Nevada

Historical Society Quarterly

Spring 2009

Nevada Historical Society Quarterly

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

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The *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* (ISSN 0047-9462) is published quarterly by the Nevada Historical Society. The *Quarterly* is sent to all members of the Society. Membership dues are: Individual, $35; Family, $50; Sustaining, $100; Contributing, $250; Patron, $500; Benefactor, $1,000; Seniors, $20 (without Quarterly). Membership applications and dues should be sent to the Director, Nevada Historical Society, 1650 N. Virginia St., Reno, NV 89503. Periodicals postage paid at Reno, Nevada and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly,* 1650 N. Virginia St., Reno, Nevada 89503.

Publication production by Double Click Design

Nevada
Historical Society Quarterly

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Volume 52 | Spring 2009 | Number 1

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Front Cover: Highway and railroad in the Truckee Canyon, east of Reno, ca. 1940s. Photographer unknown. *(Nevada Historical Society)*

By Rail and By Road
Nevada Landscapes in Women's Transcontinental Travelogues, 1873–1920

PETER KOPP

Beatrice Larned Massey's transcontinental automobile trip of 1919 went less smoothly than planned. The title of her published travelogue, *It Might Have Been Worse* (1920), hints at her dissatisfaction, though it is well into the text before she unleashes the crux of complaint: The abominable condition of western roads. After traversing fairly benign terrain in the East and Midwest, Massey was ill at ease upon reaching the Utah-Nevada border. A perceptive passenger while her husband drove, she noted, "We did not look forward with an atom of pleasure to this part of the trip. . . . We dreaded it. It simply *had* to be done."[1] But the Masseys decided otherwise. In the small town of Montello, Nevada, they abandoned their road-trip plans and paid $196.69 to load their Packard and themselves onto a train headed for California.[2]

The Masseys' decision to forego Nevada's interior by road offers a reminder that despite the establishment of the Lincoln Highway in 1913—the first transcontinental highway in the United States—automobile tourism remained a highly challenging proposition in the Far West.[3] The topography and climate of the Great Basin created physical and mental tests of endurance for travelers, as well as tests of technological endurance for their automobiles. Those first auto trips across the Silver State could take several weeks because of inclement conditions, and, given that, nearly all travelers agreed that the Sierra Nevada

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The Lincoln Highway, ca. 1920. Photographer unknown. *(Nevada Historical Society)*

on the California border was an appealing sight. Yet this notion was not new for auto tourists. For the previous half century, overland pioneers and railroad travelers had remarked on how Nevada landscapes acted as testing grounds before more rewarding territory was reached. Emigrants viewed the Great Basin as an inevitable obstacle on their way to new homes in San Francisco or the Central Valley, and the Sierra Nevada signaled that these places were near. Following generations of tourists agreed, but conveyed different meanings in their writings.[4]

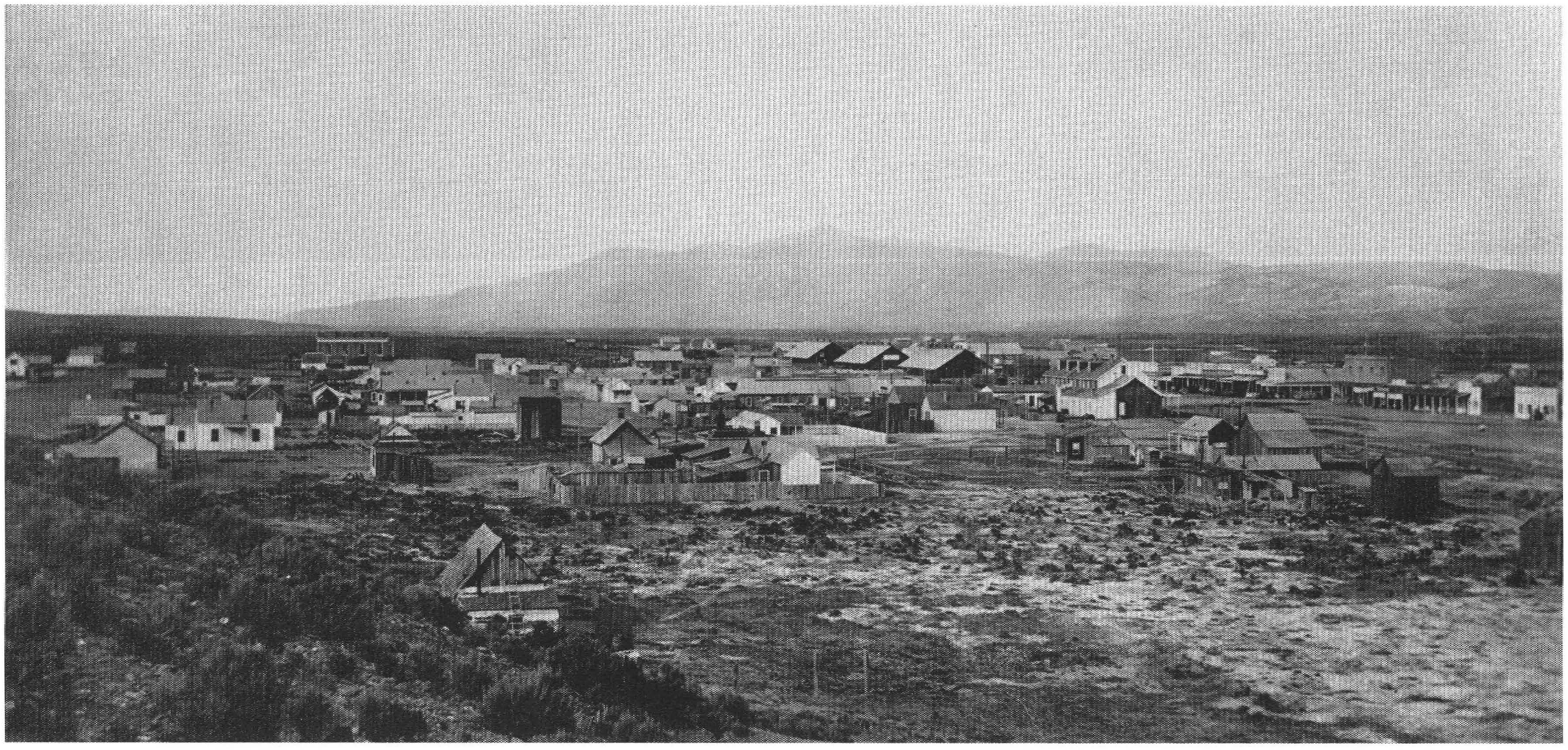
Massey's *It Might Have Been Worse* did not just bridge the two earliest technological periods of transcontinental tourism. The work also contributed to a unique body of travel literature written by adventuresome women from the East Coast and Great Britain who wanted to understand variations in life and landscape across the United States—particularly in the Far West. Although they arrived in the region from a variety of regional backgrounds, traveled in different technological eras, and brought different intentions to both their journeys and their writings, they shared many important qualities. Nearly all were middle or upper class, white, and educated. While not all were professional writers, their

narratives homed in on unique characteristics of place, and they were intent to inspire other would-be travelers through their publications. For all of their intrepidness in engaging in new and surprising *public* spaces, though, almost all were steeped in Victorian era values of proper conduct and attentiveness to the *domestic* sphere.

In recent years, scholars have used women's travelogues to explain a range of historical topics—with much scholarship centered on how different modes of transportation acted as testing grounds for national and individual identities. Amy Richter has argued that Gilded Age railroad travel contributed to the breakdown of gender roles in the United States as Pullman cars offered places of "public domesticity." She writes that, because railroad cars were "neither as private as a home, nor as socially unruly as a public street,"[5] they provided a borderland between Victorian era values and those emerging for the twentieth-century "new woman." Karen M. Morin has suggested that British women engaged in railroad travel for similar reasons, but at the same time used the travel to reinforce imperialistic and racist views. Women expressed significant interest in their travelogues in saving "their downtrodden Native American sisters,"[6] among others of nonwhite races and those of lower classes in the American West. Morin's suggestion that many of these British travelers viewed themselves as "heroic" women of benevolent empires is likely applicable to Americans as well.

As for the automobile, Anne Farrar Hyde and Kris Lackey have explained how road narratives differed greatly from those about railroads because writers conveyed new senses of freedom that only the unrestrained open road could offer. Unlike the public domesticity of a Pullman car, the road trip offered much less in regard to the private sphere—and this could also play an important role in breaking down traditional values. But, as Virginia Scharff has illustrated, automobile culture was still extremely male-dominated, and that often restrained women from venturing further from Victorian values—a theme discussed in more detail later in this essay. A common crossover for all of this scholarship, on both rail and road, is also the emphasis on the exclusion of African Americans and other nonwhites from an unrestrained experience of travel culture. For blacks in particular, as Lackey has best explained, tourism could be a threatening undertaking because of racist encounters across the country.[7]

Generally overlooked in the scholarship related to women's travelogues such as Massey's has been the specific notion of *landscape*. Morin's work on British women is one of the few that broaches the theme. By emphasizing the spatial and temporal interplay between women tourists and Native Americans in the West, she argues that the make-up of American landscapes helped support imperialistic views. Further, she notes, "Train transportation itself was key to how travelers represented western Native peoples, because it was on the trains or at the depots along the railroad routes that travelers and Native Americans most often encountered one another."[8] Captured in this description are three



View of Elko, Nevada, ca. 1876. Photographer unknown. *(Nevada Historical Society)*

elements that landscape theorists emphasize in breaking down meaning in place: *cultural, physical,* and *experiential*.[9] Another way of thinking about this follows the geographer Stephen Mills's suggestion that landscape "implies an active, two-way engagement between people and their surroundings,"[10] entailing cultural (human-centered) and physical (nonhuman-centered) parts of place. To be sure, the three qualities of landscape are inherently intertwined. But it is not impossible to dissect layered meanings.

While not always obvious in the intent of narratives like Massey's, women tourists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were keenly aware of the layered meanings of landscape they encountered. And this was reflected in their writing. Nevada provides an excellent opportunity for understanding multidimensional meanings of landscape as conveyed through women's travelogues. Though its tourist boom did not occur until later in the twentieth century, the state played an important role during the early eras of the cross-country rail trip and the road trip. The transcontinental railroad had spanned the region by the 1870s and, by the 1910s, several hundred miles of present-day Highway 50 constituted a link from California to the rest of the country on the Lincoln Highway. It was also an expansive and dramatic region that—because of its immense distance and rugged character—played substantial roles in their narratives.

This essay explores the work of six women who traveled through the Far West and published travelogues based on their experiences from 1873 to 1920. A specific examination of those who traveled across eastern and northern Nevada, through Reno, and the Sierra Nevada near Lake Tahoe provides continuity in the places the women encountered. By rail and by road, women travelers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries expressed different meanings of their passages through the Silver State. The recorded differences and similarities shed light not only on concepts of imperialism and related racism or gender roles and notions of domesticity, but also on how travelers created different meanings of Nevada *landscapes*—related to the physical, cultural, and experiential—as an endurance testing ground in the infancy of the state's tourist identity.[11]

Nevada by Rail: Grace Greenwood, Isabella Bird, Mrs. Frank Leslie

For most of its early history, Nevada was viewed by transcontinental travelers as a place to pass through, not to linger. The state, and preceding territory, was often characterized as "discordant" to the rest of the cross-country travel experience because of its expansive desert and seemingly uninhabitable lands.[12] Lake Tahoe had been a tourist attraction since the opening of the Comstock in 1859, but, for the most part, tourists ignored the rest of the state. After the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869—just five years after Nevada achieved statehood—there were indications of a change in perception. The serendipity of being connected to the rest of the nation via railroad, the historian Wilbur

Shepperson has noted, allowed the state to become "something of a magnet and destination in its own right."[13] Forced to traverse the entirety of Nevada, cross-country railroad travelers experienced the physical and cultural landscapes of the basin-and-range desert, the Truckee Meadows, and the Sierra Nevada. Lake Tahoe and Virginia City ultimately emerged as points of interest in magazines such as the *New York Illustrated Times* and *Harper's Weekly* in the 1870s. Other writings by Mark Twain and Horace Greeley highlighted increasing national curiosity about other parts of Nevada.[14]

Despite positive recognition for Nevada in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, most transcontinental women tourists who passed through the state on rail did not share a sense of excitement. With general Victorian values of self-restraint and orderliness, they perceived the physical landscape of Nevada as wild and hostile—a far cry from the civilized East or the Eden of California that was their final destination. Most women tourists regarded the cultural aspects similarly, as they mostly saw Nevada towns as desolate

Native American men at the Central Pacific Railroad station yard, Reno, Nevada, 1868. Photographer Alfred A. Hart. *(Nevada Historical Society)*

or uncivilized and burdened by Native Americans, Chinese, and transient miners—all of whom they generally cast as dirty, backward, and ungodly. These impressions weighed so heavily on these women travelers' minds that, except for occasional mentions of the grandeur of Nevada's mountain ranges or respectable amenities in Reno, they largely focused their travelogues on the state's cultural make-up. On the California border, though, were saving graces for what they saw as an inhospitable land: The Sierra Nevada and Lake Tahoe provided unbridled inspiration and beauty for the tourist. Juxtaposed against the wild deserts and inhabitants of Nevada, Lake Tahoe turned out to be the highlight of many women's journeys and was commemorated as such in the pages of their writings.

In 1871 and 1872, the celebrated author Grace Greenwood documented her travels on the transcontinental railroad. She published her account soon after as *New Life in New Lands: Notes of Travel* (1873). Already established as a journalist, children's magazine publisher, international travel writer, and lecturer, Greenwood maintained credibility in expressing new experiences, and knew her audience looked to her for a wide range of information. Readers also characterized her writing as infectious. As one newspaper of 1874 raved, "[H]er sarcasm, generally good-humored, always high-toned never offends the most sensitive or fastidious, and like a steady shining light, she has been ever reliable, while others, more brilliant, have wavered, flickered, and gone out."[15] Although in many ways Greenwood was tied to aspects of the cult of domesticity, her adventure to the Far West marked an opportunity to test gendered boundaries in the public sphere and relate her experiences to wide audiences. Despite her support for abolition and women's rights throughout her lifetime, though, her racist attitudes toward the region are of particular interest.[16]

With similar intentions in 1873, the British writer Isabella Bird traveled on the newly finished transcontinental railroad. Originally embracing travel to aid her health, she had already toured Europe and Asia (among other areas) and emerged as the prominent voice of Englishwomen's travel literature. Besides an elegant and vibrant style, her most distinctive feature was her propensity to travel without companionship, seeking to invoke meaning away from her husband, on her own terms. Still, in *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains* (1879), one of her most highly regarded works, she confronted many of the same gendered stereotypes as Greenwood while also engaging in imperialistic and racist descriptions of Nevada. With less sarcasm than Greenwood, Bird claimed to have crafted an "objective" point of view of culture and nature—and indeed, her writing persona was accepted as more serious than Greenwood's. In reality, the descriptions were similar. Taken together they are remarkable not only in what they saw but in how they expressed the landscapes of the Silver State.[17]

Recognizing their roles in large part as literary promoters of railroad tourism, both Greenwood and Bird maintained vivid senses of their surroundings and experiences across the United States. Their writings reflected in great detail the

diversity of towns, agriculture, and rural scenery, and they generally portrayed the country in a positive light for their readers. Upon reaching Nevada—a state looked to with a certain scorn or indifference by most tourists during their lifetimes—both women seemed at first open to taking in the views. After crossing the border from Utah, for example, Greenwood suggested that "all along the valley of the Humboldt there are pictures of savage grandeur and quiet beauty which alternately rouse and rest one."[18] To a large degree, Bird shared these sentiments of interest in parts of the Nevada basin-and-range desert. But related comments were brief as both women's discussions quickly turned disapprovingly to other aspects of the landscape in the western portion of the state. For these tourists, the experiences of culture so different from lives in the East and Great Britain became paramount.

Once in Reno, Carson City, and Virginia City, Greenwood did not shirk from suggesting that she would rather be in more "civilized country."[19] While the character of the physical landscape contributed to uneasy feelings for her and Bird, Greenwood focused more on the inhabitants in her writing. She recalled unsettling encounters with "greasy-looking Indians and squaws."[20] She characterized them as beggars and seemed to resent having to interact with them at all. In similar meetings with Native Americans, Bird stated, "They were all hideous and filthy, and swarming with vermin. They were a most impressive incongruity in the midst of the tokens of an omnipotent civilization."[21] It is interesting that these sentiments also fit their feelings toward other aspects of Nevada culture: Both women directed insults at the "Heathen Chinee" and other peoples who populated the mining towns. Although Bird was less explicit than Greenwood in her desire to once again find civilization, both made it clear that Nevada was not a place they wanted to stay.

Understanding the unbalanced amount of attention to cultural elements in the narratives of Greenwood and Bird is complicated. The historian Anne Hyde has offered one possible explanation by suggesting that because boredom set in on the long transcontinental rides, many tourists looked for those things that would make their journey more interesting. Thus, it might be assumed that many women's travelogues during this time period focused not on the "boring" or inhospitable desert, but in experiences with different people in those lands.[22] Karen Morin's argument that these types of adventures acted as imperialistic testing grounds, where filth and the improper hygiene of local residents did not mesh with Victorian values, is also convincing. And it helps contextualize the racist attitudes from the women travelers.[23] Another less-explored argument for the cultural awareness and racism might center on a general tone in both narratives that the desert and its inhabitants simply did not mesh with expectations of a proper tourist destination.

If the qualities of Greenwood's and Bird's encounters with Nevada during their railroad trips were ultimately degraded by unseemly country, towns, and peoples, their regard for the Sierra Nevada and Lake Tahoe on the edge of the

"European Lady" and Native American woman, ca. 1900. Photographer unknown. *(Nevada Historical Society)*

state immediately effected a change of mood. Upon arriving at what turned out to be one of the most memorable portions of her entire journey, an awestruck Greenwood noted, "I have left myself no space fitly to describe the crowning pleasure of my little tour of Nevada—the visit to Lake Tahoe."[24] Inspired, she abandoned the criticism that had marked the previous pages of her book and proclaimed, "Tahoe is the most beautiful lake I have ever beheld. It is an emerald on the brow of a mountain. Marvelously clear and sparkling, it is surrounded by the most enchanting scenery. . . . Some time I hope to be able to describe it."[25] Similarly, Bird expressed reverence for Lake Tahoe, fondly comparing it to other regions of her world travels:

> I have found a dream of beauty at which one might look all one's life and sigh. Not lovable, like the Sandwich Islands, but beautiful in its own way! A strictly North American beauty—snow-splotched mountains, huge pines, red-woods, sugar pines, silver spruce, a crystalline atmosphere, waves of the richest color and a pine-hung lake which mirrors all beauty on its surface. Lake Tahoe is before me.[26]

Clearly, at that point in their journeys, both women were glad to be out of the Nevada desert and mining towns and face-to-face with one of the most magnificent landscapes of their tours.

In addition to their regard for the physical scenery, both Greenwood and Bird wrote briefly about aspects of the human-built environment in their visits to Lake Tahoe—even though their impressions were quite different. On the one hand, Greenwood referred to "an admirable hotel at the lake, and a small steamer for pleasure-excursions, a charming drive along its shores, and prime fishing in its cool, translucent waters."[27] The indication here was that Lake Tahoe had already been discovered as a tourist destination. She also envisioned even more of a future for it, though, when she suggested, "I think Lake Tahoe must yet become a great pleasure resort. I have seen no more charming spot in all my tours for a summer's rest and rambling."[28] Her prediction came true as Lake Tahoe's popularity increased dramatically in the following decades. It is curious, on the other hand, that Bird did not consider the tourist industries of Lake Tahoe. Rather, she focused on the qualities of industry. One passage in particular raises an intriguing discussion. Reflecting upon her serene visit, she noted, "There is no sound but the distant and slightly musical ring of the lumberer's axe."[29] But this is all she wrote—thus making the reader aware that logging occurred in the area, but making no mention of the clear-cut landscape she must have encountered during the peak of the Tahoe basin's lumber industry.[30]

Many questions remain about how Bird and Greenwood viewed and portrayed the landscape of Lake Tahoe after encountering an inhospitable Nevada. How can we understand that both women, for the most part, only briefly mentioned qualities of the human-built portions of the Lake Tahoe landscape, whereas in other portions of Nevada their narratives were solely focused on dealings with people? Were they simply letting the scenery overshadow all of the displeasure that had built up in the rest of the state? Did travelers like Greenwood and Bird not see the significance in mentioning these aspects of the landscape? Or, because they saw their manuscripts as guidebooks for those who would follow, did they generally leave out such details? These questions are nearly impossible to answer. One thing is certain, however: Although briefer sections within the travel narratives of both writers are comparable to later travelogues, the juxtaposition of dislike for most of Nevada's lands and people and the reverence for the scenic Lake Tahoe contributed important experiences in the landscapes of the West.

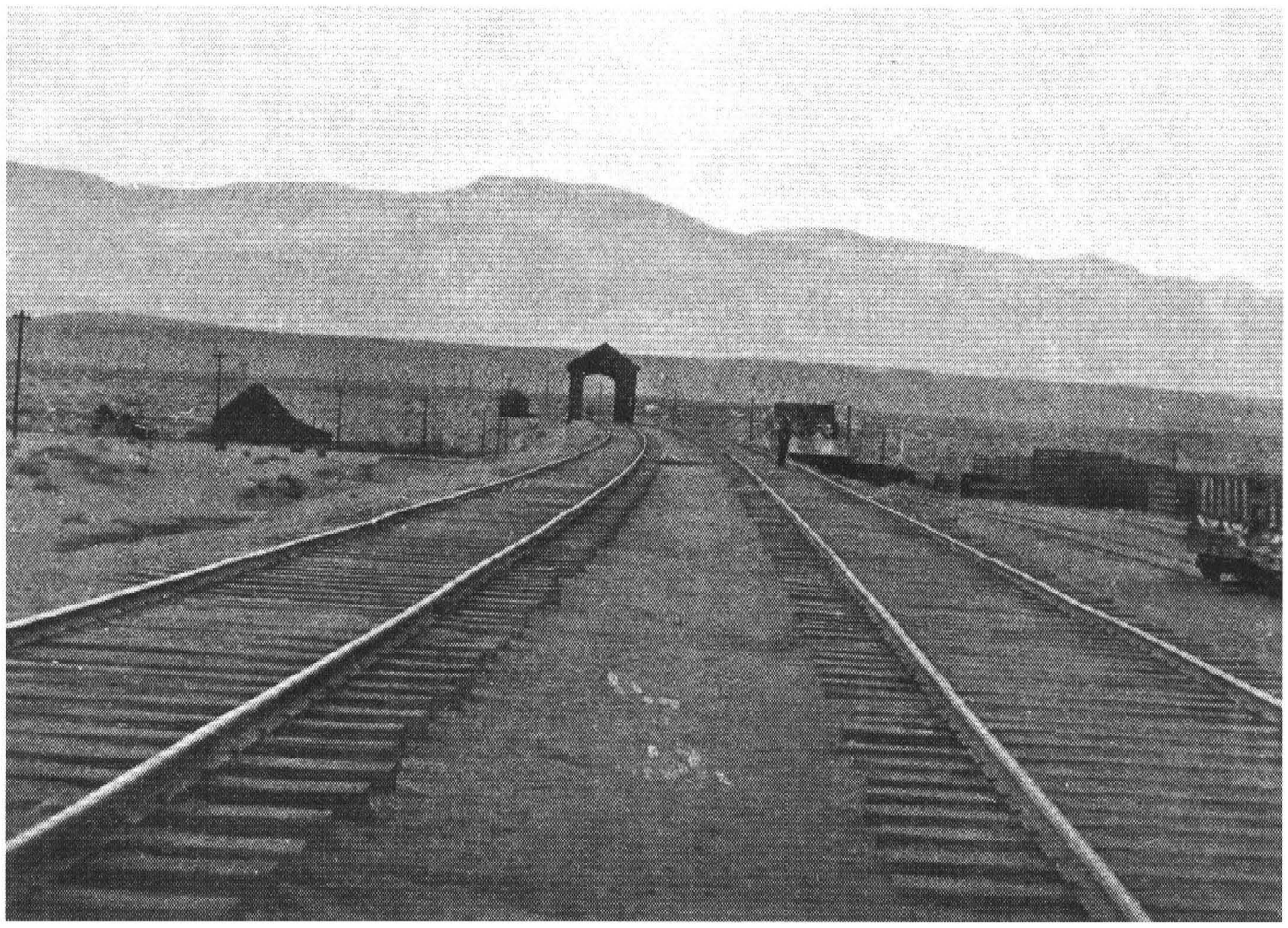
A few years after Greenwood's and Bird's trips, Mrs. Frank Leslie (Miriam Florence Leslie), the wife of the prominent eastern newspaper publisher and an increasingly important writer, editor, and socialite, embarked on a similar tour. Her work culminated in the travelogue *California: A Pleasure Trip from Gotham to the Golden Gate* (1877). While scholars have not recognized her literary contributions as much as those of Greenwood or Bird, she was extremely influential first as a travel writer and social commentator, and later as an astute businesswoman.

Newspapers across the country were attracted to her day-to-day activities, and one account from 1884 captured her uniqueness in noting,

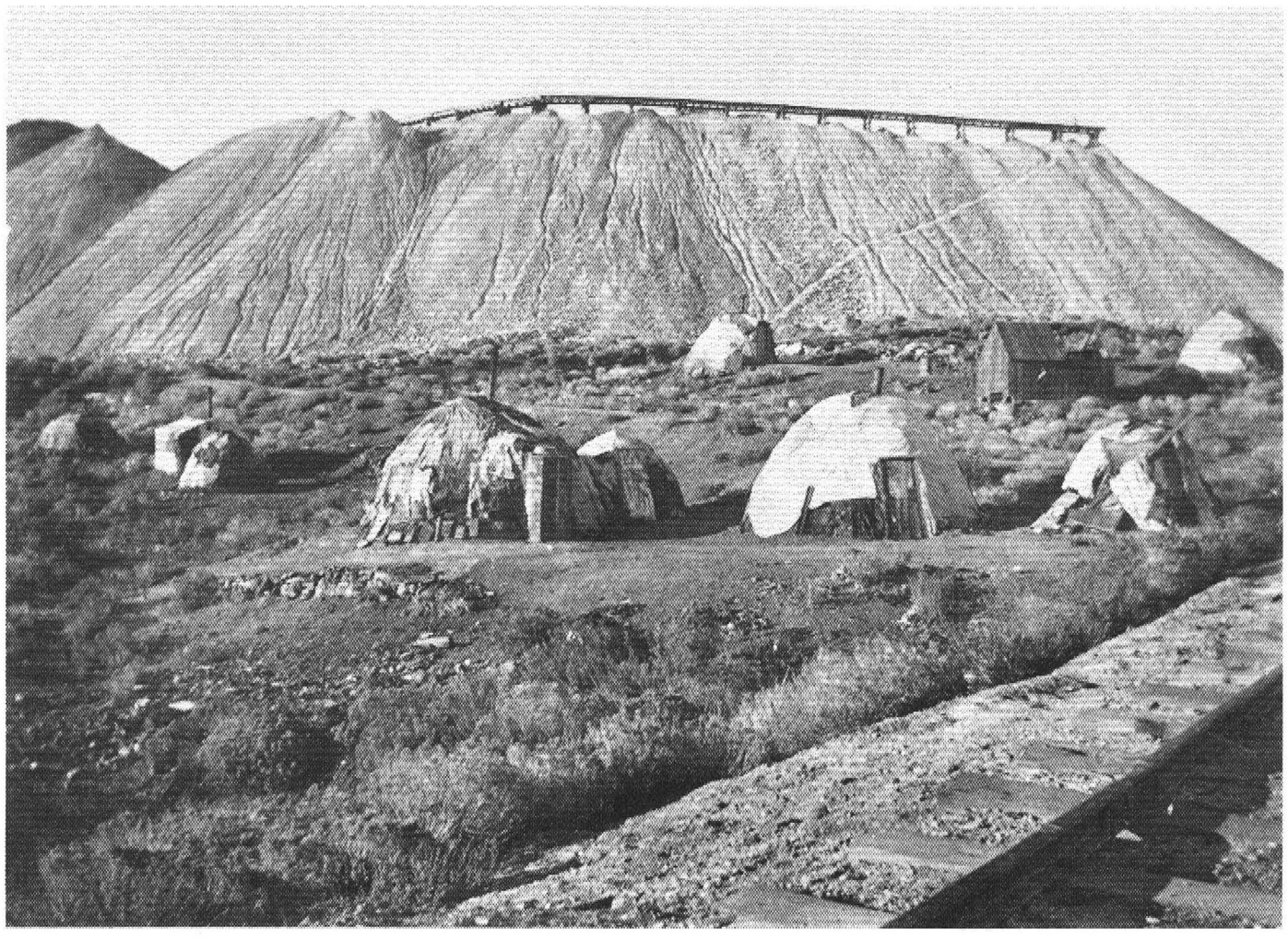
> Mrs. Frank Leslie is more widely known than many of that galaxy of brilliant women in America . . . whose names are household words. . . . To rare literary ability Mrs. Leslie added unusual business capacity, and her husband found her advice no less valuable regarding the mechanical and business departments of his establishment than concerning the letter-press of his publications.[31]

While Leslie later would use her abilities and social position to support the feminist movement, she negotiated difficult realms of gender and class during the years of her railroad travelogue. Despite a sophisticated view of the world, Leslie was wrapped in Victorian values similar to those of Greenwood and Bird. But Leslie's experience and expression of them was different because of her class status and marriage to the influential and renowned Frank Leslie. Her social status and celebrity influenced the topics and approach of her writing—often tailoring it to what her audience desired. Thus, when it came to her travels, she characterized what the historian Amy Richter has suggested is a more sheltered view from the train. Accompanying other upper-class individuals from New York, she encountered new landscapes in social terms. Focusing more on her immediate surroundings, and less aware of the world outside of the Pullman car, Leslie's sentiments were captured early in her travelogue when she noted, "So the charming little residence in which we found ourselves shall be called a home," complete with "bouquets, shawls, rugs, sofa-cushions."[32] Highlighting the domestic sphere from the beginning, her narrative would be different from Greenwood's and Bird's. These views would persist throughout her discussion of westward travel, and into Nevada.[33]

At first, Leslie's discussion of the Silver State resembled those of Greenwood and Bird. Shifting her narrative from the range of interesting tourist opportunities in other parts of the country, she commented on the inhospitable scenery and people in Nevada. More so than the other two writers, though, Leslie put almost all of her efforts into describing problems of the culture. Upon entering the state and making an early stop, she suggested of the local Indians: "The 'braves,' if they will excuse the sarcasm of so calling them, were somewhat more repulsive than the women and children, being equally dirty and more dangerous; as, for instance, a sewer rat is more disagreeable than a young pig."[34] This type of commentary persisted, as she ignored other characteristics of the landscape to focus on the differences from her own culture. While her narrative proved a little more favorable to Chinese workers than Greenwood's or Bird's, Leslie's mood and commentary still reflected the inherent racism of her Victorian and imperialistic values. For example, in the western part of Nevada, she noted, "Now, too, we began to see the 'Heathen Chinee,' in numbers, and ill as their



Wadsworth, Nevada with Truckee River bridge in the background, ca. 1869. Photographer H. Bruce. *(Nevada Historical Society)*



Paiute "Campoodie," Virginia City, ca. 1890s. Photographer William Cann. *(Nevada Historical Society)*

odor may be to Caucasian nostrils, we must say that their cleanly, smooth, and cared-for appearance was very agreeable in contrast with the wild, unkempt and filthy red man."[35] Unfortunately, by recognizing an abundance of cultural aspects, she ignored deeper descriptions of the physical qualities of the landscape. But, as Richter suggests, she also may have been revealing her values of domesticity and her insular view from the Pullman car. It also fits Morin's suggestion that the experiential aspect of the train brought tourists face-to-face with many poor Native Americans at the train stations.

Before leaving Nevada, Leslie did comment briefly on the physical qualities of the landscape. Her description would have made any tourist think twice before embracing Mark Twain's or Horace Greeley's favorable perceptions of tourism in the state.[36] First, Leslie suggested that Carson was a "bare, comfortless, place,"[37] like the rest of the towns in Nevada. Then she recalled: "There is a rise of 1,700 feet from Carson to Virginia City . . . and the train winds heavily up between mountain walls of dust-brown rock, whereon grows neither tree, shrub, herb, nor blade of grass, nothing with life or motion in it."[38] Along with her discussions of the problems of culture, this summed up her view of Nevada as an inhospitable desert. Upon reaching Virginia City, the last stop in the state, her comments reflect an all-out desire to leave Nevada. She finally noted, "To call a place dreary, desolate, homeless, uncomfortable, and wicked is a good deal, but to call it God-forsaken is a good deal more, and in a tolerably large experience of this world's wonders, we never found a place better deserving the title than Virginia City."[39] It appears that having toured the entirety of the state, she could not get to California soon enough.

Despite her different interests and higher social class those of Leslie focused on many aspects of the Nevada landscape similar to Greenwood and Bird, but her experience ended in a slightly different manner. Unlike the women before her, Leslie did not make the standard side-journey to Lake Tahoe.[40] But this seems not to have mattered, as her encounter with the rest of the Sierra Nevada left her awestruck, and her expressions of the landscape largely mirror Greenwood's and Bird's after they left the uninviting desert. In strikingly similar fashion to those women travelers before her—despite not having encountered Lake Tahoe—Leslie cast the region as one of the most significant portions of her journey. She noted: "Without attempting the impossible, we simply say to those of our friends to whom the Alps are a bore, Appenines and Pyrenees a weariness, and the Andes a tiresome impossibility, do go and see the American Cañon, Cape Horn, the Sierras, Donner Lake, Emigrant Gap, Yuba River with its dam and all the rest of it."[41] While Leslie's journey ended less majestically than Greenwood's and Bird's with the splendor of Lake Tahoe, her encounter with the Sierra Nevada appears to have served a similar role in redeeming the qualities of the Nevada desert.

The sum of Greenwood's, Bird's, and Leslie's travelogues was a portrayal of the state's landscapes as a place of desolation that countered their Victorian values. Their heavy focus on encounters with Indians, Chinese, mining communities, and seemingly lifeless deserts, undoubtedly caused their readers to reconsider

Twain's or Greeley's fascination with Nevada. Many questions remain, though. Could the view from the Pullman car have prevented deeper connections to the world outside? Did the shock of cultural encounters overshadow what could have been genuine experience of the physical landscape? Did the train quickly move through areas where they would have been able to make these observations? While these questions remain largely unanswerable, these narratives reveal a general climate of understanding various qualities in the Nevada and Lake Tahoe landscapes. They also provide important markers with which to compare later accounts.

NEVADA BY ROAD: ALICE HURLEY RAMSEY, EFFIE PRICE GLADDING, BEATRICE LARNED MASSEY

By no means did transcontinental railroad tourism end at the turn of the twentieth century. However, with the advent of the automobile in the 1890s and successful attempts to cross the country by the first decade of the twentieth century, a new mode of travel and tourism emerged that would slowly replace trips like those taken by Greenwood, Bird, and Leslie. Automobile travel also inspired new conceptions of the landscape based on a more immediate experience of being closer to the ground and facing the turmoil of driving and mechanical problems. As Kris Lackey characterized the differences, "Railroad passengers, as many motoring travelers pointed out, were . . . bound by unwanted society, speed, and fixed routes, they were just too comfortable. They could not taste the weather or appreciate the rain, mud, and rain-swollen rivers."[42] Indeed, the mode of travel was different and provided different experiences, the kind that Lackey suggests were part of a "larger revolt against Victorian institutions."[43] While the suggestion holds weight, the perspectives of travel from women auto tourists in the first two decades of the twentieth century both emphasize and reject this point.

In *Taking the Wheel* (1990), Virginia Scharff explains that gender issues were central to the birth of the automobile era. From the 1890s onward a "cult" of men dominated driving and mechanics; they also played the role of chauffeurs for women automobilists. Furthermore, demonstrating a significant tie to Victorian principles, men generally encouraged women not to drive or ride in combustion engines, reasoning that they were too hard to crank start or too dirty for riding. If women engaged in automobile travel, some men argued, they should only use the more feminine electric car, which was easier to start and provided a cleaner experience. Although many women accepted these arguments in the first two decades of the twentieth century, others fought them. As a result, a much more varied type of woman and tourist emerged at the dawn of the auto-tourist era. Some were thrill seekers, either making bets or entering races sponsored by automobile companies and clubs to test their

driving and mechanical abilities. Others denied the need for speed or to prove gender equality and simply rode with their husbands or families with a desire to see parts of the country through a new mode of transportation. Whatever their motivations, interesting perspectives of landscape emerged.[44]

As in transcontinental railroad tourism, Nevada played an important role in transcontinental automobile travel, and can be used to gauge changing views of landscape. To be sure, many physical and cultural changes occurred in the state during the rise of the automobile era that earlier tourists had neither perceived nor experienced. The decline of the Comstock and associated markets in lumber and agriculture altered the physical make-up of the landscape; and, with these industries having declined, Nevada had become significantly less populated by the turn of the century. There were also changes in the landscape related to national trends such as road-building itself and electrification—even if these technological improvements did not reach the region as quickly as others. Despite all these changes, many observations of the Nevada landscape remained similar to those of railroad tourists, as the desert was still portrayed in varying degrees as a wasteland and the majestic Lake Tahoe and Sierra Nevada remained highlights for transcontinental travelers.

In 1909, Alice Huyler Ramsey became the first woman to drive across the United States. A natural adventurer, driver, and mechanic, Ramsey seemed an ideal candidate to make such a journey. At least, the Maxwell-Briscoe Company thought so, and sponsored the trip as a means to publicize its automobiles. Without her husband and accompanied only by three other women, Ramsey engaged in a feat unlike that of any other woman to that time—driving the entire distance herself and acting as her own mechanic. Half a century later, in *Veil, Duster, and Tire Iron,* Ramsey recalled her trip from New York to San Francisco at the dawn of the automobile era.[45] Unlike many other drivers who engaged in similar journeys in the early decades of the twentieth century, she was not looking to break any speed records. In fact, she made sure to note early in her narrative, "I was brought up *not* to race an engine and could never tolerate it running madly above the required revolutions."[46] This attitude was clear as Ramsey's journey took several weeks to complete. But avoiding high speeds also allowed her to make detailed observations along the way.[47]

Ramsey's narrative immediately revealed differences in understanding of the landscape from those of the railroad tourists who traveled the country before her. First, with the physical landscape changing, cultural relations and perceptions also differed over the forty years that had passed from the peak of the railroad era—particularly in what we recognize today as racist and biased language. Most important, the experiential aspect of landscape differed fundamentally between the Pullman car and its riders and the Maxwell and other first generation automobiles driven by Ramsey and her successors. Focused on road and weather conditions, Ramsey revealed a more immediate idea of landscape in her writing. It is interesting that she considered this issue throughout her

A photo from the Ramsey scrapbook of Beatrice Larned Massey and her machine stuck in the mud. Photographer unknown. *(Archives and Special Collections, Vassar College Library)*

book, noting that she wished she had had more of an opportunity to take in the scenery, which was limited because she was driving and dealing with the problems of the car and the road.

Because her observations largely dealt with driving, Ramsey reflects her impressions of landscape through her encounters with different roads across the country. It is not surprising that the journey from New York to the Midwest went pretty smoothly—these were, after all, larger population centers and the first areas to concentrate on adequate road infrastructure. Headed farther west, she ran into some rough spots in Iowa and Nebraska caused by inclement weather, but her reminiscence discussed no issues that were too difficult to overcome. As she and her companions continued, they realized that the roads would be much different in the Far West. Nevada held a bad reputation during this period, and many warned her of problems in the desert. Upon arriving in Salt Lake City, Ramsey noted, "We would have the Maxwell gone over and put in shape for what might be the hardest part of our journey."[48] In fear of the expansive Nevada desert, she later even admitted, "We left Salt Lake City reluctantly."[49] As this was the central path for cross-country tourists, she must not have felt that she had much of a choice.

For various reasons, Nevada played a prominent role in Ramsey's journey and memory. From conversations with westerners, she knew that the basin-and-

range topography would provide challenges and the road conditions were not up to the standards of other parts of the country. True to these warnings, Ramsey and her companions ended up delayed at several points in Nevada, stuck in extensive patches of mud or waiting for parts and repairs to her automobile after poor road conditions wreaked havoc on the Maxwell. Consequently, Ramsey spent a significant amount of time in her travelogue explaining the problems she faced and documented little of the landscape's broader physical or cultural characteristics. She did note, however, "The state of Nevada is almost completely made up of north-south mountain ranges partitioned from each other by long narrow valleys in which there is little population and less vegetation; the roads were mere trails and difficult to follow."[50] While the encounters of Ramsey and her companions with Native Americans and Chinese were similar to those of the railroad tourists, she used no racist language and her comments were generally unimpressionable. That values regarding race had changed between the 1870s and early 1900s is doubtful. The lack of commentary related to Native Americans and Chinese may suggest more advanced thinking on Ramsey's part or perhaps the impact of the years that passed between the experience and her reminiscence of it; or it may be that it simply was less important to Ramsey as she dealt with rural roads and ranches rather than the train depots in which she would have had the experiences described by Greenwood, Bird, and Leslie.

If nothing else, Nevada proved a testing ground for Ramsey and her companions—just as it had for many of the railroad travelers before them and the even earlier overland pioneers. Having met the most difficulties on Nevada's roads during their cross-country journey, they did not restrain their excitement at having reached the western portion of the state. Upon seeing the lights of Sparks in the distance one evening, Ramsey proclaimed, "I think I shall never forget the surprise of that vista bursting upon us in the darkness . . . . Right off the dark and barren desert, this almost bowled us over. It was situated only a couple miles from Reno . . . . Surprise! Surprise! Suddenly we had returned to civilization!"[51] Clearly reacting differently from the railroad travelers who called this region uncivilized, Ramsey and her companions were simply overjoyed to be nearing the end of the desert.

Once Ramsey's group reached northwestern Nevada, the comparison of her experience to those of Greenwood, Bird, and Leslie is quite remarkable. This landscape had significantly changed between the Comstock era and the first decade of the twentieth century. Thus, while Ramsey and her companions did pass through Carson and Virginia City, it was not the same area that had existed a generation prior. Cognizant of this reality, she noted, "The rich production of the Comstock Lode had furnished much of the wherewithal for this fast, extravagant form of existence, remnants of which might still be seen, especially in the . . . ghost town, Virginia City."[52] Again, a different physical and cultural landscape led to a different experiential landscape. Ramsey had no opportunity to evaluate the same scenic qualities that had influenced previous tourists.

Her next stop would prove a far more profound experience. After leaving Virginia City and heading back on the route to San Francisco, Ramsey encountered the natural spectacle that even she could not ignore in other ways that she had as the driver. Her depictions of Lake Tahoe reveal that it might have been the most moving landscape in her journey. She noted of the scenery as she looked from the Maxwell:

> Majestic sugar pines, Douglas firs and redwoods lined our road on both sides. What a land! What mountains! What blue skies and clear, sparkling water! Our hearts leapt within us. None of us had ever seen the like—and we loved it. We almost chirped as we exclaimed over the grandeur that surrounded us on all sides.[53]

That Ramsey shared the romantic senses of amazement and inspiration upon reaching Lake Tahoe of her railroad tourist predecessors is unsurprising. More than the civilization of Reno and Sparks, Lake Tahoe provided a fine capping point following her difficult trip through Nevada. This connection between the trials of the desert and the embraces of Lake Tahoe and the Sierra Nevada landscape reveals an important and pervasive historical link.

Ramsey's narrative is an excellent example of the changing mode of society, economy, technology, and related perceptions of the landscape as reflected through encounters at the dawn of the automobile era. But even her journey marked a point of change in history. By the early 1910s, the "See America First" movement pushed for better roads across the country. Mirroring the connection of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific in 1869, this reality caused significant change in Nevada. This time it was the Lincoln Highway that helped instigate new tourism in the state. Wilbur Shepperson described this change along with other historical phenomena when he noted, "About fifty transcontinental tourists passed through Reno in 1914 . . . . By 1915, World War I had diverted eastern tourists from Europe to California, and some five thousand autos crossed central Nevada that year."[54] These changes inspired new tourist amenities and offered even more substantially different landscape experiences than had the railroad.

In 1914, Effie Gladding accompanied her husband on a transcontinental automobile journey. A privileged easterner who had traveled in other parts of the world by automobile prior to her United States trip, she spent much of her narrative engaged in comparative physical and cultural observations with her home back east. But, in these comparisons—unlike the railroad travelers who did not engage with the world outside the Pullman car, or even Ramsey, who drove the length of the country and performed as her own mechanic—Gladding spent a great deal of time considering the broader meanings of the landscapes she traversed. Her ability to do so partly resulted from her position as a full-time passenger. It also related to her agenda of publicizing the state of automobile tourism and culture across the country. Because of these conditions, Gladding

Lake Tahoe, ca. 1915. Photographer unknown. *(Nevada Historical Society)*

rarely focused on the negative aspects of her journey. Even in the expansive Nevada desert, which maintained its share of difficulties, Gladding focused on understanding and explaining its uniqueness.[55]

Headed from San Francisco to New York, Gladding took a trip immediately different from Ramsey's and most railroad journeys because the prizes of the Nevada experience—Lake Tahoe and the Sierra Nevada—were the first substantial landmarks she encountered in the state. After an extensive journey around other regions of California, Gladding and her husband connected to the Lincoln Highway near Redding and quickly approached the landscapes of which previous women tourists had written so fondly. Headed east past Placerville into the Sierra Nevada, Gladding captured her perception of traveling conditions and regional nature. She noted, "The road was in excellent condition and ran on through the forest for miles, flanked by sugar pines, cedars, firs, balsams, and yellow pines . . . . The white lilac was blooming at the roadside."[56] Compared to previous accounts, Gladding's description of the physical landscape was substantially richer and set the tone for further discussion.

Downtown Reno, Nevada, ca. 1906. Photographer unknown. *(Nevada Historical Society)*

Because she recognized that her journey was a travel guide for her readers and not just a personal adventure of promotion, Gladding sought to be as expressive about landscapes as possible. Therefore, her narrative provided the most illuminating relationships to landscape of the authors explored in this essay. But part of her discussion also reflected a civil and nonexcitable tone in which she sought to be informative and helpful for the reader rather than getting carried away. Thus, upon reaching Lake Tahoe—the most memorable landscape for many previous transcontinental travelers—she avoided excessive commentary of praise and wonderment. Unlike tourists such as Greenwood and Bird upon their first impressions, Gladding simply related her experience as she headed up the pass: "We saw the exquisite green of these watery meadows and the lovely clumps of pines growing here and there in the valley. Beyond stretched the great lake surrounded by lofty mountains—a glorious view."[57] If she was as impressed or inspired by the scenery as were other travelers, she certainly did not express it in her prose.

Gladding avoided vast descriptions and stories of inspiration with various scenic landscapes. Instead, she focused on road conditions, the manner in which

the innkeepers treated their patrons, and opportunities to engage in recreation. For example, upon arriving at the Tallac Hotel, finding no open rooms, and settling for the Al Tahoe instead, she noted:

> From Al Tahoe one can make many excursions on foot or by boat. As there was still snow on the road we did not undertake the motor drive from Al Tahoe to Tahoe Tavern and Donner Lake. We did drive the nine or ten miles of mountain road to Fallen Leaf Lake, which is a most exquisite mountain lake right under the shadow of Mt. Tallac. The trails from the hotel at Fallen Leaf Lake are very numerous and attract many enthusiastic mountain climbers.[58]

In these details of her observations it becomes clear that Gladding's expression of her experience of physical and cultural places was specifically a tourist landscape—not a romantic one.

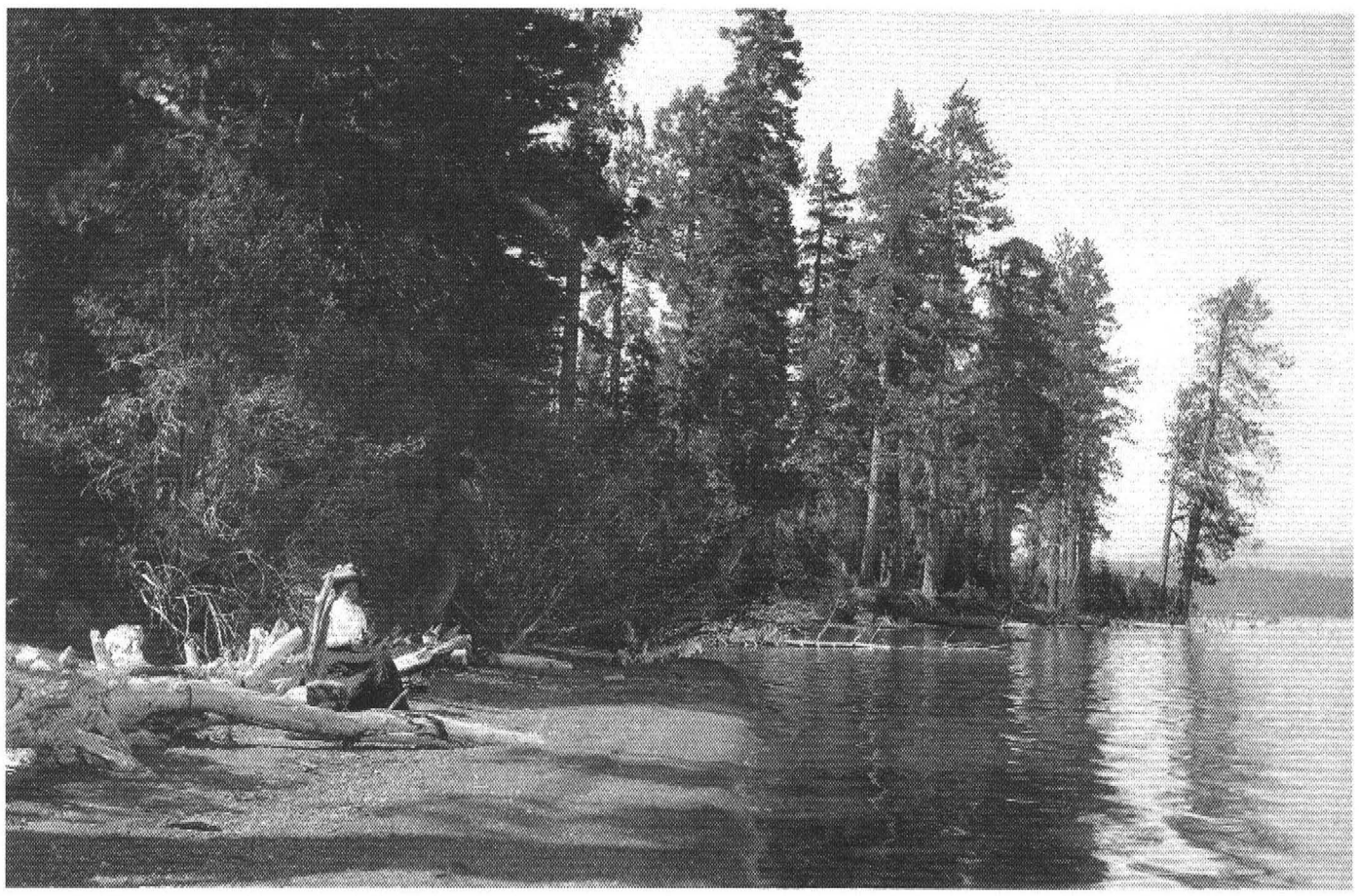
Having left the Tahoe basin heading east, Gladding noticed drastic changes in the physical landscape. She noted, "After leaving the lake we came into a rather desolate mountain region where the whole character of the country changed . . . it was somewhat dreary and forbidding after the rich forest foliage that we had just left."[59] But unlike previous tourists who looked to the rest of Nevada with hesitancy and fear, Gladding accepted that it was part of her journey. Fulfilling her role as an early-twentieth-century travel guide, she offered the state its finest reviews. Following a tour of Reno, including its neighborhoods, university, and river walk, she referred to it as a "pleasant town"[60] and even suggested, "I was sorry to come away from Reno."[61] As with Ramsey, these comments diverge decisively from the narratives of Greenwood, Bird, and Leslie, but the physical and cultural landscape of Reno and surrounding areas had changed significantly since the decline of the Comstock. The town had become a commercial center, and, where this portion of Nevada had been referred to as uncivilized, Gladding's (and Ramsey's) comments suggest that the town had undergone historic transformations.

Following her adventures in northwestern Nevada, Gladding and her husband engaged in quite a different landscape from that described by the railroad travelers and even by Ramsey. Taking time to understand the surroundings and capture them in her narrative for her readers, she included a lengthy discussion of the drive from Reno to the other edge of the state. In the process she toured the Lahontan Reservoir, commented on sightings of wildlife, and visited several ranches. Despite some difficulties in the rough terrain—though far less traumatic ones than what beset Ramsey and her companions—Gladding ultimately treated the desert in a thoughtful manner. She noted, "The land about us is dreary and desolate and yet it has its own charm."[62] Then, having purposefully taken time to engage and understand the landscape and the people who inhabited it, she reflected on its meaning:

> I can completely understand how the desert casts its spell over cattlemen and sheepmen so that they love it and its freedom and are continually drawn to it. The mystery and glory of the desert plains have their devotees just as the mystery and glory of the great city have their worshipers who never wish to be far from its lights.[63]

These types of reflections were nonexistent in previous narratives. Gladding's perception of landscape and its meaning beyond her immediate experience in the automobile tour was profound.

As such discerning perceptions suggest, Gladding generally portrayed her encounter with the Nevada landscape positively. As noted, this may have had to do with her ability to see the road as a passenger, encounter it after the Comstock era, or have fewer road problems. But more than anything, she was open to new experiences and wanted to convey deeper senses of place than had been written previously. While Gladding was generally accepting of Nevada's landscapes from the automobile, she may have been an anomaly. Other transcontinental tourists felt differently—even after continued road improvements and an increase in tourist amenities.



Fannie Dodd sitting on a log at Lake Tahoe, 1913. Photographer unknown.
(Nevada Historical Society)

In 1919, just four years after the Gladdings' tour, Beatrice Larned Massey, her husband, and another couple decided rashly to drive across the country—inspired by previous accounts of cross-country automobile travel. With no intention of promoting her vehicle (though she did mention it was a Packard) or racing across the country as other travelers did, Massey took a journey more similar to Gladding's. Also, because it appears that Massey did none of the driving during the trip, she took it upon herself to use the seven-week journey—which included several layovers in various cities and time spent repairing the automobile—to create a narrative. At the beginning of her reminiscence, she suggested, "This account of our motor trip from New York City to San Francisco is intended to be not only a road map and motor guide for prospective tourists, but also to interest the would-be or near motorists who take dream trips to the Pacific."[64] But unlike Gladding, she gave her narrative a much different shape. The title of her travelogue, *It Might Have Been Worse* (1920), suggests that Massey perceived her book to be just as much a tourist guide as a warning of the still rudimentary conditions of roads throughout the country.[65]

As with most transcontinental travelers from the nineteenth century onward, Massey began her trip in New York. Traversing several hundred miles toward Pennsylvania, her observations of both urban and rural landscapes were eloquent. Recalling her drive through Pennsylvania, for example, she noted, "The scenery was beautiful. The Blue Ridge and Alleghaney [*sic*] Mountains loomed up in the haze like cathedrals."[66] As the miles piled up Massey's narrative took on a sour tone. Because of road and car difficulties beginning in Ohio, the more miles she traveled, the more she concentrated on the journey's negative aspects. Massey's descriptions of the landscape became focused more on the road itself and less on the touring experience that she originally may have intended to create, in a vein similar to Gladding's. Problems added up in the Dakotas and Idaho among other areas, enough to make her admit to viewing the whole trip as a "foolhardy undertaking."[67] After reaching some good roads in Utah, she felt a little better about the situation. But when the map indicated that Nevada was only miles ahead, Massey confided to the reader an impending concern.

Massey's chapter entitled "Nevada and the Desert" is one of the most interesting of all the travel narratives explored in this essay. Unlike other travelers who at least tried to hide some bias, Massey put it all on the table after enduring thousands of difficult miles. Upon entering the state, she noted, "The Nevada roads were no improvement on Idaho, and the trail was obliterated many times by the swirling sand, making the going almost impossible."[68] After a desert sandstorm forced her and her husband to stop over in the small town of Montello and they were unable to find an open room in the town, her mood worsened. This is when they decided to ship themselves to Reno on the railroad rather than face any more problems driving through Nevada. It is interesting that her comments about rail travel through the state at that time recalled the earlier accounts by Greenwood and Bird—but without the cultural biases and commentary. For

Massey, the scenery went quickly as she only briefly mentioned the Humboldt River, Palisade Canyon, Elko, Battle Mountain, Lovelock, and eventually "Reno, the metropolis of Nevada."[69] Here, she noted, "It was but a few miles from the state line of California, where the motorists' troubles are ended."[70]

Doubtless the result of the draining aspects of the journey, Massey looked more toward her destination in San Francisco than to enjoying the rest of her trip. Thus, in contrast to most of the other women travelers and writers, her mention of Lake Tahoe was brief. She suggested, "Beyond Reno the ascent of the Sierra Nevada begins, and you pass Lake Tahoe, six thousand feet high, the most delightful summer-resort in America."[71] Other than this comment, she simply noted that the sight in the Sierra Nevada provided a wonderful marker to the finish line. Despite the brevity of her comments on this concluding portion of her trip through Nevada, her words are telling. Massey experienced the view differently from travelers such as Greenwood, Bird, and Leslie because the mode of travel had exhausted her several hundreds of miles earlier. Massey, it appears, was sick to death of any kind of travel and particularly the landscape of the road. Not even the majesty of Lake Tahoe could provide the solace she desired.

BY RAIL AND BY ROAD: MEANINGS IN NEVADA'S LANDSCAPES

There is an irony in Massey's journey through Nevada that should not be lost in explaining changing notions of landscape in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Her decision to forego the roads and, instead, purchase a railroad ticket is at first a reminder that this mode of travel still existed despite the rise of automobile culture. For this reason, Massey's experiences and observations provide an important link to women such as Greenwood, Bird, and Leslie. In many ways, Ramsey's impressions of the state's interior also reflected the nineteenth-century accounts as she largely centered on its desolate and inhospitable nature—even if degrading cultural references were absent. But while Greenwood's, Bird's, and Leslie's perceptions followed weeks of looking from the interiors of often luxurious Pullman cars, several weeks of dealing with inclement weather and rudimentary roads shaped Massey's views. She could not fathom enduring more of the state's treacherous roads and simply saw Nevada as the final obstacle before California, and this ultimately shaped her impression of the landscape.

While deciding to forego the automobile journey may have been an expression of Massey's weariness, she clearly missed out on an opportunity to understand Nevada from the automobile. This becomes evident in the narratives of Ramsey and Gladding, as their more immediate experiences with the road provided specific and strong perceptions to connect with the landscape. More so than the other travelers, Ramsey understood the state as a testing ground for endurance. While her frustration was evident, reaching northwest Nevada quickly

Sheep grazing in the Carson Valley. Photographer Frashers Fotos.
(Nevada Historical Society)

changed her outlook. Far from the "uncivilized" area that Greenwood, Bird, and Leslie characterized, Ramsey and her companions emphatically embraced the region as "civilization." Gladding's writing, with still another perspective, demonstrates the most patience and insight of all the women's travel narratives. Her role as an automobile passenger allowed her the time, vision, and intimacy to understand the variances of place and identity connected to the unique landscapes of Nevada.

Despite the differing technologies and prior experiences, it is of particular importance that all of the women travelers discussed in this essay recognized and conveyed the importance of Lake Tahoe and the Sierra Nevada in their narratives. Even if expressed or experienced differently, Greenwood, Bird, Leslie, and Ramsey truly embraced these landscapes as their reward for enduring the trying journey through the Nevada desert; Gladding and Massey—though the latter had largely given up on her journey by this point—acted more as disconnected tour guides in describing amenities, recreational opportunities, and the area's potential. As the rail and road that connected this region to the rest of the United States underwent significant physical and cultural changes during the years covered by the women's adventures, the consistency of the recognized

importance of Lake Tahoe and the Sierra Nevada landscape is remarkable. Each in her own way, the women tourists expressed the area's importance to their readers.

Through the writings of women tourists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it becomes overwhelmingly clear that notions of landscapes—as physical, cultural, and experiential realities—are always changing. In Nevada and Lake Tahoe, even before the rise of casinos and the tourist boom in the second half of the twentieth century, the landscape maintained several identities. The writings presented these women's views on mining towns and ghost towns, Pullman cars and Maxwell cars, Lake Tahoe of wonderment and Lake Tahoe as a signal of arriving in California. These perspectives both complicate and enrich meanings in the region, but they ultimately re-emphasize the layered reality of landscape and identity in the Silver State for the travelers who pass between its borders.

Notes

[1]Beatrice Larned Massey, *It Might Have Been Worse: A Motor Trip from Coast to Coast* (San Francisco: Harr Wagner Publishing Company, 1920), 117.

[2]*Ibid.*, 123-28.

[3]Nevada's portion of the highway was not fully developed until 1915. For original promotional literature of the Lincoln Highway see Lincoln Highway Association, *The Complete Official Guide to the Lincoln Highway* (Detroit: Lincoln Highway Association, 1916). For a historical exploration, see Drake Hokanson, *The Lincoln Highway: Main Street across America* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1988).

[4]Elizabeth Raymond, "Desert/Paradise: Images of Nevada Landscape," *Nevada Public Affairs Review*, 1988 (No. 1), 12-18. These notions were also shaped by personal conversations with the author and I owe her great thanks in helping construct this essay.

[5]Amy G. Richter, *Home on the Rails: Women, the Railroad, and the Rise of Public Domesticity* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 60.

[6]Karen M. Morin, "Peak Practices: Englishwomen's 'Heroic' Adventures in the Nineteenth-Century American West," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 89:3 (1999), 493.

[7]Kris Lackey, *Roadframes: The American Highway Narrative* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 112-30. The entire chapter entitled "The Nigger Window: Black Highways and the Impossibility of Nostalgia" digs deeper into these ideas both in terms of theory and content. Also see Anne Farrar Hyde, *An American Vision: Far Western Landscape and National Culture, 1820-1920* (New York: New York University Press, 1990); Virginia Scharff, *Taking the Wheel: Women and the Coming of the Motor Age* (New York: The Free Press, 1991).

[8]Karin M. Morin, "British Women Travellers and Constructions of Racial Difference across the Nineteenth-Century American West," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, N. S. No. 23:3* (1998), 312.

[9]Yi-fu Tuan has provided the most important groundwork for differentiating between space (a terrain without attached meaning by humans) and place (a term used when meaning is attached to space). This is detailed in Yi-fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977).

[10]Stephen Mills, *The American Landscape* (Edinburgh: Keele University Press, 1997), 6.

[11]While this essay focuses on six women (Grace Greenwood, Isabella Bird, Mrs. Frank Leslie, Alice Huyler Ramsey, Effie Price Gladding, and Beatrice Larned Massey), it should be noted that there were several other writers who engaged in similar trips. I have limited the number to enable close readings of the travelogues, but other crossing-Nevada narratives by women include Amanda Preuss, *A Girl, A Record, and an Oldsmobile: By the Girl Herself* (Lansing, Michigan: Olds Motor Works 1916); Emily Post, *By Motor Car to the Golden Gate* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, 2004); Estella M. Copeland, *Overland by Auto in 1913: Diary of a Family Tour from California to Indiana* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1981).

[12]Wilbur Shepperson, *Mirage-Land: Images of Nevada* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1992), 17-27.

[13]*Ibid.*, 37.

[14]*Ibid.*, 43.

[15]"Our-Lady Correspondent," *Janesville Gazette* [Wisconsin] (30 March 1874).

[16]Grace Greenwood was the nom de plume of Sara Jane Clarke Lippencott, born in Pompey, New York, in 1823. As with many women writers of her generation, she entered the publishing world as an editor of a women's magazine—in her case, the *Lady Dollar Newspaper,* in 1849. Later in her life she also took writing and editing positions at the *National Era*, the *New York Times*, the *New York Tribune*, and the *Saturday Evening Post*. Greenwood's first (and most popular) book-length work was *Greenwood Leaves: A Collection of Sketches and Letters* (1850), though she went on to produce nearly thirty more in her lifetime including books of poetry, travelogues, and short stories. Her widest readership was for her popular pieces that appealed to Victorian society and culture.

[17]Isabella Lucy Bird was born on October 15, 1831, in Yorkshire, England. Her early life was marked by her family's interest in education, landscape, and labor—themes she would react to throughout her lifetime. Bird's earliest writings were political in nature, but after facing serious health concerns she began a life of travel to assist in healing. It was from her journals of these travels—first to Ireland and then to Canada and the United States—that she honed her prose style.

Her first book, *The Englishwoman in America* (1856), was received well, even if it included cultural admonishments and feelings of superiority. Her writing did mature as she produced later works such as *The Hawaiian Archipelago: Six Months among the Palm Groves, Coral Reefs, and Volcanoes of the Sandwich Islands* (1875), *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains* (1879), *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan: A Record of Travels in the Interior, Including Visits to the Aborigines of Yezo and the Shrines of Nikkô and Isé* (1880), and *Korea and Her Neighbors: A Narrative of Travel, with an Account of the Recent Vicissitudes and Present Position of the Country* (1898). However, much of her writing remained culturally insensitive. Today her work is used by scholars more than any of her contemporaries to garner meaning from women's travel in the Victorian era.

[18]Grace Greenwood, *New Life in New Lands: Notes of Travel* (New York: J. B. Ford and Company, 1873), 173.

[19]*Ibid.*, 177.

[20]*Ibid.*, 28.

[21]Isabella Bird, *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960), 6.

[22]Anne Farrar Hyde, *An American Vision: Far Western Landscape and National Culture, 1820-1920* (New York: New York University Press, 1990), 135-40.

[23]See Morin, "British Women Travellers," and *idem*, "Peak Practices: Englishwomen's 'Heroic' Adventures."

[24]Greenwood, *New Life in New Lands*, 184.

[25]*Ibid.*, 185.

[26]Bird, *Lady's Life in Rocky Mountains*, 3.

[27]Greenwood, *New Life in New Lands*, 186.

[28]*Ibid.*, 187.

[29]Bird, *Lady's Life in Rocky Mountains*, 3.

[30]Douglas Strong, *Tahoe: An Environmental History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 56-62.

[31]"Her Enterprise," *The Evening Gazette* [Cedar Rapids, Iowa] (7 May 1884).

[32]Mrs. Frank Leslie, *California: A Pleasure Trip from Gotham to the Golden Gate, April, May, June,* 1877 (New York: G. W. Carleton, 1877), 19.

[33]Mrs. Frank Leslie's name is a bit tricky. Her given name was Miriam Florence Folline, and in marriage to Frank Leslie she became Miriam Florence Leslie. Upon his deathbed, Frank Leslie asked that his wife (and business partner) legally change her name to his own. While she had already published under the name Mrs. Frank Leslie, she officially adopted that name as her own when Mr. Leslie died in 1880. By 1900 she had remarried and then went by Mme. La Baronne Leslie deBazus. For the purpose of this essay, I will use Mrs. Frank Leslie, as this was her name when she published *California: A Pleasure Trip from Gotham to the Golden Gate*. Amidst these name changes, however, she gained notoriety in a fashion similar to Greenwood: writing for women's journals. Her ability and tenacity ultimately caught the eye of Frank Leslie as he first asked her to join the popular *Leslie's Magazine*. She rose through the ranks quickly, ultimately taking over many of the business aspects of the magazine during her marriage. Though she existed in the public eye into the twentieth century, her body of work has been regarded as of less consequence than other women writers because of her popular appeal—even though she made important contributions to feminist literature.

For an interesting overview of Frank Leslie's perspective from the train during the same years, see Richard Reinhardt, *Out West on the Overland Train: Across-the-Continent Excursion with Leslie's Magazine in 1877 and the Overland Trip in 1967* (Palo Alto, California: The American West Publishing Company, 1967).

[34]Leslie, *California*, 107.

[35]*Ibid.*, 108.

[36]It is not my intent in using the Greeley and Twain comparisons to suggest that popular male writers were not racist or classist. Rather, I am using them to compare favorable and exciting writings about Nevada tourism to unfavorable or unexciting ones.

[37]Leslie, *California*, 275.

[38]*Ibid.*

[39]*Ibid.*, 277.

[40]Elizabeth Raymond has noted of the side trip to Lake Tahoe that "until the Carson and Tahoe Lumber and Fluming Company's Lake Tahoe Railway began operation in 1900, the trip was made

by carriage or wagon." Elizabeth Raymond, "'A Place One Never Tires Of': Changing Landscape and Image at Lake Tahoe," in Peter Goin, Elizabeth Raymond, and Robert E. Blesse, *Stopping Time, A Rephotographic Survey of Lake Tahoe* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992), 16.

[41]Leslie, *California*, 110.

[42]Lackey, *Roadframes*, 4.

[43]*Ibid.*, 33.

[44]Virginia Scharff, *Taking the Wheel*, 1-7, 15-31.

[45]Although Ramsey's manuscript was not published until 1961 it contained her journals and recollections at the time of the journey and soon after.

[46]Alice Huyler Ramsey, *Veil, Duster, and Tire Iron* (Covina, California: Alice Huyler Ramsey, 1961), 5.

[47] In contrast to the three women discussed thus far, Ramsey was not a professional writer. She was born in 1887, completed her studies at Vassar College, and then became a homemaker. Still, her accomplishments remain in posterity. Although she was never again to be employed by Maxwell for promotional purposes following her 1909 trip—in 1910 the company was incorporated into the U.S. Motor Company—she made more than thirty additional cross-county trips in her lifetime, later including her children in her adventures. Ramsey also played an important role in organizing for the Red Cross Motor Corps during World War I and continued to advocate for women's driving and mechanical abilities until her death, in 1983. See the chapter on Ramsey in Lynn Wenzel and Carol J. Binkoswki, *More than Petticoats: Remarkable New Jersey Women* (Guilford, Conn.: TwoDot, 2003), 126-38.

[48]Ramsey, *Veil, Duster, and Tire Iron*, 80.

[49]*Ibid.*, 81.

[50]*Ibid.*, 87.

[51]*Ibid.*, 92.

[52]*Ibid.*, 94.

[53]*Ibid.*, 97.

[54]Shepperson, *Mirage-Land*, 97.

[55]Like Ramsey, Gladding was not a professional writer. While she shows up on Ohio Wesleyan University's alumni roster, she also appears to have been a housewife who had no other major publications in her lifetime. According to some documents, Gladding was heavily involved with the Young Women's Christian Association and published in its magazine. She was also mentioned in the *Christian Science Monitor*. Her journeys across the United States and other regions of the world—India and Asia just prior to her American trip—sprang from her husband's retirement and her desire to share the knowledge of her travels with any other interested party. Pertaining to her writings on the United States, some scholars have conjectured that she hoped to create interest in the Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915, held in San Francisco. For notes on Gladding, see Gregory Clark, *Rhetorical Landscapes in America: Variations on a Theme from Kenneth Burke* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004), 93-95. Gladding's reflections on her prior trip to India can be found in Effie Price Gladding, "The Spell of India," *The Association Monthly: The Official Organ in the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Association*, 8:10 (November 1914), 361-64.

[56]Effie Price Gladding, *Across the Continent by the Lincoln Highway* (New York: Brentano's, 1915), 113.

[57]*Ibid.*, 114.

[58]*Ibid.*, 115.

[59]*Ibid.*, 116.

[60]*Ibid.*, 117.

[61]*Ibid.*, 120.

[62]*Ibid.*, 125.

[63]*Ibid.*, 138.

[64]Massey, *It Might Have Been Worse*, foreword.

[65]Massey's foreword further noted: "There are many so-called 'highways' to follow, and numerous routes which, according to the folders, have 'good roads and first-class accommodations all the way.' I can speak only for ourselves, and will doubtless call down the criticism of many who have taken any other route. On the whole, it has been a revelation, and, to my mind, the only way to a first-hand knowledge of our country, its people, the scenery, and last, but not least, its roads – good, bad, and infinitely worse."

Massey is the most curious of all the writers explored in this essay. *It Might Have Been Worse* appears to have been her only publication. She shows up in the records of the Daughters of Founders and Patriots of America, but other connections are not clear. The best information available is in the travelogue itself, where among other points, she highlights the trip to Yellowstone National Park and the fact that the road trip covered 4,540 miles in thirty-three days.

[66]Massey, *It Might Have Been Worse*, 8.

[67]*Ibid.*, 70.

[68]*Ibid.*, 123.

[69]*Ibid.*, 128.

[70]*Ibid.*, 129.

[71]*Ibid.*, 130.

"Wind Blew Down"/"Wind Came Up"
The Misfits *and the Imagery of Arthur Miller*

Stephen Marino

Most critical discussion of Arthur Miller's *The Misfits* has concentrated on the screenplay and subsequent film version. The project is intriguing to film, drama, and literary critics as a collaboration of Miller's writing talent and Marilyn Monroe's attempt to be taken as a serious actress. Miller constructed the screenplay as a gift to Monroe, after she suffered an ectopic pregnancy, by expanding a short story of the same title that he had written in 1956. The filming, directed by John Huston, was complicated by Monroe's emotional difficulties, which were intensified, according to Miller in his autobiography *Timebends*, by the undue influence of the acting coach Paula Strasberg. Miller's marriage to Monroe irretrievably broke down during production, and the film served as a final vehicle for both Monroe and Clark Gable.[1]

As a literary work, *The Misfits* actually exists in four different versions: the original story, which appeared in *Esquire*; a revised and expanded story that was published in the 1967 short story collection, *I Don't Need You Anymore* and re-published by Scribner's in 1987 under the title *"The Misfits" and Other Stories*; the actual screenplay; and, in conjunction with the release of the film, a work Miller published in 1961 that he classified as an "unfamiliar form—neither novel,

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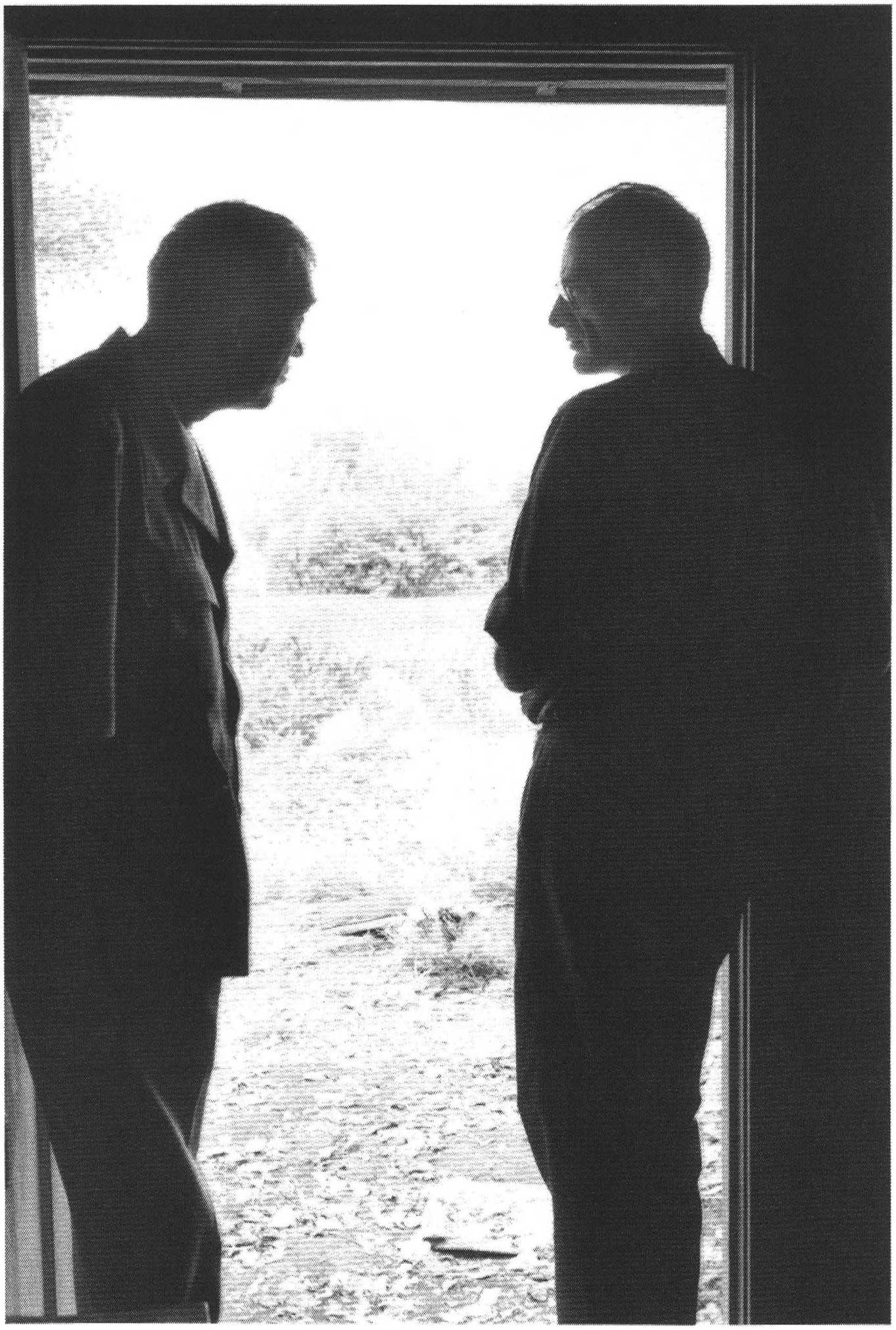


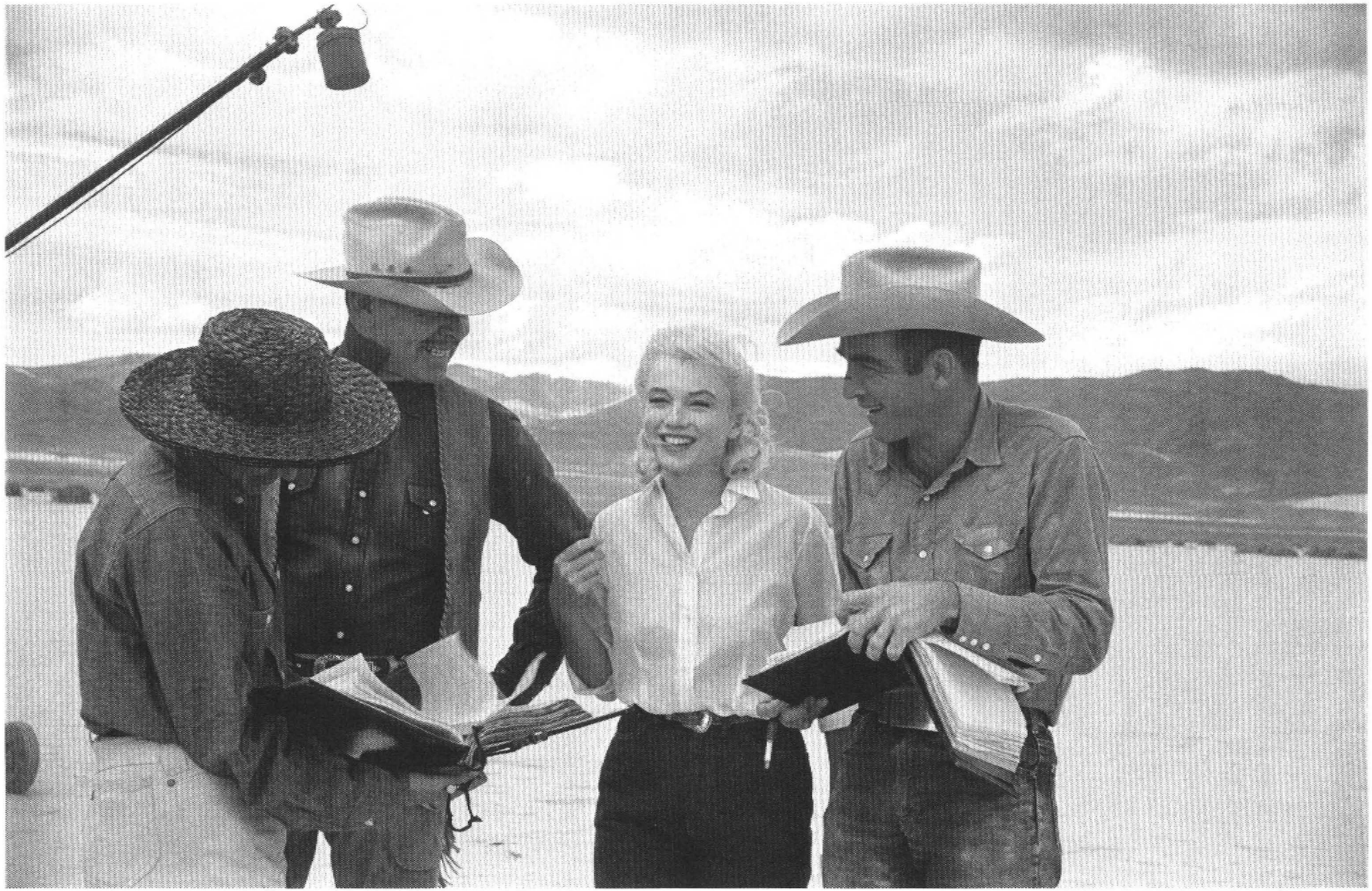
Director John Huston and playwright Arthur Miller during the filming of "The Misfits," Reno, Nevada, 1960. Photograph by Inge Morath. *(Magnum Photos)*

play, nor screenplay," which is a combination of the dialogue from the screenplay with extensive descriptions of the various Nevada locales of the film and includes a reprint of the original *Esquire* story. Laurence Goldstein maintains that the "stubborn rootedness of *The Misfits* in all its forms in the soil of the late 1950s and early 1960s complicates our efforts to measure its continuing claims upon the public imagination in the early years of the twenty-first century."[2]

The similarities and differences among all these versions have received very little scrutiny. Most discussion focuses on how Miller expanded the character Roslyn, completely absent but much spoken about in the short story, into a major role for Monroe in the screenplay and fully developed her relationship with one of the cowboys, named Gay, played by Gable. However, Miller completely altered the original short story for the film, not only expanding characters, but also adding settings and plot, which includes a rodeo scene and Roslyn at the roundup of the mustangs. In reality, the screenplay is in most ways unrecognizable from the original short story, which focuses less on the relationship between Gay and Roslyn and more on the personal connection between two of the cowboys, the middle-aged Gay and the younger Perce Howland.[3] Moreover, there are substantial differences between the original *Esquire* story and its expanded version which have not been the subject of extensive critical analysis. The enlarged tale rearranges detail, includes additional descriptions of the setting, and adds internal narration that enlarges the psychological motivations of the characters. In addition, both versions use significant imagery to describe the literal landscape of the Nevada mountain ranges, deserts, and plains and to assign them figurative significance in the lives of the characters. In particular, wind acts as a crucial unifying image for the cowboys, and the mustangs they capture signify their status as misfits in their landscapes.

The original story and its expanded version are terse, one-scene tales that relate a few hours in the lives of Nevada cowboys Gay Langland, Perce Howland, and Guido Racanelli, who that day are herding mustangs, which they sell for the making of dog food. However, these so-called cowboys are atypical, for they herd the mustangs in a manner completely different from the rustling and roping that took place in the Old West—action romanticized in the movies and idealized at the rodeos at which Perce is expert. Guido rounds up the mustangs by flying a plane low into the mountain range they inhabit and shooting a gun out of the cockpit, thus scaring the horses out of the mountains and driving them onto the floor of the desert plains, a dry lake bed where the entire story takes place. Then the three men capture the mustangs by chasing them with their truck, individually lassoing and roping them; finally the horses are weighted down with tires, which keep them from moving until the next day, when the cowboys truck them to market for sale.

Miller came to write the story based on his 1956 experiences living at Pyramid Lake, Nevada, when he was establishing his six-week residency required for a quickie Reno divorce from his first wife, Mary Slattery, in order to marry



Clark Gable, Marilyn Monroe, Montgomery Clift on the set of "The Misfits," outside Reno, Nevada, 1960. The screenplay was gift from Miller to Monroe. Photograph by Eve Arnold. *(Magnum Photos)*

Monroe. He clearly turned his experiences there and his emotional turmoil over the divorce into the short story. Miller writes in *Timebends* that, during his time in Nevada, he was trying "to make some personal contact with the terrain after exploding my life,"[4] and concluded that "Nevada thus became a mirror to me."[5] He had met two rodeo men who were hunters of wild mustangs and spent some time with them out in the desert. Miller was struck by the cowboys' admiration of movie cowboys who to the men were more genuine than they themselves who had lived on horseback for years. Miller relates their sexual assignations with women, to whom they always referred with great respect, and their fascination with the variety of personalities of the abundant would-be divorcées. Miller writes, "Under all that sky and amid those eternal mountains they understood earth and animals and each other. But the women were forever the mystery."[6] He particularly singles out Will Bingham, on whom he obviously based Gay, divorced and guilt ridden over abandoning his six-year-old daughter. Miller judges, "He led a lone, self-sufficient life that he seemed to think inevitable if not ideal."[7] Above all, Miller notes, "The sensitivity of some of these brawny western men was somehow reassuring."[8]

Finding himself in "Nevada, home of the rootless, the wanderers, the misfits,"[9] Miller took the sensitivity he found reassuring in these cowboys and combined it with his own sense of loss, isolation, loneliness, and abandon over his divorce from his wife and separation from his two children. He transformed these feelings into a story of male bonding in the West, especially between Gay and Perce, for the story focuses not only on the physical rounding up of the mustangs, but also on the emotional journey that Perce and Gay take across the vast dry lake bed where the story takes place. Although we live in a time when a relationship between two cowboys can be turned into a love story, the original "Misfits" is decidedly not a prequel to *Brokeback Mountain*. However, Miller's strong interest in writing plots that explore male-male relationships is well known, particularly conflicts between brothers and between fathers and sons, as in *All My Sons*, *Death of a Salesman*, and *The Price*. But "The Misfits" is interesting for developing the relationship between two men who are not related, and Miller did write this story just after he married Monroe and was still smarting over his severed friendship with Elia Kazan, cut off because of the stage and film director's testimony before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). Miller had described a "brother-love" that he had had for Kazan.[10]

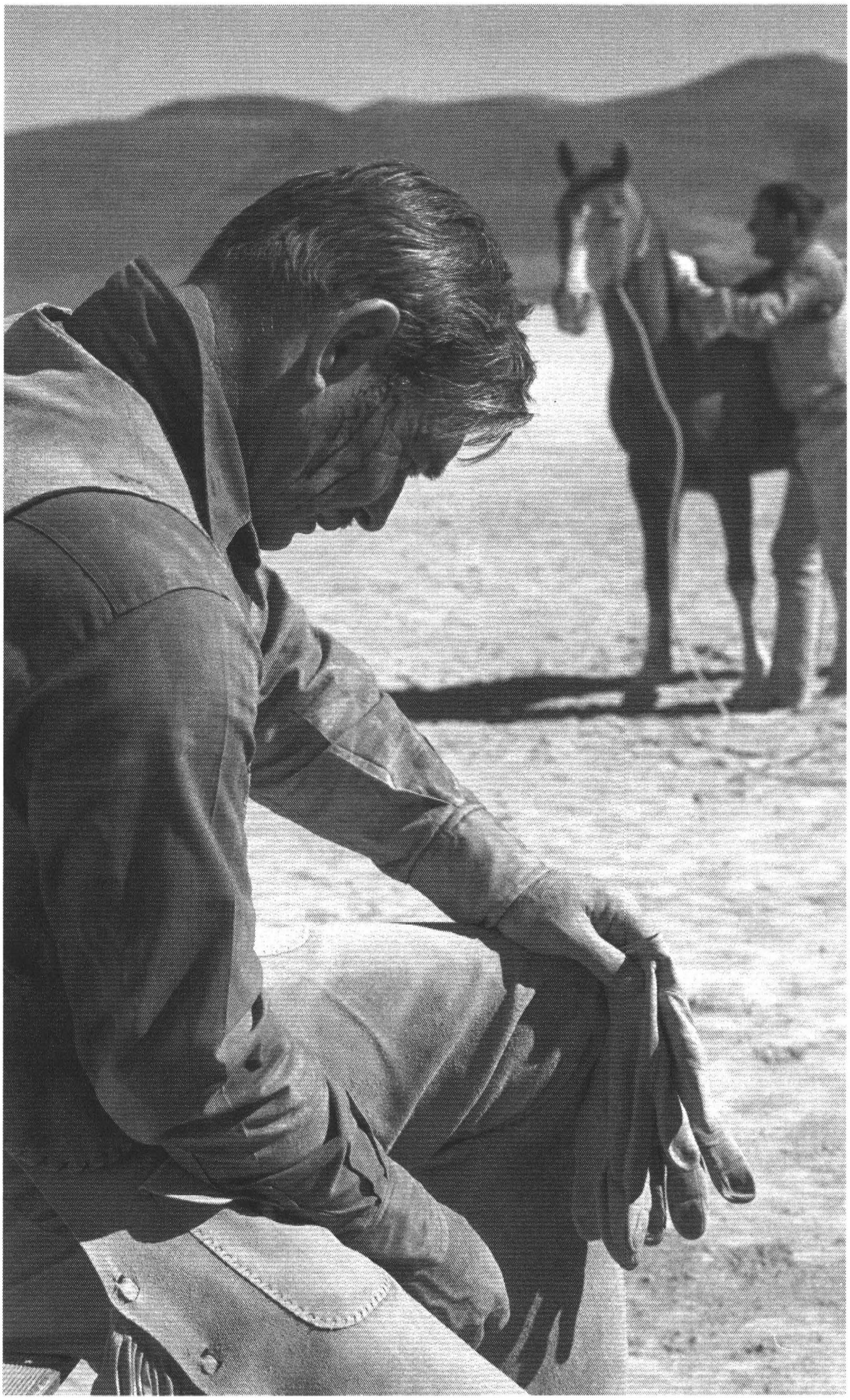
In *Timebends*, Miller wrote, "A certain indeterminacy of life was really all these characters had to rely on."[11] Miller clearly depicts the uncertainty of each cowboy's male angst: Guido brooding over the death of his wife and stillborn child, Gay still torn years after catching his wife cheating and still longing for his children (stressed in the expanded story), and the young Perce losing the desire to go home for the first time. Each character suffers an emotional dislocation evident in their ironic attempt to connect with the Nevada landscape. The story particularly emphasizes the bond between Perce and Gay, one young, the other middle-aged, who connect as they ride on the remote landscape. Although they had met only a few weeks before,

a clear symbiosis is portrayed between them: In the original story, they finish each other's sentences, they know each other's thoughts; Gay pursues Perce, accompanying him north to other ranges to search for other mustangs. However, Perce has the wanderlust to continue riding rodeo, since he is determined throughout the story to go to Largo to sign up for the next contest. Yet, the revised tale strongly conveys Perce's pleasure at becoming fast friends with Gay.

At the same time, Gay is in a relationship with the unseen Roslyn and we see that she gives him great comfort, but his internal narrations also show his concern over Roslyn's doting on Perce: Gay even wonders if they are sleeping together, and he fears that she will go back east from where she came, a possibility he describes in both stories as "the bottom of his life falling."[12] Clearly he wants to lose neither Perce nor Roslyn. Both versions reinforce Gay's connection to the younger man: "He had been all of his life like Perce Howland . . . a man moving on or ready to."[13] Even the physical descriptions of them emphasize shared youthful characteristics: Gay, the middle-aged man, is described in the original story with ears like a little boy[14] and, in the expanded tale, as having a boy's turned-up snub nose.[15] Perce in the revised story is described as a "little child waking up and his eyes were still dreamy and soft."[16]

What is not wholly clear, and one of the strengths of this purposeful ambiguity, is how much of Gay's attraction to the younger man lies in his seeing himself in Perce, and therefore wanting him to carry on the misfit lifestyle—which is why Gay so wants Perce to come north with him to continue finding more mustangs on Thighbone Mountain. But Gay also dislikes some aspects of Perce. He resents some of his physical youth, as, for example, when Perce easily spots Guido's plane off in the distance, but Gay must use binoculars. Moreover, Gay is repulsed by Perce's youthful idealism when he expresses regret at hunting the mustangs: "Gay, I never felt comfortable about taking those horses" [17] and "Seems to me God put them up there and they belong up there."[18] Also, Perce shows particular concern for the captured mare and whether the untethered colt will leave her, which becomes an important focus at the end of the story. Yet he redeems himself in Gay's eyes as he points out Roslyn's hypocrisy in criticizing the hunting of the innocent mustangs, but still feeding her dog canned horse meat. But the story ultimately emphasizes the strong bond between the men who are depicted as feeling "between them the comfort of purpose and their isolation."[19] Moreover, this bond will continue because Perce, at the end of the story, agrees to go north. In the original tale this is expressed as "Gay felt more peaceful now that the younger man would not be leaving him. There was a future again, something to head for."[20] The revised tale replaces this last line with "He drove in contentment."[21]

Christopher Bigsby has called "The Misfits" a story of metaphor.[22] Dennis Welland noted the "graphic vividness of the writing, heightened only occasionally by an image."[23] However, the original story contains a striking amount of imagistic language, greatly expanded in the revised version, which describes the literal landscapes of the Nevada mountain ranges, deserts, plains, and



Clark Gable during the filming of "The Misfits," 1960. Photograph by Eve Arnold. *(Magnum Photos)*

plateaus and assigns them figurative significance in the lives of the characters. All the imagery shows that the three cowboys are both contradictorily connected and disconnected from the western landscape. In *Timebends*, Miller proclaims that the story intends to use the landscape as a metaphor—what he describes as the immense dead spaces of Nevada is meant to signify how "a man seems lost."[24] In fact, this was Miller's complaint about the film version—that the context of man's insignificance against the land was blanked out by the close-ups required in film. In contrast, the images of landscape in the short stories bolster his depiction of the characters. "I had set to create the feeling of a few isolated, lost, and lonely people on the vast mythic plain of existence."[25]

The vast mythic plain of existence where Miller places the cowboys is an unidentified desert situated on a grand plateau between two mountain ranges, one to the north and one to the south, where the entire story takes place. Both versions describe the location: "Thirty miles ahead stood the lava mountains which were the northern border of this desert, the bed or bowl seven thousand feet, a place no one ever saw excepting a few cowboys searching for strays."[26] The location is even more specifically described as the men drive toward the spot where they encounter the mustangs: "A prehistoric lake bed thirty miles long by seventeen miles wide, couched between two mountain ranges. It was a flat beige waste without grass or bush or stone, where a man might drive a car at a hundred miles an hour with his hands off the wheel and not hit anything at all."[27] Despite this specificity, whether the story actually occurs in Nevada is debatable. Although the movie is clearly identified in popular culture with Nevada (*The Misfits* was filmed with much fanfare in the state; Miller placed the opening scene in Reno), neither version of the short story specifically states any exact location in Nevada. In fact, Perce says he has been "coming down from Nevada"[28] since he was sixteen. Because the story consistently identifies "up" as north, Perce "coming down" strongly suggests that the story occurs in a state south of Nevada. In addition, the two towns mentioned in the story, Bowie and Largo, are not located in the Pyramid Lake area of Nevada, the oft-presumed setting. Although there are towns named Bowie and Rodeo on the Arizona/New Mexico border, in reality mustang herding took place in scores of mountain ranges and desert plateaus in the West and Southwest. Miller even wrote in *Timebends* that the name of the rodeo town far out in the desert had faded from his memory.[29] Thus, he seems to have consciously set the story in a place that surely would be symbolic.

This symbolism is evident in the metaphor of the story's title. "Misfits" obviously applies to both the horses and the men, but Gay first uses it to describe Perce: "You're a real misfit, boy," who quickly responds in kind: "Hell, Gay you are the most misfitted man I ever saw and you done all right."[30] The cowboys are self-identified misfits from the rat trap of conventional society: They resist working legitimate jobs for someone else in traditional employment. "Better than wages" is their mantra. Thus, they do not hunt for the money, but rather some warped cowboy idealism. Perce says in both versions: "I don't want nothin' and don't want to want nothin'."[31]

"The vast mythic plain,"—filming of "The Misfits," 1960. Photograph by Cornell Capa. *(Magnum Photos)*

But Gay also uses the term misfits to describe the mustang stallion: "He ain't nothing but a misfit. You couldn't run cattle with him. He's too small to breed and too old to cut."[32] In the revised story, Gay says, "He ain't nothing but a misfit, except for some kid. You couldn't run cattle with him and he's too small for a riding horse."[33] Miller emphasizes the connection between the horses and the men, especially in their purposeful separation. The *Esquire* story explains that the "mustang herd lived in total isolation and inbreeding reduced them to the size of large ponies."[34] In the revised tale, as the men drive across the plateau, the connection to the mustangs is strongly enforced. In Gay's mind, "he could feel the wild horses grazing and moving about in the nearby mountains."[35]

Above all, the sense of isolation of these misfits is also meant to illustrate the conflict between stasis and movement in the story: The men seek isolation from conventional society and look to continue it by hunting mustangs in other ranges up north. Similarly, the mustangs resist leaving their isolated existence in the mountains; they are forced onto the flatness of the desert plain by Guido's plane: "They would not go forward onto unknowable territory from the cooler sage dotted desert behind them,"[36] and only reluctantly step onto the lake bed where they will be captured. In addition, this contrast of stasis and movement is echoed by other opposites: The heat of the desert plains with the cool of the mountains, up north and down south, dawn and dusk, and most important, calm wind and blowing wind.

The most striking image of the story is the image of wind, which both opens and closes the tale and is scattered throughout the texts in both versions. The wind effectively acts as a crucial unifying element for both the men and horses, signifying their status as misfits in their natural and unnatural worlds.

There are other works in which Miller uses the wind in a similar way. In *All My Sons,* the wind has blown down Larry's tree; in "A Search for a Future," the wind indicates the life force of the old man; in "I Don't Need You Anymore," the powerful ocean wind evokes the voice of the mother, the sins of the Jews, and atonement. And in a letter Miller sent to the attendees at 1999 Arthur Miller Society conference, he wrote of Willy Loman: "He is all mood, all feeling, a naked branch of a tree swaying in the wind."[37] This use of figurative language is all part of Miller's wider use of imagery, simile, and metaphor in his dramatic and non-dramatic canon.[38]

Both versions of "The Misfits" open with wind blowing from the mountains, preventing the men from hunting because Guido can not fly the plane. The original begins:

> Wind blew down from the mountains for two nights pinning them to their little camp on the desert floor. Around the fire on the grand plateau they were the only moving things. But awakening now with the first pink of dawn they heard the hush of a windless morning. Quickly the sky flared with true dawn like damp paper catching fire, and the shroud of darkness slipped off the little plane and the truck standing a few yards away.[39]

The revised story more strongly emphasizes how the wind from the mountains impeded the men from hunting: "Now that the wind had died down, Gay hoped very much that Guido would take off this morning and let them begin their work;"[40] Perce thinks: "For two days they had been waiting for the wind to die so the pilot could take off into the mountains where the wild horses lived."[41]

Both versions suggest how the wind indicates nature's resistance to the men's hunting, for in other instances in the story, the wind threatens the men's action: Guido tells Gay in the original, "It don't mean a damn thing what the wind does down here. Up there is where it counts." He thumbed toward the mountains behind them. "I'm ten feet from rocks at the bottom of a dive; the wind smacks you down then and you never pull up again."[42] The revised account makes this much stronger: "You can't see wind, Gay"..."You're flying along in and out of those passes and then you dive for the sons of bitches, and just when you're pulling up some goddam gust presses you down and there you are."[43] The revised narrative also connects the wind to Guido's mourning over his wife and child:

> Guido had had the feeling that he made that deep dive so that he could die. And the thought of his dead wife had come to him again. . . . So that through these past three days up here he had refused to let himself take off until the wind had utterly died, and he had clung to moroseness. He wanted to take off in absolute grip of his own wits, leaving nothing to chance. Now there was no wind at all, and he felt he had pressed the sinister gaiety out of his mind.[44]

Later in the story, the wind the men create when riding the truck and corraling the herd threatens their lassos.[45]

Thus, Miller suggests that the wind is an elemental part of both the men and the horses. In fact, all the men are identified with the wind in their physical descriptions: Guido has melon cheeks browned by the wind, or burned brown from it, and Gay is brown skinned from wind. Most significant, in the revised story Gay calls the wind "sumbitch"[46] and Guido calls the horses "sons of bitches."[47]

The beginning of the expanded tale more strongly connects the wind to its source in the mountains and its effect on the men:

> Wind blew down from the mountains all night. A wild river of air swept and swirled across the dark sky and struck down against the blue desert and hissed back into the hills. The three cowboys slept under their blanket, their backs against the first upward curve of the circling mountains, their faces toward the desert of sage. The wind and its tidal washing seethed through their dreams, and when it stopped, there was lunar silence that caused Gay Langland to open his eyes. For the first time in three nights he could hear his own breathing and in the new hush he looked up at the stars and saw how clear and bright they were. He felt happy and slid himself out of his blanket and stood up fully dressed.[48]

Marilyn Monroe, Clark Gable, Mongomery Clift, and Eli Wallach on the set of "The Misfits," 1960. Photograph by Cornell Capa. *(Magnum Photos)*

Here Miller uses literal images of wind and mountains and assigns them figurative significance in the lives of the characters. Note the position of the men as they sleep: The back curves of their bodies are toward the mountains, their faces are toward the desert of sage. The down-blowing wind is the spirit of their dreams, the elemental source of their existence pouring from the mountains, the wind of the spirit of the mustangs.

And wind ends the story. The final scene—exactly the same in both versions—parallels the beginning. The horses are captured on the desert floor—the same desert floor where the men have slept the night before—all of them restrained by the tires, except the colt that the men do not need to tie down since they know it will not leave the mare. In fact, the considerable discussion between Perce and Gay about this foreshadows its imagistic significance in the last scene. When Perce asks, "Ever hear of a colt leave a mare?" it instigates in Gay the fear of Roslyn leaving, and in Perce thoughts of his mother and his definite commitment to accompany Gay to Thighbone Mountain. As the night comes, in an inversion of the opening of the story, the horses face the mountains north from which they have been forced, and the powerful wind—now coming up—blows from the south behind them. They put their backs to the wind, their tails blowing between their legs (the colt up against the mare for warmth), facing the source of their spiritual existence, the lust for their wild, unbridled life—where the men ironically want to be. The stark image of the animal misfits tied down by the human misfits implies that the men are really hunting themselves: The relentless, contradictory, and hopeless pursuit of looking to kill off that which we are, that which we don't want to be, the spirit of wildness inbred in men and horses.

The final image of the story is at dawn—Miller describes the same pink hue as the beginning—the colt stands, looking for water, and returns to the mare's side, sniffing the warming air. This powerful image of the untethered colt tied to the mare by the bonds of maternity has been foreshadowed in the conversation between Perce and Gay after the capture of the mustangs. Its figurative importance resonates in many of the characters in their unresolved conflicts: in Gay and Roslyn—Gay unable to leave, fearing her abandonment; Perce and his mother—a colt having abandoned his mare; finally in Gay and Perce, as misfit mare and colt—Perce untethered, but unable to leave Gay's side.

Finally, in a dramatic moment of life imitating art, the wind had a significant impact on the last days of filming *The Misfits*. The production, filmed on the same Pyramid Lake that inspired Miller to write the tale, was filled with delays predominantly caused by Monroe's emotional turmoil. But the final weeks also were grossly affected by severe weather conditions. Every afternoon, a strong wind would rise over Pyramid Lake and cover the crew, actors, and equipment with dust, frequently forcing them to postpone filming—nature rearing itself again and again on the world of Hollywood misfits.

NOTES

[1]Monroe was never to complete another film before her death, in August 1962; Gable died of a massive heart attack just two weeks after the filming of *The Misfits* ended.

[2]Laurence Goldstein, *"The Misfits* and American Culture," in *Arthur Miller's America: Theatre and Culture in a Time of Change*, Enoch Brater, ed. (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2005), 110.

[3]Arthur Miller's penchant for drafting, re-drafting, and producing several versions of plays has been quite challenging for those readers and scholars who crave definitive editions of texts. In fact, the two works preceding "The Misfits," *The Crucible* and *A View from the Bridge*, are well known as plays in which Miller produced different texts. Miller added an additional scene to the second production of *The Crucible*. The original 1955 Broadway production of *A View from the Bridge* was a one-act play; Miller revised and expanded it into two acts for the 1956 London production. In the 1990s, Miller wrote two versions of *The Last Yankee* and changed the ending of *Broken Glass* for the London and New York stage productions, as well as for the screen adaptation.

[4]Arthur Miller, *Timebends: A Life* (New York: Grove Press, 1987), 377.

[5]*Ibid.*, 382.

[6]*Ibid.*, 383.

[7]*Ibid.*

[8]*Ibid.*

[9]*Ibid.*, 377.

[10]*Ibid.*, 335.

[11]*Ibid.*, 474.

[12]Arthur Miller, "The Misfits," *Esquire* (October 1957), 200; *idem*, *I Don't Need You Anymore* (New York: Viking, 1967), 73.

[13]*Ibid.*

[14]Miller, "The Misfits," 195.

[15]Miller, "I Don't Need You Anymore," 77.

[16]*Ibid.*, 64.

[17]Miller, "The Misfits," 204.

[18]Miller, "I Don't Need You Anymore," 77.

[19]*Ibid.*, 196.

[20]Miller, "The Misfits," 221-22.

[21]Miller, "I Don't Need You Anymore," 89.

[22]Christopher Bigsby, *Arthur Miller: A Critical Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 224.

[23]Dennis Welland, *Arthur Miller* (New York: Grove Press, 2005), 21.

[24]Miller, *Timebends*, 469

[25]*Ibid.*, 463.

[26]Miller, "The Misfits," 196; *idem*, "I Don't Need You Anymore," 71.

[27]Miller, "The Misfits," 201; *idem*, "I Don't Need You Anymore," 74.

[28]Miller, "The Misfits," 197.

[29] Miller, *Timebends*, 472.

[30]Miller, "The Misfits," 202; *idem*, "I Don't Need You Anymore," 75.

[31]*Ibid.*

[32]Miller, "The Misfits," 213.

[33]Miller, "I Don't Need You Anymore," 84.

[34]Miller, "The Misfits," 208.

[35]Miller, "I Don't Need You Anymore," 65.

[36]Miller, "The Misfits," 207; *idem*, "I Don't Need You Anymore," 79.

[37]Arthur Miller, "Letter to the Arthur Miller Society," in "Introduction" to "The Salesman Has a Birthday": *Essays Celebrating the Fiftieth Anniversary of Arthur Miller's* Death of a Salesman, Stephen A. Marino, ed. (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2000), x.

[38]For a detailed discussion, see *A Language Study of Arthur Miller's Plays, The Poetic in the Colloquial* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2002).

[39]Miller, "The Misfits," 193.
[40]Miller, "I Don't Need You Anymore," 61.
[41]*Ibid.*, 65.
[43]Miller, "The Misfits," 194.
[44]*Ibid.*, 68.
[45]*Ibid.*, 80.
[46]*Ibid.*, 64.
[47]*Ibid.*, 67.
[48]*Ibid.*, 62.

Book Reviews

Devils Will Reign: How Nevada Began. By Sally Zanjani (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2006)

Sally Zanjani is one of the premier historians of Nevada. She has written many books on the Nevada experience, ranging from a loving memoir of her maternal grandfather, George Springmeyer, as well as the authoritative study of Goldfield in its heyday, to a treatment of women prospectors in the West, and, most important, the definitive and gracefully written biography of Sarah Winnemucca. Now Sally Zanjani has come in with a book on Nevada's beginnings: *Devils Will Reign* is the story of the eastern slope of the Sierra from its annexation to the United States in 1848 until the formation of Nevada Territory in 1861. A short section at the end carries the narrative to Nevada statehood, three years later.

Zanjani begins, accurately enough, by stating that "Washington politics would have more effect on the creation of Nevada than anything done in Nevada" (2). But although she does not ignore Washington politics, her real interest is the local level, and to her the chief thrust of events is actually determined by ordinary individuals. We must, she contends, look at the "struggles of the contending parties on the front lines" (2). Her cast of these contending groups consists of miners, Gentiles (non-Mormons), Saints (Mormons), Native Americans (she is empathetic toward this group and never loses sight of them), and Chinese. Her cast of individuals, and she develops some of these at considerable length, include Abner Blackburn, Bill "Lucky Bill" Thorington (whom she admires), William Ormsby (whom she does not), the young Sarah Winnemucca, James M. Crane, Allen and Hosea Grosh, and Peleg Brown. Her title *Devils Will Reign* hints that not all the characters are admirable ones, although in truth Zanjani admires some of the scoundrels more than some of the "good people."

The title also hints that the decade of the 1850s was one of administrative chaos and disorganization in the area. This is the book's chief theme. Although it was ostensibly a part of Utah Territory from 1850 on, administrative tidiness and organization never reached the eastern slope of the Sierra during this decade. It began in chaos and ended in chaos. For one thing, the capital of the territory was five hundred miles away, and the Gentiles despised any imposition of Mormon rule. The chief attempt by Mormon leadership to impose administrative control over the area began with the creation of a separate

Carson County in 1855, with the sending of Orson Hyde—one of the twelve apostles of the Church—to the area as probate judge, and with the migration of several hundred Mormon families into the area, which succeeded in shifting the population balance in favor of the Saints. But when the Mormons were called back to Zion in 1857, the effort collapsed. Thus the miners who came to develop the Comstock in 1859 were left with no semblance of organized government whatever.

Zanjani then recounts how the secession of southern states after the presidential election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860, and the resultant resignation of their representatives and senators in the lame-duck congress, provided an opportunity for bringing order out of this governmental anarchy: A bill creating a separate Nevada Territory passed the Congress in its final days, and was signed by President James Buchanan, just two days before Lincoln's inauguration as president. Lincoln was then able to organize the territory under Republican leadership.

This is an outstanding book. It is well researched and, as we have come to expect in anything from Sally Zanjani, beautifully written. It becomes the definitive study of the period of the 1850s. Her discussion of the enmity between Mormons and Gentiles is incisive, and she has probably written the most judicious and best summary of the Pyramid Lake War of 1860 in existence. The author also has a nice sense of humor. *Devils Will Reign* is an excellent and lively read, quite authoritative, and highly recommended.

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Leave the Dishes in the Sink: Adventures of an Activist in Conservative Utah. By Alison Comish Thorne (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2002)

Leave the Dishes in the Sink: Adventures of an Activist in Conservative Utah offers an autobiographical account of a life well lived. While not especially well written, Thorne's narrative does offer an uncommon appreciation of the author's historical context and plenty of local flavor. Indeed, the beauty of the book is in its details—community action programs mingle with crabapple trees in bloom, for example (124). But Thorne's message rests in the seamless integration of her daily life with broader worlds, everyday homemaking with the masculine worlds of economics, philosophy, and ethics. Her narrative seamlessly joins the intellectual, political, and historical forces at work in her life with the daily labors that shaped her experiences and those of other women.

Thorne begins with a description of the impact of the politics of the 1920s on people's lives in rural Oregon. Both of Thorne's parents were active in progressive politics, establishing a family precedent of commitment to social justice. Her second chapter is equal parts a celebratory history of early feminist economics and a detailed intellectual autobiography of her college and graduate-school years, replete with a description of the arduous process of washing her hair in her college dorm, one of the many details that enrich her story. (She pumped rainwater into buckets to carry to the communal bathroom.) She then discusses the difficulties of rearing children while living a life of the mind, a familiar refrain among women with lives of the mind in the forties and fifties.

In the most engaging chapters of her narrative, Thorne reviews her efforts in university and local politics during the activism of the 1960s. Building on a family legacy of women's progressive activism, Thorne's résumé is indeed impressive, but perhaps the most impressive and compelling of these activities was the development of education programs for the children of Mexican-American migrant workers, which Thorne and her women compatriots struggled to maintain amid threats of defunding. With Thorne and other campus women behind it, Utah State University's women's studies program emerged out of the feminist upheavals of the 1970s and 1980s. Thorne and other campus women also created a women's center, and the Women and Gender Research Institute. Her book concludes with an homage to its own genesis, the increasing place of and interest in women in American universities.

Thorne's folksy, matter-of-fact style left me wanting a bit more self-reflection from such a historically sensitive autobiography. While Thorne gives us plenty of interest, she leaves the task of drawing meaning-making to her readers. In one sense, the book can be read as a tribute to the many local—unsung—pioneers, Thorne among them, who carried out the feminist revolution. Indeed, as Thorne recognizes, feminist change has often depended as much on wives, friends, and local women as on national movements. A housewife with a Ph.D., Thorne (and no doubt many other women) spent a good deal of time working on books and papers never published, as well as on teaching classes, organizing conferences and events, coordinating and administrating campus programs, and championing political causes while receiving no compensation. Feminist successes, like so many other accomplishments, have rested on the unpaid labor of women, and Thorne is grateful to have lived a life enriched by engaging intellectual and political work.

As a feminist reader, however, I longed for Thorne's gratitude to be accompanied by a feminist critique, or at least an observation, of the magnitude of her own and other women's unpaid—and unrecognized—labor on the Utah State campus. In this book, any feminist analysis that might emerge is eclipsed by Thorne's sheer gratitude for having had engaging work to do. I find this lack especially disturbing because the "shadow manuscript" that Thorne wrote in the forties "dealt with domesticity, a shadowy realm involving women's household

work, unpaid, and considered less important than paid employment" (50). I longed as well for an analysis beyond simple recognition of the level and nature of privilege that enabled such a life of volunteer activism. While Thorne recognizes her husband's beneficence and emotional and financial support, one leaves the book with the distinct sense that Betty Friedan's "problem that has no name" can be solved by any housewife who can purchase some philosophy books and a typewriter.

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Railroads of Nevada and Eastern California. Vol. III: More on The Northern Roads. By David F. Myrick (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2007)

Southern Pacific's Salt Lake Division. By John R. Signor (Berkeley and Wilton, Calif.: Signature Press, 2007)

These two recently published railroad-related books are by former railroaders who live in California, actively publish on western railroads, and have a special interest in the Southern Pacific (whose predecessor Central Pacific initiated railroad operations in the Silver State). David Myrick has written about a dozen books and is recognized as the dean of western railroad historians. John Signor has written about a half dozen books on the same subject, and currently edits at least three railroad-historical-society newsletters. These authors represent two generations of railroad historians, and I shall begin by discussing the work of the more senior, David F. Myrick.

For more than forty-five years, Myrick's two-volume work on the *Railroads of Nevada and Eastern California* has been the definitive source on Nevada's varied railroad lines. In those volumes, first published in 1962 and reprinted several times, Myrick covered the railroads of Nevada and California east of the Sierra geographically. The breakdown was simple enough: Volume I dealt with northern Nevada (including the Central/Southern Pacific transcontinental line and the fabled Virginia and Truckee), while Volume II covered the southern roads (including those serving Goldfield, Rhyolite, Pioche, and Las Vegas). Despite excellent coverage in those early books, the indefatigable Myrick conducted subsequent research in Nevada and California, uncovering additional historical material that warranted this new volume. Moreover, he ends *More on the Northern Roads* by covering a number of "recent developments in Nevada"—including the Las Vegas Monorail (1995), the tourist operations

over the partially restored Virginia and Truckee and the Nevada Northern, and the controversial Reno Trench (2004).

Most of the material of interest to Nevadans resides in the first third of the book. Here, Myrick appropriately begins by revisiting the Central Pacific Railroad, which put Nevada on the railroad map in the first place (1868). This section sheds considerable new light on the political machinations surrounding the Central Pacific's role in developing the western component of the first transcontinental railroad. Myrick also further discusses early Central Pacific operations and the transition to E. H. Harriman control. In addition, the Central Pacific Railroad towns of Wadsworth, Toano, Elko, Lovelock, and Winnemucca are covered in more detail. Far from the Central Pacific/Southern Pacific main line across Nevada, several smaller railways in the lonely, sagebrush-covered far northwestern corner adjacent to the California border are also covered. These include the Fernley and Lassen Railway, the Goose Lake and Southern Railway, and a look at the final years of the Nevada-California-Oregon Railway. There is also a discussion of the proposed but never built Surprise Valley Railway. These roads reveal the optimism of the railroad visionaries of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries whose goal was to connect Nevada to the Pacific Northwest by routes more direct than Central Pacific's path through the Sacramento Valley. A bit farther to the south, Myrick takes another look at the legendary Carson and Colorado narrow-gauge railway. In all cases, the new material unearthed—including numerous never before published photographs—makes Volume III of the *Railroads of Nevada and Eastern California* a bonanza for historians of the Silver State and the western Great Basin.

Although I have emphasized Nevada in this review of Myrick's latest volume, I should also note that students of northeastern California's lumber railroads will find more than eighteen of them covered in considerable detail. As with all of Myrick's books, Volume III is well written and highly accurate, though Myrick does not cite the sources he used—making it difficult for other researchers to further consult those sources.

John Signor's book on the Salt Lake Division of the Southern Pacific joins a growing list of railroad histories by an author who grew up inspired by Myrick and other railroad historians. Signor's forte is the Southern Pacific and Union Pacific railroads, which were virtually merged about a century ago until the United States Supreme Court ruled, in 1913, that Harriman's ambitious plans violated antitrust statutes. However, that dream of a unified Southern Pacific-Union Pacific system did ultimately materialize in 1996, when the much stronger Union Pacific assimilated the Southern Pacific. In fact, Union Pacific had earlier taken control of the Western Pacific Railroad (the subject of another recent book by Myrick) leaving Nevada as an essentially one-railroad state under the Union Pacific shield today.

In covering the Salt Lake Division of the Southern Pacific, which reached from Reno to Ogden, Utah (with a number of branch lines sprouting off the

main trunk), Signor's book basically follows a linear path across the Great Basin. Although dozens of books address the furious construction of the Central Pacific across the Sierra Nevada through Utah to Promontory Summit, only Myrick's Volume I covers the railroad's operations in any detail. Now, with the publication of Signor's *Salt Lake Division*, the comprehensive story of the Central Pacific's construction and operation in Nevada and Utah is available in one book. And what a book it is! Richly illustrated with hundreds of crisp black-and-white historical photographs, and full-color images of more recent (post-1950) operations, this is Signor's best book yet—a real statement of praise as his other books on various divisions of the Southern Pacific and the Union Pacific are fine indeed.

Signor begins with a brief overview of the pioneers of exploration and railroad-related surveying across the region (including, naturally, John Charles Frémont), then discusses the completion of the line to Promontory Summit in Utah. He highlights operations of the line across Nevada through the *entire* period of Southern Pacific's corporate history, 1868-1996. Moreover, the extensions of the Southern Pacific from Hazen to Fallon, Mound House, and through Tonopah Junction to Keeler, California (the latter is the Slim Princess narrow gauge), are also discussed and illustrated in considerable detail. In other words, Signor's *Salt Lake Division* now joins Myrick's Volume I and Volume III as an indispensable source on the railroads of northern Nevada.

Given that these two books cover similar territory, a brief comparison is in order. Both are weighty tomes in large format (8 by 11 inches). Both feature not only several historical maps, but also maps created by the authors themselves; both books are accurate, providing the kind of encyclopedic detail that rail aficionados appreciate (and demand) and other historians need to consult on numerous occasions. Therefore, both books belong in the library of anyone seriously interested in late nineteenth- and twentieth-century Nevada history.

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Supermob: How Sidney Korshak and His Criminal Associates Became America's Hidden Power Brokers. By Gus Russo (New York: Bloomsbury, 2006)

I'll Do My Own Damn Killin': Benny Binion, Herbert Noble, and the Texas Gambling War. By Gary W. Sleeper (Fort Lee, N.J.: Barricade Books, 2006)

When Americans hear the phrase "organized crime," one image dominates: the Italian Mafia in New York City—think Hollywood's *The Godfather* and HBO's *The Sopranos*. But over the past century, organized crime has come in more than one flavor and existed in more than one place. Two recently published popular histories delve into two very different forms of organized crime that thrived in Dallas, Texas, and Los Angeles, California. It is of interest that leaders of both criminal enterprises eventually found their way to Las Vegas in pursuit of riches and greater freedom to operate outside the system.

Gus Russo, a noted organized-crime author, traces the Chicago Outfit's rise in Southern California and Las Vegas from the 1940s to the 1980s through the machinations of Sidney Korshak, a lawyer and labor negotiator who always could be found at the center of the action. Korshak epitomized what Russo calls the Supermob, the Jewish power brokers from the Midwest (primarily Chicago) who operated "in the shadows" and maintained "arm's-length associations with the roughneck Italian and Irish mobsters imprinted in the popular imagination" (xv). According to one Italian gangster quoted by a former FBI agent, "If we didn't have the Jews, we'd still be hiding money under the mattress" (26).

"This 'Kosher Nostra' stressed brains over brawn," Russo writes, noting that they were "quintessential capitalists" who bridged the gap between organized crime and legitimate business enterprises (xvi). In the process, after World War II the Supermob played dominant roles in Hollywood, Southern California's real-estate boom, and Las Vegas.

The best-known Supermob member in Las Vegas was Moe Dalitz, the Cleveland bootlegger who helped develop the Strip and eventually came to be regarded as a model citizen in Sin City. In reality, Dalitz was involved in skimming at numerous casinos, as well as other nefarious activities not typically conducted by a Man-of-the-Year honoree. Russo, in fact, contends that it was Dalitz who had Bugsy Siegel killed in 1947—not because of Siegel's overspending on the opulent Flamingo Hotel but because Siegel was beating up his girlfriend, Virginia Hill. But Russo argues that while Dalitz was a major figure in Las Vegas, he remained a relative pawn in a larger mob apparatus. Russo quotes an anonymous source as saying, "Dalitz didn't go to the bathroom without checking with Sidney" (266).

Korshak was most closely associated with Las Vegas's Riviera Hotel, where he was a fixture in the restaurants and showrooms during his frequent visits. Russo relates a story that exemplifies Korshak's clout at the Riviera. A Teamsters Union meeting was being conducted there and the powerful boss Jimmy Hoffa

has been given the posh presidential suite. But when Korshak arrived, Hoffa was ushered out of the suite to make way for Korshak.

The Riviera, however, was hardly Korshak's only connection to Las Vegas. According to Russo, Korshak managed the skim in Las Vegas and controlled the unions. "Korshak, known in Vegas as 'the Chicago Juice,' handled labor affairs for the Sands, Desert Inn, the Riviera, the Stardust, the Trop, and others," Russo writes. "During the boom years, Korshak prevented strikes from all corners of Sin City's work force, including waiters, taxi hacks, entertainers, and casino employees" (221). Russo quotes a Hollywood source: "Whoever the front guys were, it was Sidney who ran Vegas" (221).

The greatest feat of Korshak's long career, however, was staying out of prison. While the government nailed an array of major organized crime figures in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, including those who ran skimming operations in Las Vegas, Korshak somehow escaped prosecution. Russo quotes the FBI agent Mike Wacks, who followed Korshak for years: "He was like Teflon, he could never get charged. He was amazing. He was one sharp cookie. Nobody ever ratted him out, and he never got caught on a wire" (274). One key reason for this, Russo contends, was that Korshak was secretly cooperating with government authorities.

Supermob is a long book, and only about twenty-five percent of it deals specifically with Las Vegas. Much of the action is set in Beverly Hills, where the Supermob set up shop as "Chicago West," as well as in Palm Springs, the "underworld retreat." Hollywood dramas in which Korshak played a role are detailed exhaustively. But the Vegas sections are packed with fascinating connections between Korshak and familiar names such as Frank Sinatra, Howard Hughes, Paul Laxalt, Kirk Kerkorian, and Ralph Lamb. Testifying to Korshak's clout, the screenwriter Tom Mankiewicz told Russo, "They would say Sid was the only one even Frank Sinatra knew not to fool with" (148).

Perhaps the most important contribution Russo makes to Las Vegas history is to remind us that it is inextricably linked with organized crime. Some historians have tended to gloss over that fact lately in favor of a more savory version that emphasizes creative genius and entrepreneurial ambition. Russo reminds us that for its first forty years, the Strip was developed by mobsters and run by mobsters, and its profits were skimmed to feed the offshore bank accounts of mob bosses in Chicago and other cities. And Sidney Korshak—a Jewish lawyer, not an Italian godfather—was instrumental in making the skim run smoothly.

Many Nevadans and Las Vegas visitors no doubt assume that the glory years of Benny Binion's life were those spent as the mastermind behind the legendary Horseshoe Club casino in downtown Las Vegas. But as Gary Sleeper's *I'll Do My Own Damn Killin'* effectively shows, Binion's Las Vegas years were a modest second act following his heyday as the leading figure in the Dallas underworld.

From the mid 1930s through the mid 1940s, according to Sleeper, Binion was the "boss gambler" in Dallas. Binion's Southland Group owned at least half of the more than two dozen illegal casinos operating in Dallas, and Binion pocketed more than $1 million a year from his various enterprises.

This was a considerable achievement for Lester Ben Binion, a sickly child who only sporadically attended school and, Sleeper contends, never learned to read. Binion learned about life not from textbooks but from spending time with his father, Lonnie Lee, a horse trader who "traveled through North Texas buying and selling horses and mules, gambling and drinking" (10). Sleeper quotes Binion from a 1976 interview conducted by the University of Nevada Oral History Program: "From a real small kid, I'd go with the horse traders, and became a pretty good horse trader. And then they all gambled when they'd get together. . . . So I kinda got in with more of a gambling type of guy, you know . . . you might say road gamblers" (11).

Binion eagerly learned the tricks of the gambling trade. He came to Dallas in 1923 and hooked up with Warren Diamond, a legitimate businessman who also operated illegal gambling joints. Binion got his start doing menial jobs for Diamond but eventually became involved in the gambling business. In 1926, Binion started his own craps game in a small downtown hotel, paying twenty-five percent of the take to Diamond for the privilege.

When Diamond dropped out of the gambling business in 1930, Binion took over. At the time, the most popular form of gambling was the "policy wheel." Sleeper explains the game:

> Each wheel represented a different game, and a drawing for each wheel was conducted at least once, sometimes twice, each day. A player could place a bet on his favorite three-digit number on any wheel of his choice, or bet the same number on several wheels. Each wheel paid its own jackpot, usually six hundred times the amount of the winning bet (15).

The timing of Binion's rise could not have been better. Starting life as the capital of the cotton market, Dallas had grown into a thriving city of a quarter million people by 1930. And during the 1930s, while much of the rest of the country struggled, Dallas avoided the worst effects of the Depression thanks to the discovery of massive oil reserves in the area. "The oil fields brought jobs for tool pushers, drillers, roughnecks, roustabouts, and truck drivers, and they all came to Dallas to spend their wages," Sleeper writes (22).

Binion was allowed to operate his illegal gambling games without much interference from Dallas politicians or police, in part because the city had long embraced a live-and-let-live approach to vices such as drinking, gambling, and prostitution. But under increasing pressure from "preachers and reformers," police officials and gambling operators devised a clever façade. Sleeper writes:

> Once or twice a week, each protected game would be raided, albeit so quietly that few of those in attendance knew that the raid had taken place. The officers would take a count of the participants and, a day or two later, the gambler or his attorney would show up at the district court to pay a fine of ten dollars for each person present at the game. Benny Binion estimated that, over the years, he paid over $600,000 in such fines (39).

The bulk of Sleeper's book documents the violent feuds between competing illegal gambling operators. Binion's supremacy was inevitably challenged, and gunplay often ensued. Sleeper describes violent shootouts and revenge killings rivaling the novels of Cormac McCarthy or Hollywood's blood-soaked portrayals of the Old West. He recounts the tragicomic tale of Herbert Noble, a Binion rival, who somehow managed to survive a dozen attempts on his life before he was finally killed when his mailbox blew up in 1951. (Binion was suspected in the murder but never indicted.)

By the mid 1940s, gambling was more popular than ever in Dallas hotel suites but violence between rival operators had become frequent front-page news, fueling a reform movement that gained the upper hand in the 1946 municipal election. Binion and other gambling operators could see the writing on the wall. Some simply closed down their games and pursued other ventures but Binion decided to leave Texas altogether. He climbed into a limousine with $3 million in cash in tow and headed for Las Vegas.

At first, Binion did not intend to stay in the emerging capital of legal gambling. He figured he would return to his beloved Dallas when political conditions became favorable again. And while Binion became entrenched in the Las Vegas casino business, he continued to run lucrative policy wheels that catered to Dallas's blacks and poor whites (and were therefore of little interest to reform politicians). "Harry Urban, Sr., who had been left in charge of the operation, continued sending enormous amounts of money to Benny every week, long after Benny had relocated to Las Vegas," Sleeper writes. "With twelve policy wheels running seven days a week, Binion would not lack for income on his return to Dallas" (102). Binion also had gambling operations in neighboring Fort Worth.

December 1949 marked the end for Binion's Dallas gambling empire. His illegal operations were raided, his financial records were seized, and he and his partners were indicted on charges of income-tax evasion. Binion pleaded guilty in 1953, paid $516,541 in back taxes, and served four years in Leavenworth federal prison.

Until his death in 1989, Binion remained a Las Vegas icon, revered as an expert casino operator even though he never obtained a state gaming license. But as Sleeper shows, Binion's story is first and foremost set in Dallas. If Binion had had his druthers, he would have spent his entire life in Dallas, where he reveled in the power he wielded and the dangerous business he ran.

Although neither book suggests that Korshak and Binion ever met, there are at least two connections between them. First, both were major figures in the storied history of twentieth-century organized crime who defy the popular stereotype of the Italian gangster. And second, it is nearly impossible to imagine that either of them could thrive in the twenty-first century, when corporate giants dominate the gambling industry. Neither Korshak's juice nor Binion's brawn would amount to much in a business more beholden to the expectations of shareholders than to the demands of underworld kingpins.

Geoff Schumacher
Las Vegas, Nevada

Vanishing America: In Pursuit of Our Elusive Landscapes. By James Conaway (Emeryville, Calif.: Shoemaker Hoard, 2007)

As readers, we are often attracted to books about familiar places, and sometimes an author's work makes us wonder if we have lived parallel lives. In James Conaway's recent collection of essays, which spans the depth and breadth of the lower forty-eight, I was particularly attracted to chapters on places I know well: Washington, D.C., New Orleans, and the Napa Valley. Conaway knows them, too; his writings include a history of the Library of Congress, a work of fiction entitled *The Big Easy* (he is credited with popularizing this now-famous moniker), and two bestsellers on this country's most celebrated viticultural landscape.

More important than the geographic diversity of Vanishing America, however, is the author's perspective. He concedes that other places could illustrate his point of view just as well, but those selected represent personal preference and familiarity. The book's intriguing title and Conaway's editorial affiliation with *Preservation* magazine suggest an agenda confirmed in the prologue: "to assess, for want of a better word, exceptional American places that I think serve as physical and spiritual barometers" (5). He continues, "Judging by my experience, we're in heavy weather, with more on the way" (5).

The focus of *Vanishing America* is on landscape preservation. Conaway acknowledges that Americans have become accustomed to the idea that significant buildings merit preservation, but extrapolating that sense of stewardship to something as nebulous as a landscape has been difficult. Europeans, by comparison, seem to place more value in natural areas and the cultural heritage of their built environment, as measured by the yardsticks of regulation and public awareness. It is clear, however, that for Conaway the conservation movement in America, of which landscape preservation is a part, is too little too late.

The prologue, entitled "For As Long As It Lasts," relates how the author and his wife watched as their hobby farm in the vicinity of the Blue Ridge Mountains west of the nation's capital changed from pastoral to pedestrian as others moved in around them. (It reminded this reviewer of Joni Mitchell's environmental anthem "*Big Yellow Taxi*.") The book itself consists of eighteen chapters evenly divided into three sections: "Out West," "Back East," and "Ghosts." It is of interest that the chapters progress from west to east and back again, perhaps reflective of the author's career. As an early Wallace Stegner Fellow in Stanford University's Creative Writing Program, Conaway went on to crisscross the country in pursuit of his stories. Like Stegner, Conaway, too, displays a deep respect for the environment and for history.

The "Out West" section begins with the author's return to Big Sur after his initial visit in 1963 and the observation that the spectacular coastal scenery had been diminished by corporate enterprise catering to "weekenders . . . in pressed jeans" (19). This binary opposition between the authentic and the contrived is one of the book's common denominators, and other chapters illustrate permutations of this theme. The section continues with Conaway working with a Mormon family who graze cattle on public land near Saint George, Utah. He hunts for fossils with a Bureau of Land Management paleontologist in New Mexico's San Juan Basin. In Wyoming, the author interviews corporate and government officials participating in Exxon's oil and gas exploration. In Idaho and Oregon, he investigates competing demands for water in the Columbia River watershed. The section concludes with a family trip in southwest Colorado led by an intrepid outfitter emblematic of the Old West.

The half dozen chapters that make up "Back East" range from New Orleans and the Dry Tortugas to Down East Maine. As a cub reporter for the *Times-Picayune*, Conaway's first assignment was to assess the impact of Hurricane Betsy, and four decades later he reflects on the land and life of New Orleans in the wake of Katrina. West of Key West, Conaway participates in an Audubon Society outing to Dry Tortugas National Park and Fort Jefferson, where he witnesses the effects of penurious federal funding coupled with the pressures of popular visitation. On Cumberland Island, Georgia, he examines the legacy of wealth and privilege. The chapter entitled "God and Olmstead in Washington, D.C." exposes machinations affecting the grounds of the National Cathedral. The two New England chapters focus on the Nantucket real-estate market and a guided canoe trip with Thoreau's *The Maine Woods* in mind.

The last section, "Ghosts," continues to probe the juxtaposition of past and present landscapes. The chapter entitled "Old Dominion" (introduced in the prologue) recounts the author's experience of property ownership near the headwaters of Virginia's Rappahannock River. It begins with a natural narrative reminiscent of Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac* and concludes by describing the traditions of two socially opposite events: a fox hunt and a mountain-man rendezvous. In "Buffalo Commons," Conaway travels from

Nebraska to Montana interviewing those attempting to restore buffalo to the northern Plains. "Glacier" describes his attendance at a National Park Service conference on historic preservation where marketing and money take center stage. Conaway describes the forty-six million acres of public land that constitute the National Landscape Conservation System as "the last and best of old-time America" (237), and his chapter entitled "Escalante" picks up where his book *The Kingdom in the Country,* critical of the Bureau of Land Management, left off two decades earlier. The final two chapters are devoted to an examination of controversial land-use zoning and regulation in Napa Valley and Oregon, respectively.

The thought-provoking essays in *Vanishing America* leave little doubt as to where the author stands on the issue of landscape preservation. For example, he compares the state of Wyoming's historic relationship with developers as "roughly analogous to that of prostitute and john" (56), and points to the number of top officials in the Department of the Interior accused of "favoritism, exploitation, incompetence, and worse" (248). At the same time, he sympathizes with people at the grassroots level in public and private sectors alike who feel frustrated in their efforts to prevent irreparable harm to what they consider our national patrimony. His intention, I suspect, is to encourage all of us to reject the fatalism implicit in the book's prologue: "For as Long as It Lasts."

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Catholicism in the American West: A Rosary of Hidden Voices. Roberto Trevino and Richard Francaviglia, eds. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2007)

This edited work by Roberto Trevino and Richard Francaviglia provides historians of the American Southwest with an important piece of the mosaic that has been all but lost because of the historical disregard for the voices of minority populations and lesser-known individuals within this specific religious tradition. The six narratives found in *Catholicism in the American West* explore what's western about western Catholicism and how it reflects the elements of western ethnicity, demography, and politics (7). Although Catholicism in the American West never shied from the complex intersection of religion and politics, the combined scholarship in this volume makes it clear that Catholicism has no single voice, no single definition, and no agreed upon vision. Consequently, the fuller context of this American religious group has been largely marginalized or undervalued in traditional historiographical treatments of the geographic region. *Catholicism in the American West* seeks to create a balanced perspective.

The collective scholarship in this volume reflects the three major frontier theses: Frederick Turner's savagery meets civilization, Patricia Limerick's imperial conquest, and Herbert Bolton's borderland thesis of a frontier where three well-established cultures (Native American, Hispanic American, and Anglo American) encountered each other in the Spanish Borderlands to form yet a third way of life and a new geographic region: the American Southwest. Each of the contributors work within the paradigm of social history (32).

Both the keynote chapter and subsequent contributors unveil a Catholic presence in the West that was always an integral player in the developing American society well into the twentieth century. The portrait that emerges is that of a religious tradition at once Catholic and American. The reader discovers a Catholicism that is energetically active within the big picture of social justice, immigrant conclaves, and the necessity for Americanization and assimilation. Equally important to Catholics was securing the marginal populations firmly within the religious tradition itself. This is especially highlighted in the chapters focusing on the Mexican Americans of California and Texas (Michael Engh, S.J.), and the immigrant Italian mine workers in rural Utah (Matthew Pehl).

The first chapter promises to give voice to the hidden and overlooked laity who often moved the Catholic presence forward in order to root it deeply into the soil of the American southwest. Unfortunately, the clerical voice and action of the hierarchy dominates the narratives and determines the outcomes of the specific events. This is telling in itself about how the Church operated in the West. While the paucity of the laity's voice may be a weakness in this volume, it is not disappointing because the reader still sees both the powerful and long-term effects of personal conviction that the laity had on lives and communities despite clerical interference and even indifference.

Without a doubt, the reader also gains insight into the often contentious in-house struggle between Catholic laity and clergy. While both strove toward the same goals of justice, inclusion, and assimilation, they refused to take the same path to get there. Examples of these failed efforts at cooperation are the programs initiated by Mary Workman and Verona Spellmire in pre-World War II Los Angeles as chronicled by Michael Engh, S.J. and Gina Marie Pitti's recounting of the mid-century petition generated by Mexican American parishioners sent to Bishop Mitty requesting a national parish in San Francisco. Each of these attempts ended in misunderstanding and a regrettable parting of the ways. However, while the clerical hierarchy might have called the shots, Catholicism's effects in the American West were ultimately decided by both the choices and faith of the members, both individually and collectively, as Catholic activists increasingly were "rarely inclined to see the Church as a key ally in social justice struggles" (134). In his assessment of the Houston Chicano Movement, Roberto Trevino states that "the Catholic Church lent circumspect—if unprecedented—support to the Chicano quest for social justice" (162). Catholic bishops and priests were left to follow the lead of the laity and, consequently,

it was the Mexican Americans themselves who brought significant changes to Catholicism in Texas and the Southwest.

The scholarship in *Catholicism in the American West: A Rosary of Hidden Voices*, collected from the 2004 Walter Prescott Webb Memorial Lectures, seeks to address the imbalance between histories of this region and the significant role played by both American Catholic clergy and laity. The studies are fine examples of the scholarship currently "reshaping how historians understand the role of Catholicism both in the development of the West and in the broader history of the nation" (Preface). The editors claim that *Catholicism in the American West* is "a work that offers at once a fuller portrait of the Catholic hardship and triumph in the American West and also tantalizing glimpses that are highly suggestive of fruitful areas for further study" (Preface). The claim is not an empty one and historians of the American West will want a copy of this book on their shelf.

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2008

COMPILED BY NEW WEST INDEXING

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