters and sirens continued to exist, but were rebranded as valuable resources for use in natural disasters. In the 1990s, a sense of nostalgia for the 1950s developed, and there were resurrected images of fall-out shelters and Bert the Turtle singing about duck-and-cover. The contemporary national memory of civil defense in the 1950s focuses on these seemingly silly relics of the Cold War.[101] In actuality, civil defense presents a complicated story about government power, the role of American citizens, and the changing realities facing the nation after World War II. One cannot simply laugh off civil defense as an artifact of yesterday when it can offer an important glimpse into American culture in the 1950s. Las Vegas, because it developed as a city centered not on industry, but on the manufacture of experiences, chose to reject the dominant discourse on civil defense; instead it concentrated on the cards the city held in the federal monies at the Nevada Test Site and on its new status as a tourist hotspot. The city viewed civil defense without much of the ambivalence of other cities and, instead, embraced it for the value that might be extracted via hospitality and support for the Nevada Test Site, itself a unique tourist attraction.

NOTES

[1]"I Saw a Stairway to Hell," *Parade* (26 April 1953), 6-7.

[2]Allan M. Winkler, *Life under a Cloud: American Anxiety about the Atom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 112.

[3]Spencer R. Weart, "History of American Attitudes toward Civil Defense," in *Civil Defense: A Choice of Disasters,* John Dowling and Evans M. Harrell, eds. (New York: American Institute of Physics, 1987), 13.

[4]Guy Oakes, *The Imaginary War: American Civil Defense and American Cold War Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 7-8.

[5]Winkler, *Life under a Cloud*, 113-14.

[6]Andrew D. Grossman, *Neither Dead nor Red: Civil Defense and American Political Development during the Early Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 2.

[7]*Ibid*.

[8]Elaine Taylor May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 10.

[9]Oakes, *Imaginary War*, 6.

[10]Grossman, *Neither Dead nor Red*, 59.

[11]*Ibid*., 2.

[12]*Ibid*., 57.

[13]Oakes, *Imaginary War*, 34.

[14]*Ibid*., 34.

[15]*Ibid*., 51.

[16]Weart, "History," 14.

[17]Laura McEnaney, *Civil Defense Begins at Home: Militarization Meets Everyday Life in the Fifties* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

[18]*Ibid*., 35.

[19]*Ibid*.

[20]Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (New York: Pantheon, 1985), 325.

[21]JoAnne Brown, "A Is for Atom, B Is for Bomb: Civil Defense in American Public Education, 1948-1963," *Journal of American History* 75: 1 (1988), 70.

[22]*Ibid*.

[23]Boyer, *Bombs Early Light*, 327.

[24]Michael Scheibach, *Atomic Narratives and American Youth* (London: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2003), 87.

[25]Winkler, *Life Under a Cloud*, 115.

[26]Grossman, *Neither Dead nor Red*, 77.

[27]Federal Civil Defense Administration (hereafter FCDA), *1953 Annual Report* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1954); and Grossman, *Neither Dead nor Red*, 77.

[28]Kristina Zarlengo, "Civilian Threat, the Suburban Citadel, and Atomic Age American Women," *Signs—Journal of Women on Culture and Society,* 24:4 (1999), 933.

[29]Sarah A. Lichtman, "Do-It-Yourself Security: Safety, Gender, and the Home Fallout Shelter in Cold War America," *Journal of Design History,* 19:1 (2006), 41.

[30]Grossman, *Neither Dead nor Red*, 63.

[31]*Ibid*., 63.

[32]McEnaney, *Civil Defense*, 4.

[33]May, *Homeward Bound*, 103.

[34]*Ibid*.

[35]McEnaney, *Civil Defense*, 88.

[36]*Ibid*., 108.

[37]May, *Homeward Bound*, 103.

[38]*Ibid*.

[39]McEnaney, *Civil Defense*, 7.

[40]Boyer, *Bomb's Early Light*, 323.

[41]McEnaney, *Civil Defense*, 55.

[42]FCDA, *1953 Annual Report*, 13.

[43]*Ibid.*, 14.

[44]"Port of New York: Vital U. S. Asset Is Vulnerable to Strikes—and Bombs," *Life* (5 November 1951), 130.

[45]"We're Wide Open for Disaster," *Look* (27 February 1951), 29.

[46]"Civilian Defense: New York Shows the World," *Newsweek* (10 December 1951), 22-23.

[47]Examples include "So Much to be Done," *Newsweek* (27 June 1955); "Cities into Targets," *The Nation* (21 May 1960); and "Best Defense? Prayer," *Time* (27 June 1955), 17-18.

[48]McEnaney, *Civil Defense*, 50.

[49]Oakes, *Imaginary War*, 153.

[50]The *Los Angeles Times* and *The New York Times* both paid yearly attention to the drills and ran multiple stories about the activities in the preceding days.

[51]One example is "Only a Few Hear and Heed Air Sirens—Alert Is Flop!" *Los Angeles Examiner* (3 October 1952), 1:3.

[52]Federal Civil Defense Administration, *The Women's Civil Defense Council: A Guide for Its Organization and Utilization* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, June 1957).

[53]Federal Civil Defense Administration, *Civil Defense: Your Government and You* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, ca. 1955).

[54]"Civil Defense Begins at Home," *Ladies' Home Journal* (August 1951), 41.

[55]"Home Nursing Classes for Defense Slated," *Los Angeles Times* (18 January 1951).

[56]"Would-Be Shelter Mogul Folds Up," *The New York Times* (11 September 1951), 24.

[57]"Hazards of Selling Survival Products," *Business Week* (24 February 1962), 62-4.

[58]FCDA, *For Your Information*, no. 149, 4 November 1954.

[59]Sears, Roebuck and Co., *Catalog: Spring and Summer 1955*, 507.

[60]Gallup Poll no. 359, 31 October 1945, in Gallup Brain, online database, cited 14 March 2006.

[61] Gallup Poll no. 517, 2 July 1953.

[62]Gallup Poll no. 568, 1 August 1956.

[63]Margot A. Henriksen, *Dr. Strangelove's America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 200.

[64]Dee Garrison, "Our Skirts Gave Them Courage: The Civil Defense Protest Movement in New York City, 1955-1961," in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*, Joanne Meyerowitz, ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 202.

[65]*Ibid.*, 209.

[66]"Civil Defense Directors Praise Southern Nevada," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (13 March 1953).

[67]Populations of cities on the critical targets list in 1953 ranged from 146,983 (New Britain-Bristol, Connecticut) to 12,911,994 (New York-Northeast New Jersey). Federal Civil Defense Administration, *1953 Annual Report*, 13.

[68]U. S. Department of Energy, *Origins of the Nevada Test Site* (2000), 57.

[69]*Ibid.*, 58.

[70]*Ibid.*, 55, 58.

[71]Dina Titus, *Bombs in the Backyard: Atomic Testing and American Politics* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2001), 74.

[72]U. S. Department of Energy, *Origins of Nevada Test Site*, 60.

[73]http://www.nv.doe.gov/news&pubs/publications/historyreports/news&views/perspective.htm, last accessed 14 March 2006

[74]"A-Blast Shakes Up Southern Nevada," *Las Vegas Morning Review Journal* (18 March 1953).

[75]"The Wax Models Will be Taken on Tour," *Las Vegas Sun* (3 April 1953).

[76]FCDA, *1953 Annual Report*, 1.

[77]John F. Cahlan, "Atomic Test Proves Basement of Home May Be Safest Place," *Las Vegas Morning Review-Journal* (19 March 1953).

[78]*Ibid.*

[79]*Ibid.*

[80]*Ibid.*

[81]"All Out Civilian Defense Plan for County," *Las Vegas Morning Sun* (14 August 1950).

[82]"Pahrump Valley May House Refugees from A-Bomb War," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (23 October 1950).

[83]"Operation Second Phase," MS 28, Box 3, Nevada State Museum, Las Vegas.
[84]"Crandall Will Be Volunteer CDA Director," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (5 September 1951).
[85]"Operation Unofficial," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (25 April 1952).
[86]*Ibid.*
[87]"CD Week, March 15-21,"*Las Vegas Sun* (13 March 1953).
[88]*Ibid.*
[89]"Charlie Michael's Program," MS 28, Box 2, Nevada State Museum, Las Vegas.
[90]"Hardship Cases," MS 28, Box 4, Nevada State Museum, Las Vegas.
[91]J. C. Swayze, "Sightseeing with the Swayzes," *Travel* (October 1955), 66.
[92]Nevada State Highway Department, *Nevada Highways and Parks* (June-December 1953).
[93]*Ibid.*
[94]Katherine Best and Katherine Hillyer, *Las Vegas: Playtown USA* (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1955), 159.
[95]P93-03/999-1006, Photo Archives, Special Collections, University Library, University of Nevada, Reno.
[96]"Wherever You Look There's Danger in Las Vegas" *Life* (12 November 1951), 37.
[97]Titus, *Bombs in the Backyard*, 94.
[98]Howard L. Rosenberg, *Atomic Soldiers: American Victims of Nuclear Experiments* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1980), 82.
[99]Titus, *Bombs in the Backyard*, 93.
[100]Clive S. Thomas, ed., *Politics and Public Policy in the Contemporary American West* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991), 64.
[101]A. Costandina Titus, "The Mushroom Cloud as Kitsch," in *Atomic Culture: How We Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*, Scott C. Zeman and Michael A. Amundson, eds. (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2004), 110.

Notes & Documents

Jeanne Elizabeth Wier's Second Career
Her "Evolution" in History at the University of Nevada

JAMES W. HULSE

We Nevada historians remember Jeanne Elizabeth Wier primarily as the founder of the Nevada Historical Society in 1904. Since she was its secretary and director for the first forty-five years of its existence, it is fitting that we celebrate her professional life as a pioneer in the preservation of the primary sources of the state's history. She was an effective collector of artifacts and editor and publisher of papers and memoirs relating to the state's early days. Tributes for this service are abundant and well deserved.

But this was only half, or less than half, of her professional career. She had a lesser-known role as a forty-one-year faculty member at the University of Nevada. As such, she was the academic homesteader of the historical profession in a backward frontier state that became her home. By entering an unclaimed domain at the end of the nineteenth century and "proving up" on it, as the saying went in the land settlement and mining-claim business, she had an influence on the curricula well beyond her lifetime.

This other role as professor and historian took second place to her interests in the Nevada Historical Society, but it provided the bread-and-butter base of her activities. My purpose is to look briefly at her career in the history department and the

James Hulse retired as professor of history from the University of Nevada, Reno, in 1998. He is the author of many books and articles on Nevada history, on the Nevada higher-education system, and on Nevada's libraries. He has been a member of the Nevada Historical Society since 1952.

university she served while she was building the historical society. She wrote an assessment of the Department of History and Political Science shortly before her retirement that can be used as a reference point. Among the many boxes of Wier's personal papers at the Nevada Historical Society in Reno, the crucial document here is an eighteen-page paper written in early 1940, when she was bitter at most of her colleagues. It is entitled "The Evolution of the Department of History and Political Science and a Statement of Its Present Condition," and dated February 6, 1940 (hereafter cited as "Evolution").

Wier, a native of Iowa, had begun teaching in Rockwell, Iowa, at age nineteen in 1889. She attended the state normal school for years and received a bachelor of didactics degree in 1891. She served as an assistant principal at an Oregon high school from 1893 to 1895 and enrolled at Stanford University in 1896. She had not finished her bachelor's work when she was called to the Nevada State University.

When Wier reached Reno in 1899, her new academic employer was barely a dozen years old, having been moved to Reno in 1886 after several years in Elko. Her recruiter from Nevada, Anne H. Martin, one of its early graduates, had gone to Stanford to pursue an advanced degree and returned to Nevada in 1897. After returning, Martin spent two years as an instructor in history before going to New York for additional study (see Anne Bail Howard, *The Long Campaign: A Biography of Anne Martin* [Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1985], 44).

When Martin left Reno, she intended to return to resume her role as the university's historian, but within two years, Wier had established her claim to the position. She had finished her baccalaureate at Stanford and had made the Nevada turf her own. A prospector might have accused her of claim-jumping, or a homesteader of squatting on another's land. The next few university registers listed Martin as a historian of art, but she clearly had lost or surrendered the domain of history at the university to Wier. Their friendship ended with this development.

By 1904, the year the Nevada Historical Society was founded, the university register listed the courses available in history and political science, all offered by Wier. Students could take Medieval History, History of England to 1485, Constitutional and Political History of the United States to 1840, French Revolution, History of the Pacific Slope, and Nineteenth and Twentieth Century History, and a "Special Course" could be arranged for graduate students. Obviously, not all of the courses could be offered each year, but Wier tried to teach most of them at least in alternate years. She was a serious and energetic teacher.

For the first fourteen years, Wier was the only faculty member in the Department of History and Political Science, although President Joseph E. Stubbs instructed political science classes. In 1913, she recruited Silas Feemster, who had almost completed a master's degree at the University of Nebraska. Feemster provided a range of courses on European history and Latin America. He was an erratic individual with a rustic lifestyle who became the source of scores of colorful stories from colleagues and students in later years: He kept goats

at his home and carried the smell of them into the classroom, and he insisted on home-schooling his children because the local schools were not offering them Greek and Latin. Wier defended his peculiarities for many years.

The papers left by Wier contain much correspondence with the university's regents, presidents, and others about real or perceived slights and insults she received as a member of the faculty. She had access to the attention of several regents, and presidents responded to her complaints with regularity. This propensity for history department faculty members to raise their voices when things seem to be going awry has not been lost.

But in academics, one of the more innovative courses in Wier's portfolio was "Woman in History," introduced in about 1911. It was offered first as a junior-level course (the catalog listed three kinds of courses: senior, junior, and normal school). An early description, slightly modified in later years, identified it as:

> WOMAN IN HISTORY. A study of the position and influence of woman in various ages and among different nations will be followed by lectures upon the vocations now open to woman and the significance of college education in preparation for the same. Lectures on various occasions will be given by representatives of these vocations and professions. Especially designed with reference to the needs of Freshman women, but open to all women students. Both semesters.

This course, with slight modifications, appeared in the University Register or Catalog annually for the next twenty-nine years, until Wier retired. Then it disappeared, not to be restored, in different forms, for thirty years.

By the time Wier retired in 1940, the University of Nevada enrollment had increased nearly fivefold, from 253 students in 1899-1900 to 1,267 in 1939-1940. During the same four decades, the faculty in her department had grown to five. Feemster survived despite several attempts by the Board of Regents to remove him. Charles Rogers Hicks, a specialist in Latin America and the Far East, was hired in 1924, and C. C. Smith, a political scientist, joined the faculty in 1929. Anatole Mazour, whose main field was Russian history, came in 1939. (Shall I confess that I had classes from three of these men? They served the university well, but each of them became tired in his work.)

By the late 1930s, Wier was at odds with Feemster, Hicks, and Smith. She wrote scathing criticism of all three in her summary account of the history and political science department in "Evolution." By that time, she was a bitter, defeated person, convinced that the training she had received at Stanford forty years earlier had made her the arbiter of the discipline of academic history at the University of Nevada. In fact, each of the younger colleagues had more impressive credentials than she.

By the time she retired, Wier's course listing included the basic History of the Americas, the Teaching of History, Institutional Relations of Woman in History, Historical Geography, Westward Expansion in the United States,

Jeanne Wier, Nevada Historical Society founder and director in her doctoral robes, ca. 1910, Tonopah, Nevada. Photographer unknown. *(Nevada Historical Society)*

Prehistory, Research in Nevada History, Medieval Civilization and Institutions, the French Revolution, and thesis work.

So far as I can tell, she never released any of her academic turf. She was content to have others teach in fields secondary to her own interests, such as Latin America and the Far East (Hicks) or American politics (Smith) or Russia (Mazour). But if in doubt, the territory and assignment of courses were hers. There came a time when her younger colleagues had other visions. And she was retired in 1940, two score years and one after her initial appointment.

Wier had her share of recognition during her lifetime. She received an honorary doctorate in the 1920s from the Board of Regents and enjoyed being called Doctor Wier. In 1947, the Nevada legislature passed a resolution commending her for her long service.

So, Wier was more than a bureaucrat, politician, and feminist. She was an activist, serving the women's franchise movement for a short time. She was a crusader for the preservation of the earliest documents of Nevada history. Some of her successors in the profession have had a chuckle at her expense when we heard the stories about her efforts to preserve her youthful facial features against the ravages of age.

She was an imperialistic historian, regarding herself as the personification of history in Nevada. Her mission was the pursuit of historical documents and her determination was to arouse this historically dormant commonwealth from its slumbers. She encountered resentment in her time in the academy, but she gave an urgency and a respectability to the sub-discipline of state history that it had previously lacked. Her reach was more ambitious than her grasp, but more than one of us has been guilty of that syndrome.

History in those early years was a feminine domain. Like music and the arts, it was left to the skills and talents of what was then called "the gentle sex." Nevada's university was, after all, a man's world in most disciplines. It was a land-grant institution, committed to instruction in agriculture, the mechanical arts, and mining.

Wier had rivals among the women, especially in Martin, the suffragist who had lost the homestead to Wier in 1899. Another nemesis, Effie Mona Mack, went on to get a Ph.D. in history at Berkeley, but then was destined to teach for decades at Reno High School and, much later, at the University of Nevada Southern Regional Division, later the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. The history slot at the university in Reno was never available to her, because Wier's successors seemed to have a bias against women. This is a subjective judgment, based on little firm empirical evidence, and with the caveat that Dr. Mack had her own agenda and values, not always consistent with those of younger faculty members.

Among Wier's papers is a letter from 1939 or 1940 to Russell Elliott. He was one of her former students from the early 1930s, who was then studying at the University of California at Berkeley. She commented to him about her problems. As we all know, Russ became her successor as the leading teacher in Nevada history when he joined the faculty in 1949. Wier was still alive at that time. Did he have any contact with her? I do not know.

The Nevada Historical Society was housed in the State Building in downtown Reno for nearly forty years. The Society moved to its current location on the University of Nevada, Reno campus in 1968. Photographer unknown. *(Nevada Historical Society)*

So, what are we to make of Wier, a century after she began her Nevada crusade for history and more than half a century after her death? She left far more unpublished manuscripts in her files than the number of her writings that made their way into print, which may be the case with many historians. In addition to collecting and preserving many papers, she made history a respectable discipline within the academy in Nevada. She was a pioneer in women's studies.

Then there is her "Evolution" paper. It does not do justice to her role as Nevada's most persistent museum builder and document collector during the first forty years of the twentieth century. That document is the diatribe of a person losing her grasp on the mini-empire she had built. She had grown old and bitter, insisting that pedagogical methods ingested before the turn of the century were absolute. She did not evolve as much personally as she had prompted her department to do in her younger years. We also might remember that 1940 was approximately the end of the Great Depression, when all institutions—public and private—were malnourished because of the lack of money. Nevada and its university were not then as open to her initiatives as they had been three decades earlier.

I never knew Professor Wier, although I lived in a house on University Avenue near her own. I often visited the Nevada Historical Society downtown in the old State Building when Clara Beatty was in charge. She had been mentored by Wier and became her successor. It was my privilege to hear stories from her about the old days and occasionally to lobby on her behalf and on behalf of the historical society in Carson City during the 1950s.

The conscientious archivist who organized the Wier papers that had been left to the Nevada Historical Society—Lenore Kosso, I believe—wrote a commentary; she described the papers as incomplete, and word-of-mouth at the historical society asserted that Beatty had purged Wier's papers. I have one disturbing memory of those days. Maybe this was the 1960s, when the historical society was about to move from the State Building (then soon to be demolished) to the campus. When I walked into the State Building one day during the move, Clara was surrounded by boxes of Wier's papers. Sorting and discarding, she was tossing papers right and left into the wastebasket. Clara was not in her best form that day as a historic preservationist. Who knows what was lost?

We are grateful that most of Wier's papers survive, despite Beatty's purging. But I almost wished, when I was looking at them, that the "Evolution" document that Wier wrote just before her retirement had been purged with the others, because it does no credit to her as a member of a university community. Her legacy, just after the centenary of her society's founding, will focus on her inspiration and accomplishments in Nevada history rather than on her frustrations as a faculty member in 1940.

New Resources

New Acquisitions at the Nevada Historical Society

LIBRARY

The Nevada Historical Society has a new mining card catalog. Roger Steininger, a mining-industry consultant and docent at the historical society, has spent the last couple of years perusing the mining serials housed at the Society. He has created citations for Nevada mines, mining districts, and individuals involved in mining. This index will continue to grow for a number of years to come.

Dean Lemon has played an integral part in the project since its inception, sitting at the computer cutting and pasting information, creating the individual cards, and then organizing the cards and filing them into the card catalog. Other docents have also helped with this project and made it possible. I thank all of those who have been involved.

We recently received a donation of a similar type of card index. Created by Robert C. Horton of the Nevada mining industry, this index was donated by Ron Hess of the Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology. Mr. Horton was employed at the Nevada Bureau of Mines and worked on the index there from 1956 to 1966. This index has been added to the catalog mentioned above creating a valuable reference tool for anyone researching the Nevada mining industry.

Michael Maher
Librarian

PHOTOGRAPHY

Among the rarest new acquisitions every year are the scans and copies of photographs that Dave Stafford, local postcard dealer, brings in. Among the hundreds of postcards and snapshots copied this year are the public swimming pool at Winnemucca around 1940, Upper Bridge Street in Winnemucca around 1907, the Battle Mountain Catholic Church around 1935, sheep headed for market in Schurz around 1920, the Blair House in Fallon during the 1930s, Emigrant Pass before the freeway was constructed, and the Wildhorse Dam near Elko in the 1940s.

The new additions also fill out our collection of Nevada schools, with shots of Elko, Pershing, and Humboldt county schools, including the Humboldt County High Gymnasium designed by famed architect Russell Mills. A unique personal snapshot shows students at the Eureka County Normal School (teachers' training school) in front of their Christmas tree on December 21, 1919. In the scenic category, there is an excellent real-photo postcard of Painted Rock and the Truckee River before Interstate 80 was built.

New street and business scenes include shots of Elko businesses, such as the Elko Roller Mills, as well as less-common views of businesses in Reno, Minden, and Carson City. Among the new ranching scenes are the RH Dude Ranch, near Carson City and the T&T Ranch at the south end of the Amargosa Valley. These photographs date from the 1920s and 1930s.

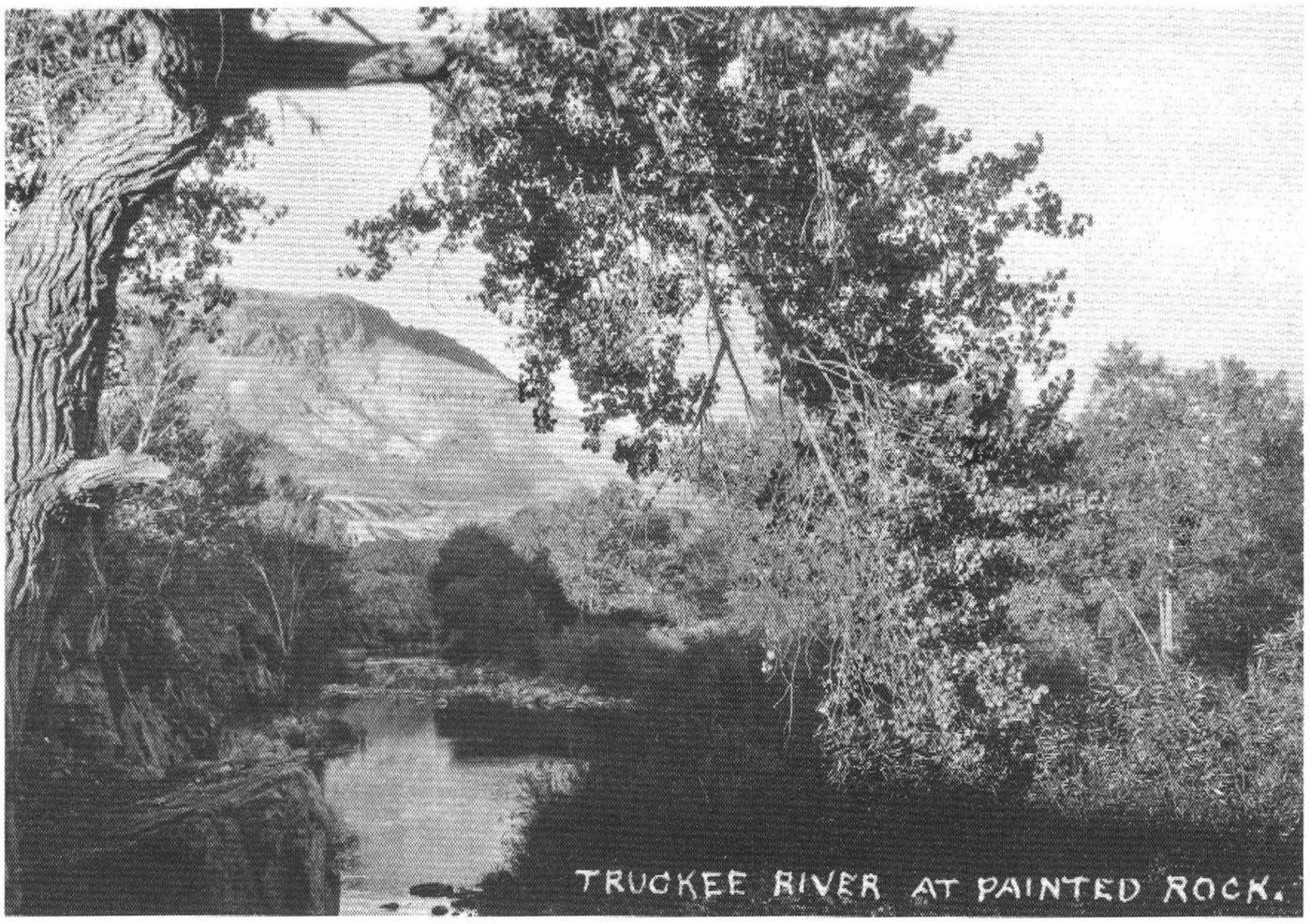
In the genre of mining, copies include testing activity at Art Langan's placer mine near Goldfield and snapshots of miners at the Whitehouse Mine on the edge of that town. These snapshot photographs date from the 1930s.

Students at the Eureka County Normal School, anonymous snapshot, December 21, 1919. Photographer unknown. *(Nevada Historical Society)*

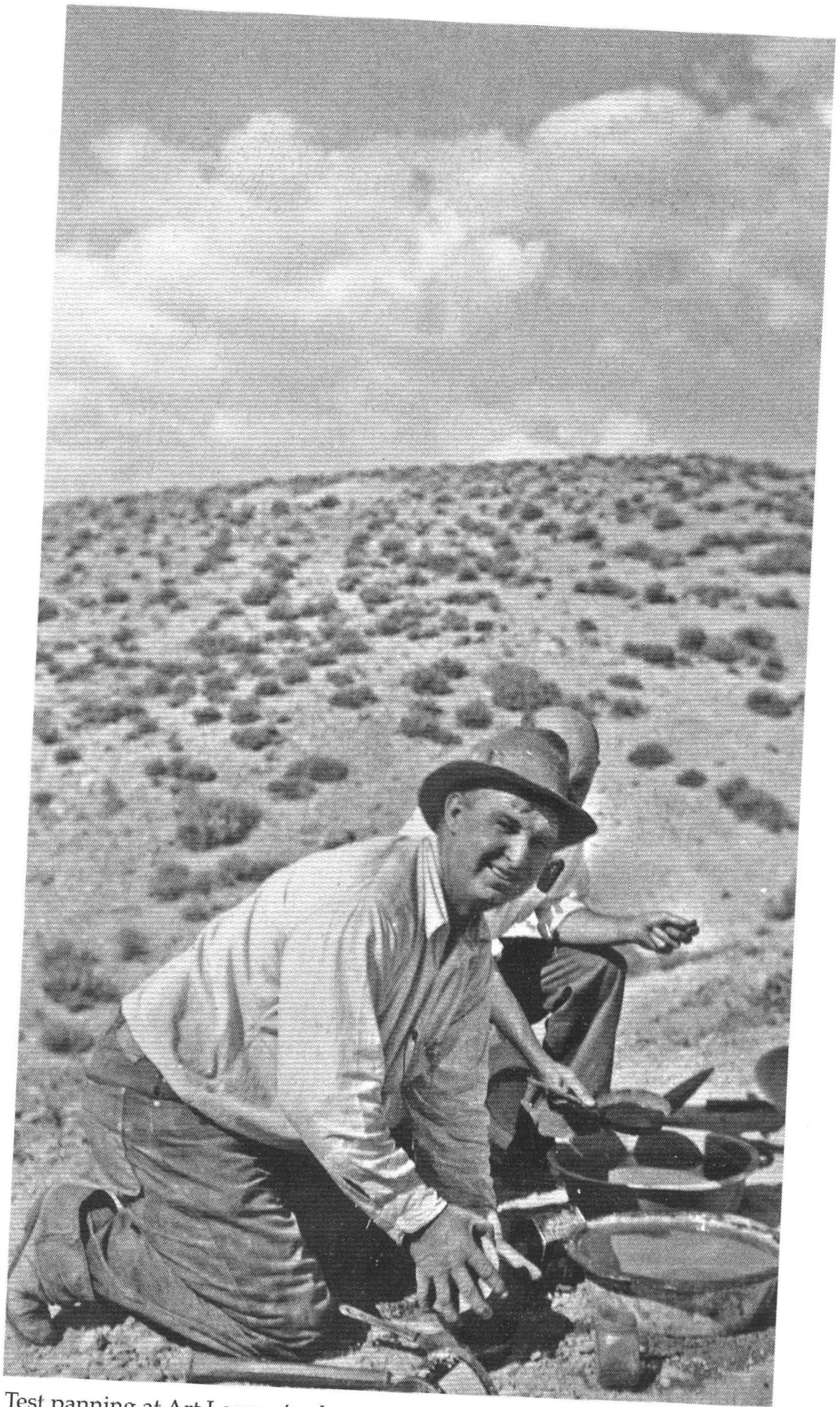
Other possibly unique images include a snapshot of the *Nevada State Journal's* Rambler trailer around 1930, as well as a possible self-portrait by the noted Nevada photographer Thomas J. Osborne. Creating one's own postcards was popular in the heyday of real-photo postcards. Other examples copied include images of children sledding or riding in goat carts (the predecessor of go carts, if you will).

Among the many excellent new images of Native Americans in a series of wheat harvest scenes at the Duck Valley Shoshone Reservation dating from the early 1900s, several cyanotype (blue-print process) portraits of Paiute women during the same period, a rare Polaroid print of the school at Schurz, and an exceedingly rare photograph of the Native American (probably Shoshone) camp at Aurora around 1904.

Lee Brumbaugh
Curator of Photography

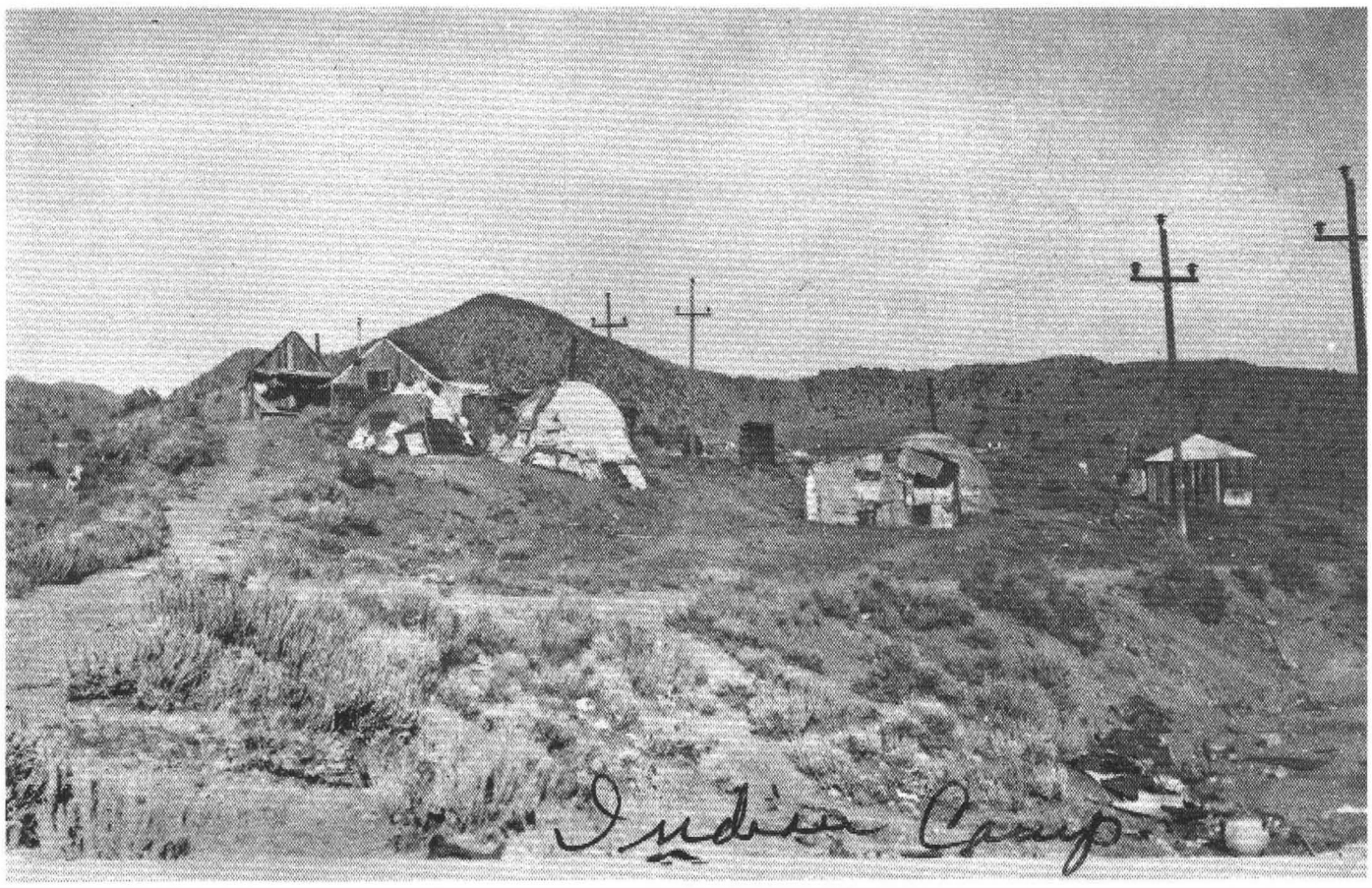


Truckee River at Painted Rock, real photo postcard, ca. 1940. Photographer unknown.
(Nevada Historical Society)



Test panning at Art Langan's placer mine near Goldfield, anonymous snapshot, ca. 1940. *(Dave Stafford Collection, Nevada Historical Society)*

Nevada State Journal Rambler trailer, Reno, anonymous snapshot, ca. 1930s. *(Dave Stafford Collection, Nevada Historical Society)*



Native American camp at Aurora, anonymous snapshot, ca. 1904. *(Dave Stafford Collection, Nevada Historical Society)*

Manuscripts

Grosh Brothers Letters

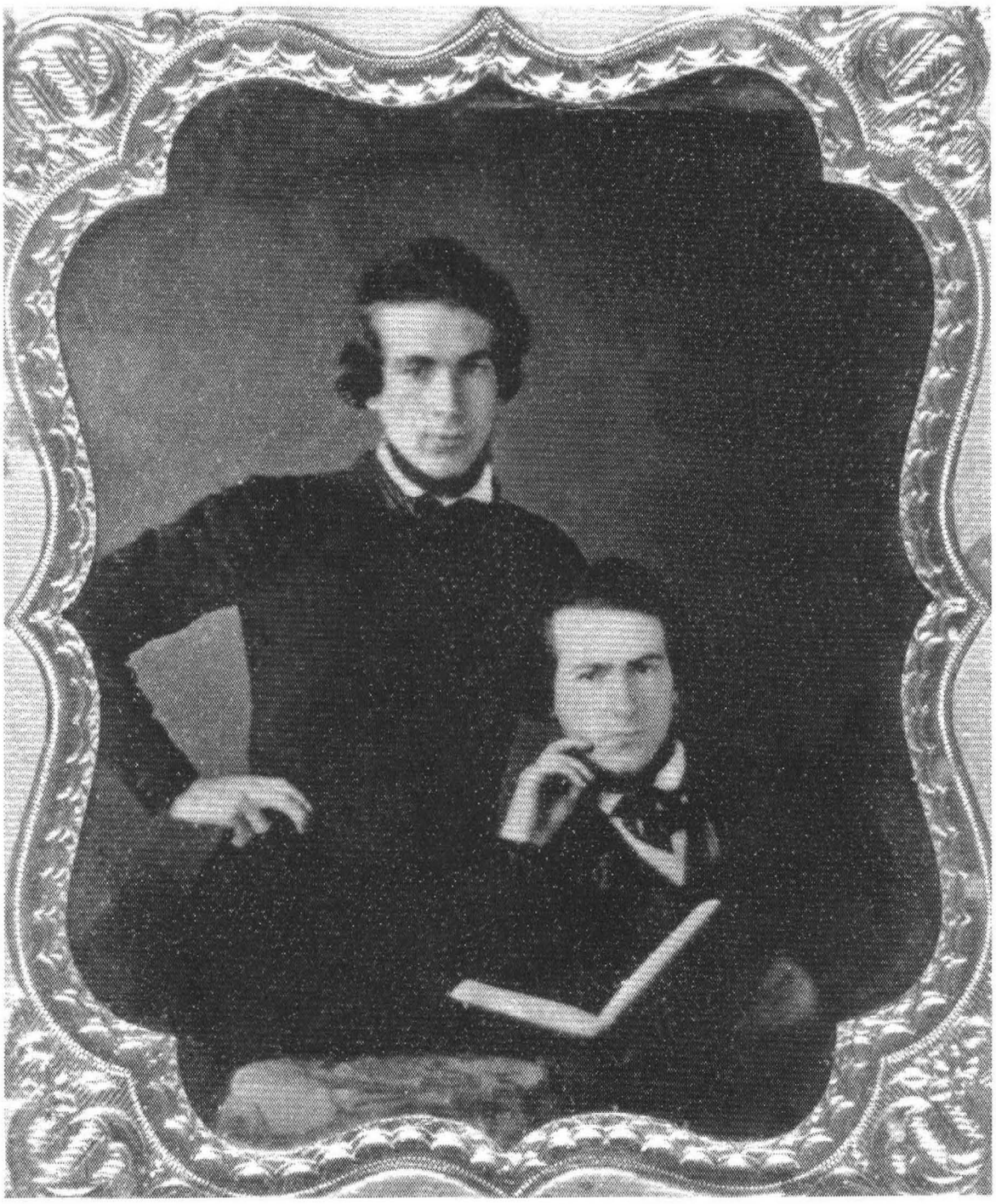
In March of this year, the Nevada Historical Society completed the acquisition of a manuscript collection that represents a long-lost and key element of the state's documentary heritage. The collection consists of some one hundred documents from the Grosh family which include letters written by brothers Ethan Allen and Hosea Ballou Grosh, miners of the 1850s whose story is inextricably tied to early Nevada and the discovery of the fabulously rich Comstock Lode. The group of documents constitutes, arguably, the society's most important nineteenth-century research collection.

The collection chiefly contains letters written between 1849 and 1857 by the Grosh brothers, ambitious sons of a prominent Universalist minister of Pennsylvania. They journeyed to California while in their early twenties to participate in the Gold Rush, and then spent eight years seeking riches in the gold and silver regions of California and Nevada. These letters are accompanied by related financial documents, several photographs (including a studio portrait of the brothers), and letters by other family members dating to 1880.

In literate, detailed missives to their parents and other relatives, Ethan Allen and Hosea documented their departure by ship from Philadelphia with a company of Pennsylvania gold seekers, their travel overland through Mexico to the Pacific, and their arrival in a tumultuous San Francisco. The letters go on to describe the brothers' months in that city as they battled illness and made preparations to head off to the gold fields, and their mining activities in the Mother Lode country, chiefly in and around the mining camps of El Dorado County. The Groshes did not find much gold, but they remained cheerfully optimistic that they would make their fortunes in the West.

By 1853, the brothers were extending their searches for gold over the Sierra Nevada into what is now Nevada, but was then part of western Utah Territory. They moved through Carson Valley and around Lake Tahoe, eventually ending up in Gold Canyon on the Carson River, near present-day Dayton. Their letters describe mining activities in the vicinity of the canyon and the daily, often violent lives of the miners there, as well as the brothers' own working of placers in the canyon's streams, as they gradually made their way uphill toward where the Comstock Lode would shortly be discovered. There is also comment on political matters and the behavior of non-mining settlers, most of them Mormons, in the valleys bordering the eastern Sierra.

The Groshes returned to California each winter, but kept coming back with warm spring weather to Gold Canyon, where they soon began looking for silver instead of gold—the precious metal that consistently eluded them in California. During the fall of 1856, they uncovered in Gold Canyon a rich vein of silver that they described



Allen and Hosea Grosh, ca. 1849, just before they left for California. Photographer unknown. *(Grosh Family Papers, Nevada Historical Society)*

as "a perfect monster." Back in California that winter they sold the unproductive gold claim they had been working for $150; a few months later they returned to Gold Canyon to continue their search for silver. Assays of what they found yielded promising results and they set about organizing a mining company—even locating a financial backer. A "Mexican silver miner" in the canyon offered his opinion that rock from the brothers' major vein was "the outcrop of a very rich mine of silver." "There can be no question as to our success," they wrote exuberantly to their father.

Then, in the latter part of 1857, disaster struck. First, in August, the brothers' mining partner and financial backer, George Brown, was murdered. Later that same

month Hosea struck his foot with a pick ax. Blood poisoning set in and, despite the attentions of local physicians, he died on September 2. Two months after the grief-stricken Ethan Allen vividly described Hosea's death in a letter to their father, he and a friend, Maurice Bucke, left Gold Canyon for California. Unfortunately, they were caught by an early snowstorm in the mountains and suffered frozen legs. When they were rescued, Bucke allowed his feet to be amputated and he survived—eventually to become a prominent physician in Canada. Ethan Allen refused to have his limbs removed and he passed away on December 19.

The letters of Ethan Allen and Hosea Grosh, which remained in the hands of their brother Warren's descendents—and survived at least three house fires—offer readers a fascinating and unparalleled eyewitness account of life and events in the California Gold Rush camps and in the "Washoe Country" of western Utah in the 1850s. The brothers' observations of mid-1850s Nevada provide us with unique information on mining in the region, the society of the mining camps, territorial political affairs, frontier medicine, and the early development of the Comstock Lode. The Groshes' discovery in 1857 of an offshoot of the lode (which led some nineteenth-century observers—and Grosh family members—to claim that they had found the lode itself) forms an essential part of the story of that great silver deposit whose exploitation shaped Nevada's early history. Whether a continuation of their determined search for silver would have led the brothers to the Comstock Lode proper is something we will never have an answer for, though the question is made all the more intriguing by their sudden, tragic deaths.

The process of obtaining the Grosh documents was an arduous one. It extended over eight years and involved not only the staff of the Nevada Historical Society, but also numerous other individuals in a continuing effort to acquire the funds needed to purchase the collection. A fundraising project began in 1999, soon after the existence of the Grosh letters was publicized and after descendents of the Grosh brothers, represented by Charles T. Wegman of New Jersey, offered the documents to the society. The Wegman family made the items available at a price well below their appraised value, believing that they belonged in Nevada and that the state should have the first opportunity to acquire them. Over the next eight years, during which the Grosh descendents waited patiently and did not increase the price of the collection or offer it to any other institution, the Nevada Historical Society sought to raise the $210,000 needed for the purchase. The fundraising was finally completed early in 2008, with a number of individuals and organizations, as well as the state of Nevada, being instrumental in the success of the project. Contributors to the purchase fund include Marjorie Lee Mortensen, Marilyn Bremer, the Mary Bremer Foundation, the Charles H. Stout Foundation, the Nevada History of Medicine Foundation, the Geological Society of Nevada Foundation, and Dale V. Miller. Crucial to the fundraising effort was an appropriation by the 2005 Nevada State Legislature of $160,000 to be used toward the purchase of the Grosh letters. Also participating in essential ways in the long and complicated project to bring the letters back to Nevada were Fred Holabird of Holabird-Kagin Americana in

Reno, who first brought the Grosh descendents and the Nevada Historical Society together; Nevada state Senator Bob Coffin who championed the allocation of state funds for the acquisition; Bob Stoldal of the Nevada Board of Museums and History; Dr. Anton P. Sohn of the University of Nevada School of Medicine; Roger C. Steininger of the Nevada Geological Society; Douglas B. McDonald, historian and longtime friend of the Nevada Historical Society; the Nevada Cultural Affairs Foundation; and Scott Sisco, former acting director of the Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs. Peter L. Bandurraga, who was director of the Nevada Historical Society during most of the fundraising work, initiated the project. Without the efforts of those noted above and the combination of private generosity and public support that was exhibited in the endeavor, the acquisition of the Grosh brothers' letters would not have been possible.

The Grosh letters and all related family documents are now available for use by researchers in the Nevada Historical Society's research library. The letters, many of which are extremely fragile, are presently being scanned for preservation purposes and samples will be placed on the society's website. A critical edition of the letters will be published in book form, it is hoped before the end of next year.

On the evening of April 16, 2008, soon after the last of the Grosh documents was received by the society, a special event celebrating their return to the state, and recognizing those who made it happen, was held at the Nevada Historical Society in Reno. In attendance were Charles Wegman, his mother, Naomi Thompson, and her husband, Harry Thompson. Nevada historians Sally Zanjani and Ron James spoke to the standing-room-only crowd about the importance of the Grosh letters to the history of Nevada and the Western mining frontier, as did Michael Fischer, director of the Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs, who also noted the significance of the cooperative private and public effort that enabled the state to obtain the collection. The highlight of the evening occurred when Charles Wegman, in sometimes emotional remarks, described the importance of the Grosh brothers and their story to his family, and spoke about the pride the family felt in that historical connection. He expressed the family's deep satisfaction that the Grosh documents had at last made their way back to Nevada, and commented on the feeling of kinship with Nevadans and their state that he felt through the Grosh brothers' ties. It is safe to say that Nevadans share his satisfaction and his happiness that the letters of Ethan Allen and Hosea Grosh have returned to the Silver State after a century and half.

Eric N. Moody
Curator of Manuscripts

Museum

In recent months, the Nevada Historical Society has acquired a number of interesting artifacts through generous donations from the public. These items represent important aspects of Nevada's history that might be lost to future generations.

In the area of housekeeping mementos comes a donation from Mr. Ron Baker. The collection has several early laundering artifacts including five bars of Crystal White Family Soap, made by the Colgate-Palmolive-Peet Co., which dates back to 1928; an early wicker laundry basket; a Dubl Handi linen washboard made by the Columbus Washboard Co., the oldest such company in the United States, dating back to 1895. Until 1930, the company produced the "Bear Easy." From 1931 to 1938, twenty-two other washboard names were introduced to the market including the Dubl Handi. An early tin washing plunger was also included in this donation.

Early laundry items. Photograph by Sheryln Hayes-Zorn. *(Nevada Historical Society)*

In the area of gaming, the society has acquired a special collection. The collection of Harolds Club casino memorabilia was received from the estate of Betty Hoyt. She worked at Harolds Club, representing them through publicity photographs, riding in float parades, and working as a dealer on the same shift and table for twenty-three years. The collection includes two photo albums of publicity, parade, club photos, and Betty's career highlights including her retirement party and correspondence. There are also several casino mementos that Harolds Club produced including a commemorative decanter, die, pens, cards, and some additional local casino items.

In the area of political and commemorative memorabilia comes a donation from Patty Cafferata. The gift includes several commemorative medallions: One-hundredth birthday for Washoe County Library in 2004; Thirtieth Anniversary of the last run of the Virginia and Truckee Railroad, in 1950; Governor Kenny Guinn, Lincoln County and Esmeralda County Celebrations in 1990, and the Trinity Episcopal Church in Reno. There are also pins and buttons that support Artown, Reno, and the city of Caliente, Nevada. A unique political garment is a canvas apron, ca. 1950s, bearing the message "Be a builder of the GOP America—Give Ike the Workers' Russell for Governor and Bell for Lt. Governor."

Sheryln Hayes-Zorn
Registrar/Curator

Top: Lincoln County commemorative medallion from 1990. Photograph by Sheryln Hayes-Zorn. *(Nevada Historical Society)*

Left: Trinity Episcopal Church, Reno. Photograph by Sheryln Hayes-Zorn. *(Nevada Historical Society)*

Book Reviews

Through the Glass Ceiling: A Life in Nevada Politics. By Sue Wagner, interviews and introduction by Victoria Ford, edited by Richard Hoadley and Kathleen Coles (Reno: University of Nevada Oral History Program, 2005)

Sue Wagner served in the Nevada Legislature for two decades, first as an assemblywoman (1974-80), then as a senator (1980-90), and finally as senate president (1991-95), a role constitutionally assigned to the lieutenant governor. During her distinguished tenure, the Reno Republican cultivated an expertise in criminal justice issues, advocated aggressively for Nevada's women, and gained the respect of many in the legislative arena, regardless of party affiliation. Considered a rising star, Wagner found her political career all but ended after a devastating plane crash in 1990. Working through the great pain and illness caused by her injuries, Wagner fulfilled her duties as lieutenant governor, the first woman elected to that office in Nevada, but chose not to run again. In addition, she reared two children—mostly as a single mother after the untimely death of her husband—and worked at the Desert Research Institute. Currently a member of the Nevada Gaming Commission, Wagner recounts to the oral historian Victoria Ford the many stories of her life as a Nevada wife, mother, and politician.

Consisting of edited transcripts from forty-two interviews recorded over a three-year period, *Through the Glass Ceiling* is organized around the mileposts in Wagner's life. Born Sue Pooler in Maine in 1940, she and her family relocated to Arizona ten years later. She graduated from the University of Arizona, where she majored in political science, in 1962, and followed that with a master's degree in Civil War military history from Northwestern University, where she studied General George McClellan's papers even though they "looked like a chicken had gotten into ink and run across a piece of paper" (54). She then began doctoral studies at Ohio State University. During the summer between graduate schools, while at home in Tucson, she met Peter Wagner, a doctoral candidate at the University of Arizona. They married in the summer of 1964 and moved to Reno after Peter was hired by the Desert Research Institute. Two children, Kirk and Kristina, soon rounded out the family. Sue was first elected to the Nevada Assembly in 1974 and was re-elected in every subsequent election in which she ran. In 1980, Peter was killed in a plane crash, and Sue won her first election to the Senate. During her third senatorial term, she ran for lieutenant

governor, and it was during this campaign that she was severely injured in the plane crash that changed the trajectory of her life.

Wagner fills in that outline with captivating details. Sometimes with tears, other times with anger, yet more often with laughter, Wagner candidly relates the challenges she experienced as a public and private person. She reminisces about her first campaign when "hardly anybody asked about issues, about what [her] position was on education or the growth of the state or whatever going on at the time" and, instead, questioned her competency as a mother (132). Once elected, however, she had a direct effect on those issues and many others, such as abortion, laetrile, and the Equal Rights Amendment, all of which she discusses with Ford. Clearly winking, Wagner, the "big sports nut" (434), remembers disarming potentially antagonistic voters with a discussion about earned run averages when they asked her about the ERA (130). Wagner's accomplishments have been considerable, and her oral history clearly conveys her delight in her children, her pride in her work, and her concern for her constituents and her adopted state.

Although Wagner impressively recalls numerous names and dates, this book is much more a color commentary than it is a play-by-play recitation on legislative issues and political players. As with all oral histories, it is "a personal account of a remembered past" (vi), and the occasional error of fact in the text is to be expected. Errors in the index, however, are not, and yet they seem to have crept in with names misspelled, a page reference incorrect, and an assumption of a birth name mistaken. Particularly grievous, though, is the omission of subject entries. Wagner vividly explains her landmark legislative efforts to combat domestic violence, yet the index does not contain such a subject entry. Nor are there entries to lead the inquiring reader to her comments about her considerable efforts on sex education, prison reform, or even the establishment of Nevada's Duck Stamp.

At well over four hundred pages, this book is not easily read from cover to cover in one sitting. It is, instead, a collection of conversations upon which one is allowed to eavesdrop and a priceless opportunity to tap into the memories of one of Nevada's most remarkable politicians.

Dana Bennett
Arizona State University

The Civilian Conservation Corps in Nevada: From Boys to Men. By Renée Corona Kolvet and Victoria Ford (Reno and Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2006)

The Civilian Conservation Corps in Arizona's Rim Country: Working in the Woods. By Robert J. Moore (Reno and Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2006)

Although there has not been a major history of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) as a national program since John Salmond's *The Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942: A New Deal Case Study* (Duke, 1967), a number of historical studies have emerged in recent years that view the CCC from the state, rather than federal, level. Generally, these state-level accounts have tended to be more narrative than analytical. That is the case with these two new books on the Civilian Conservation Corps in Nevada and Arizona. Both provide a narrative of the work of the CCC in the conservation of both natural and human resources. They are both successful in telling the story of the CCC and giving readers a good sense of the CCC's accomplishments and contributions in Nevada and the national forests of Arizona. Neither work, however, seeks to challenge or revise the established historiography of the CCC.

Renée Corona Kolvet (an archeologist) and Victoria Ford (an oral historian) have based their book, *The Civilian Conservation Corps in Nevada: From Boys to Men* on primary documentary research, using records in the National Archives (particularly camp inspection reports), Nevada newspapers, CCC camp newspapers, and oral-history interviews with former enrollees.

The book is divided into two parts. Part I, "The Nation, Nevada, and the New Deal," provides the setting and historical context for the study, describing the Great Depression's effects—both nationally and in the Silver State—and the federal government's program to address it. It also addresses the tensions between rural Nevada communities and the influx of CCC boys, many of them from eastern cities.

Part II, "CCC Contributions and the Legacy Left Behind," contains seven chapters detailing the CCC's work in Nevada, supplemented by the reminiscences of former CCC enrollees. In a state where more than 80 percent of the land is in federal ownership, the CCC worked in every section of the state, leaving a legacy of projects that was remarkable and diverse. The agencies of the Department of the Interior made especially extensive use of CCC labor. Among Interior's agencies, the Grazing Service (a forerunner of the Bureau of Land Management) had the most camps, which carried out range improvements and built roads across Nevada's vast public lands. The Bureau of Reclamation used enrollees to improve Rye Patch and Lahontan dams and to rehabilitate aging canals and ditches on the Newlands Project, near Fallon. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service used CCC labor to develop administrative facilities for the Ruby Lake and Charles Sheldon National Wildlife Refuges. Camps under National Park Service supervision built swimming beaches, boating facilities,

and scenic overlooks at the new Lake Mead National Recreation Area, and a campground at Lehman Caves National Monument. They also gave a boost to Nevada's state park system, building the Lost City Museum (to house artifacts they excavated from sites to be inundated by Lake Mead), developing the Valley of Fire and Cathedral Gorge state parks, and restoring Fort Churchill. Agencies of the Department of Agriculture used CCC labor as well. The Soil Conservation Service used enrollees to combat erosion and flooding along the washes of southern Nevada. The United States Forest Service's CCC enrollees built ranger stations, roads, fire lookouts, campgrounds, and recreational facilities, particularly at Mount Rose, Mount Charleston, and Lamoille Canyon. Finally, the CCC did not work only for land management agencies; the Navy used the CCC at the Hawthorne Naval Ammunition Depot to build roads, an airfield, and a water system for the base.

While Kolvet and Ford take a comprehensive approach to the CCC in Nevada, examining all the agencies statewide that used CCC labor, Robert J. Moore's scope is narrower. *The Civilian Conservation Corps in Arizona's Rim Country* focuses only on the national forests of the Mogollon Rim and White Mountains. Moore, formerly a high-school history teacher in Scottsdale, Arizona, worked summers as a seasonal interpreter for the Forest Service. With the aid of some of his students, he researched and produced an exhibit on the CCC for the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest's Mogollon Rim Lakes Visitor Center. His book developed out of that project.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the CCC program in Arizona, including a look at the work of the CCC-Indian Division on the White Mountain Apache Reservation. Chapter 2 contains brief histories of each of the fourteen CCC camps in the area. The remaining chapters alternate between the reminiscences of CCC veterans and descriptions of various aspects of camp life, such as camp newspapers and the recreational and educational opportunities available to enrollees outside of their work hours. According to Moore, the CCC made significant contributions to the development of the Apache, Sitgreaves, Coconino, and Tonto national forests. Enrollees built campgrounds, trails, roads, fire lookouts, telephone lines, and a number of other improvements that enabled the Forest Service to manage the land more effectively. The program also helped the Forest Service to standardize its facilities, particularly ranger stations. Before the Depression, these had largely been developed in a haphazard way, but the manpower available through the CCC allowed the construction of "administrative complexes" based on standard plans developed by the regional office in Albuquerque (14-15). In addition to construction, enrollees also killed prairie dogs (which competed with cattle for range grasses), tended saplings in the forest nursery, and fought forest fires. The reminiscences of former enrollees also provide a view into how young men experienced the CCC, the Forest Service, and life in rural Arizona. Their memories of intercamp sports rivalries, practical jokes, mess-hall chow, and their own physical development (many enrollees recall gaining weight and muscle as a result of hard work and ample food) enliven the book.

Both volumes are well illustrated with photographs depicting life in the CCC camps and representative examples of CCC work projects. In both books, the illustrations are spread throughout the text, rather than being segregated in a separate section. Neither book has many maps; however, the two volumes diverge markedly in the quality of the maps. Kolvet and Ford's volume includes an excellent and professionally produced map of the state of Nevada, showing the locations of all CCC camps in the state (55). By compiling the data and presenting it spatially in map form, the authors have created a map that is a useful scholarly contribution in itself. In Moore's book, however, the editors chose to employ two puzzling, hand-drawn maps that are not to scale and are difficult to read (7, 11). Both books contain useful appendices, listing the camps and providing their names, camp numbers, locations, supervising agencies, and dates of operation.

Kolvet and Ford have made a useful addition to Nevada history and provide a context for understanding the legacy the CCC left in the Silver State. Their work should also help establish and demonstrate the significance of the CCC program in Nevada, aiding those who seek the historic preservation of the remaining examples of the CCC's contribution to Nevada's built environment and cultural landscapes. Moore's book is of more limited scope, but it will still be quite useful to readers interested in the CCC, and will aid in better interpreting and preserving the CCC heritage in Arizona's national forests. Both books are useful works of regional public history. The CCC is often described as the most widely popular of all the New Deal programs. From the memories of participants and the record of concrete accomplishments detailed in these books, it is easy to see why.

Douglas W. Dodd
California State University, Bakersfield

The Glen Canyon Reader. Edited by Mathew Barrett Gross (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2003)

In the American West there is no more potent symbol of unsustainability and industrial hubris than Glen Canyon Dam and Lake Powell behind it, also known as Lake Foul by those who have spent volunteer time cleaning up after motor boats and houseboats. In the heady days of the late 1950s and early 1960s, when baby boomers were being born, the West was on a roll, and the Bureau of Reclamation and the Colorado River Storage Project sought to turn the entire Colorado River Basin into a series of well-plumbed reservoirs. For dam builders and houseboat enthusiasts, their finest accomplishment was completing Glen Canyon Dam a few years ahead of Congressional passage of the National Environmental Policy Act. For river runners and environmentalists, led by the irascible author Ed Abbey, no greater slur upon the western landscape exists. Cactus Ed railed against the dam from the time he floated through Glen Canyon and wrote about it in *Desert Solitare.*

Later, the Sierra Club president David Brower would regret the decision of conservationists who won the 1956 fight against a dam in Dinosaur National Monument at Echo Park, but who did not oppose a dam in Glen Canyon because "it was the place no one knew." A decade after the dam was built even Arizona native and United States Senator Barry Goldwater confessed if he could do it again, "I'd vote against it [the dam]. I've become convinced that, while water is important, particularly for those of us who live in the desert, it's not that important."

In *The Glen Canyon Reader* its editor, Mathew Barrett Gross, sets out to find the truth of Glen Canyon and to prove that, indeed, authors and explorers did know about its marvels. This book is a superb elegy of place and must reading for anyone concerned about the future of the American West and the conflicting values Americans hold. With excerpts from the 1776 Dominguez-Escalante Journal to John Wesley Powell's "The Exploration of Glen Canyon" to comments by Zane Gray, Barry Goldwater, Russell Martin, Katie Lee, John McPhee, Wallace Stegner, and even Floyd Dominy, Gross presents a finely tuned look at a place we'll never see. Though most of the book is a love song to a drowned canyon, it's a magnificent lament, not a dark and dreary funeral dirge.

And, of course, there's always hope. Ed Abbey wrote *The Monkey Wrench Gang* about a band of eco-activists trying to blow up the dam. Groups such as Living Waters want to "Reclaim the Bureau—600 dams, 100 years, Too Much!" But the sad truth is that Lake Powell, home of the Blue Death, has three million annual visitors and the longest shore line in America at 1,960 miles. Because of the striking attraction of red rocks, warm sun, and perennial blue skies, Arizona has more registered motor boats than any state in the nation. Ellen Meloy acknowledges, "Sooner or later everyone must come to terms with Lake Powell's duality as hubris or techno-triumph" (161).

For environmentalists, Glen Canyon Dam represents everything wrong with industrial America, and the flooding of places so spectacular that Major Powell named them Cathedral in the Desert, Music Temple, and Hidden Passage. The dam and the

adjacent reservoir, rapidly silting in, seem to be a gigantic environmental mistake wreaking irreparable damage not only to Glen Canyon but also to the Grand Canyon, which is just downstream. How could we have done this to ourselves? Editor Gross has located superb essays about nature lost in the flooded canyons, and he sympathizes with Bruce Berger, who wrote, "The enormity that two hundred of the most beautiful river miles imaginable could be erased by one wedge of concrete has taken three decades to realize" (154). But the book lacks a coherent conclusion.

In the acknowledgments Gross states, "This book is dedicated to all those who would again see a free-flowing Colorado River. To paraphrase Vaughn Short: Fight. Fight to Win. Win" (viii). Fine words, those, but how about a little realism? The dam is not going away and the reservoir's not working. We're in a drought, big time, and Lake Powell has leveled off at about 49 percent of capacity. Monthly, thousands of Americans are still moving to Phoenix and Las Vegas. Los Angeles is in a deep drought, too, and what with global warming, no one is turning off their air conditioners.

Yes, a younger generation needs to know what fools we were in the 1960s and how the Glen Canyon Dam should never have been built, and should never have created, in Wallace Stegner's phrase, "one of the great water playgrounds [because] in gaining the lovely and the usable, we have given up the incomparable" (142). But we are an excessive consumer society and we built the damn dam, so we have to live with it. We can hope that a second edition of this book will have additional essays addressing marinas that can't be utilized because the water level's too low, the impact of three-dollar-a-gallon gasoline on gas-guzzling houseboats, and what can be done to protect the Colorado River system, such as stopping diversions from the Yampa River upstream. Another position worth advocating is allowing only kayaks and canoes up the Escalante River to try to return a wilderness experience to a place Jared Farmer writes "has changed from sacred to desecrated" (192).

The Glen Canyon Reader is a fine, timely book, part of "the literature of the lost," but monkey-wrenching aside, the dam is not going anywhere. A younger generation needs to know what was submerged, but also how to love a landscape on foot or with personal paddle power. Glen Canyon Dam remains a concrete metaphor to a time and place in American society when dam builders could do no wrong and the urban expansion of the West seemed limitless. As a nation and as a society, we persist in ignoring our limits, but if the creation of Lake Powell represents twentieth-century American eco-arrogance, what are we doing wrong now? At the end of the twenty-first century what other environmental mistakes will we have created?

Perhaps it's time for environmentalists to quit preaching to the choir and instead start a dialogue with the motorheads, the houseboaters, the ATV-users, those folks who have a very different perspective on how to play in the West's open spaces. As Walt Kelly's cartoon character Pogo so eloquently opined, "We have met the enemy and he is us."

Andrew Gulliford
Fort Lewis College

Pedestals and Podiums: Utah Women, Religious Authority, and Equal Rights. By Martha Sonntag Bradley (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2005)

Pedestals and Podiums is a work of deep personal resonance for many Mormon women, its author included. A case study of the "high voltage intersection [between] feminism and the Christian Right" (xv), Martha Sontag Bradley's book details Mormon women's various and contentious debates and campaigns over the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. Bradley's introduction makes clear her investment in the story and promises a narrative centered on the gut-wrenching pains, disappointments, and sisterly betrayals women experienced on both sides of the debate over the ERA. Like no other issue before it, the ERA ripped apart a century and a half of spiritual sisterhood among Mormon women. Bradley's book is, if nothing else, an attempt to heal that rift.

Bradley's initial chapters argue that although both sides rooted their campaigns in Mormon history and tradition, it was rhetorical style, as much as political difference, that made the ERA such a divisive issue among Mormon women. Anti-ERA forces spoke in emotional terms, with coded language that marked them as "true" Mormons. They portrayed the ERA as a grave threat to all that Mormon women held dear: Marriage, family, obedience to church authority, the sacredness of motherhood, and the divinity of gender-specific roles. Among Mormon women, the rational arguments feminists made for sexual equality "fell flat compared to the dramatically dire predictions that came from their opponents" (123).

The middle chapters offer a meticulously detailed account of Mormon women's varied, sometimes troubled, and often polarized relationship to the events preceding and the debates over the ratification of the ERA. But interpretation can be dangerous business in Mormon history, and Bradley's greatest strength becomes also her greatest weakness. She gives her reader no little analytical frame on which to hang the myriad, almost excessive details she offers. Especially in its middle chapters, Bradley's book falls victim to the central problem that, in my view, burdens much of Mormon history; it becomes mired in its own minutiae, resulting in a too-long and rather repetitive route to the ultimate purpose of her book.

However, in the midst of her immoderate amount of detail, Bradley excels in demonstrating the complex relations between local and national politics. She shows how Mormons on both sides of the debate were informed by their national compatriots, yet they coded national debates in Mormon terms. She is equally adept at explaining the power of Mormon political action in several state ratification campaigns outside Utah, demonstrating the relevance of the Mormon Church and its women to the national failure of the ERA. Male church leaders, Bradley points out, viewed the ERA as a moral issue, not a political issue, and justified the church's vast campaigns against the amendment on those grounds. They mobilized thousands of loyal women to political action

to defend traditional values against feminist assault. Committed to keeping the women at the center of her narrative, Bradley details the role of the institutionalized church through the eyes of the women—pro- and anti-ERA—to whom it mattered most.

Bradley's narrative presents no real heroes on either side of the debate. Both sides, she shows, employed backhanded politics and betrayed their own basic principles. Anti-ERA Mormon women's love for their church and submission to its authority overdetermined their political choices. Feminists, although they come off a bit cleaner in Bradley's work, naïvely underestimated the power of Mormon women directed by church authority. Pro- and anti-ERA forces clashed when the 1977 International Women's Year Conference in Utah "turned into a battleground" (197).

The real heroes of Bradley's narrative are the moderate women of the Alice Louise Reynolds Forum, a group of Mormon women committed to equality but struggling to understand and accommodate their place in a patriarchal church. The Forum provided an inclusive, respectful environment for Mormon women of all stripes to voice their ideas in "meetings consist[ing] of in-group sharing, processing, and discussing in a multi-voiced dialogue" (421). Less public than the radical Mormons for the ERA, the Forum privately sought redress for church injustices against Mormon feminists with letters to the church presidency, ruffling far fewer ecclesiastical feathers than their more activist sisters.

Bradley's analysis of the Forum betrays her ultimate purpose, to begin to heal the wounds cut wide open by the turmoil of the late 1970s and early 1980s. While Bradley's sense of the Reynolds Forum is perhaps a bit idyllic, she offers it as a historical precedent for healing deep divides among Mormon women. The Forum's feminism is a kinder, gentler Mormon feminism, rooted in a vision of spiritual sisterhood that transcends women's varied feminist choices, with room for all Mormon women beneath its tent. For women who value their religious affiliations as much as their political convictions, this vision may be the best feminist option of all.

Chris Talbot
Dickinson College

Germans in the Southwest: 1850-1920. By Tomas Jaehn (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005)

Although his work could more accurately be titled "Germans in New Mexico," Tomas Jaehn fills a niche heretofore ignored by historians. The histories of German immigrants in the midwestern and mid-Atlantic United States have been well documented by the prominent historians Kathleen Neils Conzen, Carl Wittke, Stanley Nadel, and others. But other than in Texas, research into the experiences of Germans arriving in the Southwest is rare. Although their numbers were small, they were the second largest European ethnic group in New Mexico between 1850 and 1920, and were influential in the area's economic development. *Germans in the Southwest* provides important insights into a unique acculturation process for Germans as well as serving as a model for investigating other ethnic groups who face a non-Anglo society already in place.

Jaehn presents a two-part picture of the German experience in New Mexico, before and after the arrival of the railroad in the 1870s. Initially, rather than an Anglo-based society, Germans arriving in the mid to late nineteenth century encountered a Hispanic cultural and political society which, Jaehn states, lent itself more to adaptation and acculturation because it paralleled their own. Because the Germans did not feel threatened, he believes, they made only a few efforts to preserve or promote their culture. Unlike the situation in the Midwest, language preservation was not important, and the Germans learned the dominant Spanish language as well as English. With few German women in New Mexico, the men married Hispanic women and "some of these families' children spoke Spanish only" (49).

With the coming of the railroad in the 1870s, more Anglo-Americans arrived from the eastern and midwestern United States, and Jaehn contends that, although they maintained their economic power, the Germans in New Mexico found their cultural identity threatened and turned to preserving their traditions. They began to replicate institutions and societies Germans had formed in other areas where they co-existed with the Anglos. German newcomers to New Mexico gravitated away from the older settlements of Santa Fe, Taos, and Las Vegas to newer communities, especially Albuquerque, where they fought the "Americanization" of their culture.

Jaehn's work examines the German experience in depth. He mines the United States censuses of 1850 to 1920 to provide an extensive picture of how the German, Hispanic, and Anglo populations interacted with one another and how that interaction changed in the 1880s. He successfully explains how the Germans never became politically active in New Mexico, except where local issues were concerned, citing their history of political exclusion in Germany by the royal leadership. The Germans aggressively sought economic power by seeking out the most promising business centers before and after the railroad arrived. Together with the Anglos, they brought a new, hugely successful

"extractive" economic system to New Mexico; however, Jaehn explains, when the 1910-1920 decade brought increased local and mail-order competition and better rail and auto transportation among the communities, profits declined, and many of the affluent Germans left New Mexico, some returning to the East Coast, others to Germany. He found that during World War I, Anglo xenophobia was directed more toward the Hispanics because the Germans did not venture opinions or express patriotism.

Two chapters are particularly interesting: Jaehn's examination of the literature the Germans used as a resource about New Mexico and his study of the change in the Germans' attitudes toward preserving their *Kultur*. He details the German-language publications available for future immigrants, emphasizing the prevalence of a Teutonic romanticism that mostly ignored the existing Hispanic culture. The settlers' underlying analysis that New Mexico was only a place for adventure and quick profits, not for permanent settlement, may have contributed to their departures when economic fortunes waned. Preserving the *Kultur*, Jaehn asserts, began when Anglos arrived in great numbers. The Germans in the United States Army stationed there in the 1870s re-introduced the culture, holidays, and an emphasis on the preservation of the German language. The New Mexican Germans felt pressure to establish ethnic churches, singing societies, and a *Turnverein*, and they began publicly celebrating their ties to Germany in meetings, balls, and holiday parties. Jaehn also shows how they intermingled with the Anglos, abandoning their former Hispanic ties.

Jaehn's work is well documented, and he presents numerous individual histories to illustrate his theme of a two-part assimilation process. His bibliography is an extensive resource for scholars of New Mexico's history. One might argue that, rather than attributing the Germans' failure to form ethnic organizations to the parallel nature of the existing Hispanic culture, the failure resulted from their small numbers—0.06 percent of New Mexico population in 1860 (29). As the historian Robert Billingon has noted, Germans tended to assimilate quickly and abandon their language when they were thinly disbursed. What is impressive, however, is how Jaehn demonstrates the Germans' change in attitude and practice even though their population remained at a low percentage of the total, only 0.03 percent in 1920 (30). Scholars can use his techniques to investigate how a European-based, non-Anglo-American ethnic group encounters the prevailing Hispanic culture in the Southwest, or indeed how these groups, when numerically small but important, assimilate and acculturate when faced with an existing culture already in place in their new homelands.

Carole Cosgrove Terry
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Crime and Punishment in Early Arizona. By R. Michael Wilson (Las Vegas: Stagecoach Books, 2004)

Author of five books about crime in the Old West, R. Michael Wilson gives the case-by-case details of the history of hangings, lynchings, murders, and the imprisoned in the Territory of Arizona between 1875 and 1912. After a brief introductory chapter on the history of Arizona, *Crime and Punishment in Early Arizona* is divided into chapters that deal each with a different way to be executed or jailed. The author defines the difference between hanging and lynching, as well as how to properly hang someone for a quick death. It further presents graphic details about how people were murdered and a discussion of Arizona's prisons and their construction.

Each chapter describes the persons and the situations involved in case after case. For example, in the chapter on hanging, the author details the case of Michael DeHay of Mohave County in 1876. DeHay's early history is given followed by a description of his murder of his wife. His two children were orphaned as a result of the murder of their mother and the hanging of their father. In another case, John Heath of Tombstone, was lynched in 1884 after an armed robbery that he had not participated in, but, as it turned out, had planned. Because he cooperated with authorities, he received a sentence of life imprisonment rather than the death sentence given to the other five criminals involved in the incident. Angered by the decision not to hang Heath, the citizens of Cochise County gained entrance to the jail under false pretenses and forced the jailor to surrender the prisoner. Upon leaving the jailhouse, the crowd tossed the sheriff out of the way, and proceeded to hang Heath. The coroner's jury ruled that his death was caused by emphysema brought on by strangulation.

No effort is made to analyze why the crimes were committed or explain what happened to the people involved. For example, what happened to DeHay's two children, and what became of the citizens who lynched Heath? The same problem occurs in nearly every case presented in the book. The eighty-six cases range in length from one paragraph to several pages. Granted, analysis of the information might not be possible because of a lack of information.

The cases in the book include those of men and women, of Euroamericans, Mexicans, Native Americans, African Americans, and Chinese. No effort was made to analyze or compare the information provided. It is merely factual. In most of the cases, no information is provided as to where the author obtained his information, although he occasionally credits contemporary newspaper reports and arrest or court records.

This book is a useful source for those interested in crime and criminals as it provides several extensive lists of prisoners incarcerated in Arizona's prisons at Yuma between 1875 and 1909, and at Florence between 1909 and 1912. The lists contain the prisoners' names, dates of incarceration, their crimes, and

sentences. The appendix provides a list of sheriffs and United States Marshals who served in Arizona. The book's brief bibliography includes basic sources on the history of Arizona, as well as numerous names of the newspapers he cited in the text.

Diana Ahmad
University of Missouri, Rolla

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Submission Guidelines

The *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* solicits contributions of scholarly or popular interest dealing with the following subjects: the general (e.g., political, social, economic, constitutional) or natural history of Nevada and the Great Basin; the literature, languages, anthropology, and archaeology of these areas; reprints of historic documents; reviews and essays concerning the historical literature of Nevada, the Great Basin, and the American West.

Articles: Researched articles are written for an intelligent, educated audience with a range of backgrounds and interests. Articles vary in content, research methodology, and interpretation, but all are concerned with understanding some aspect of Nevada, the Great Basin, and the West. *NHSQ* will publish two to three articles in each issue.

Notes and Documents: *Notes and Documents* is a place for the reprinting of older documents and records plus contemporary essays heavily based on a single document or a memoir or other personal account. Photographic essays and short single-subject essays are also appropriate to this section.

Book Reviews: If you are interested in becoming a book reviewer for the *NHSQ*, contact Book Review Editor, Michael Green, at greenm1@scsv.nevada.edu.

Format

- Articles should be submitted on a CD or as an e-mail attachment, typed, double-spaced, in a Mac or IBM compatible format (WordPerfect or Microsoft Word).
- Leave pages unnumbered.
- Use a single Tab for paragraph indents.

Length: Articles should be no more than 20 to 30 pages of text with an additional page or two for endnotes.

Endnotes: When endnotes are used, please insert the numbers into the article with the superscript font position, then type the note at the end of the article, double-spaced. All citations and quotations should be rechecked for accuracy before the copy editing process begins. The following style is to be used for notes:

1. Michael W. Bowers and Larry D. Strate, "Judicial Selection in Nevada: An Historical, Empirical, and Normative Evaluation," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 36:4 (Winter 1993), 227-45.
2. Eliot Lord, *Comstock Mining and Miners* (Berkeley: Howell-North 1959), 172.
3. *Independent News* (13 January 1965), p.4.
4. James G. Scrugham, ed., *Nevada: A Narrative of the Conquest of a Frontier Land*, vol. III (Chicago: American Historical Society 1935), 398-99.
5. *Ibid.*, I:205. (same author as footnote 4, but vol. I, page 205).

Illustrations: Authors are strongly encouraged to include illustrations (including written permission to publish from the owner) with the work. Photographs, maps, handbills, headlines, cartoons, and works of art are effective illustrative materials. Scanned images may be submitted if scanned at a minimum of 300 dpi and saved to a CD or sent as e-mail attachments. Originals or hard copies may be submitted, as well. These will be returned upon request. Please provide captions and credits for all images.

Biographical Sketch: In a separate computer file, the author should submit a brief career biography (about fifty words) that includes present position, educational background, principal interests and/or current projects, and recent or forthcoming publications. Following this, please identify the postal address, telephone/fax number, and e-mail address you prefer the *NHSQ* staff use to communicate with you.

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Nevada Historical Society Quarterly

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