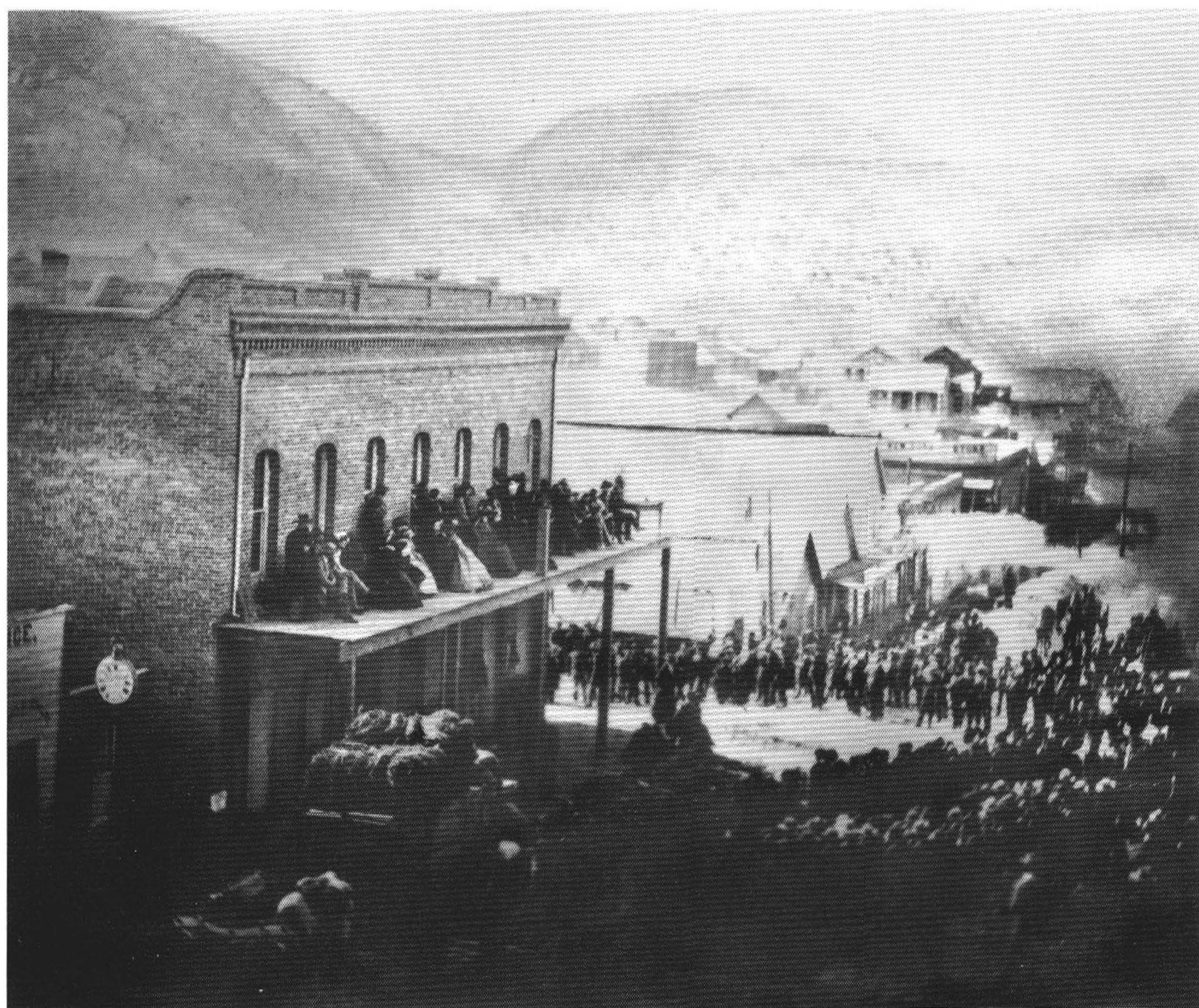


# *Nevada*

Historical Society Quarterly



SUMMER 2009



## *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*

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

Prospective authors should send their work to The Editor, *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 1650 N. Virginia St., Reno, Nevada 89503. Papers should be typed double-spaced and sent in duplicate, along with a copy on disk (in MAC® or IBM® compatible form-WordPerfect® 5.1, 6.0, or Microsoft Word®). All manuscripts, whether articles, edited documents, or essays, should conform to the most recent edition of the University of Chicago Press *Manual of Style*. Footnotes should be typed double-spaced on separate pages and numbered consecutively. Submission guidelines are available on request. Correspondence concerning articles and essays is welcomed, and should be addressed to The Editor. © Copyright Nevada Historical Society, 2009.

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# *Nevada*

## Historical Society Quarterly

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## *Editor's Note*

This is a new feature that will appear in each issue of the *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*. It will provide a little information about what appears inside its pages, or a little information about the journal itself or the historical society, and sometimes all of these. It is designed to make your experience as a reader easier, and to keep you up-to-date on what is going on around here.

This issue includes two articles on very different, very significant subjects in Nevada's history. The first of these is on the connections between Abraham Lincoln and Nevada. This year marks the bicentennial of Lincoln's birth, celebrated with—literally—shelves of new books and articles on the sixteenth president. Lincoln had a significant impact on Nevada, as if the state's nickname gave no hint of that. But his impact actually proved even greater than many realize. The purpose of this article is to examine that.

This editor's note also provides an opportunity to tell you something about how our journal operates and to offer a disclaimer. When an author submits an article, I read it as editor-in-chief to decide whether it should be sent to referees—almost always, two people with some expertise related to the article's subject. This is typical of scholarly journals. In this case, however, the author submitting the article was the journal's editor. Therefore, our managing editor, Mella Rothwell Harmon, sent it to two referees who made comments on what the article said and a recommendation as to whether to publish it. Then, I revised it and sent it back in. All of this is a normal process, but it might interest readers to know that the editor does not get preferential treatment!

The other article in this issue is by Dennis McBride, who is familiar to many students and teachers of Nevada history as a walking and talking encyclopedia of the history of Boulder City and Hoover Dam. Happily, Dennis also is turning his attention to other significant aspects of the Nevada experience. His subject is a too often ignored subject: The state's gay community. Through research in primary and secondary sources and interviews, Dennis tells a fascinating story that helps us better understand Nevada's people and how attitudes change—and sometimes do not change. Much of Nevada's history has been the subject of too little scholarly research, but that is especially true of what the British scholar Eric Hobsbawm called the "history of society." What the rich and powerful have done is important and needs further study, but that is also true of lesser-known Nevadans without money and power.

As usual, this edition also includes information about new acquisitions as well as book reviews. In the future, we plan several thematic issues that we think you will find different and enjoyable. We always look forward to hearing from our readers and welcome submissions of articles or ideas for articles. Please feel free to email me at [michael.green@csn.edu](mailto:michael.green@csn.edu). Thank you, and happy reading!

Michael Green  
*Editor-in-Chief*

# *Abraham Lincoln, Nevada, and the Law of Unintended Consequences*

MICHAEL GREEN

The three most-written-about figures in history are Jesus Christ, William Shakespeare, and Abraham Lincoln, and historians have consistently ranked Lincoln as the nation's greatest president. So, it is no surprise that the two-hundredth anniversary of Lincoln's birth, on February 12, 2009, has inspired a national bicentennial commission that includes many of the leading Lincoln scholars, admirers, and popularizers; the publication of an estimated sixty major books on Lincoln; and new documentaries and a variety of celebrations and analyses of his importance. Adding to the interest has been the election as president of another lanky Illinoisan with a facility for handling the language, along with his selection of his main rival for the nomination, a senator from New York (in 1860, William Henry Seward; in 2008, Hillary Clinton), as secretary of state. Indeed, Barack Obama stated that his post-election reading list included Lincoln's writings, and comparisons between the two politicians have been inevitable. These events are a reminder of the Pulitzer Prize-winning historian David Herbert Donald's observation that every generation of Americans devotes considerable effort to "getting right with Lincoln."<sup>1</sup>

Michael Green is a professor of history at the College of Southern Nevada and the editor-in-chief of the *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*.

The author wishes to thank the following for their comments on this article: Jerome E. Edwards, emeritus professor of history at the University of Nevada, Reno; Eric N. Moody, interim director of the Nevada Historical Society; and Yanek Mieczkowski, professor of history at Dowling College in Oakdale, New York. He also would like to thank Mella Rothwell Harmon, the managing editor of the *Quarterly*. Because he is the editor, the author withdrew from any role in the process of publication, and Mella had to take on added chores, in addition to the countless others she performs so cheerfully and superbly.

The reasons for this interest are understandable. Lincoln wielded a pen like no president before or since. He led the nation—indeed, did a great deal to instill the concept that the United States was a nation and not individual states that came together—during what has been called “the central event in the American historical consciousness.” At the end of the Civil War, assassination made him a martyr. And his life is full of the kinds of contradictions that appeal to anyone interested in a story: He was born in a log cabin and capitalized politically on his roots, yet he joined the more elite political party and married into an upper-crust family; he opposed slavery and was advanced in his thinking for his time, yet by modern standards his racial views are uncomfortable; he spoke of his melancholy yet is remembered more than any other president for his sense of humor; he became the Great Emancipator yet faced criticism from radical Republicans for moving too slowly and from conservative Republicans and Democrats for moving too quickly.<sup>2</sup>

But Nevada has special reasons to be interested in Lincoln. Scholars of Lincoln and the Civil War are familiar with the connections between the president and the “battle born” state, so named because it won statehood in 1864, during the war. They may be less familiar with how much Lincoln actually affected Nevada’s development. Their intertwined history provides a study of how Lincoln influenced an individual state, and how his political acumen, ideology, and policies had intended and unintended consequences that shaped Nevada and the West long after John Wilkes Booth fired the fatal shot on April 14, 1865. Those consequences resonate today.<sup>3</sup>

#### THE MAKING OF A TERRITORY

Before the Civil War and before Nevada existed in its present name and form, the area had become part of the fight over the protection and expansion of slavery that defined American politics in the 1850s and reanimated Lincoln’s electoral career. What is now Nevada became part of the United States when Congress accepted the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo of 1848, ending the Mexican-American War. The Compromise of 1850 set up the state of California and the new territories of Utah, including most of present-day Nevada, and New Mexico, which included Arizona and Nevada’s southern tip, and thus Las Vegas and its surrounding hinterland.<sup>4</sup> While sparsely settled and hardly rising to the level of controversy and importance associated with Kansas and Nebraska when Congress created them as territories in 1854, Nevada, too, was caught in the maelstrom over spreading slavery into new territories during the 1850s. When Mormons built a trading post in the Sierra Nevada’s eastern foothills, they attracted fellow church members, ranchers who sought to supply the store with goods, and miners going to or from California. The three groups proved incompatible. Pleased at the lack of interference from Salt Lake

but fearing a theocratic future, non-Mormons petitioned Congress to carve a new territory out of western Utah in 1853. When that effort failed, they called for Congress to add their region to California, but to no avail. Not only did Congress face more important issues, but its members also had no desire to add to the controversy over slavery by creating a new territory in an area that seemed to require no immediate attention.<sup>5</sup>

Two events, unrelated at the time but eventually inseparable, combined to change the area's fate and future from its status as part of western Utah to that of Nevada Territory. The first, in 1859, was the discovery of the Comstock Lode, which generated hundreds of millions of dollars in gold and silver over the next two decades and created not only new wealth, but also newly wealthy, powerful figures who were to shape the development of Nevada, mining booms inside and outside of the state, and the West itself. The second was Lincoln's election in November 1860 and the southern response to it. When seven southern states seceded by February 1861, all of their senators and representatives withdrew from Congress. Their departure removed as an obstacle to forming a new territory the issue that had contributed to the failure of the effort in 1853: The expansion of slavery westward. Most northern Democrats had fallen into line behind Senator Stephen Douglas of Illinois in supporting popular sovereignty, and southerners had either acquiesced in Douglas's premise or demanded that new territories accept the arrival of slaves as they would any other property. Republicans had insisted on keeping slavery out of new territories, and with the most ardently pro-slavery southerners gone, the party that was about to control the White House had a freer legislative hand during President James Buchanan's final months in office than it had ever known before. On March 2, 1861, Congress approved and Buchanan signed enabling acts for the new territories of Nebraska, Colorado, and Nevada.<sup>6</sup>

Two days after the birth of Nevada Territory, Lincoln took the oath of office. While Nevada was hardly a priority—after all, the matter of Fort Sumter needed tending to—it was indeed a consideration. Even before entering the White House, Lincoln faced a phalanx of jobseekers, and patronage problems plagued him throughout his presidency, but especially in its early months. When his appointee as minister to England, Charles Francis Adams, voiced horror at finding Lincoln more excited about finding a new Chicago postmaster than meeting him, the incident bespoke Lincoln's need to fill government positions—and, in Nevada's case, to fill the positions that would create a government. As governor of the new territory, Lincoln appointed a veteran New York politician who had been part of the anti-slavery Republican machine operated by William Henry Seward and his close ally the *Albany Evening Journal* editor Thurlow Weed. Although it came after he had applied for a variety of other patronage jobs, James Nye's appointment was to prove fortuitous for Nevada and the Union, and influential.<sup>7</sup>

James Warren Nye brought several important attributes to the job of territorial governor. As did Lincoln, he had both a strong sense of humor and a strong sense of right and wrong. He had administrative experience as a police commissioner



James Nye, Lincoln's choice as Nevada's territorial governor. Photographer unknown. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

and as an officer in the state militia. He also had a long record of opposing slavery. After arriving in the new territory and organizing the legislature, he delivered his first message. It is an irony, in light of Nevada's future, that he called on lawmakers to prohibit gambling—and, in a harbinger, lost that battle. Another lost battle was his demand that Nevadans allow blacks to testify in court cases involving whites and to intermarry, with a declaration that to do otherwise would be “behind the Spirit of the Age”—at a time that Lincoln had yet to take steps toward emancipation or anything resembling equal justice under the law for blacks.<sup>8</sup>

For Nye to take that position was politically risky, because he hoped to become a United States senator. That required not only popular support from a territory whose nascent political culture placed no emphasis on racial egalitarianism, but also the territory's achievement of statehood. While Nye visited Washington to lobby on Nevada's behalf, the citizens of his territory went forward in 1863 with a constitutional convention without congressional authorization. The constitution they wrote failed to win ratification, but not for lack of federal approval. Rather, its policies taxing mining property at a rate higher than corporate executives preferred, as well as putting the constitution to a vote with a slate of candidates for state offices, proved too controversial for Nevadans to stomach.<sup>9</sup>

By early 1864, Nevadans wanted to try again, and Congress wanted them to try again. On February 21, Senator James R. Doolittle of Wisconsin introduced an enabling act to allow Nevadans to take the steps to achieve statehood. Almost immediately, they scheduled a new constitutional convention. The second constitution strongly resembled the first, except this time it taxed mining at a rate lower than other property and went before the public for a vote without a slate of candidates. On September 7, 1864, Nevadans overwhelmingly approved their proposed state constitution.<sup>10</sup>

That constitution reflected how Lincoln, his party, and the war they were fighting were reshaping American notions of governance and nationhood. With southerners claiming the right to overturn the result of a presidential election and claiming state's rights, Nevadans readily acknowledged the superiority of the federal government. Not only did they agree to cede to the federal government any unclaimed land—in the end, approximately ninety percent of what is now the state of Nevada, and a source of controversy in Nevada to this day—but they also wrote into their constitution a paramount allegiance clause:

All political power is inherent in the people. Government is instituted for the protection, security and benefit of the people; and they have the right to alter or reform the same whenever the public good may require it. But the Paramount Allegiance of every citizen is due to the Federal government in the exercise of all its Constitutional powers as the same have been or may be defined by the Supreme Court of the United States; and no power exists in the people of this or any other State of the Federal Union to dissolve their connection therewith or perform any act tending to impair, subvert, or resist the Supreme Authority of the government of the United States. The Constitution of the United States confers full power on the Federal Government to maintain and Perpetuate its existence, and whensoever any portion of the States, or people thereof attempt to secede from the Federal Union, or forcibly resist the Execution of its laws, the Federal Government may, by warrant of the Constitution, employ armed force in compelling obedience to its Authority.

As Congress stipulated in its enabling act, Nevada also prohibited slavery—after the issuing of the Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863, but before the Thirteenth Amendment's passage on January 31, 1865.<sup>11</sup>

The Nevada Constitution and the debates over it also reflected other effects of the Civil War and the Republican party. Just as the war and its exigencies expanded government power and corporate entities, the framers of Nevada's Constitution grappled with the question of just how much to encourage similar growth in private enterprise. After a sometimes heated debate, and despite lobbying, they decided against funding subsidies for the transcontinental railroad. But amid an economic downturn and after a previous draft of a proposed state constitution failed in part over the issue, they agreed to provide special tax status to mining corporations. And, as torn as Republicans had been between former Jacksonian Democrats advocating limited government and onetime Whigs supporting more federal activism, Nevadans took the more Whiggish (and Republican) position of banning state bank notes.<sup>12</sup>

Nevadans mailed their constitution to Washington, D.C., to be accepted, but it still had not arrived as the 1864 election approached. With the opportunity to influence national events slipping away, Nye ordered the document telegraphed back east at a cost of more than \$4,000, a record for its time. The Nevada Constitution arrived at the State Department and went to Lincoln for his signature. He signed it on October 31, 1864. Just as he had chosen the men to set up the new territory's government in 1861, he approved the Union's thirty-sixth state three years later.<sup>13</sup>

The circumstances of Nevada's admission were unusual, especially considering the involvement of a president with legal ability and scruple. Nevada fell short of the population requirement of sixty thousand that the Land Ordinance of 1785 stipulated, although that seemed a minor point in an era in which Lincoln and both his political friends and foes were debating the right to suspend the writ of habeas corpus and the constitutionality of such antislavery actions as the Confiscation Acts and the Emancipation Proclamation. For Lincoln, however, reading the law broadly was nothing new. As a Whig, and then as a Republican, he had read the Constitution more broadly than his Jacksonian Democratic counterparts. Also, one other state entered the Union during the Civil War: West Virginia, carved out of Virginia only after much soul-searching in the White House and a request from Lincoln that members of his Cabinet submit opinions on whether he had the authority to erect a new state from land belonging to a state that, for legal purposes, the Lincoln government described as remaining part of the United States, although it was then engaged in an insurrection. As with West Virginia, Nevada reflected what Lincoln had told Congress on July 4, 1861, in the wake of Chief Justice Roger Brooke Taney's ruling against his suspension of habeas corpus in *Ex Parte Merryman*: "[A]re all the laws but one to go unexecuted and the Government itself go to pieces lest that

one be violated?" Whatever the meaning and impact of Nevada's statehood, it symbolized the more elastic interpretation of the Constitution that Republicans had subtly supported in their campaign platforms and their policies, and the constitution that Nevadans wrote reflected the changing ideology and sense of nationhood of Lincoln and the Republican party.<sup>14</sup>

#### LINCOLN, STATEHOOD, AND THE THIRTEENTH AMENDMENT

But as is the case of so much of the literature on Lincoln's life and times, the meaning and impact of Nevada's statehood has been part of a historiographical debate that illuminates evolving perceptions and information. A Lincoln scholar and Pulitzer Prize-winning editorial writer, F. Lauriston Bullard, argued in the *American Bar Association Journal* in 1940 that Nevada entered "the Union under emergency conditions. . . . The vote of at least one additional state was believed to be necessary for the abolition of slavery, and Congress hurried forward its admission in order to make sure of three more electoral votes for Lincoln's second term." But why Nevada and not another territory such as Nebraska or Colorado? Bullard assessed the reminiscences of Charles A. Dana, Edwin M. Stanton's assistant in the War Department. A longtime newspaperman, Dana had been Horace Greeley's deputy at the *New York Tribune* before the war and the editor of the *New York Sun* afterward. According to Dana, Lincoln worried about the closeness of the House of Representatives vote on the enabling act for Nevada's statehood and authorized Dana to promise patronage appointments to three Democrats in return for their support. Given the ease with which the enabling act passed, Bullard voiced doubts that Dana had his story straight.<sup>15</sup>

Instead, Bullard pointed to Lincoln's perceived need for three additional electoral votes for his re-election. He cited accounts in New York and Boston newspapers predicting how Nevada would vote—and a newly admitted state with a thoroughly Republican government seemed unlikely to back Lincoln's Democratic opponent, General George McClellan, in the 1864 presidential election. Bullard emphasized two items in Lincoln's papers. One was the "blind memorandum," written late that summer, in which he required all of his Cabinet ministers to sign a piece of paper that proved to be a promise to work with his successor to save the Union if Lincoln lost his bid for re-election, which the president then considered probable. The other was a list that Lincoln made of how each state would cast its vote, adding up to a 117-114 victory in the Electoral College. Someone else—Bullard credited Major Thomas Eckert, the head of the War Department's telegraph office—added three from Nevada to the 117, giving Lincoln a slightly safer 120-114 majority. Bullard also made use of the diaries of Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles and Attorney General Edward Bates, both of whom reported that Seward had tried to persuade Lincoln to proclaim Nevada a state on September 30. But Lincoln had declined because

the secretary of state based his request on Nye's notification that Nevadans had ratified their state constitution—not the document itself, which remained en route. Not until after Nevada had telegraphed its constitution to Washington, D.C., did Lincoln sign the proclamation, on October 31, 1864—just in time for the state to vote in the presidential election. "For three reasons the admission of Nevada was promoted by President Lincoln," Bullard wrote, "and all three were war measures: To ensure the adoption of the abolition resolution in Congress, to obtain a precious cluster of votes for the President in the Electoral College, and to supply one more ratification for the abolition amendment."<sup>16</sup>

One of the godfathers of the "new western history," Earl Pomeroy, published one of his first journal articles in 1943, three years after Bullard's, on Nevada's statehood and the Thirteenth Amendment. While Bullard suggested the possibility, Pomeroy argued more strongly that Dana conflated the events of March 1864, when Congress considered the enabling act for Nevada and two other territories, and January 1865, when Lincoln and Seward strained every nerve to win the two-thirds majority needed in the House of Representatives to send the Thirteenth Amendment to the states for ratification. At that point, Lincoln and Seward had twin motivations: The House's failure to pass the amendment the year before, which they would prefer not to see repeated, and their realization that Congress would not meet again until December 1865, long after they hoped that the war would be over and some constitutional amendment would be required to deal with the slaves who had been freed under the Emancipation Proclamation or had run away from their masters as the Union Army advanced through the South.

Pomeroy also saw another set of players in the decision making. "Though Nevada happened to be the only new western state of the Civil War years, the admission of new states had attracted interest and suspicion among Republicans," he wrote. When Lincoln sought West Virginia's admission in 1862, radicals in Congress saw it as an effort to reduce legislative power for the executive branch's benefit. By contrast, conservatives questioned the constitutional scruples of such a move and suspected radicals of driving the movement for statehood. Whoever bore responsibility for the thirty-fifth state, Pomeroy detected a radical role in creating the thirty-sixth: Since the original enabling act might have kept Nevada from voting in the presidential election, Pomeroy reasoned, Republicans in general and radicals in particular simply took advantage of an opportunity to expand their party's number in Congress and in state offices. Radicals also may have hoped, as James Ashley, one of their number and the chairman of the House Committee on Territories, suggested, "to establish a new principle of the admission of States . . . negating, so far as I could in the enabling acts, the old idea of State rights," both to assure the loyalty of future states and to set a precedent for the returning states of the seceded South. But Pomeroy saw no reason to credit Lincoln with any special interest in guiding Nevada to statehood.<sup>17</sup>

These interpretations have resonated with historians since. Neither of the two recent full-length studies of the 1864 election refers to Nevada in the context of its statehood or the Thirteenth Amendment. The leading modern biography of Lincoln follows the lead of Bullard and Pomeroy. "Though it was clear that the election was going to be a very close one, Lincoln did not try to increase the Republican electoral vote by rushing the admission of new states like Colorado and Nebraska, both of which would surely have voted for his reelection," David Herbert Donald wrote. "On October 31, in accordance with an act of Congress, he did proclaim Nevada a state, but he showed little interest in the legislation admitting the new state." He added a footnote describing Dana's claims and quoting Pomeroy's argument that "there is no reason to suppose that Nevada was a favorite project of Lincoln or that he viewed it with great warmth." In his outstanding history of the Thirteenth Amendment, Michael Vorenberg supports his predecessors, but adds that "some people recognized early on that Nevada's admission would aid the amendment," citing a Nevadan's letter to Representative Elihu B. Washburne of Illinois and the notoriously unreliable memoirs of one of Nevada's first United States senators, William Morris Stewart. In one of his many studies that argue convincingly in favor of Lincoln's political sagacity, Lincoln Forum founder Frank Williams cites both Dana and Pomeroy, supporting the historian over the politician-journalist. "As Pomeroy indicated, Lincoln would have been in favor of Nevada's admission, regardless of whether that state might help ratify the amendment. It would support his reelection and increase Republican strength in Congress," Williams wrote. "Moreover, the merits of admitting Nevada, for the sake of the amendment, Lincoln's reelection, and the Republican Party, were fairly well known in spring 1864. If Lincoln did press for Nevada's admission, he was not showing much more foresight than others in his place would have shown." Indeed, the only recent study that lends any credence to Dana's argument misidentifies him as the Massachusetts attorney and author Richard Henry Dana, misstates how quickly Nevada became a state after the exchange between Lincoln and Dana, and footnotes Carl Sandburg, who also believed Dana's account and published his version of events more than a decade before the Bullard and Pomeroy articles corrected the information that Dana provided.<sup>18</sup>

Scholars of the Nevada experience have generally followed the lead of the historians of the Civil War who have addressed the statehood issue. Writing in the 1930s, the pioneering Nevada historian Effie Mona Mack took Dana's story at face value, and she continued to do so even after Bullard and especially Pomeroy debunked it. Russell Elliott, the longtime dean of Nevada historians, posited that Lincoln supported statehood in hopes of obtaining the two-thirds vote needed for the Thirteenth Amendment to pass the House, while Republicans in Congress, especially radicals, wanted Nevada's support against Lincoln's moderate reconstruction policies—and the party sought an additional Republican state out of fears that a close presidential election might

wind up in the House, where each state would have one vote and the addition of a Republican delegation might prove crucial. The most recent textbook, by the Nevada historian James W. Hulse, argued that "President Lincoln and the Republicans were in political trouble" and accordingly approved legislation for three territories to seek statehood, but only Nevada completed the process.<sup>19</sup>

More specialized studies have tended to echo these other scholars rather than staking out ground of their own. David Alan Johnson's path-breaking work on politics and state building in California, Nevada, and Oregon duly noted Bullard and Pomeroy but added a supporting declaration from Senator John Conness, an Irish immigrant to California who shifted from the Democrats to the Union Party, a fusion group that supplanted the Republican Party so that Democrats who supported the war could abandon the Copperheads who opposed it. A newspaper in Gold Hill, the sister city to Virginia City, the "Queen of the Comstock," quoted Conness a month before the enabling act passed as saying, "Her votes are wanted here," and "every loyal man awaits her admission"—suggesting the possibility of more interest in Nevada's statehood among national leaders than earlier scholars had thought.<sup>20</sup>

As in many other cases when historians debate Lincoln's motives and actions, black and white all too often obscure the shades of gray. Historians who disagree with the interpretation that Lincoln paid any attention to Nevada's drive for statehood tend to dismiss the idea out of hand because they doubt Dana's accuracy and see no evidence in the record. That Dana confused the events of March 1864 and January 1865 seems indisputable, but Lincoln scholars have not been alone in their occasional tendency to question the value and veracity of oral history and memoirs until they find material that suits their purposes. Historians also carefully evaluate records for corroboration or the lack of it, and what scholars think about Lincoln's life has changed in response to further study: Rodney Davis and Douglas Wilson examined the extensive interviews conducted by Lincoln's longtime law partner, William Herndon, which earlier Lincoln experts had dismissed, but they found Herndon's work to be a treasure trove of helpful information about him. While Dana was wrong about his dates, other evidence could suggest that his basic point was correct.<sup>21</sup>

Historians have cited an additional reason to doubt Lincoln's interest in Nevada's statehood: His refusal to accede to Seward's wishes that he approve statehood without having the constitution in hand. This is easily countered. First, whether Seward pushed him that hard is open to debate: The two sources for this story are the diaries of Welles, an old Jacksonian Democrat who often wound up on the same side as Seward on the issues but despised him for his old Whig attachments and his slipperiness, and Bates, who shared Seward's Whiggery but none of his personal or political savoir-faire, and who took a far narrower view on most constitutional issues than Lincoln and Seward did. While Dana's reminiscences are inaccurate, Welles and Bates also filtered events through their own perceptions. Second, judging Seward's motives is

difficult. Just as Lincoln could be, as Herndon described him, “the most shut-mouthed man,” Seward hated to commit himself on paper—his letters are replete with allusions to important events, followed by the declaration that what he knew was too important to be put on paper and therefore he would discuss his information in person with the recipient of the letter. But since Nye, Nevada’s territorial governor and would-be United States senator, had been part of his political machine in New York and he had had a great deal to do with Nye’s appointment to Nevada, Seward presumably would have wanted his friend to advance politically. Statehood would have contributed to that advancement—and, in the process, to Lincoln’s re-election and possibly the success of his policies.<sup>22</sup>

How these motives would have affected Lincoln, given that he knew Seward to have become one of his most loyal supporters and that the secretary of state had become his closest friend in the administration, is unknowable, but both men shared a deserved reputation as brilliant politicians. One of the keys to success in politics lies in knowing when to be reckless and when to be cautious. By September 30, when the Cabinet meeting took place, the Democrats had, as Lincoln predicted, taken the contradictory, potentially fatal step of nominating a war candidate (General George McClellan) on a peace platform; General William Tecumseh Sherman had captured Atlanta, providing Lincoln and the Union with a badly needed military conquest; and General John C. Frémont had agreed to abandon his quixotic third-party campaign for president. All of these, taken together, meant that Lincoln had less cause for concern about his prospects than he had when the drive for Nevada—and Nebraska and Colorado—statehood had begun earlier in the year. And less than two years before, Lincoln had pursued statehood for West Virginia on far more questionable constitutional grounds than those surrounding Nevada’s possible admission as a state. While Lincoln had demonstrated a willingness to stretch the Constitution’s limits when necessary, the necessity in this case seemed to have subsided. Yet when Nevada’s constitution finally reached the State Department on October 31, Lincoln and Seward wasted no time approving it, enabling Nevada to vote the next week.<sup>23</sup>

Understanding Lincoln’s—and, to a lesser degree, Seward’s—political acumen is crucial to understanding why, indeed, Nevada’s statehood may have mattered more than recent historians have believed. The list of projected votes within Lincoln’s papers, showing a narrow electoral victory with Nevada’s three electoral votes added, is instructive. The president and those around him realized that the election could prove close. Given what is known about him as a political operator, especially when he was in Illinois, and his relationship with Seward, it strains credulity to think that Lincoln had not considered every possible electoral angle—or, if he felt that the war demanded his attention, that Seward had not done so and acted as his proxy. One of those angles was the Electoral College, and the list of states and votes demonstrates Lincoln’s

consciousness of it. Even if no evidence exists to prove that Lincoln hastened or supported Nevada's statehood, ample evidence exists to prove that Lincoln was the kind of politician who would have been aware that the creation of a new state would help his chances. To dismiss the possibility out of hand because of Dana's faulty memory is to misunderstand Lincoln's shrewdness and his ideology of promoting freedom and union, while assuring himself and his party of the power to promote them.<sup>24</sup>

The passage of the Thirteenth Amendment presents a similar problem and suggests a similar solution. In that case, Dana's recollections—placed in what is probably their correct context in early 1865—would be in league with the accounts by Vorenberg and such earlier historians as John and LaWanda: That Lincoln, Seward, and Ashley used lobbying, patronage, and perhaps even bribery to secure the two-thirds majority that approved the measure on January 31, 1865. Indeed, Thaddeus Stevens, the radical Republican from Pennsylvania, observed, "The greatest measure of the nineteenth century was passed by corruption, aided and abetted by the purest man in America." One of the members of the two-thirds majority backing the amendment was Henry G. Worthington, whom Nevadans had elected as their lone representative in 1864 when they voted a straight Union Party ticket. They did so because they had approved a constitution that included a required provision: "That there shall be in this state neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, otherwise than in the punishment for crimes, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted." In 1861, before Lincoln had taken office, Republicans in Congress had seen no need to stipulate that territories would have no slavery, since they would be appointing the officials who would make the policies governing the territories. But by 1864, they had enough experience with power to want to specify their goals and enough of a desire to end slavery that they would require a new state to accede to that demand.<sup>25</sup>

Those experiences had included legal questions about the status of seceded states. While the radical Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts propounded a theory of "state suicide," in which those states were rendered territories for the federal government to control as it wished, Lincoln won considerable support for his argument that they remained states in the Union. In this way, Lincoln sought to deny the validity of secession and blunt the possibility that foreign nations would recognize the seceded states as a newly created Confederate republic. Lincoln had based his support for the Thirteenth Amendment in part on his understanding that the Emancipation Proclamation was an action of a commander-in-chief during wartime that might not pass constitutional muster with the United States Supreme Court, which had barely upheld the Union government in wartime cases. Three-fourths of the states had to approve a new constitutional amendment, and Lincoln knew that how many states existed in the Union remained open to question. Given that Lincoln had pressed for the amendment to be part of the Union Party platform in July 1864,

and then pressed even harder for its passage in January 1865, the issue clearly was on his mind. Statehood for Nevada—and, if they availed themselves of the opportunity, for Colorado and Nebraska—would help turn the amendment into a reality, both with its one vote in the House of Representatives and with its role in ratification.<sup>26</sup>

In discussing Nevada statehood, historians long have argued that both Lincoln and radical Republicans hoped for congressional support from Nevada's two United States senators and its representative as they sought to reconstruct southern society in the waning days of the Civil War and afterward. Lending added credence to this theory is the role of radicals in creating territories. While a Wisconsin conservative, James R. Doolittle, introduced the enabling act for the territories to become states in 1864, the measure went to the Senate Committee on Territories, chaired by Benjamin F. Wade of Ohio. The debate of that February 24, when the Senate considered the bill to admit Nevada, shows Wade, as was his wont, impatient to move forward and opposed to amending what had emerged from his committee. While Lincoln worked well with some radicals, his relationship with Wade often had been contentious. As chairman of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War, Wade helped Lincoln pressure slow-moving generals, but he also interfered with Lincoln's handling of other commanders and often expressed contempt for Lincoln and his leadership. If Lincoln hoped for Nevada's support, the chances are equally good that Wade looked to Nevada to hew to the radical line, either in the presidential election or on Reconstruction, or both.<sup>27</sup>

The other member of Congress linked to Nevada's statehood was another Ohio radical, Representative James Ashley. Unlike Wade, Ashley actually had worked well, or at least cordially, with Lincoln. But while Ashley proposed reconstruction legislation more moderate than his Ohio colleague's and closer to Lincoln's wartime vision of how to restore the South to the Union, he also "hoped to engraft black suffrage onto the malleable state constitutions of the South"—a step that Lincoln had yet to take, although he had been moving in the direction of supporting black suffrage, at least to some degree. The combination of his management of the Thirteenth Amendment and the Nevada enabling act suggests that he, too, could have linked these measures, if only in his own mind. In turn, Lincoln has earned enough of a reputation for political caginess to suggest that he could be equally capable of linking those measures and those men.<sup>28</sup>

None of these scenarios has the benefit of proof, an element that also links the characters of Lincoln and Nevada. Neither of them easily revealed or reveals secrets, whether, as in Lincoln's case, out of a preference for silence or, as in Nevada's case, because its history is replete with the kinds of political corruption and organized crime involvement that rarely show up in writing or in collections of personal papers. But students of Lincoln have a long history of extrapolating details of his life from unusual sources. To paraphrase Richard

Current's title, "the Lincoln nobody knows" remains a rich trove of possibilities, and the Lincoln everybody knows was capable of the political maneuvering that would have guided Nevada to statehood, or at least supported it, for the sake of his re-election, the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, the future of Reconstruction, or some combination of these. To rule out a role for Lincoln in the absence of incontrovertible evidence would be as unwise as claiming that he was the sole motivating force. To do either is to misunderstand the man and the politician, and to deny that historians have made assertions with far more certitude and far less proof.<sup>29</sup>

#### NEVADA AND "THE GREATEST NATION OF THE EARTH"

In the words of the historian Heather Cox Richardson, "Trying to recreate a more extensive and prosperous version of the antebellum world of independent individuals from which they came, the Republicans instead set the stage for an entirely new, industrial America." While the necessities of fighting a civil war made possible much of the change that Republicans sought, they had articulated this vision in their party platforms of 1856 and 1860, calling for a transcontinental railroad and a homestead act to help farmers settle the West. The Thirty-seventh Congress, meeting from 1861 to 1863, turned these proposals into legislation that Lincoln signed into law. Their motivations varied. Some rooted these policies in the free-labor ideology that Eric Foner linked to slavery and the cause of the war, and that Gabor Boritt saw as the central economic tenet of "Lincoln's American Dream." Other business-minded Republicans east and west may have seen pure profitability. During the war, Thaddeus Stevens suggested another reason by linking economics and expansion when he said, "We must either agree to surrender our Pacific possessions to a separate empire or unite them to the Atlantic by a permanent highway of this kind. The Romans consolidated their power by building solid roads from the capital to their provinces."<sup>30</sup>

As a territory and as a state, Nevada was one of those provinces, and it felt the effects of the ideology of Lincoln and his party, directly and indirectly, at the time and long afterward. While the Homestead Act had no discernible impact on Nevada's economy or polity, the Morrill Land Grant College Act of 1862 had a delayed effect that revealed an essential Republican contradiction. The measure permitted states to sell public lands to fund institutions of higher learning. Two years later, the Nevada Constitution included a provision for "the establishment of a State University which shall embrace departments for Agriculture, Mechanic Arts, and Mining," which conformed with the Morrill Act. But while Lincoln and his party affected Nevada's approach to higher education, they concomitantly limited it: With Nevada conceding nearly ninety percent of its available land to the federal government, the new state lacked the funding base for a college that qualified under the Morrill Act.<sup>31</sup>

Eventually, though, this Republican program made higher education in Nevada possible. In 1873, the state legislature approved a plan for a university in Elko, which won the prize and opened the school the next year, because the larger communities of Reno and Carson City split the vote, and the governor at the time was an Elko County rancher, Lewis R. Bradley. The *Reno Evening Gazette* later said that to call it a university was “as appropriate as to call a canoe a man-of-war,” since it served mainly as a college preparatory school, but it moved to Reno in 1886, complete with a school of mining, one of the mechanical arts required under the Republican-driven Morrill Act and the Nevada Constitution.<sup>32</sup>

The Pacific Railway Act influenced Nevada and the West even more, in ways that Republicans hoped and in ways that they doubtless never would have imagined—or, presumably, wanted to imagine. After the House and Senate passed the bill easily, Lincoln signed it into law on July 1, 1862. At the time, the measure was unique in two key ways. The Union Pacific, which would build west from the Missouri River, would be a public-private partnership, while the Central Pacific, building east from Sacramento, was a private corporation, essentially in the hands of four men: Charles Crocker, who would superintend the construction; Governor Leland Stanford of California; and the businessmen Mark Hopkins and Collis Huntington. And the federal government provided a series of subsidies to the railroad builders: Public land for a right of way, five alternate sections per mile on each side of the track, and loans through thirty-year bonds at six-percent interest of \$16,000 to \$48,000 per mile of track. Eventually, Republicans in Congress voted about \$60 million in loans and forty-five million acres of land to the two lines—and about five million of those acres were in Nevada, making the railroad the second-biggest landowner in the state, behind the federal government.<sup>33</sup>

For Republicans, this federal support merely began a long commitment to tying railroads to the gospel of prosperity throughout the country, but it also shaped western and Nevada political economy for the rest of the century—and beyond. Historians of the Gilded Age point to such urban political machines as the Tweed Ring and Tammany Hall, and to the railroad’s power in California, as exemplifying the political corruption of that era. But they would do well to consider Nevada. From its founding, it has been mostly a one-industry state. Until 1931, the mining industry on the Comstock Lode in Virginia City’s environs and in south-central (the gold and silver booms in Tonopah and Goldfield) and eastern (the copper boom in White Pine County) Nevada predominated. This created, in essence, a company state. Then, as the Nevada historian Wilbur Shepperson put it, “the legislature set in motion the process whereby the company merely changed hands”; by making Nevada the only state in which gambling was legal, it thus made Nevada dependent on gambling—or, to put it more accurately today, with some form of gambling now legal in forty-eight states, on the tourism industry.<sup>34</sup>

But in the nineteenth century, while mining corporations and their operators dominated Nevada politically and economically, they did so in tandem with the Central Pacific Railroad's owners. The Comstock's leading figures in the nineteenth century were William Sharon, who came to Virginia City as the representative of the Bank of California and ended up saving the company from dissolution, and the "Silver Kings," mining operators John Mackay and James Fair and stockbrokers James Flood and William O'Brien. As with them, the motivations of Crocker, Hopkins, Huntington, and Stanford were clear: To avoid having to repay any federal and state loans, and to avoid subjecting themselves to federal or state taxation or regulation that they deemed onerous. Success required them to win support from politicians whose votes could cost them money and editors whose publicity could harm their efforts at co-option.<sup>35</sup>

Their methods varied. The Central Pacific played an important role in urbanizing Nevada by creating or expanding the communities of Reno, Winnemucca, Elko, and Carlin—setting a precedent to be followed later when the Union Pacific and its partner, Senator William Andrews Clark of Montana, needed a division point for their railroad from Los Angeles to Salt Lake City and started the town of Las Vegas. They also became powers within those communities, sometimes dictating municipal operations. Railroad executives throughout the country were liberal with the use of passes on their lines for politicians and editors whose favor they reasonably could expect in return. Their lobbyists exerted considerable power in state legislatures, both legally and illegally—as Henry M. Yerington, who represented the Virginia and Truckee Railroad in Carson City, Nevada, attested in 1879 that

during every Nevada legislature since 1869 bills have been introduced to regulate freight and fares, and many other matters connected with the working of railroads in this state, most of them have been of a blackmailing character requiring *Coin* to prevent them from being introduced or to get out of the road after introduction. This Co. has put up the Coin in large sums every session and the result has been not one bill inimical to railroads has been passed during all these years.<sup>36</sup>

More important, Central Pacific executives joined with mining executives to play a crucial role in determining who represented Nevadans in the state legislature, and, in turn, in the United States Senate. Only as of 1940 did Nevada finally have two United States senators who owed their prosperity and election to something or someone other than the mining industry. But in representing mining interests, they also stood for what the railroads wanted. The first senator elected from Nevada, William Morris Stewart (1865-1875, 1887-1905), had been a mining lawyer who served on committees related to mining and railroads.

"Stewart is a *trump* and *no mistake*," Huntington told Hopkins; and a week after the driving of the golden spike at Promontory, Utah, in 1869, Huntington wrote to Crocker, "Stewart leaves here this week for California and you must see him and let him into some good things in and about San Francisco. He has always stood by us. He is peculiar, but thoroughly honest, and will bear no dictation, but I know he must live, and we must fix it so that he can make one or two hundred thousand dollars. It is to our interest and I think his right." And later, Huntington told Stanford, "I have agreed, with your consent, that the Southern Pacific Railroad Company will give William M. Stewart fifty thousand acres of land of the average quality of the lands along the line of the road, say on the first two hundred miles. He will select some person to whom the land is to be conveyed." When Stewart returned to the Senate after a twelve-year absence in 1887, his campaign manager, Charles C. "Black" Wallace, had doubled as the Central Pacific's resident agent for Nevada. Wallace shepherded him through that election and two subsequent ones with a combination of their own guile and his employer's money, liberally dispensed among legislators who supported not only Stewart, but also legislation that the railroad supported. Nor was Stewart alone: His colleague from Nevada, John Percival Jones, an independently wealthy mine owner, hoped to develop land in southern California and needed a railroad to accomplish that goal. The Central Pacific needed Jones's vote on a bill to help it with its debt, and Huntington offered Jones bonds in a related company, the Southern Pacific. Afterward, Huntington wrote, "Jones is very good natured now, and we need his help in Congress very much, and I have no doubt we shall have it."<sup>37</sup>

Stewart and Jones were not unique, in Nevada or elsewhere—and, as Huntington's correspondence suggests, Stewart also retained an independent streak, or at least thought that he did. But successive generations of senators and representatives from Nevada who sought to protect mining and then gambling from interference found themselves in an anomalous position. Guarding against federal power that might hamper their state's prosperity led them into alliances with like-minded members of the House and Senate. Fellow westerners shared their desire for miners and ranchers to control their own fate even before the Sagebrush Rebellion of the 1970s and 1980s materialized; thus, westerners who tended to support Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal had no use for the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934, which they viewed as undue interference with the ranching industry. But they also found support for their professions of state power and independence among southerners who also hoped to avoid legislation that interfered with state's rights—specifically, civil rights. It strains credulity to think that Republicans planned to create the South and the West as they eventually would exist, but the party's actions helped to shape their futures—and, coincidentally, helped to bring them together to fight the kind of expansive federal government that Republicans of Lincoln's era had supported.<sup>38</sup>

Without the generous terms of the Pacific Railway Act and subsequent bills, the Central Pacific might still have become a dominant political force. But without that help, whether the Central Pacific would have needed to be so dominant a political force is more open to question. During the Civil War, Republicans saw the opportunity to pass the legislation that they had long deemed necessary to promoting economic and geographic growth, in the process bringing prosperity to a region whose availability for free labor had been the key to their party's creation.

What Lincoln would have made of this can only be conjectured. Even those who subscribe to David Herbert Donald's description of him as "a Whig in the White House," maintaining his old party's belief that the executive branch should defer to the legislative, agree that he took a great interest in the plans to build the railroad. How much was ideological and how much was due to his background as a surveyor is also open to question. In the wake of Lincoln, an old surveyor, poring over maps, evaluating gauges, and helping to expand the railroad's subsidy by including the Sierra Nevada foothills as part of the mountain range—despite a California Supreme Court opinion to the contrary—Representative Aaron Sargent of California mused, "Abraham's faith moved mountains." Historians often shape Lincoln into a capitalist or a laboring man, a radical or a conservative, to fit their views. But Lincoln left a long record of supporting business while endorsing those who would contain it, arguing, "Labor is prior to, and independent of, capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not first existed." As adept as Lincoln was at political gamesmanship, the corruption of state legislatures and Congress to which the Union Pacific and Central Pacific contributed would have been more than he could have stomached.<sup>39</sup>

#### THE LAW OF UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

Not that Nevada was the first or last thing on Abraham Lincoln's mind, although the possibility of the latter exists. One of his last conversations was with Schuyler Colfax, the speaker of the House of Representatives, who planned a trip to the West Coast. According to Colfax, Lincoln told him,

I have very large ideas of the mineral wealth of our nation. I believe it practically inexhaustible. It abounds all over the western country, from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific, and its development has scarcely commenced. . . . Tell the miners from me that I shall promote their interests to the utmost of my ability, because their prosperity is the prosperity of the nation; and we shall prove, in a very few years, that we are, indeed, the *treasury of the world*.

And Nevada's new United States senator, William M. Stewart, claimed that he brought a friend to meet Lincoln at the White House, but the president informed him that he had an engagement that evening at Ford's Theatre, so he should bring back his visitor the next day.<sup>40</sup>

Those are anecdotal examples compared with the broader possibilities and ironies. Whether Lincoln actually supported Nevada's statehood—and, if so, why—probably can never be known without additional hard evidence. What remains, then, are reminiscences and oral traditions of the sort that historians routinely use or discard according to additional corroboration and their own best judgments. That the power and ideology of Lincoln and his party helped shape Nevada and its state constitution, and the governmental system of which they were a part, is indisputable. Nearly a century and a half after Lincoln's death, Nevada seems an unlikely candidate for consideration as a shining beacon of his impact: Lincoln hardly contemplated a tourist economy catering to hedonistic pleasures and entertainment combined with a dependence on the federal government for the availability of land and defense projects.

Lincoln and Nevada also represent the West, but in untraditional ways. As Colfax wrote, "In precisely the same sense in which we say the child is father to the man, the Abraham Lincoln of the Western prairies was the father to the President Lincoln of the White House." Lincoln represented the West of Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis, of equality and opportunity that made possible his rise from failed storekeeper to president, and also the West of Patricia Limerick's land of conquest, exemplified by his support for the Whig party's program of internal improvements to make the West more accessible and profitable—a program that ultimately became part of the Republican platform. As president, Lincoln supported policies toward Nevada and the West that promoted the building of a railroad that created and expanded cities and linked the previously unconnected in a chain of development—just as Nevada was growing during the Civil War and would continue to grow long afterward through a series of boomtowns that served a mining and ranching hinterland. While the West's image suggests hardy souls tilling and toiling in the soil, the path that Lincoln took—from rural to urban and farming to law with the growth of his communities of New Salem and Springfield—is similar to that of many westerners of his time and since who have engaged in one of the great migrations in American history. Not only has Nevada been at the forefront of that movement as one of the fastest-growing states of the post-World War II era. It also is among the most urban states, with ninety percent of its population residing in the Las Vegas and Reno-Carson City metropolitan areas, thanks in part to the railroad construction that Lincoln and his fellow Republicans encouraged, and thanks in part to the kinds of economic freedom and expansion that Republicans saw as vital to the nation's growth and development.<sup>41</sup>

Lincoln and the Republicans of his era could no more have envisioned the state that Nevada has become than could many Nevadans of more recent vintage. But reflection on Lincoln's impact had become a national habit even before his bicentennial. Nevada was and is the "battle born" state, and owes its origins to Lincoln and those around him. Indeed, Lincoln's effects on Nevada go well beyond a piece of paper that he signed on October 31, 1864. As in so many other ways, he is with us still.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>David Herbert Donald, *Lincoln Reconsidered: Essays on the Civil War Era*, 3d ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 2001), 3-15. The best source for information about bicentennial celebrations and those involved in them is [www.lincolnbicentennial.gov](http://www.lincolnbicentennial.gov). On the Obama-Lincoln comparisons, see, for example, "Straw Man? Historians Say Obama Is No Lincoln," [www.politico.com](http://www.politico.com), (15 December 2008); James Oakes, "What's so Special about a Team of Rivals?" *The New York Times*, (20 November 2008); and the book that is the basis for much of the comparison, Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005). I also would suggest an earlier book that covers a great deal of similar ground, Burton J. Hendrick, *Lincoln's War Cabinet* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1946). On the spate of new books on Lincoln, see, for example, *Boston Globe*, (22 September 2008).

<sup>2</sup>James McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), vii.

<sup>3</sup>On the history of Nevada and Las Vegas, see Russell R. Elliott and William D. Rowley, *History of Nevada*, 2d ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987); James W. Hulse, *The Silver State: Nevada's Heritage Reinterpreted*, 3d. ed. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2004); David Alan Johnson, *Founding the Far West: California, Oregon, and Nevada, 1840-1890* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Eugene P. Moehring and Michael S. Green, *Las Vegas: A Centennial History* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2005). On gaming, tourism, and the image of Las Vegas, see John L. Smith, *Running Scared* (Fort Lee, New Jersey: Barricade Books, 1995), and *Sharks in the Desert* (Fort Lee: Barricade Books, 2005); Christina Binkley, *Winner Takes All: Steve Wynn, Kirk Kerkorian, Gary Loveman, and the Race to Own Las Vegas* (New York: Hyperion, 2008); Ed Reid and Ovid Demaris, *The Green Felt Jungle* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1963); Sally Denton and Roger Morris, *The Money and the Power: The Making of Las Vegas and Its Hold on America, 1947-2000* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001).

<sup>4</sup>Michael F. Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party: Jacksonian Politics and the Onset of Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 436-38; Leonard Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 210-49. On the Compromise of 1850, see Holman Hamilton, *Prologue to Conflict* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1964), and Mark J. Stegmaier, *Texas, New Mexico, and the Compromise of 1850: Boundary Dispute and Sectional Crisis* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1996). On Lincoln in this period, see Don E. Fehrenbacher, *Prelude to Greatness: Lincoln in the 1850s* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), and John S. Wright, *Lincoln and the Politics of Slavery* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1970).

<sup>5</sup>Sally S. Zanjani, *Devils Will Reign: How Nevada Began* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2006); Guy Louis Rocha, "Nevada's Emergence in the American Great Basin: Territory and State," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 38:4 (Winter 1995), 255-80.

<sup>6</sup>See Ronald M. James, *The Roar and the Silence: A History of the Comstock Lode* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1997); Rodman W. Paul, *Mining Frontiers of the Far West, 1848-1880* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1963). On the secession crisis, the standard remains David M. Potter, *Lincoln and His Party in the Secession Crisis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942), but see also Russell McClintock, *Lincoln and the Decision for War: The Northern Response to Secession* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), and Harold Holzer, *Lincoln: President-Elect: Abraham Lincoln and the Great Secession Winter, 1860-1861* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2008).

<sup>7</sup>David Herbert Donald, *Lincoln* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), 321; Harry J. Carman and Reinhold Luthin, *Lincoln and the Patronage* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943). On the Seward-Weed machine, see Glyndon G. Van Deusen, *Thurlow Weed: Wizard of the Lobby* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967), and *idem*, *William Henry Seward* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967).

<sup>8</sup>Jud Burton Samon, "Sagebrush Falstaff: A Biographical Sketch of James Warren Nye" (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 1979); William Hanchett, "Yankee Law and the Negro in Nevada, 1861-1869," *Western Humanities Review*, 9:2 (Summer 1956), 241-50; Kent D. Richards, "The American Colonial System in Nevada," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 13:1 (Spring 1970), 28-38. On Nevada's treatment of African Americans in this era, see Elmer R. Rusco, "Good Time Coming?" *Black Nevadans in the Nineteenth Century* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1975).

<sup>9</sup>On North, see Merlin Stonehouse, *John Wesley North and the Reform Frontier* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1965). On Stewart, see Russell R. Elliott, *Servant of Power: A Political Biography of Senator William M. Stewart* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1983). Readers should trust George Rothwell Brown, ed., *Reminiscences of Senator William M. Stewart of Nevada* (New York: The Neale Publishing Company, 1908), at their peril.

<sup>10</sup>See especially Johnson, *Founding the Far West*, 189-230, 376-79.

<sup>11</sup>Nevada Constitution, Ordinance and Article II, Section 2; Johnson, *Founding the Far West*, 189-230.

<sup>12</sup>Johnson, *Founding the Far West*, 71-97, 189-230; Nevada Constitution, Article VIII.

<sup>13</sup>Elliott and Rowley, *History of Nevada*, 88-89.

<sup>14</sup>Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 9 vols. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1953-55), 4:430. See also James F. Simon, *Lincoln and Chief Justice Taney: Slavery, Secession, and the President's War Powers* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006).

<sup>15</sup>F. Lauriston Bullard, "Abraham Lincoln and the Statehood of Nevada," *American Bar Association Journal*, 26:3 (March 1940), 210-12, 236; 26:4 (April 1940), 313-17; Janet E. Steele, *The Sun Shines for All: Journalism and Ideology in the Life of Charles A. Dana* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1993).

<sup>16</sup>Bullard, "Abraham Lincoln and Statehood."

<sup>17</sup>Earl S. Pomeroy, "Lincoln, the Thirteenth Amendment, and the Admission of Nevada," *Pacific Historical Review*, 12:4 (December 1943), 362-68. See also Michael P. Malone, "Earl Pomeroy and the Reorientation of Western American History," in *Writing Western History: Essays on Major Western Historians*, Richard W. Etulain, ed. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2002), 311-34.

<sup>18</sup>David E. Long, *The Jewel of Liberty: Abraham Lincoln's Re-election and the End of Slavery* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1994); John C. Waugh, *Reelecting Lincoln: The Battle for the 1864 Presidency* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1997); Donald, *Lincoln*, 539, 676n.; Pomeroy, "Lincoln, Thirteenth Amendment, and Admission of Nevada," 367; Michael Vorenberg, *Final Freedom: The Civil War, the Abolition of Slavery, and the Thirteenth Amendment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 180-81, n. 19; Frank J. Williams, *Judging Lincoln* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2002), 135-36. The errors appeared in Bruce Chadwick, *The Two American Presidents: A Dual Biography of Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis* (Secaucus, New Jersey: Birch Lane Publishing, 1999), 314; see also Carl Sandburg, *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and the War Years*, 3 vols. (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1954), 3: 505.

<sup>19</sup>Effie Mona Mack, Idel Anderson, and Beulah E. Singleton, *Nevada Government: A Study of the Administration and Politics of State, County, Township, and Cities* (Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, 1953), 15-16; Elliott and Rowley, *History of Nevada*, 83-84; Hulse, *Silver State*, 83-84, 242-43.

<sup>20</sup>Johnson, *Founding the Far West*, 88-89. Examples of works that tend toward the Dana and Mack versions are Richard G. Lillard, *Desert Challenge: An Interpretation of Nevada* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942), 46-48; Leslie Burns Gray, *The Source and the Vision: Nevada's Role in the Civil War* (Sparks: The Gray Trust, 1989). Those who question them include Gilman M. Ostrander, *Nevada: The Great Rotten Borough, 1859-1964* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), 35; Elliott, *Servant of Power*, 36; James, *Roar and Silence*, Don W. Driggs and Leonard E. Goodall, *Nevada Politics and Government: Conservatism in an Open Society* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 35-38; Albert C. Johns, *Nevada Government and Politics* (Dubuque: Kendall-Hunt, 1971), 27-29; Michael W. Bowers, *The Sagebrush State: Nevada's History, Government, and Politics*, 3d. ed. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2006), 19-20.

<sup>21</sup>Douglas L. Wilson and Rodney O. Davis, eds., *Herndon's Informants: Letters, Interviews, and Statements about Abraham Lincoln* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998); Douglas L. Wilson, *Honor's Voice: The Transformation of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998); Douglas L. Wilson, *Lincoln before Washington: New Perspectives on the Illinois Years* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997). See also David Donald, *Lincoln's Herndon* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948); Guy Louis Rocha, "Why Did Nevada Become a State?" at <http://dmla.clan.nv.us/docs/nsa/archives/myth/myth12.htm>.

<sup>22</sup>David Herbert Donald, *"We Are Lincoln Men": Abraham Lincoln and His Friends* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004), xiv, 140-76. On Lincoln and his ministers, see Hendrick, *Lincoln's War Cabinet*, and Goodwin, *Team of Rivals*. On Nye, see Michael S. Green, "Diehard or Swing Man: Senator James W. Nye and the Impeachment and Trial of Andrew Johnson," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 29:3 (Fall 1986), 175-91; George P. Nye, "James Warren Nye," in *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 39:1 (Spring 1996), 63-78; Samon, "Sagebrush Falstaff." The William Henry Seward and Thurlow Weed papers at the Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester, Rochester, New York, include many such examples of Seward alluding to something as too sensitive to be discussed in print.

<sup>23</sup>Long, *Jewel of Liberty*, details the 1864 election.

<sup>24</sup>Michael S. Green, *Freedom, Union, and Power: Lincoln and His Party during the Civil War* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004); Adam I. P. Smith, *No Party Now: Politics in the Civil War North* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Mark E. Neely, Jr., *The Union Divided: Party Conflict in the Civil War North* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).

<sup>25</sup>Vorenberg, *Final Freedom*, especially 183-86; LaWanda Cox and John H. Cox, *Politics, Principle, and Prejudice, 1865-1866: Dilemmas of Reconstruction America* (New York: Free Press, 1963), especially 1-30; Allen C. Guelzo, *Abraham Lincoln: Redeemer President* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 401.

<sup>26</sup>David M. Silver, *Lincoln's Supreme Court* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1956); Brian McGinty, *Lincoln and the Court* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

<sup>27</sup>Hans L. Trefousse, *The Radical Republicans: Lincoln's Vanguard for Racial Justice* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969); *idem*, *Benjamin Franklin Wade: Radical Republican from Ohio* (New York: Twayne, 1963); *Congressional Globe*, 38<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session (8 February 1864, 521; 24 February 1864, 787-88); Gerald S. Henig, *Henry Winter Davis: Antebellum and Civil War Congressman from Maryland* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1973); Bruce Tap, *Over Lincoln's Shoulder: The Committee on the Conduct of the War* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998).

<sup>28</sup>Vorenberg, *Final Freedom*, especially 49-52; Robert F. Horowitz, *The Great Impeacher: A Political Biography of James M. Ashley* (New York: Brooklyn College Press, 1979).

<sup>29</sup>Richard Nelson Current, *The Lincoln Nobody Knows* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1958).

<sup>30</sup>Heather Cox Richardson, *The Greatest Nation of the Earth: Republican Economic Policies during the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 7; *Congressional Globe*, 37<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session (5 May 1862), 1949. See also Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970, reprint 1995); Gabor S. Boritt, *Lincoln and the Economics of the American Dream* (Memphis: Memphis State University Press, 1978), ix; Green, *Freedom, Union, and Power*.

<sup>31</sup>Nevada Constitution, Article XI, Section 4; James W. Hulse, *The University of Nevada: A Centennial History* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1974); James W. Hulse, Leonard E. Goodall, and Jackie Allen, *Reinventing the System: Higher Education in Nevada, 1968-2000* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2002); Coy F. Cross, *Justin Smith Morrill: Father of the Land-Grant Colleges* (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1999), 77-94. On Nevada's legislative and political system, see Driggs and Goodall, *Nevada Politics and Government*.

<sup>32</sup>Nevada Constitution, Article XI, Section 4; *Reno Evening Gazette* (4 January 1879); Hulse, *The University of Nevada*; John P. Marschall, *Jews in Nevada* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2008), 46-47.

<sup>33</sup>Richardson, *Greatest Nation of the Earth*, 170-208; Ostrander, *Great Rotten Borough*, especially 76-96.

<sup>34</sup>Mark Summers, *Railroads, Reconstruction, and the Gospel of Prosperity: Aid Under the Radical Republicans, 1865-1877* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); Wilbur S. Shepperson, "A New Shrine in the Desert," in *East of Eden, West of Zion: Essays on Nevada*, Shepperson, ed. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1989), 171-86; Ostrander, *Great Rotten Borough*; Moehring, *Resort City in the Sunbelt*, Las Vegas, 1930-2000, 2d. ed. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2000); John M. Findlay, *People of Chance: Gambling in America from Jamestown to Las Vegas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Charles W. Calhoun, *The Gilded Age: Perspectives on the Origins of Modern America* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007); Michael E. McGerr, *The Decline of Popular Politics: The American North, 1865-1928* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

<sup>35</sup>Michael J. Makley, *The Infamous King of the Comstock: William Sharon and the Gilded Age in the West* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2006); Elliott, *Servant of Power*; Oscar Lewis, *The Silver Kings: The Lives and Times of Mackay, Fair, Flood, and O'Brien, Lords of the Nevada Comstock Lode* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947).

<sup>36</sup>Elliott and Rowley, *History of Nevada*, 161-64. The Central Pacific and Virginia and Truckee Railroad papers at The Huntington Library are replete with the passes. See also John Townley, *Tough Little Town on the Truckee: Reno, 1868-1900* (Reno: Great Basin Studies Center, 1983); Edna B. Patterson, Louise Ulph, and Victor Goodwin, *Nevada's Northeast Frontier* (Reno: University of Nevada Press and Northeastern Nevada Historical Society, 1991); Moehring and Green, *Las Vegas*.

<sup>37</sup>Elliott, *Servant of Power*, 64-65, 93-100; Ostrander, *Great Rotten Borough*, 70-96. Nevada's U.S. senators also included the mine owners John P. Jones (1873-1903), William Sharon (1875-1881), James G. Fair (1881-1887), George Nixon (1905-1912), and Tasker Oddie (1921-1933); and the mining

attorney Key Pittman (1913-1940). With Pittman's death in 1940, the Las Vegas Mormon businessman Berkeley Bunker joined Patrick McCarran as a U. S. Senator from Nevada.

<sup>38</sup>Gary E. Elliott, *Senator Alan Bible and the Politics of the New West* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1994), superbly details how senators from Nevada often were aligned with their southern counterparts; Ralph L. Denton and Michael S. Green, *A Liberal Conscience: Ralph Denton, Nevadan* (Reno: University of Nevada Oral History Program, 2001), 293; *The New York Times* (10 and 11 June 1964), lists roll-call votes on amendments to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and shows how westerners and southerners often wound up on the same side. On the pervasiveness of the railroad, see William Deverell, *Railroad Crossing: Californians and the Railroad, 1850-1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Richard J. Orsi, *Sunset Limited: The Southern Pacific Railroad and the Development of the American West, 1850-1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

<sup>39</sup>Donald, *Lincoln Reconsidered*, 133-47; Boritt, *Lincoln and the Economics of the American Dream*, 211; Basler, ed., *Collected Works*, 5:52.

<sup>40</sup>Osborn Hamiline Oldroyd, *The Lincoln Memorial: Album-immortelles* (Springfield, Illinois: Lincoln Publishing Company, 1890), 374-75; Brown, ed., *Reminiscences of Stewart*, 189-91.

<sup>41</sup>Allen Thorndike Rice, ed., *Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln by Distinguished Men of His Time* (New York: North American Review, 1888), 335; Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1987); Richard C. Wade, *The Urban Frontier: Pioneer Life in Early Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Lexington, Louisville, and St. Louis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968); Eugene P. Moehring, *Urbanism and Empire in the Far West, 1840-1890* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2004); Carl Abbott, *How Cities Won the West: Four Centuries of Urban Change in Western North America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008).

# Stonewall Park

DENNIS MCBRIDE

In 1983, the Reno gay activist Fred Schoonmaker and his partner, Alfred Parkinson, conceived a series of efforts to establish a gay town in Nevada. They named the settlement Stonewall Park for the 1969 New York City riots that had marked the beginning of the fight for gay equality. Social and legal discrimination against gay people in Nevada had reached such a pitch by the early 1980s that many in the state believed the only way they could survive was to segregate themselves from the straight population.

Nevada had never been an accepting home for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people. The state's sodomy law—Nevada Revised Statutes section 201.190—had been used to repress, harass, and prosecute gay men since the territorial legislature adopted it in 1861. Despite recommendations in the 1970s to repeal 201.190, the legislature instead refined its language against gay people and increased its penalties.<sup>1</sup> Several challenges to the statute's constitutionality were unsuccessful.<sup>2</sup> Nevada's *Daly v. Daly* case terminating the parental rights of a male-to-female transgendered parent in the 1980s was a circus of bigotry cited many times afterward in legal proceedings as bad case law.

Dennis McBride, born in Boulder City, Nevada, is curator of history and collections for the Nevada State Museum, Las Vegas. McBride is the author of more than a hundred articles on Nevada history, as well as several books, including *Building Hoover Dam: An Oral History of the Great Depression* [with Andrew Dunar]; *In the Beginning: A History of Boulder City, Nevada*; *Midnight on Arizona Street: The Secret History of the Boulder Dam Hotel*; and *Hard Work and Far From Home: The Civilian Conservation Corps at Lake Mead, Nevada*. He has appeared in dozens of television documentaries about Hoover Dam, on whose history he is considered the foremost authority. "Stonewall Park" is adapted from his latest book, *Out of the Neon Closet: A History of Gay Las Vegas*, in which McBride traces the development of the gay community and political activism in the Silver State. *Neon Closet* is currently searching for a publisher.



Fred Schoonmaker, c. 1950. Photographer unknown. (*Fred Schoonmaker Papers, GLBT Historical Society*)

Daly tainted similar cases until it was overturned in 2000.<sup>3</sup> The popular Reno Gay Rodeo, established in 1976, grew to include participants from around the world, yet the event annually drew such ire from religious and political conservatives in northern Nevada that it was driven from the state in 1987.<sup>4</sup> Finally, after the AIDS epidemic appeared in Nevada in 1983, gay people infected with the virus found themselves fired from their jobs, evicted from their homes, and shunned by their families. Even uninfected gay people faced open hostility.<sup>5</sup>

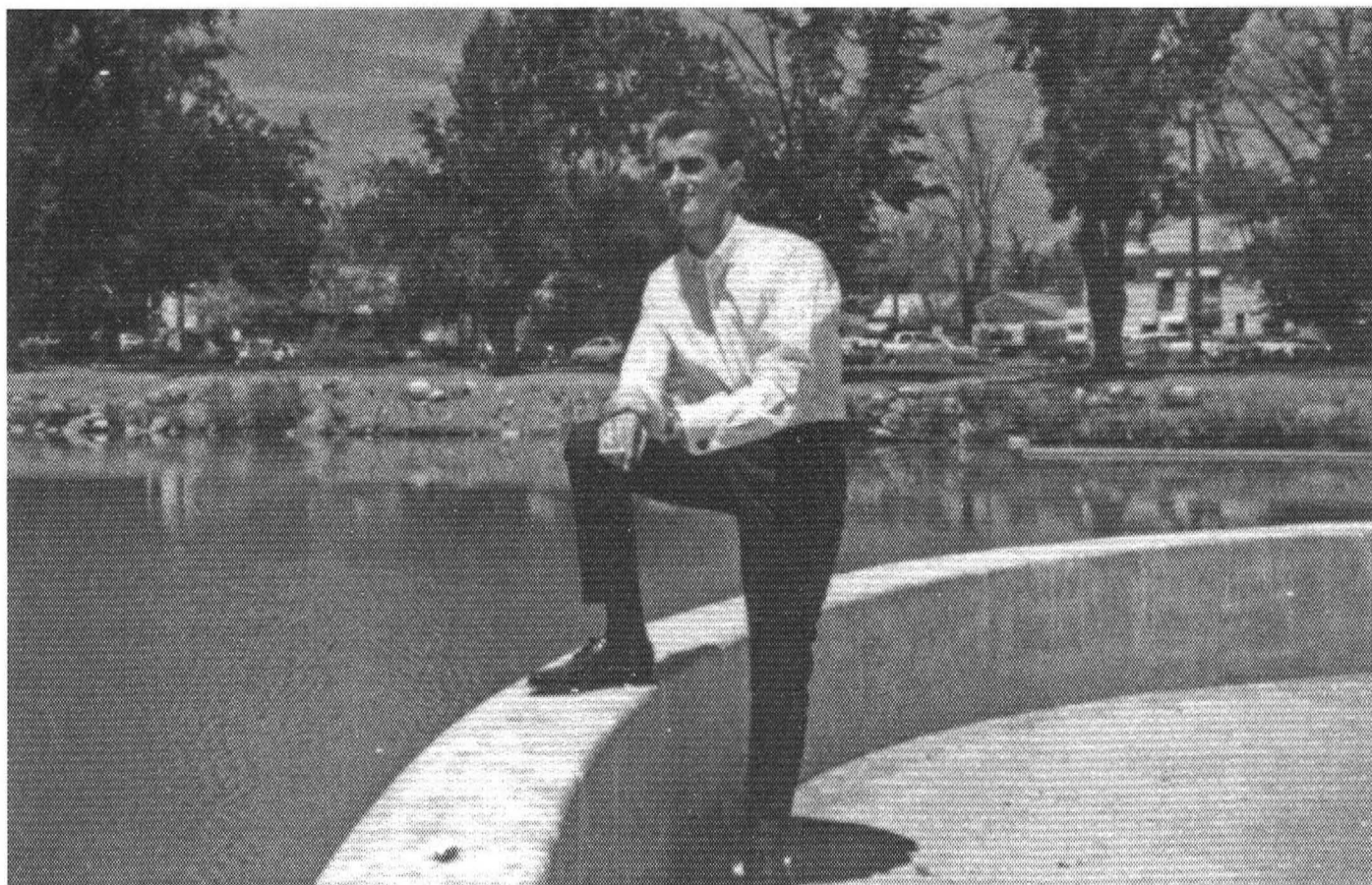
If there had been a gay community in Nevada at this time, gay people might have found political or social strength against discrimination or at least a wel-

coming shelter. Communities require shared geographic, political, social, and cultural ties, a sense of having a separate and distinct identity within a larger culture. A century of fear instilled by section 201.190, however, had retarded development of such ties and distorted gay people's sense of identity. While gay communities thrived in several western cities and there were stirrings of community in Las Vegas, with its larger, more urban population, Reno's gay community was restricted to a few bars, the Silver Dollar Court organization, the Reno Metropolitan Community Church, and the gay rodeo. Political influence and social recognition did not exist.

Nevertheless, some gay people in Nevada worked toward equality by challenging the sodomy law, establishing publications and organizations, or living openly in the straight community. Others, including Schoonmaker, Parkinson, and like-minded friends, believed the only way they might be safe was to physically segregate themselves from the straight population in a place like Stonewall Park. Schoonmaker's response to Nevada's institutionalized repression was understandably emotional, and the impassioned rhetoric of his interviews, press releases, and correspondence resonated with other gay Nevadans who felt similarly besieged. While his efforts to establish Stonewall Park were sincere, that they were driven strictly by emotion made them impractical and, in the end, disastrous.

A segregated community for gay people was not a new idea. Schoonmaker likely had been aware of, perhaps even involved with, the Los Angeles Gay Liberation Front's (GLF-LA) project in Alpine County in northern California. In the summer of 1970, the GLF-LA announced it was moving 479 gay people into northern California's tiny Alpine County—ten miles south of Lake Tahoe—where they would take over Markleeville, the county seat, and establish a gay community with “a gay government, a gay civil service [and] the world's first museum of gay arts, sciences, and history, paid for with public funds.” The proposal shocked California's government and brought a lot of publicity to the GLF-LA. Whether the Alpine County venture was serious or a publicity stunt was never clear, and it died for lack of support in the gay community—but it was the kind of endeavor Schoonmaker would gladly have joined.<sup>6</sup>

In a November 1984 newspaper article, Schoonmaker revealed his elaborate dream. “Developers envision . . . a casino, tennis courts, spas, condominiums and single-family homes,” the story read. The article also noted Schoonmaker's caution in selecting a site: “He and others involved with the project have agreed to build it outside of Washoe County because they don't think the [county] commission's pro-growth attitude would favorably outweigh what they feel is an anti-gay attitude.”<sup>7</sup> Schoonmaker claimed his idea for Stonewall Park came from a comment Alfred made one summer when they were discussing the difficulty of their life in Reno as an interracial gay couple—Fred was white, Alfred was African-American. Schoonmaker yearned for a place where they could live freely and simply as who they were. Parkinson said, “Well, if you're



Fred Schoonmaker in Idlewild Park, Reno, c. 1964. Photographer unknown.  
(*Fred Schoonmaker Papers, GLBT Historical Society*)

ever going to find a place like that, you're going to have to build it yourself." Schoonmaker said his obsession was born at that moment.

Privately, Fred admitted wanting to establish a segregated gay community for Alfred. Schoonmaker's friend, Ted Tucker, an internal auditor for Holiday Inns in Reno whom Fred met in September 1983, recalled long conversations where Fred said that Alfred "needed someone to take care of him," and would need "a safe and peaceful place" to live after Fred was gone, since he expected Alfred to outlive him.<sup>8</sup> Another supporter of the Stonewall Park idea, Marguerita "Stormy" Caldwell, remembered Alfred as mentally challenged. Alfred was also much bigger physically than Fred and protective of him, so that the two had a mutually dependent relationship. "Alfred took good care of Fred," Caldwell said. "But he was a little bit slow so Fred always took care of Alfred. Whatever Fred wanted, Alfred would try to do."<sup>9</sup>

Schoonmaker was a single-minded, idealistic advocate of gay causes whose understanding of oppression was born when he was a gay teenager in the hills of West Virginia. Unable to accept being gay, two of his friends, sixteen-year-old boys, killed themselves.<sup>10</sup> Rodney Sumpter, the Reno attorney, who served as Stonewall Park's counsel, recalled Fred telling him stories of his same-sex

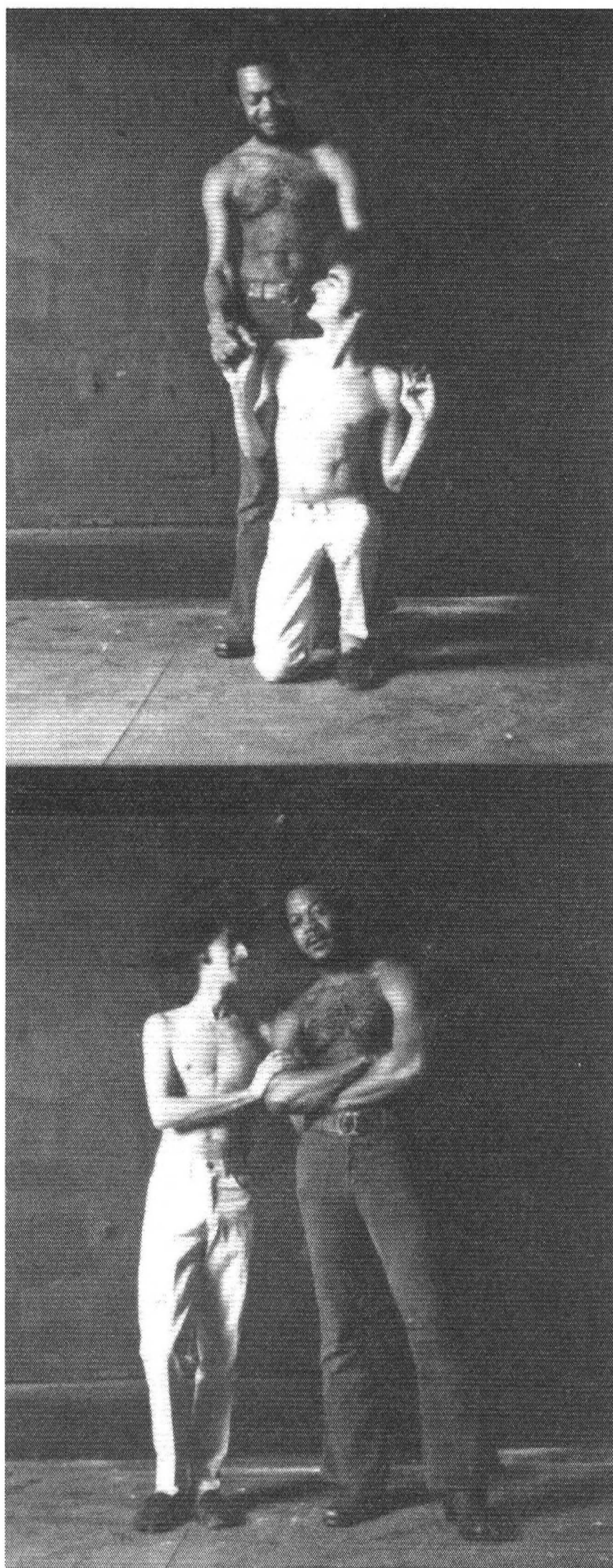
communal living experiences in San Francisco during the 1960s. "The idea of a gay commune was probably not as foreign to him as it might appear to someone like me, who's a little more mainstream," Sumpter said. "I want to fit into society just like everybody else. I don't want to be set apart as a gay man and to [found a segregated gay town] I think would just further isolate people being gay. It might make you a target."<sup>11</sup>

Fred had moved back and forth between Reno and San Francisco since about 1964, and around 1974, while living in San Francisco, he met Alfred. In 1978, the men opened two ice cream and sandwich shops on Church Street and Fulton Street called Munchkin's. Alfred hand-churned gallons of fresh ice cream each day and the business, according to Fred in later interviews, was very successful. So successful, in fact, that their landlord doubled the rent; litigation ensued, and in 1982 Fred and Alfred lost the business—"swept away by a greedy straight landlord, and an equally greedy gay friend," Fred wrote in 1984.<sup>12</sup>

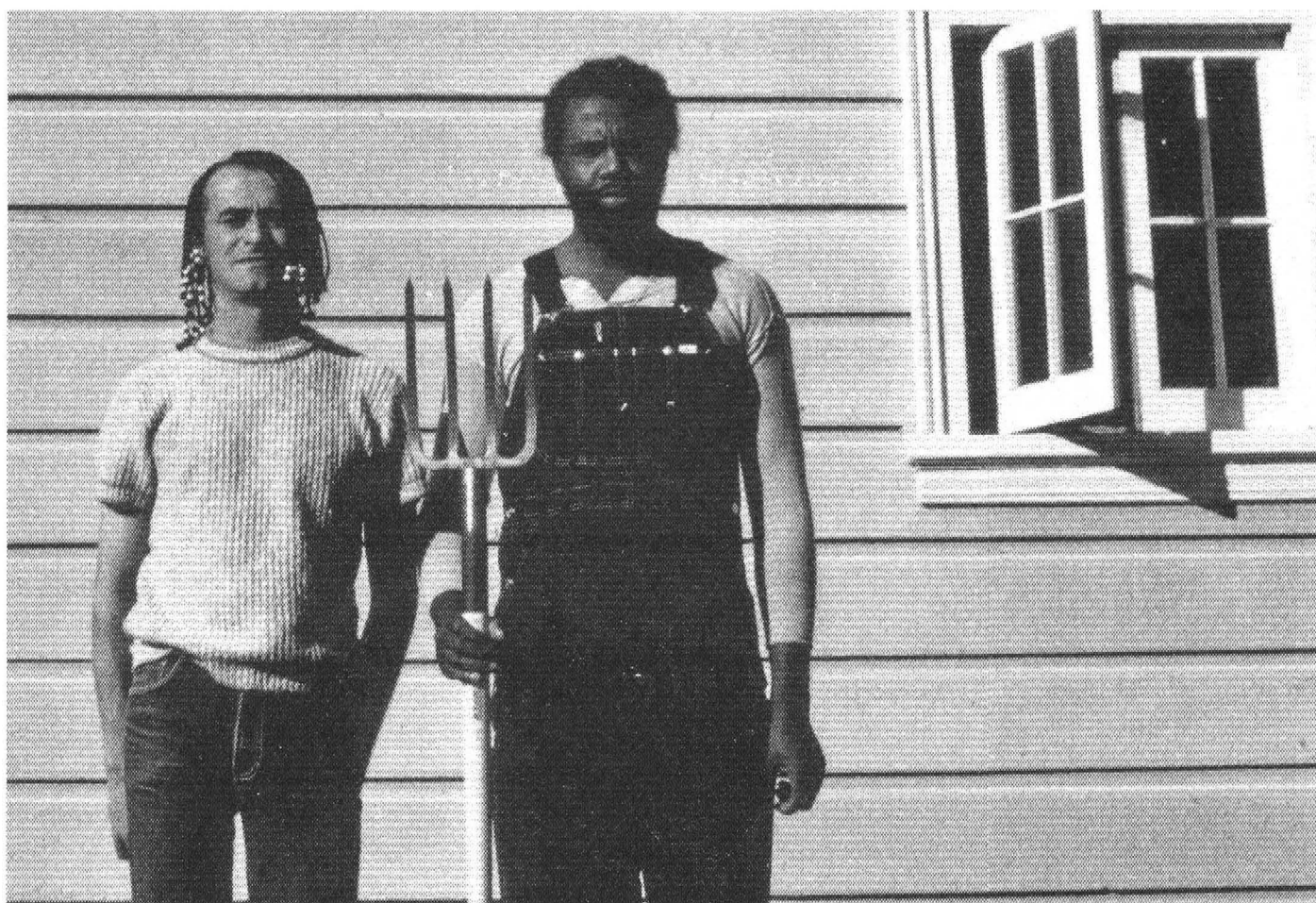
Bankruptcy papers filed on May 24, 1983, however, suggest that Munchkin's was less successful than Fred claimed. He filed no tax returns in 1981 or 1982; the Internal Revenue Service file liens against the property; and by the time Fred filed for bankruptcy, he had sixty-one creditors. In his typed comments on the bankruptcy forms, Schoonmaker claimed his employees embezzled, stole valuable artwork, and "seized possession of the business premises, fixtures, equipment, and trade value."<sup>13</sup> The loss of Munchkin's cemented Fred's sense of betrayal and suspicion of straight people and of gay people who exploited their own community. He later projected this sense onto the various failures of Stonewall Park, blaming those failures not on his own unreasonable idealism and lack of business acumen, but on exploitative individuals and Nevada's homophobia. He was not entirely incorrect.

By the time of Munchkin's bankruptcy, the couple had moved to Reno. Schoonmaker worked as a waiter and cashier in the steak house at the Circus Circus Hotel and Casino, while Alfred was a pastry chef at the Eldorado Hotel. It is an irony that Schoonmaker would have chosen one of the most homophobic places in the West to establish a gay town. Reno in the 1980s, was a dismal place to be gay. Nevada's sodomy law made private consensual sex between same-gender persons a felony, and anyone who acknowledged being gay was assumed to have "committed" sodomy and then accused of a felony. "Gaming regulations prohibited anyone who was even presumed to have committed a felony from working in casinos handling money, cards, dice, liquor, and so on," Tucker said. "You could not be openly gay and have a decent job at a casino. Professionals kept their mouths shut. If they went to the bars at all, then they parked blocks away, watched over their shoulders, and used the back doors." Gay bashing was common.<sup>14</sup>

Establishing Stonewall Park would require support from local gay people, especially professionals with money and skills. The best way to reach them, Schoonmaker believed, was through a publication. The only such publication



Fred Schoonmaker and Alfred Parkinson, c. 1970s. Photographer unknown.  
(*Fred Schoonmaker Papers, GLBT Historical Society*)



Fred Schoonmaker and Alfred Parkinson as a gay American Gothic, c. 1970s-80s. Photographer unknown. (*Fred Schoonmaker Papers, GLBT Historical Society*)

in Nevada then was the *Nevada Gay Times* (later known as the *Bohemian Bugle* and the *Las Vegas Bugle*), the newsletter of Nevadans for Human Rights in Las Vegas. Fred failed to interest that publication in expanding its distribution to Reno, even though he offered to underwrite costs. In the end, Fred decided to publish his own paper through a sole proprietorship he named the Lavender Press. He put together a prototype to sell advertising and in September 1984 began publishing Reno's first gay magazine, known first as *Gay Life Reno* and then as *Gay Life Nevada* (September-November 1984), later as *Gay Life* (December 1984-July 1985), and, by August 1985, as *Stonewall Voice*. At first Fred meant it only to be the vehicle to publicize Stonewall Park, although it soon developed into Reno's only source of gay news and became one of the area's earliest steps toward establishment of a viable gay community. Tucker provided both money and editing expertise.<sup>15</sup>

Tucker also introduced Schoonmaker to Rodney Sumpter. Fred had no money or assets to start his Stonewall Park project, Tucker said, so nobody would give or lend him anything. Further, Schoonmaker had "no experience in real estate development and no political power to get around the anti-gay



Fred Schoonmaker and Alfred Parkinson at one of their Munchkin's shops in San Francisco, c. 1981-82. Photographer unknown. (*Fred Schoonmaker Papers, GLBT Historical Society*)

forces prevalent in Nevada then. Fred knew how to sell his ideas and how to negotiate, but he did not understand anything financial." Sumpter was willing to help Schoonmaker set up the financial infrastructure for Stonewall Park. He rented space to Fred that came with some secretarial support, use of a conference room, and a photocopier; because no printer in Reno would print *Stonewall Voice*, Fred did it himself. Fred gave Sumpter ads in *Stonewall Voice*, in return for which Sumpter provided pro-bono legal work. Sumpter became one of the first professionals in Reno to come out of the closet and, despite warnings to the contrary, his business flourished.<sup>16</sup>

Schoonmaker and Parkinson met two other early allies through *Stonewall Voice*. Pamela Dallas, a transgender Reno native, wrote a column for *Stonewall Voice* called "Local Lesbiana." She helped build Fred's fund-raising database and eventually donated \$18,000 of her own money. Stormy Caldwell had been in the Reno area since the early 1960s and Sumpter persuaded her to write a column on what it was like to be gay in the "old" days. When she met Fred, his drive and vision impressed her. "He wanted so much for the gay community," she said, "and he was willing to fight for it. He was so charismatic that you couldn't help but join him! With Fred's enthusiasm, nothing was impossible. I was willing to work with him all the way."<sup>17</sup>

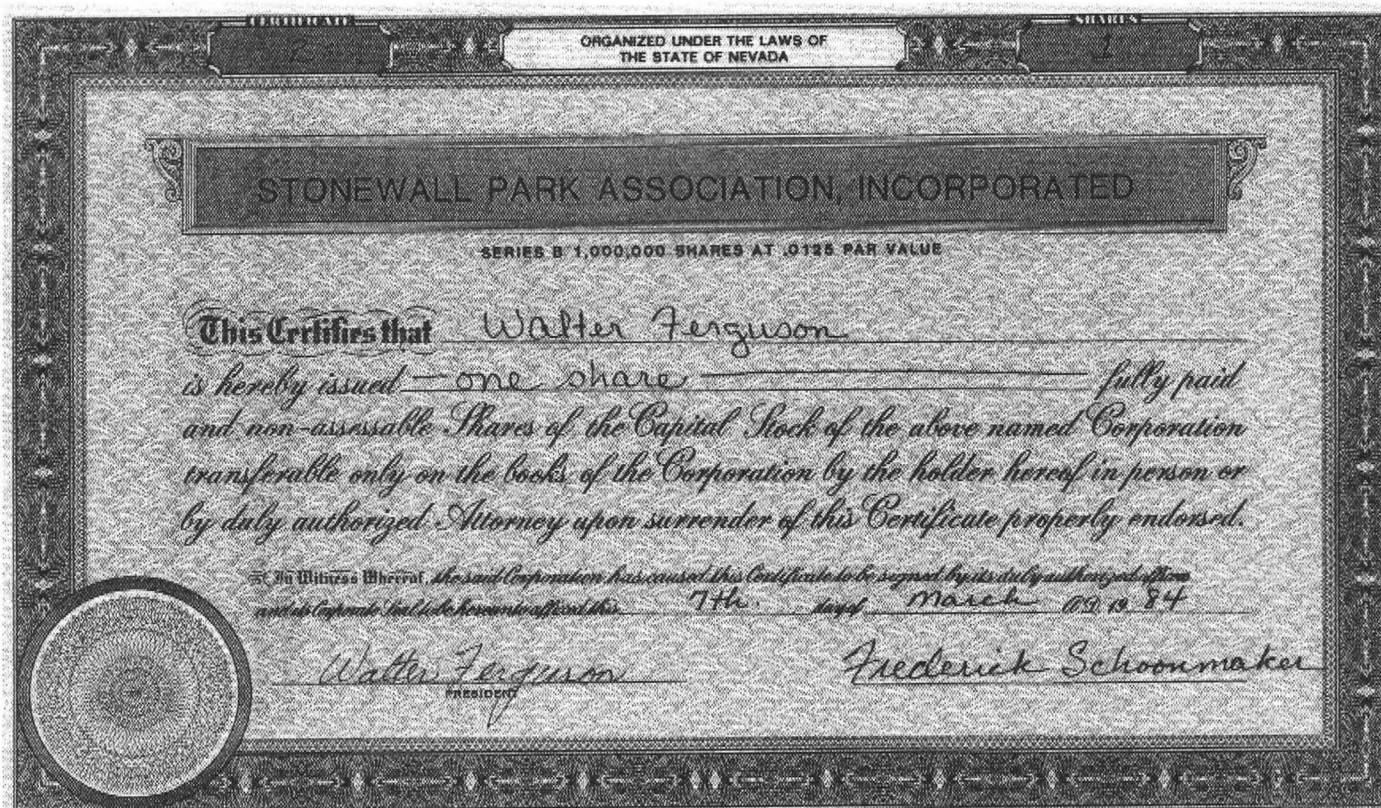
One of those Fred first approached for money to fund Stonewall Park was the retired librarian Roy Baker, who not only became a financial backer, but remained a close friend. "They asked me if I could donate \$15,000," Baker said. "I don't know where they got the idea that I had that kind of money because I don't talk about it to people. I did give them several thousand dollars [because] I thought [Stonewall Park] was a wonderful idea. At the time, I thought it would work."

Exactly what Stonewall Park ought to be was settled during long conversations between Schoonmaker and Tucker. Understanding that Stonewall Park as Fred imagined it was impractical because it had no economic foundation, Tucker suggested establishing the community as a residential resort project to provide both a tax base and jobs. "Fred and I finally reached an agreement," Tucker said. "I would help him build his project if he would give me exclusive rights to the project's casinos. My plan was to sell or license to an existing gambling establishment who would build the facilities." Tucker had considered taking rights to establish a brothel since prostitution was legal in most of Nevada's rural counties without discrimination by sex—in fact, same-sex prostitution "was already happening at the Mustang Ranch just east of Reno." The spectre of AIDS, however, made the possibility of brothels at Stonewall Park a long shot, so Tucker settled for casinos.<sup>18</sup>

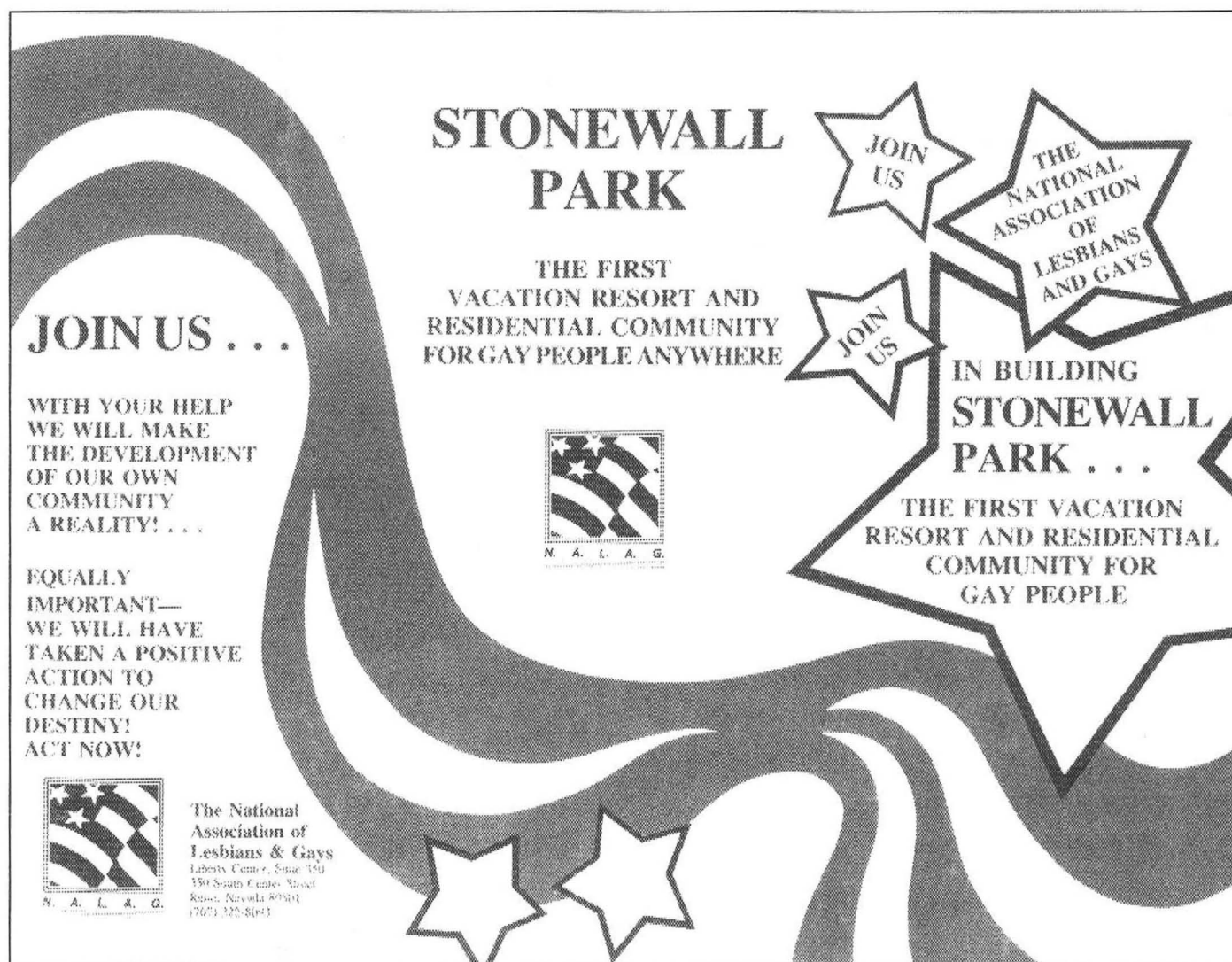
Schoonmaker made three attempts to establish Stonewall Park in Nevada—first on 116 acres of sage scrub in Silver Springs, Nevada, 30 miles west of Fallon in Lyon County; then in the ghost town of Rhyolite, 120 miles north of Las Vegas in Nye County; and, finally, at the foot of Thunder Mountain in Pershing County near Imlay and Mill City. Each attempt would end in disappointment. Some of the blame lay with Schoonmaker, some with the intolerance he encountered.

#### SILVER SPRINGS

In the fall of 1983, Schoonmaker and Sumpter filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission to establish a publicly traded corporation for Stonewall Park. The SEC, however, required that an investment banker underwrite Stonewall's stock offering. "Imagine a Wall Street firm in 1984 underwriting a dream in the desert for a gay community," Tucker said, "without a single professional or experienced person involved except for Rod, and not one cent of capital."<sup>19</sup> Instead of a public corporation, Schoonmaker incorporated Stonewall Park Association, Inc. (SPA) as a private corporation with thirteen directors—himself and Alfred; their friend Walter Ferguson, a San Francisco real estate agent; Sumpter, Tucker, and Caldwell; and a number of friends, co-workers, and business acquaintances from California and Reno. Schoonmaker also established the National Association of Lesbians and Gays (NALAG No. 1) as a sole proprietorship to serve as the fund-raising and publicity agent for SPA. In



Stonewall Park Association, Inc. stock certificate, 1984. (Special Collections Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas)



Stonewall Park brochure, c. 1986. (Special Collections Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas)

August 1985, Schoonmaker changed the name of his magazine from *Gay Life* to *Stonewall Voice* to reflect its new role as the "Official Publication of the National Association of Lesbians and Gays"; this was also the last issue published.<sup>20</sup>

In an April 1985 editorial in *Gay Life*, Schoonmaker outlined his vision for Stonewall Park, while at the same time appealing to the sense of siege and persecution gay people felt. He wrote: "The community will provide residential consideration to Lesbian and Gay persons who may from time to time need the community's protection and aid. . . . It will be a community where the Lesbian woman and Gay male can exercise control over their own lives economically and physically." Still angry over the failure of his and Alfred's business venture in San Francisco, Fred added, "Isn't it about time for Gays and Lesbians to have a community of our own? Not simply an area inhabited by us and indirectly controlled by straight landlords?"<sup>21</sup>

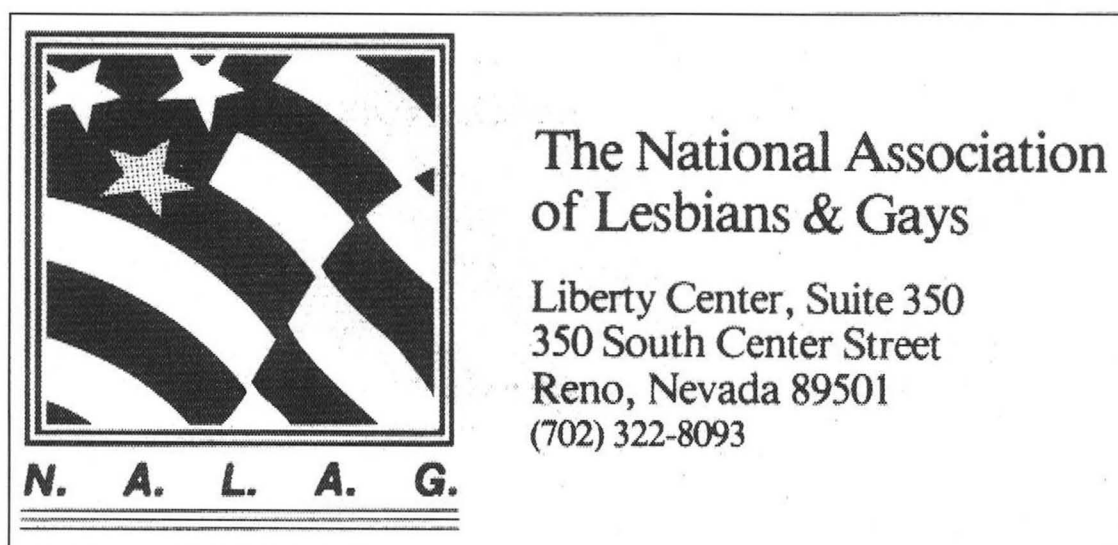
For all his anger toward straight people, it was a straight couple, Robert and Margaret Askew (also spelled Ascue), with whom Fred launched the first Stonewall Park effort. The Askews were neighbors of Fred and Alfred's at the Riverfront Condominiums on Idlewild Drive in Reno.<sup>22</sup> The Askews purportedly ran Venture Marketing Services, through which they intended to publish a series of local tourist guides.<sup>23</sup> According to Tucker, Bob Askew worked a deal with Schoonmaker to market NALAG No. 1 in return for payment later from funds raised by marketing the organization. Fred's apparent intent in establishing SPA and NALAG No. 1 as private sole proprietorships was to protect and control his project. Askew, however, felt he needed to "correct" the structure of each to provide both corporate independence and the funding necessary to make Stonewall Park happen. Fred agreed reluctantly, and early in 1986, dissolved SPA and NALAG No. 1 and replaced them, respectively, with the private, for-profit Stonewall Park Resorts, Inc. (SPR), and a newly incorporated, non-profit National Association of Lesbians and Gays No. 2 (hereafter referred to as NALAG) with a board of trustees.<sup>24</sup>

The group kicked off its campaign with an initial mailing of 19,500 brochures that spoke of Stonewall Park "The First Vacation Resort and Residential Community for Gay People Anywhere. Join Us. . . . With Your Help We Will Make the Development of Our Own Community a Reality!" Solicitation letters quoted responses "from all over the United States and Canada," noted "positive national press coverage," and offered a variety of membership plans. Schoonmaker and Dallas touted the area's proximity to the "great entertainment and nightlife of Reno and Lake Tahoe" and the "500-room hotel . . . shopping area, restaurants and recreational facilities." But they also warned, "We have to keep the location quiet . . . for even our very secret visits have caused an economic stir resulting in pre-development speculation." Fred wrote enthusiastic press releases and fund-raising appeals that reflected his emotional investment in the project: "*STONEWALL is telling the world we exist!*" he wrote. "That we have feelings! That there are over 24 million of us that want to live without harassment! That we deserve equality! STONEWALL PARK is our *living symbol* to the world that we will no longer live in fear!"<sup>25</sup>

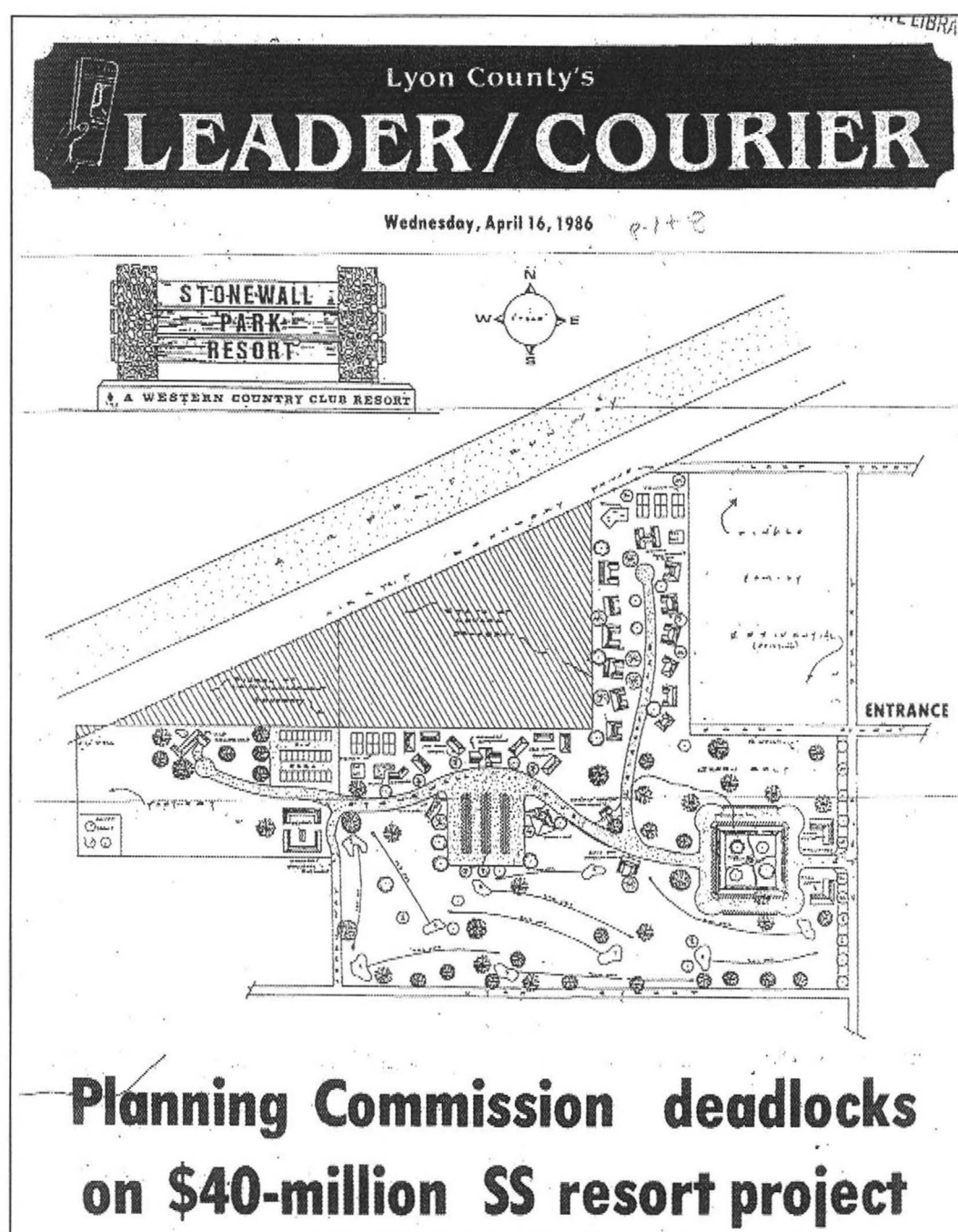
Word spread quickly through Washoe County and beyond about the proposed gay resort. Responding from the anti-gay Pro-Family Christian Coalition in Reno, Janine Hansen said, "I can't believe that under these circumstances with regard to AIDS that someone is trying to bring this into our community. . . . I'm not just concerned about AIDS, but bringing the homosexual 'death style' to Reno would be a blight on our community."<sup>26</sup> Letters from some of those who received the mailings saw it differently. Christopher McCrary of Columbia, Missouri, wrote that he and his partner were eager "to become members of the planned residential community, for my lover and I . . . have witnessed bigotry, hatred, fear, and prejudice at its worst."<sup>27</sup>

Fred and Askew announced their intent to build Stonewall Park on 116 acres in Silver Springs, near Fallon. The retired builder James Powell owned the land and agreed in March 1986 to sell it to SPR for \$440,800. Powell applied to the Lyon County Planning Commission to change the zoning of his land and amend the Silver Springs Master Plan to accommodate the resort. Unlike the promotional brochures SPR had sent out, however, nowhere in the zoning application with all its attached information about SPR does the word *gay* appear; in fact, Stonewall's target clientele is described only as the "21 million singles market."<sup>28</sup>

When the Lyon County Planning Commission met to consider Stonewall Park's application on April 8, 1986, one of the seven commissioners was absent, so only six heard Powell and Askew's presentation. Testimony lasted an hour and a half, and of the nineteen Silver Springs residents who spoke about the Stonewall Park project, ten favored it for the money and employment Powell and Askew claimed it would bring to that depressed community. Askew presented an unverified petition with the names of four hundred Silver Springs residents who favored Stonewall Park. But Kathy Morser, a resident who opposed the project, said, "I am morally opposed to my community being turned into a resort catering to the 21 million singles market. I want to be a resident of a small, quiet, rural, clean, healthy community." Morser presented a petition with names of people *against* Stonewall Park. In a surprise announcement, one of the commissioners, Nancy Dallas, said she might have a conflict of interest in the matter because she found her sister-in-law's name among the corporate officers of SPR—Pamela Dallas. That did nothing to stop her from voting against the project, however. The vote was 3-3, which Lyon County's district attorney, William Rogers, said precluded Stonewall Park from filing an appeal with the Lyon County Board of Commissioners. Though remarks at the planning-commission hearing concerned only issues of overcrowding, zoning, and Stonewall's economic impact, residents and officials of Silver Springs knew that Stonewall had been intended as a gay resort. Morser later admitted that residents opposed the new resort because Askew and Powell had been involved with SPR and NALAG, and Silver Springs feared "how [gay people] would take over the area. . . . We're frustrated with all the federal laws on homosexuals. They have all these rights and we don't have any."<sup>29</sup>



National Association of Lesbians and Gays (NALAG) logo, 1986. (*Special Collections Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas*)



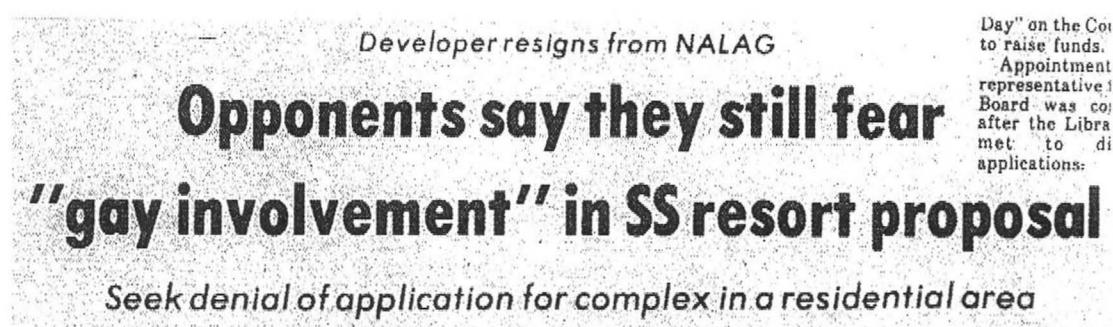
Stonewall Park Silver Springs, 1986. *Fernley Leader/Courier*, April 16, 1986, 1, 8. (*Special Collections Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas*)

Robert Askew later claimed that he and his wife had decided Silver Springs would never approve a gay resort because “the straight community is never going to mix with the gay community,” and “research and surveys proved the general resentment against ‘gays’ . . . would prevent a successful, profitable operation.” He also claimed that Schoonmaker and Pamela Dallas had approved of Askew and Powell’s “straightening out” of the project before the planning-commission hearing. Dallas, however, said she had *not* been aware of Askew’s changes in the plan nor had she donated \$18,000 toward construction of a straight resort. Dallas promptly resigned from the Stonewall board of directors because “the recent turn of events . . . makes continuation of resort development infeasible.”<sup>30</sup>

Powell and Askew claimed in subsequent newspaper interviews that they did not receive a fair hearing from the planning commission because “untrue rumors” were circulating around Silver Springs that Stonewall would be a gay resort.<sup>31</sup> That Askew would say this—plenty of information proved that Stonewall was intended to be gay, including the canceled check from NALAG used to pay SPR’s incorporation fees and the 19,500 brochures Askew mailed—is astonishing. He went on denying that the resort would be gay through statements of fact handed out at a special town meeting at the Red Coach Inn and Casino in Silver Springs, as well as by issuing a public notice that Venture Marketing Services had severed all ties with SPR and NALAG and had, with property owner James Powell, founded a new corporation called the Silver Springs Country Club and Resort to build a scaled-down, “completely family-oriented” [straight] version of the resort that promised to bring “new jobs . . . new industry . . . state and national recognition . . . millions in tourism dollars [and] increased property values.”<sup>32</sup>

To emphasize their break, the Askews filed a million-dollar lawsuit against SPR and NALAG and Schoonmaker himself for breach of contract with intent to defraud and demanding payment of service fees they claimed to have been promised, repayment of personal expenses they’d incurred for SPR, as well as damages. The Askews also sought a restraining order to keep Schoonmaker from making “false, slanderous, and vile gay comments” about Robert Askew. Askew claimed that once he realized he was not going to be paid for his work as promised in an oral agreement made with Schoonmaker, he saw that “the Defendants were using myself and my wife in a fraudulent scheme [and that] since we are not gay we were . . . being used as a cover to make a better impression upon the general public.” Finally, Askew complained, when he and his wife agreed to sign as officers and directors for NALAG, “even though [we] are not gay or lesbian [we] were immediately subjected to humiliation by [our] friends and business associates.”<sup>33</sup> Despite Askew’s insistence that his new resort was heterosexual, his proposal was rejected, as was his subsequent appeal to Lyon County’s commissioners—whereupon Askew threatened to sue *them*.<sup>34</sup>

Schoonmaker’s fury over Askew’s accusations and betrayal was intense. He and Alfred had conceived Stonewall Park as a refuge for gay people. Not only had its gay identity been erased, he believed, but straight people had hijacked



*Fernley Leader/Courier, May 7, 1986, 1. (Special Collections Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas)*



*Las Vegas Review-Journal, 10.9.86, 1B. (Special Collections Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas)*

the concept itself. From Fred's perspective, a "greedy, straight landlord" had victimized him once again. He "fired" the Askews and on May 27, 1986, countersued them for more than \$30 million, claiming, among other grounds, they had stolen his resort idea and other intellectual property. Suggesting fraud on their part, Fred supplied documents that revealed that Venture Marketing Services, Inc. was not incorporated until May 1, 1986—one day before the Askews sued him—and had never published the tourist guides as Bob Askew claimed. In addition, Fred discovered that the Askews had a long history of forming companies—twenty-four of them at the time of the lawsuit, in both California and Nevada—and declaring bankruptcy under several different versions of Bob Askew's name. The Askews had been involved in at least six bankruptcy filings and several civil suits, often involving the very kind of "oral agreement" Bob Askew claimed he had with Schoonmaker—more than thirty actions between 1979 and 1986, including one involving more than five hundred creditors, and another in which he was charged with a felony. Further, Schoonmaker accused the Askews of misappropriating Stonewall funds.<sup>35</sup>

Reinforcing Schoonmaker's sense of persecution, the United States Supreme Court handed down its infamous *Bowers v. Hardwick* decision on June 30, 1986

that claimed states had the right, according to the United States Constitution and traditional religious law, to regulate or outlaw same-sex behavior—a ruling subsequently overturned in 2003 in *Lawrence v. Texas*. Fred set up a Stonewall Park defense fund for his suit against Askew, and sent out solicitation letters referring to the Bowers ruling, which, he wrote, transformed his personal lawsuit and the Stonewall Park project into political statements.<sup>36</sup>

As much of a crusader for the gay community as Fred considered himself through his Stonewall Park project, and as righteous as he believed he was in his lawsuit against the Askews, in truth the Silver Springs version of Stonewall Park was far more ephemeral than its publicity made out. NALAG No. 1, for instance, had been a sole proprietorship under Schoonmaker's control, and money donated to NALAG for Stonewall Park often wound up supporting the Lavender Press instead. Thus, the investors who were more interested in Stonewall Park than the *Stonewall Voice* began lending money for NALAG directly to Bob Askew, who, in turn, used much of the money he collected for NALAG for his personal expenses instead, washing the checks through NALAG so that his name would not appear on them. When Fred discovered in August 1985 what was happening, he stopped publishing the magazine in order to regain control of money coming in for NALAG. Loans made to Askew after this were personal loans with notes.<sup>37</sup>

According to Ted Tucker, long before their mutual lawsuits, Schoonmaker and Askew had worked out a "secret settlement" over the NALAG funds that Askew allegedly misused. Schoonmaker's action came as a surprise to the NALAG no. 1 board when it met in late December 1985. "Fred began the first board meeting by presenting his secret settlement with Bob," Tucker said. "This settlement effectively forgave the loans made to Bob for NALAG [including] loans between people like myself and Bob. Neither Fred nor the board had authority to forgive them. In addition, Fred and Bob secretly agreed that these forgiven loans would represent partial payment for Bob's work to date. This released Bob from an earlier agreement that his payment was contingent on his marketing plan working and that he would be paid out of capital raised for NALAG from his marketing plan. Never mind that the board had never approved that, either."<sup>38</sup>

Tucker found the accounting impossible to unravel. He could get no list of NALAG No. 1 loans or donors from Askew, while Schoonmaker knew who donated but not how much. Tucker also discovered that the NALAG No. 1 checking account was in Fred's name, not the corporation's. "Donations solicited in the name of a tax-exempt corporation were technically going into Fred's pocket," Tucker said. "We would *all* look like a bunch of con artists." In addition, Tucker recalled, Schoonmaker and the board believed that Askew was actually assembling business and marketing plans. But when Askew showed up at a NALAG No. 1 board meeting with his *ideas* for plans—most of them from Schoonmaker or Tucker—"His con job was fully revealed to everyone. Bob had done no real

work." Tucker lost confidence in Fred. "Fred was desperate to get his project going," Tucker said, "and would not disassociate himself from Bob."<sup>39</sup>

Another irony is that the effort centered on Silver Springs was meant only to raise money and not to result in actual development. Askew "wanted something concrete to market and this site was selected and used for that purpose alone," Tucker remembered. "Fred gave it to Bob as the best of what he had on [his] list of possible sites. Fred always hoped to find something more suitable and simply switch sites later on, after the money came in. No real work was done to actually buy or develop Silver Springs." Yet when Fred and the Askews parted ways and Bob Askew tried to start the Silver Springs resort project anew without gay involvement, Fred accused him of stealing the idea.

"My dream ended when I resigned," Tucker said. "Most of the remaining lenders and trustees backed away from Fred and Bob. Within a month Fred was pretty much alone and forced to choose among his project, Bob, or something else. His continuing with Bob would kill the project. Fred's reputation was seriously damaged. When [Fred sued Askew] I realized the ice cream shop story was repeating itself and his project would never get going again."

On August 11, 1986, as Askew's and Schoonmaker's lawsuits moved through the courts, Lyon County authorities arrested Bob Askew on a felony charge of stock fraud for selling a bond for the Silver Springs Resort and Country Club when the corporation had not been authorized to sell bonds. Lyon County District Attorney William Rogers said Askew's background "paints a picture of a person who, by design, goes out and creates multiple corporations, lives off the proceeds of others, and then goes bankrupt. It's his livelihood. He has no other sources of income." On September 30, 1986, Schoonmaker won a default judgment in his case against the Askews, although that judgment was set aside on October 7, 1986, and the suit went on. Pamela Dallas sued the Askews and won, but was never able to recover her money. On September 28, 1987, a Lyon County jury found Askew not guilty of stock fraud.<sup>40</sup>

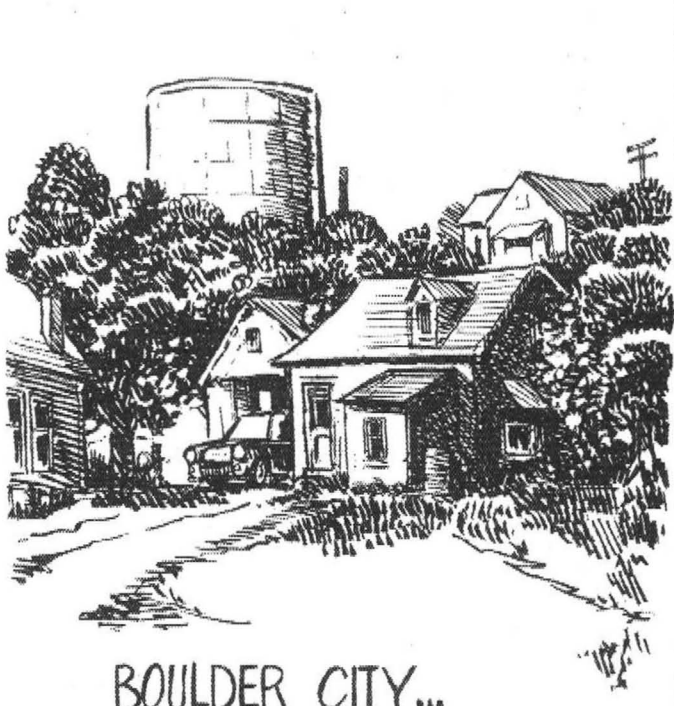
#### RHYOLITE

Rather than give up after his Silver Springs failure, Schoonmaker pressed on. After *Bowers v. Hardwick*, Stonewall Park, in Fred's mind, had become a life-or-death crusade not only for Nevada's gay community, but for the national gay community. Fred expected his gay brothers and sisters not only to support his effort, but follow him to its completion. Searching for another site, Fred and Alfred found Rhyolite, the famous ghost town near Beatty in Nye County. The media circus that followed their interest made the project international news.<sup>41</sup>

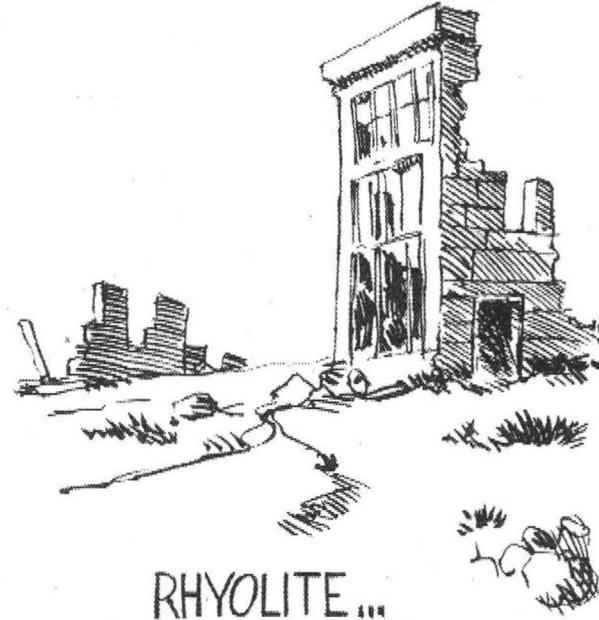
Rob Schlegel, editor of the *Bohemian Bugle* (later renamed the *Las Vegas Bugle*), broke the story. Schoonmaker had come down to Las Vegas to talk with Schlegel about Stonewall Park, a project with which Schlegel was unimpressed for

## A GUIDE TO NEVADA'S UNIQUE SMALL TOWNS:

Jim Day  
LAS VEGAS  
REVIEW-JOURNAL



BOULDER CITY...  
A BEDROOM COMMUNITY



RHYOLITE...  
A CLOSET COMMUNITY

JIM DAY/Review-Journal

Boulder City/Rhyolite editorial cartoon by Jim Day. *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 10.19.86, 10B.  
(Special Collections Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas)

the same reasons that had troubled Rodney Sumpter. "It was a novel idea," Schlegel said. "Not one that I supported totally because I'm not one for living apart. I'm more in favor of integration and tolerance. But [Schoonmaker] wanted to have this thing separate and I figured if some people want to be separate that's OK."

Schlegel had listed the old Stonewall Park Association in his magazine's community directory section when he became publisher in 1985, and took over the subscription list after the *Stonewall Voice* folded. When Schoonmaker and Parkinson brought their Stonewall Park project into Nye County, Schlegel was also working for Robert Lowes, editor of the *Death Valley Gateway Gazette*, which put Schlegel in the unique position of covering the story for both the straight and gay press. Schlegel recalled that Lowes had a "quirky sense of humor and we always tried to make the headlines crazy or flamboyant." These amusing headlines from the *Gateway Gazette* included "Happy Gays Are Here Again," "Gays, Ghosts and Goblins Gather" (on Halloween), and "Rhyolite's

Bygone Gays." "When that story hit it was immediately picked up by the [*Las Vegas*] *Review-Journal*, *Las Vegas Sun*, all the local television stations," Schlegel said. "It went on the Associated Press wire and overnight the thing attracted international attention. We had television stations flying in from Europe [and] all over the country. This was a *big* story!"<sup>42</sup>

The City of Rhyolite, Inc. was owned in part by Jim Spencer, who lived in the Rhyolite train depot with his lover and ran the bar. A former editor of *Arizona's Tombstone Epitaph*, Spencer acted as custodian of the property and resident administrator of the owning trust. He had been trying since 1983 to restore Rhyolite to its former glory. Rhyolite was the site of the annual Bullfrog Endurance and Fun Run event, named for the famed Bullfrog Mining District. In 1984, the renowned Belgian sculptor Albert Szukalski lived in Rhyolite and produced a ghostly set of fiberglass figures representing the Last Supper, which overlooked the rotting buildings and blowing sand.

Spencer's failure to attract enough investors into his restoration scheme moved him to sell Rhyolite to Schoonmaker when Schlegel brought them together. As an incorporated city, Rhyolite could be operated autonomously of state or county law and, theoretically, could decriminalize homosexuality within its borders.<sup>43</sup> In September 1986, Schoonmaker and Spencer discussed terms of a \$2.25 million purchase and Spencer provided a detailed inventory of what Schoonmaker would be acquiring in addition to the 760 acres of desert that was the Rhyolite townsite. Fred set up a new company for the deal, FESCO, Inc.—Fred E. Schoonmaker, Inc.—and he and Alfred moved into an abandoned caboose next to the Rhyolite train depot.<sup>44</sup>

While Schlegel and others in the gay community appreciated the idea of Stonewall Park and the drive with which Schoonmaker pursued it, it was impossible not to see how impractical it was—and yet to marvel at how Fred was able to get people involved. Schoonmaker "didn't have any money," Schlegel said. "If you really knew what was going on there was almost nothing to it. Fred's idea of raising the money was to put canisters in all the bars around the country where people could drop their spare change to finance this operation. He thought people would want to retire there, and lease property and it would start out almost as a commune while they built houses to live in. It was a hard project to start and couple that with the fact they had no money, no financial background, no know-how to raise the money but just a few friends that liked the idea and were going to buy into it at some point."<sup>45</sup>

In a long interview in the *Bohemian Bugle* Fred outlined his progressive plan for Stonewall Park. All the land in the city would be under direct control of a five-member Rhyolite city council, which would lease lots to those wishing to live there. Further, he said, "Stonewall Park will give those who wish to live a completely open and self-expressive lifestyle the environment to do so without complications. The project will provide an environment for the development of a rooted community, controlled culture, with positive-oriented institutions."<sup>46</sup>

Schoonmaker still had his old Stonewall Park Resort mailing list and hoped to persuade enough "pioneer" residents to move to Rhyolite by the end of 1986 to begin building. The solicitation letter Fred sent expressed a degree of hope for support that was remarkable in its naïve assumption gay people across the nation would respond:

In order to start construction, we need not only a donation from you, but from your friends, family and associates. . . . Please consider forming a "Friends of Rhyolite" support group in your area to help support and encourage this project. We've . . . enclosed "canister" labels to help with our grass roots fund raising efforts. Please consider taking a few moments each week collecting funds for construction and land costs. We ask that you only place a "canister" in a location where you are known and where you are active in the gay and lesbian community.<sup>47</sup>

Back in Reno, Fred's supporters had mixed feelings about the Rhyolite venture. "My biggest concern [was] that this place is a ghost town and a million miles from anywhere and who's going to go there?" Sumpter said. "[Fred and Alfred] actually *moved* down there, lock, stock, and barrel. The living conditions in Rhyolite took its toll on both of them." Roy Baker had driven through Rhyolite many times on his way from Reno to Death Valley. "I thought [establishing Stonewall Park there] was kind of a far-fetched idea," Baker said, "but at the same time, I thought it would be a drawing card. I think I was more in favor of [Rhyolite] than I was of [Silver Springs]."<sup>48</sup>

Fred and Alfred planned Stonewall Park's first town meeting, election, and dedication for 9 A.M. on Sunday, November 2, 1986, when a "caravan of homosexuals" was to drive up from Las Vegas to meet another caravan that would arrive from Reno. Schlegel organized the Las Vegas caravan. He went around the bars the Saturday night before trying to scrounge up as many people as he could for the next day's meeting, and early Sunday morning "15 or 20" cars started up Interstate 95. The flier Schlegel produced for the trip to Rhyolite provided detailed instructions and comments:

Please stay with the caravan . . . it'll make a better impact on the news media when we arrive together. Drive with headlights on. . . . We will drive the hated 55—we can't afford trouble. . . . If you need gas, use the Little General Store in Beatty. . . . Do not patronize the Shell Mini-Mart in Beatty—the owner is [Nye] County Commissioner Bob Revert and your business is not welcome.<sup>49</sup>

"We didn't know what our reception was going to be when we got to the county line," Schlegel recalled, "[because] we weren't wanted there. That was very clear from a lot of the town people and the [county] commissioners. We

were *petrified* because there was a white car pulled sideways on the side of the road and all we could see was somebody leaning across the hood of the car and holding what appeared to be a gun." The gunman turned out not to be "an angry [Nye County] commissioner or some idiot homophobe," but the wife of the *Death Valley Gateway Gazette* publisher Robert Lowes. She was leaning across the hood of her car with a zoom lens on her camera. "We weren't shot at like we were afraid of," Schlegel said, "and we proceeded on to Rhyolite."

The Las Vegas caravan showed up after 10 A.M. About thirty people attended the meeting, including the Reverend Rusty Carlson of the Metropolitan Community Church in Las Vegas, who led a communion service with saltines and grape juice, which is all the Rhyolite bar had on hand. Town board members were elected; they included Schoonmaker; Parkinson; Dallas; the lovers Stormy Caldwell and Terry Scott, who hoped to build a small grocery store and gas station; Chuck Melfi, who owned the Gipsy nightclub in Las Vegas; Will Collins, founder of the Gay Academic Union at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and co-founder of the Las Vegas Gay Pride celebrations; Renee Lynch; and David West. "It was an interesting day [and] we all enjoyed ourselves," Schlegel said. "We hiked around and looked at the place. Nobody got really excited because frankly, most of us didn't see ourselves living there."<sup>50</sup>

Others voiced different concerns. Roy Baker drove down with Pamela Dallas and was appalled to see how Fred and Alfred were living. "They were practically starving," he said. "They heated that boxcar with some kind of a stove." Knowing there would be photographs taken of the meeting, Baker chose not to stay, but instead wandered around the town site. "Seeing the small attendance that came to that meeting after being told that all these cars were going to be coming up [from Las Vegas] bumper-to-bumper," Baker said, "I felt that this was another failing project. Then I was concerned what was going to happen because Fred had signed papers to buy [Rhyolite]." Dallas's thought was similar: "I walked around Rhyolite a bit [and it] didn't seem particularly promising to me. I'd become disillusioned with the project [and] pretty much given up on it. I just didn't think it would go anywhere."<sup>51</sup>

Another who came to Rhyolite that day, twenty-four-year-old Tony Pflaum, had been living in Chicago after his family in California threw him out when they discovered he was gay. When he heard about Stonewall Park, he took a bus from Chicago and arrived in Beatty, then walked five miles out to Rhyolite with all of his luggage. The story he told the *Washington Post* perfectly illustrated what Fred and Alfred were trying to provide. "When I was younger, I was beaten up several times," Pflaum said. "I had straight A's, no police record—I'm a really nice kid. I just want to be able to walk down the street without having a brick hit me upside the head. When I heard about Rhyolite [I came here] not to be promiscuous. But to be free, to be comfortable. With people who are just like me. It's a dream to me."<sup>52</sup>

Aside from the gay people who came to Rhyolite for the first town meeting, eight media representatives showed up, including Major Garrett, covering the

Rhyolite story for the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. His description of Stonewall Park's first town meeting, while accurate in describing the disappointing turnout, was more than faintly mocking. Garrett also wrote that Stonewall Park's restrictive development policies were likely to discourage investment.<sup>53</sup>

Stonewall Park Rhyolite faced a violent local backlash despite Schoonmaker's plea: "We are bringing in money and we are bringing people. We expect to be judged on our merits." According to Schlegel,

Beatty was a small mining town and had the small mining town mentality. The county commissioner for that area was Bob Revert. Bob Revert owned a local [Shell] gas station and he and the owners of the Exchange Club there decided that faggots weren't welcome in Beatty and tried to get the local merchants to organize and not sell food or gasoline to any of [us]. Well, the other store owners and hotel owners knew a gold mine when they saw one so they didn't go along with that. The day we had our first town meeting at Rhyolite [Beatty merchants] did a very brisk business. And, of course, we all boycotted Revert's Shell gas station and the Exchange Club—although a few of us did eat at the Exchange Club just to make our flamboyant presence known, just to irk 'em and set 'em off.<sup>54</sup>

The Nye County Commission learned of Schoonmaker's plans during their October 8 meeting in Tonopah. It was election season, and Stonewall Park gave Revert an opportunity to express his moral outrage in time to impress his constituents. Some of Revert's published comments on Stonewall Park include, "I don't think we want that kind of community in our county and I am personally very upset at the idea. This isn't San Francisco." "This is a very rural community. This is not San Francisco where it's accepted. When I was young they weren't gays, they were queers." "We're not San Francisco. A bunch of damn queers want to build a town of their own and I don't like it one bit. As long as I'm county commissioner it will never materialize. I'm very embarrassed and I'll do everything I can to prevent it." "This is redneck country. When they get to the Nye County line, they cease being gays. They turn into queers." Revert also made a vague threat against Rhyolite's owner, Jim Spencer, saying, "I don't think he can walk down this street safely." Nye County's Republican assemblywoman, Gaylyn Spriggs, was quoted as saying, "I am totally opposed to the idea and will do something to block it in the legislature if the county cannot stop it as an undesirable business," adding, "Nevada is trying to clean up its image and I wouldn't want the city of Rhyolite known as the only place in the country exclusively for gays." Schoonmaker's suggestion was that Revert and Spriggs should "go to Florida and sell orange juice with Anita Bryant."<sup>55</sup>

Others expressed similar sentiments. Robert Lowes of the *Death Valley Gateway Gazette* reported comments he claimed to have heard around Beatty, although they sounded apocryphal. "We'll have to put up new cattle guards around town

to catch their high heels." "We've already got three drag strips in the county and we don't need any more." "I ain't got nothing against gays myself, but I'm not sure I'm ready for my son to marry one." Beatty school children were overheard referring to Rhyolite first as "Gayolite," then as "Fagolite." The school's principal announced that "Rhyolite will become a breeding ground for AIDS," while the local motel owner Bill Huffine said, "It ain't like it was 20 years ago when they didn't have AIDS. You can't move in 1,000 to 1,500 people with that type of lifestyle and not have the deadly disease. . . . This is a *town* they want? Well, you can't start a *baby-sitting* service there, can you? You can start a *funeral* home, a *mortuary*, if you see what I mean."<sup>56</sup>

Such sentiments extended well beyond Nye County. A letter to the editor from Carol McKenzie in Las Vegas embodied the absurdity of the homophobia Stonewall Park inspired:

I'm just sorry that they couldn't accommodate more "gay" citizens (like all of them in the U. S.). Just think, they wouldn't have to support any school system, because they can't procreate and would (thank heavens) not have any children. We would no longer have to deal with the issues of gay people trying to force us to accept their lifestyle . . . and that they are just as happy as a bunch of daisies on a spring day. . . . Some of us would be relieved of the fear of them preying on young boys and influencing them in their formative years.<sup>57</sup>

*The Las Vegas Review-Journal's* columnist John Smith, who proved supportive of gay people in future controversies, joked about Stonewall Park and how ridiculous the uproar was:

There may be only 15,000 residents living in the 18,000 square miles of Nye County, but at least two public servants [Bob Revert and Gaylyn Spriggs] believe there isn't room for a gay ghost town. A nuclear waste dump, maybe. A nuclear test site, certainly. Houses of prostitution, unquestionably. But a gay ghost town? What do you think they are? Immoral?"<sup>58</sup>

Jim Day, editorial cartoonist for the *Review-Journal*, drew a two-panel titled "A Guide to Nevada's Unique Small Towns." On the left was "Boulder City . . . A Bedroom Community." On the right was "Rhyolite . . . A Closet Community." Even the supermarket tabloid *Weekly World News* published an article titled "Fairy-Tale Ending for Ghost Town," noting that Rhyolite was "about to be resettled—by a flock of flaming homosexuals," and adding that "indignant local politicians say they don't want any gay blades planting pansies in their precinct."<sup>59</sup>

The backlash against Rhyolite turned physical. A favorite pastime for Beatty youth was driving out to Rhyolite to throw rocks at Fred and Alfred's home,



Western town cartoon. *Weekly World News*, November 25, 1986. (Special Collections Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas)

**Rhyolite**  
**TOWN**  
**MEETING**  
 Learn About the World's First  
**GAY COMMUNITY**  
**Stonewall Park at Rhyolite**  
 Located 120 Miles North of Las Vegas  
**You Are Invited!**  
**SUN • Nov. 2 • 11 a.m.**  
**BRING SACK LUNCH**  
 Information • Express Your Opinion  
 Phone (702) 383-8386 or ask Operator for  
 Rhyolite Toll Station #2 for information.

Stonewall Park Rhyolite town meeting flier, November 1986. (Special Collections Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas)

calling them "faggot" and "nigger." On a sign just outside Rhyolite vandals spray-painted in red "Save Our Children from AIDS." Fred said another car ran his car off the road and that a man had visited him and Alfred twice and refused to identify himself, but claimed to be from the "powers that be" in Las Vegas. First, he offered them \$2 million to leave Nevada, then he threatened to break their limbs. Fred and Alfred acquired two dogs for protection.<sup>60</sup>

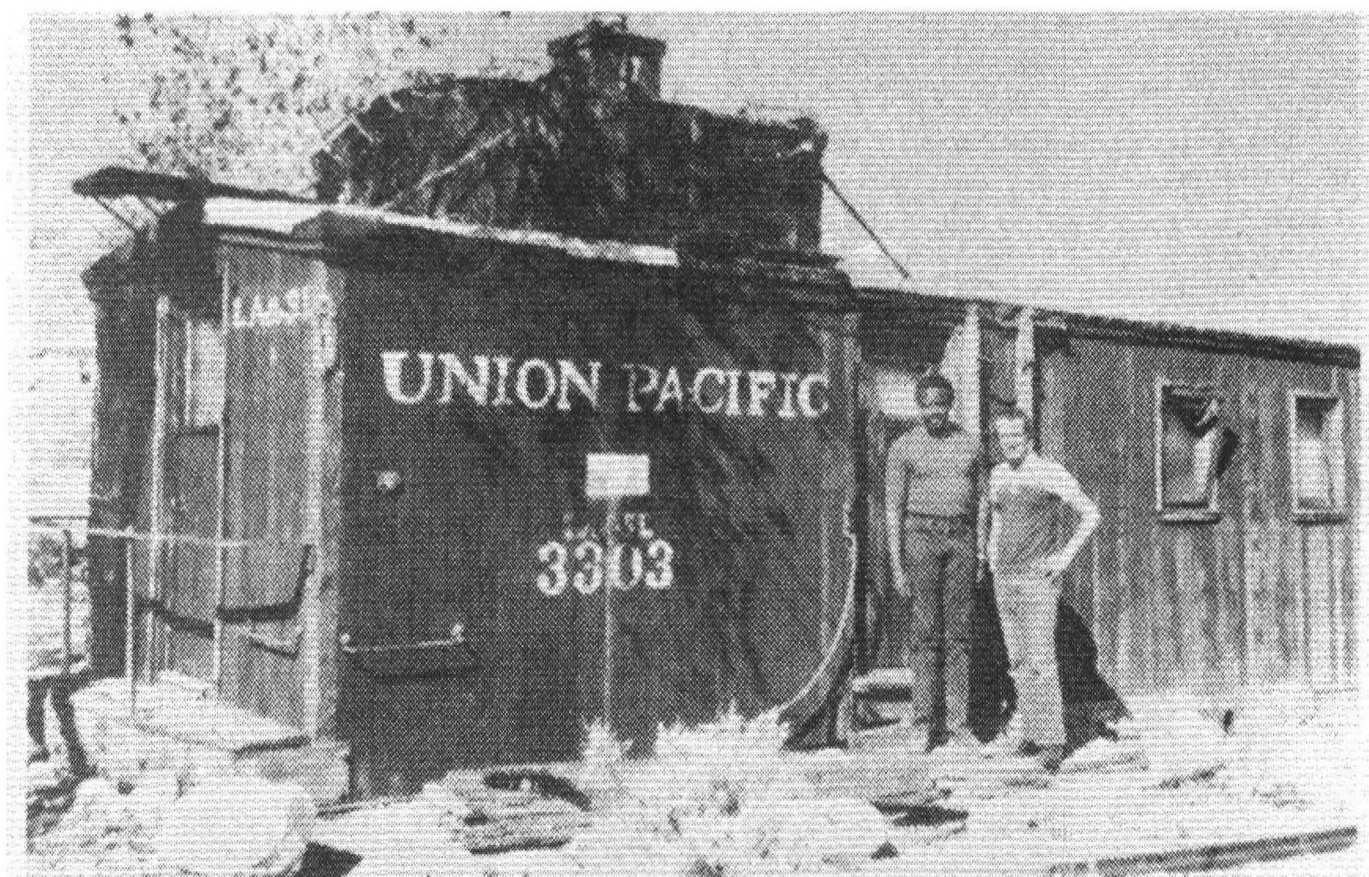
The Stonewall Park founders also were shot at. "There were always a lot of vandals that would come racing through the place screaming, 'Faggots!' and 'Get lost!' and 'Die!,'" Schlegel said. "And sometimes they would come by and shoot BB guns at the caboose where Fred and [Alfred] lived. The windows were shot out." Many recognized one repeat offender as the son of a prominent Nye County official. An ancillary issue in the brouhaha was racism since Alfred Parkinson was African-American. "The *worst* thing I think was that not only was Fred Schoonmaker gay," Schlegel said, "but his lover was *black*." Schoonmaker wrote to Governor Richard Bryan expressing his and Alfred's fear—but Bryan's answer was aloof and noncommittal.<sup>61</sup>

Just before the November 2 Rhyolite town meeting, rumors circulated through Beatty that the Ku Klux Klan planned an appearance. Even though local authorities were on alert, the Klan evidently never showed up in Rhyolite. But a number of alleged Klansmen were seen bathing at nearby Tecopa Hot Springs and were heard discussing how to "protect the world from a faggot invasion of Rhyolite."<sup>62</sup>

In the end, just as in Silver Springs, Stonewall Park Rhyolite failed. The immediate reason was lack of money. The project's first down payment of \$365,000 was due on December 15, yet by the end of November the trust fund set up for Stonewall Park Rhyolite held only \$100. Even if the money had been there, homophobia, racism, and AIDS hysteria would have killed the project.

When the tornado of hatred touched him, Spencer canceled Stonewall's lease and backed away from the project. He told the *Sacramento Bee* that he was "just as surprised, but not as disturbed, as many Beatty residents to learn of the new owners' intentions." Spencer also told an Associated Press reporter that "they couldn't pull it together. We haven't heard a word from them in more than 2-1/2 weeks. We assume it is a dead issue." The *Review-Journal's* Major Garrett claimed that, privately, Spencer said he had "no idea what Schoonmaker intended to do with Rhyolite and was uneasy about the idea of it becoming Nevada's first homosexual resort." When the Stonewall Park deal fell through, Spencer listed the town with a Las Vegas real estate firm, claiming to have received several inquiries spawned by the international publicity. "Apparently there are some people in the world who don't know where Nevada is," Spencer said, "but they sure know about Rhyolite."<sup>63</sup>

Once again, Schoonmaker felt betrayed not only by hateful straights, but now by Spencer himself, whom Fred saw as the "greedy gay friend" in a reprise of his and Alfred's loss of their San Francisco ice cream parlors years before.



Stonewall Park Rhyolite. "Alfred Parkinson and Fred Schoonmaker stand outside an old Union Pacific Railroad caboose, which they are temporarily using as their home." Photograph by Rob Schlegel. *Bohemian Bugle*, November 1986, p. 8. (Special Collections Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas)



Alfred Parkinson and Fred Schoonmaker at Rhyolite. Photograph by Wayne C. Kodey. *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, June 15, 1987, 1B. (Special Collections Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas)



**TOWN ADVISORY BOARD** — Rhyolite town board members include (back row, left to right): Fred Schoonmaker, Pamela Dallas, Alfred Parkinson, Terry Scott, Rob Schlegel, Willie Collins; (front row) Renee Lynch, Chuck Melfi and David West. *Bugle Photo*

Stonewall Park Rhyolite Town Advisory Board. *Bohemian Bugle*, November 1986, p. 10.  
(Special Collections Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas)

When Fred and Alfred moved back to Reno in December, Fred wrote two letters venting his anger and accusing Spencer of stringing him along on the purchase, milking Stonewall for publicity, and then canceling the deal:

It is your kind, the worst of all bigots, who keep Lesbian and Gay rights from coming into being. Those of you who only seek to use your brothers and sisters for your own gain and denying your sexuality . . . You showed no concern for your gay brothers in other parts of the country. Those who only after assurances went to great expense . . . and ended up as we without a place to live and broke. Your only thought must have been what you could get out of us (publicity). . . . Again we were betrayed. More than that through constant denials of self, Lesbians and Gays in general are again betrayed.<sup>64</sup>

The letters really were unfair because Stonewall Park in truth never had the money it needed. A few weeks after Fred and Alfred left Rhyolite, a check arrived from a young man in Virginia who had read about Stonewall Park and wanted to support it. It was the only such check Fred's fund-raising efforts for Stonewall Park Rhyolite ever received. Fred's outbursts against Spencer likely sprang from emotional exhaustion and disappointment.<sup>65</sup>

Fred and Alfred returned to Reno destitute and homeless. "When Fred came home from Rhyolite he had to [drive] through a bunch of rednecks to get out of the area," Caldwell remembers. "And he came home and he called me and asked me if I could come over and so I did. And he just fell into my arms weeping and he said, 'It's just not going to work. I was so frightened.' He said, 'I know Alfred would've not let them touch me, but I was so frightened.' That's when I really realized that, OK, this is not going to work down there. Too much is against us."<sup>66</sup>

#### To Use For Intended Resort

### Gay & Lesbian Group Attempts Purchase Of Desert Land

Considerable controversy is expected on reports of purchase of property near Mill City and Imlay "in the shadow of Thunder Mountain" by a alleged homosexual group, the Thunder Mountain Gay and Lesbian Alliance headed by Fred Schoonmaker.

Stonewall Park Thunder Mountain. *Lovelock Tribune*, December 18, 1986, 1:2-3 and 12:4. (Special Collections Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas)

#### THUNDER MOUNTAIN

Despite failing twice, Fred and Alfred kept pursuing their dream. Even before the Rhyolite venture was dead, Schoonmaker was working another deal with Caldwell, who owned a forty-acre ranch in Pershing County between Lovelock and Winnemucca. Looming over this desolate and waterless landscape was the dark peak of Thunder Mountain. Caldwell bought the ranch in 1976 and lived there for several years in a trailer, raising goats. Deteriorating health forced her back to Reno and she abandoned her ranch. Schoonmaker inherited money when his mother died and approached Caldwell about buying the Thunder Mountain property—which Caldwell advised against.<sup>67</sup> "I tried to talk him out of buying it," she said. "We all went out together with a person from the news media. [Fred] liked it. I said, 'You're out of your mind!' And he said,

'No, I've got to have it.' And I said, 'You're going to get in trouble out here. There's no way that you can do anything like that out here without somebody coming out and shooting you.'" Fred would not be dissuaded, even when Sumpter advised against it. He gave Caldwell a down payment; Sumpter did all he could to help.<sup>68</sup>

Whether Thunder Mountain was a good idea didn't matter: Caldwell gave Fred and Alfred their first opportunity to actually own land for Stonewall Park. Fred formed still another corporation for the Pershing County venture, the non-profit Thunder Mountain Gay and Lesbian Alliance (TMGLA), incorporated on December 15, 1986—the day Fred's first payment had been due on Rhyolite. Among the officers of the new corporation was Tony Pflaum, who had shown up at Rhyolite from Chicago, bags in hand.<sup>69</sup>

Fred set to work planning and publicizing Stonewall Park Thunder Mountain, as true to his vision now as he had been when he and Alfred first conceived it. Fred composed a pledge prospective residents were expected to sign:

I, [name], in order to become a resident of Stonewall Park, do hereby commit myself to support the efforts of the community of Stonewall Park and the Thunder Mountain Gay and Lesbian Alliance in all their efforts whether social or economic. I understand that the community needs to operate in a communal fashion during the early stages, and that my support of the community needs to directly measure up to the support the community affords me. I further understand that if I am considered to be lax in the performance of my responsibilities, the residents of the community (by a vote of not less than 2/3, in an open meeting) may request and require my departure. This may or may not be fully explained, and as an adult I know I should need no explanation.<sup>70</sup>

Schoonmaker expected to sell memberships—Regular (\$30), Voting (\$60), Patron (\$120), and Life (\$1,000). His solicitation letters early in 1987 implied anger with urban gay communities whose support he failed to inspire, and in the letters he almost megalomaniacally assumed a role as founder and leader of Northern Nevada's gay community. "[TMGLA's] ardent supporters see the project not only as a 'Lesbian and Gay Homeland' but a basic civil rights statement," he wrote. "Those persons looking for a party or ease of existence will not find the community to their liking. . . . We are common folk in a head-on collision with common working-class bigots. We will move to Thunder Mountain [and] there is every possibility we may not all come down from that mountain. We will stand erect and offer no bent backs upon which prejudice can ride." In addition to the resort and residential facilities intended to be part of Stonewall Park Thunder Mountain, he planned a nursing home for aging gay people and a library "named in honor of a 70-year-old retired librarian who supports Schoonmaker's dream"—Roy Baker.<sup>71</sup>

## Gay Community Seeks a Home on the Range

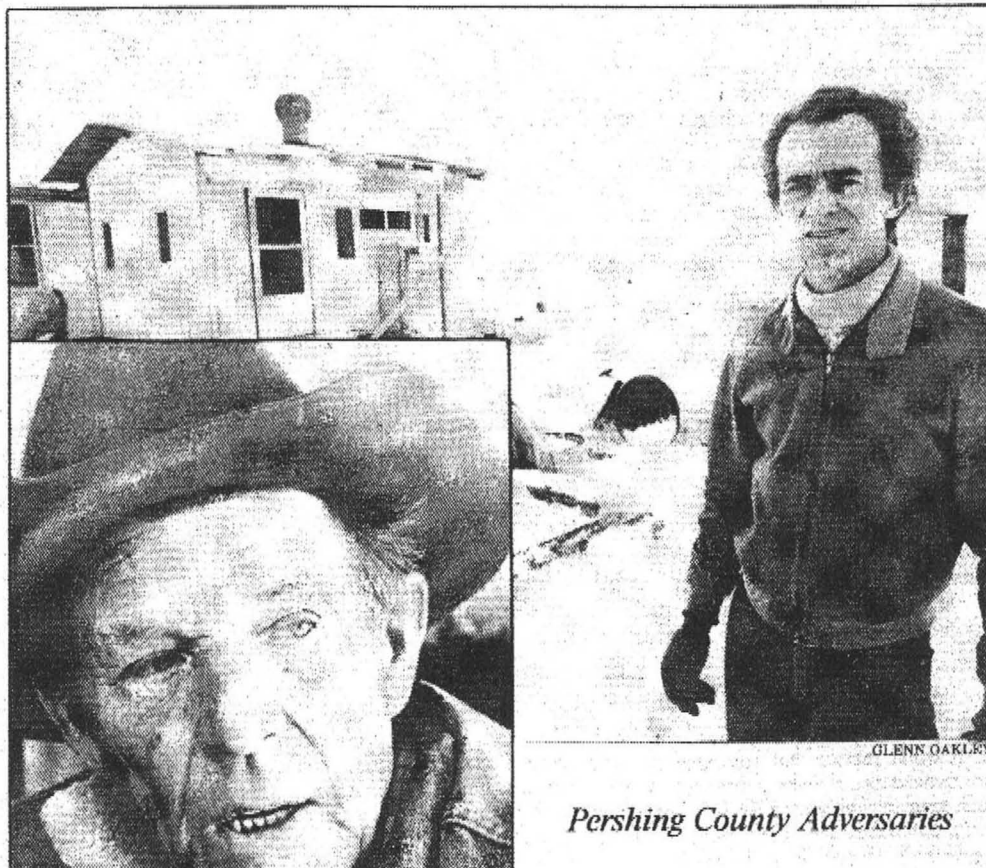
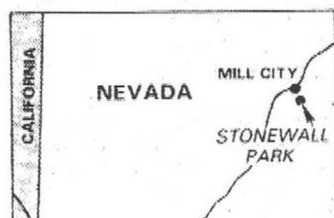
Proposed Site in  
Western Nevada  
Drawing Opposition

By ANN JAPENGA,  
Times Staff Writer

MILL CITY, Nev.—A pit bull named Spud patrols 160 acres of sagebrush and cheatgrass near this truck-stop town in western Nevada. By Spud's rules, cattle and deer have permission to pass; humans do not.

Spud's owner, rancher Bill Dale, concurs. He and his wife, Toni, tried staying in trailer parks on a recent vacation, but they abandoned the trip because Bill Dale couldn't stand being hemmed in by folks. It's clear that Spud and his owner don't like company of any sort.

Yet it looks as if they may have neighbors. A Reno man who plans to found the nation's first gay and



*Pershing County Adversaries*

Stonewall Park Thunder Mountain. *Los Angeles Times*, February 15, 1987, Part VI, 1, 8-9. (Special Collections Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas)

The media had not lost interest when Stonewall Park Rhyolite failed, and reporters followed Fred and Alfred to Thunder Mountain. Major Garrett remained mocking in his tone. In a *Las Vegas Review-Journal* article titled "Gay Group Tries to Make Nirvana Out of Nevada," Garrett wrote, "On the ideological map of Nevada, Schoonmaker's group couldn't have moved to a more conservative area. Pershing County . . . consists mostly of white miners, farmers and ranchers. Their families are large and stable. Respect for traditional values runs pretty deep here. . . . Nevertheless, Schoonmaker has faith that the purity of his motives will win over his new neighbors." With amazing prescience, Fred told Garrett, "I may be dead before it happens, but I'm going to give it a shot."<sup>72</sup>

As soon as the news broke, opposition to Stonewall Park arose, as though the presence of gay people in one of Nevada's most desolate and depressed areas would make conditions worse. More than two hundred Pershing County residents signed a petition opposing Stonewall Park and presented it in Lovelock at a January 5, 1987, county commission meeting. They claimed the gay resort would adversely affect property values and the local economy. District

Attorney Richard Wagner was discouraging in his comments about water and zoning. Governor Richard Bryan believed most Nevadans wanted to see Stonewall Park built in another state. The Republican assemblyman John Marvel from Battle Mountain likened gay people to the cattle in his stockyards: "Since I raise animals, I'm very gender-conscious. If I have a bull that doesn't know the difference between genders, he goes down the road."<sup>73</sup>

One other man particularly opposed Stonewall Park was Bill Dale, who lived in a trailer next to the Stonewall property with his wife, Toni, and a bulldog named Spud. Fred and Roy Baker met Dale during an excursion to scope the property. "[Dale] observed what was going on, but we didn't have much of a conversation with him," Baker said. "He threatened to meet us with his gun. He was not going to have any gays out there by his ranch." Dale told the *Los Angeles Times*, "I've never seen [a gay person] that I know of. I'm 67 years old and I won't put up with a bunch of bull. So I and Spud, we'll just wait and see. I don't want them on my property. I don't want nothing to do with them. The cowboys around here don't want them either, or the truckers." Fred's answer was, "Nevada [needs] a little shock treatment."<sup>74</sup>

In his last solicitation letter from Thunder Mountain, Schoonmaker announced a Gay Summer Camp to be held on the property on May 30, 1987, as a way to get interested people to work on the community—although he noted the imminent danger: "We are assured the sodomy law will be enforced," Fred warned. "You must be aware that your presence in Nevada could lead to harassment and/or arrest. This will come in legal form during the day and there is every possibility of danger at night." The May 30 summer camp never happened, however, because Fred Schoonmaker died on May 20 of an AIDS-related heart attack.<sup>75</sup>

Fred had been ill long before. In a December 15, 1985, letter to Schlegel, he wrote, "Please forgive the hand-written effort, I'm home sick as a dog with this damn flu for some three weeks now." Baker had seen Fred suffering from extreme pain in his bones and joints in 1986 when they drove back and forth to Fresno in Fred's search for information to help in his lawsuit against the Askews. Fred was diagnosed HIV-positive on March 23, 1987, and his decline from that point was rapid. He and Alfred were living in a run-down trailer on Fourth Street in Reno with three dogs when Fred was diagnosed, and because his health had grown so precarious, his doctor recommended that they find somewhere more substantial to live and get rid of the animals. They moved into a small studio apartment on Carlin Street near Pamela Dallas. The men were destitute, surviving on food stamps and Alfred's small income when he went back to work at the Eldorado Hotel. Fred had applied for Social Security disability support, but was denied because he had earned too little money to qualify; his total income during the years 1984-86, while he and Alfred pursued Stonewall, was only \$15,555.75. He appealed, and his payments were granted—on June 4, 1987, two weeks after he died.<sup>76</sup>

"Fred was angry," Ted Tucker Said. He continued:

The medical profession [in Reno] had no idea how to treat him. Someone at Washoe Medical told him they did not even want anybody with AIDS in their hospital and that he should go to San Francisco. Fred did not know what to do about this reactionary attitude from a public health official. He asked me whether he should pursue it legally, take it to the press, go to the state, mobilize the local gay community somehow, or follow the advice and go to San Francisco General.<sup>77</sup>

Despite being near death and destitute, Fred would not give up trying to create and lead a Nevada gay community. He suggested setting up a rap group for people with AIDS and wanted to go public with what he considered Nevada's unforgivable failure to deal adequately with the AIDS crisis. Tucker wrote on Fred's behalf to the San Francisco AIDS Foundation. Fred knew he had clout in the national media because of Stonewall Park and thought he could get some action for himself and other AIDS patients in Nevada by publicizing his situation. Tucker, however, advised against this. "If you publicize your situation as a means to get action," he wrote to Fred,

you will harm the Gay movement in Nevada. Recall the Beatty residents who assumed that Rhyolite would become a city of AIDS. The same thing was said in Pershing County. . . . You bring the truth [to] their assumptions by proclaiming that you, the founder of these settlements, has AIDS. They will be hot to write their legislators and the Governor I-told-you-so letters, which will bear weight because they will be true. . . . My suggestion would be to work directly with the Governor's office, presenting to him the opportunity to do something for AIDS while the legislature is in session.<sup>78</sup>

As it happened, the Nevada State Board of Health had established the Nevada Statewide AIDS Advisory Task Force on March 18, 1987, to study the epidemic in Nevada and suggest how the state should deal with it. On May 20, 1987—the day Fred Schoonmaker died—the Board of Health named the task force members, who issued their first report on September 16. He did not live to see that report or benefit from its recommendations.<sup>79</sup>

With the help of several Stonewall Park supporters, Alfred nursed his dying companion to the end. "I would go over at least once a week," Stormy Caldwell said. "I'd take the linens and wash them. I'd take [Fred's] clothing and wash it. And Alfred would make sure he ate, which most of the time didn't stay [down]." Tucker said, "Fred was out of work and they were broke from paying medical bills. The cupboards and refrigerator were bare, literally. There was nothing to drink except tap water. [There had been] an anonymous helper who fed us occasionally when we did the magazine. He and I went to the grocery store and bought enough food to restock their home."<sup>80</sup>

Schoonmaker wanted Caldwell to promise to carry on his vision for Stonewall Park, but she could not. Fred also worried about Alfred's future and feared that he might kill himself after Fred's death—Alfred had said many times he didn't want to survive Fred.<sup>81</sup> "I was at the apartment the day before Fred passed," Caldwell said. "[Fred] was just lying there in and out of a coma. I said, 'Alfred, he hasn't got much more time with us. Hold him close, because I think you're going to lose him.' And Alfred said, 'No, he can't go, he can't go.' I left. It was too hard for me to see [Fred] like that and see Alfred fall apart, too. I just couldn't do it."<sup>82</sup>

The next day Roy Baker came to the Carlin Street apartment to check on Fred and found him close to death. He called an ambulance and followed it to the hospital with Alfred. "I went in and the nurse and the doctor had seen Fred and I was standing there holding his hand and I don't think he said a word," Baker said. "He acknowledged I was there. And then all of a sudden he released his hand and threw back his head, which means that he had a heart attack. Alfred was there [but he] just walked away. [Stonewall Park] meant everything to Fred. That was his *goal*. That was his reason for living."

Fred was cremated and a few friends held a service at the Reno Metropolitan Community Church. Baker called Fred's sister, but she "wanted nothing to do with it." Alfred, who was also HIV-positive, went to pieces. "I kept telling Alfred after he got the ashes back that we should scatter them or take them and bury them or something," Caldwell said. "Alfred couldn't turn loose of them. He slept with them. When Fred was gone, Alfred didn't know what to do with himself. He went off the deep end. He was just ranting and raving. The last day of his work I understand that he went on a rampage throwing things around and screaming. They had to get security to get him out."<sup>83</sup>

Alfred returned to Oakland with Fred's ashes. Caldwell got her 40 acres back. And Fred's death was what finally brought an end to his lawsuit with Bob and Margaret Askew.

Stonewall Park died with Fred Schoonmaker, and many believed he wasted the last years of his life on an impossible pursuit. Rodney Sumpter and Stormy Caldwell, however, were not among them. "The idea of Stonewall should live on in all of us," Caldwell said.

It's just too bad that the straight community will never accept it. I don't think I frittered my time, I don't think I frittered my money. Maybe it was a lost cause, but it was a good dream." Sumpter said, "The idea about a segregated community *was* a little far-out. Fred was trying to live without being persecuted in a state where sodomy was still outlawed. Every little thing like [the Stonewall ventures] that got publicity, good or bad, let people know that gay people were there and we want to be treated [fairly and equally], and we'll go so far as to have our own [town] someplace in order to live and be the people we want to be. This was how far somebody really felt they had to go to be comfortable in that day and age. That's very insightful, I think."<sup>84</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>*Governor's Commission on Status of People, State of Nevada, 1975-77*, pp. 10-11 [author's collection]; *Vegas Gay Times* (August 1978), pp. 3-4; (26 February 1979 extra), p. 1; (May 1979), p. 1; (June 1979), pp. 1-2; (July 1979), p. 4; *Nevada State Journal* (3 May 1979), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>*Nevada v. Allan*, 2182 27A, 26149 – 26153 (1973); *Allan v. State*, 91 Nev. 650, 653 (541 P.2d 656, 658 (1975)); Parole Progress Reports, Nevada State Prison [file no.] 11569 (September 1978, August 1979), Nevada State Archives (Nevada State Prison Records); *Reno Gazette-Journal* (12 September 1985), p. 2C; (15 September 1985), p. 4C; *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (9 October 1985), pp. 1B, 3B; *Nevada Gay Times* (October 1985), pp. 1, 5, 10; *Bohemian Bugle* (January 1986), pp. 1-2; (August 1986), pp. 1, 18; First Judicial District Court of the State of Nevada, case no. 85-01462-A, John Doe et al. v. Richard Bryan, Governor of the State of Nevada (1985); Supreme Court of the State of Nevada, case no. 16978, John Doe et al. v. Richard Bryan (1986), University of Nevada, Las Vegas Lied Library, Special Collections Department [hereafter cited as UNLS], MS 2000-1 (Rodney Sumpter Collection).

<sup>3</sup>Second Judicial Court, Washoe County, Nevada, case no. 80-3430 (divorce), 82-3979 (action to terminate parental rights); Nevada Supreme Court case 102 Nev. 66 (715 P.2d 56); U. S. Supreme Court case 479 U. S. 876, L. Ed. 2d 176 (no. 86-3); Federal Court Case CV-R-84-60-BRT (13 February 1984 - 11 July 1989); Sam Z. and Talia Z. v. Hikmet and Raja J. (116 Nev. 790, 8 P.3d 126; 24 August 2000) [all, UNLS, MS 2005-7 (Daly v. Daly)].

<sup>4</sup>Nevada Gay Rodeo Association Gymkhana '94 program (18 June 1994), p. 17 [author's collection]; rental agreements between Silver State Gay Rodeo Association and Lawlor Events Center, 28 October 1987, 18 April 1988 [UNLS, MS 2005-8 (Reno Gay Rodeo, 1976-1988)] (hereafter cited as UNLS, Reno Gay Rodeo); *Bohemian Bugle* (September 1988), p. 1; (October 1988 special edition), pp. 1-2; (October 1988), pp. 1, 17, 19; *Reno Gazette-Journal* (23 October 1988), pp. 1A, 18A; *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (21 December 1988), p. 8B; *Advocate* (23 May 1989), pp. 8-10; Washoe County Second Judicial Court, case no. CV88-5141 (1988) [UNLS, Reno Gay Rodeo]; Mark Allen North to Jack Connell, 15 June 1988 [UNLS, Reno Gay Rodeo]; Richard Linio to Les Krambeal, 11 July 1988 [UNLS, Reno Gay Rodeo]; CV88-5141, Affidavit of Richard Linio [UNLS, Reno Gay Rodeo]; Linio to Krambeal, 18 August 1988 [UNLS, MS Reno Gay Rodeo]; *Reno Gazette-Journal* (3 September 1988), p. 1C; (7 September 1988), p. 1C; (16 September 1988), p. 2C; CV88-5141 (1988) [UNLS, Reno Gay Rodeo]; CV88-5151: Complaint (1 September 1988), Motion for Temporary Restraining Order (1 September 1988), Amended Complaint (1 September 1988) [UNLS, Reno Gay Rodeo]; *Reno Gazette-Journal* (7 September 1988), p. 1C; (16 September 1988), p. 2C; (17 September 1988), p. 2C; (20 September 1988), p. 1C; CV88-5141: Deposition of Mark Allen North (13 September 1988), Defendants' Points and Authorities in Opposition to Plaintiffs' Motion. (14 September 1988), Defendants' Answer to Amended Complaint (21 September 1988), Order on Motion for Preliminary Injunction (19 September 1988), Stipulation and Order. (26 April 1989) [UNLS, Reno Gay Rodeo]; *Reno Gazette-Journal* (21 September 1988), p. 1C; (22 September 1988), pp. 1C-2C; (25 September 1988), p. 2C; (17 October 1988), pp. 1C-2C; Churchill County v. David L. Lantry et al., case no. 18487, Third Judicial Court of the State of Nevada (20 October 1988) [UNLS, Reno Gay Rodeo].

<sup>5</sup>*Las Vegas Review-Journal* (12 May 1983), p. 1C; *Las Vegas Sun* (12 May 1983), p. 11; *Nevada Gay Times* (April 1983), p. 1.

<sup>6</sup>Lillian Faderman and Stuart Timmons, *Gay L.A.: A History of Sexual Outlaws, Power Politics, and Lipstick Lesbians* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 177-79; <http://www.frommers.com/destinations/sanfrancisco/0029033660.html>

<sup>7</sup>*Reno Gazette-Journal* (19 November 1984), pp. 1B, 4B.

<sup>8</sup>Theodore "Ted" Tucker, letters to the author, 7 May, 1 August 2004 [UNLS, MS 2005-6 (Stonewall Park, 1983-87)] (hereafter cited as UNLS, Stonewall Park).

<sup>9</sup>Marguerita "Stormy" Caldwell, interview by author, 26 March 2005.

<sup>10</sup>*Advocate* (14 October 1986), pp. 10-11, 20; *Los Angeles Times* (15 February 1987), 6, pp. 1, 8.

<sup>11</sup>Rodney Sumpter, interview by author, 20 January 2004.

<sup>12</sup>*Gay Life Reno* (September 1984), p. 3.

<sup>13</sup>U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Northern District of California, case no. 383-00106LK, 23 May 1983 [(San Francisco) Museum of GLBT History, MS 1990-15 (Fred Schoonmaker Papers)] (hereafter cited as GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers).

<sup>14</sup>Tucker, letter to author, 7 May 2004; Caldwell interview.

<sup>15</sup>Stonewall Park Association, Inc., prospectus [UNLS, Stonewall Park]; Roy Baker, interview by author, 8 February 2004; Pamela Dallas, interview by author, 7 February 2004; Sumpter interview; GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers; *Gay Life Reno* (September 1984); *Gay Life Nevada* (November 1984), p. 18; *Reno Gazette-Journal* (19 November 1984), pp. 1B, 4B; *Gay Life* (January 1985), pp. 9, 12; (June 1985), p. 5; (July 1985), p. 12; Fred Schoonmaker, letter to Robert "Rob" Schlegel, 15 December 1985 [UNLS, Stonewall Park]; *Washington [D.C.] Blade* (6 June 1986), p. 9; Tucker, letter to author, 7 May 2004 [UNLS, Stonewall Park].

<sup>16</sup>Tucker, letter to author, 7 May 2004; Sumpter interview.

<sup>17</sup>Dallas interview; Caldwell interview.

<sup>18</sup>Tucker, letter to author, 7 May 2004.

<sup>19</sup>Tucker, letter to author, 1 August 2004.

<sup>20</sup>Stonewall Park Association [SPA] Articles of Incorporation, 7 February 1984, SPA meeting minutes, 19 March 1984 [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers]; *Gay Life Reno* (September 1984); SPA meeting minutes, 16 February 1985, SPA List of Officers, Directors, and Agents, 28 February 1985, and Certificate of Business: Fictitious Firm Name, 21 March 1985 [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers]; *Gay Life* (April 1985), pp. 1, 8; *Stonewall Voice* (August 1985); Tucker, letter to Fred Schoonmaker, dba Lavender Press, 18 January 1986, and Tucker, letter to Schoonmaker/National Association of Lesbians and Gays [NALAG], 20 January 1986, [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers]; Tucker, letter to Su Kim Chung, 2 March 2004, and Tucker, letters to author, 7 May and 1 August 2004.

<sup>21</sup>*Gay Life* (April 1985), pp. 1, 8.

<sup>22</sup>Second Judicial Court, Washoe County, Nevada case no. 86-3810 (2 May 1986): Answer and Counterclaim (27 May 1986) [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers].

<sup>23</sup>U.S. Bankruptcy Court, case no. 85-787 [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers].

<sup>24</sup>Second Judicial Court, Washoe County, Nevada case no. 86-3810 (2 May 1986): Complaint and Affidavit of Robert Ascue [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers]; *Washington [D.C.] Blade* (6 June 1986), p. 9; Proposal by Creative Marketing for the National Association of Lesbians and Gays (15 January 1986), NALAG Certificate of Dissolution (23 January 1986), NALAG Certificate of Incorporation and Articles of Incorporation (23 January 1986), Stonewall Park Resorts [SPR] Shareholders and Directors Organizational Consent Minutes (12 March 1986), and SPR Business Summary (20 March 1986) [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers]; Tucker, letters to author, 7 May, 1 August 2004 [UNLS, Stonewall Park].

<sup>25</sup>NALAG press release (7 January 1986), Stonewall Park brochure, and NALAG solicitation letters (ca. January 1986) [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers].

<sup>26</sup>*Reno Gazette-Journal* (20 December 1985), pp. 1C, 6C.

<sup>27</sup>Christopher McCrary, letter to NALAG, 15 February 1986 [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers].

<sup>28</sup>Application for Change of Land Use submitted by James A. Powell for the Planning Commission of Lyon County, State of Nevada (20 March 1986), and Escrow Instructions (17 March 1986) [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers].

<sup>29</sup>*Mason Valley News* (11 April 1986), pp. 1, 6; (18 April 1986), pp. 1, 3; (25 April 1986), pp. 1, 8; (2 May 1986), pp. 1, 7; (9 May 1986), pp. 1, 8; (16 May 1986), sec. 1, p. 2; (23 May 1986), pp. 1, 2, 8; (30 May 1986), p. 1; (13 June 1986), pp. 1, 8; (27 June 1986), pp. 1, 8; *Fernley Leader/Courier* (16 April 1986), pp. 1, 8; (23 April 1986), pp. 1, 8; (30 April 1986), p. 1; (7 May 1986), p. 1; (14 May 1986), p. 1; (28 May 1986), pp. 1, 4; (13 June 1986), pp. 1, 3; (25 June 1986), p. 1; Robert and Margaret Askew, letter to Fred Schoonmaker, 19 April 1986 [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers]; *Reno Gazette-Journal* (25 April 1986), p. 2C; (20 May 1986), pp. 1C-2C; *Advocate* (14 October 1986), pp. 10-11, 20; Pamela Dallas, letter to the author, 11 April 2004 [UNLS Stonewall Park].

<sup>30</sup>Pamela Dallas, letter to Fred Schoonmaker, 22 April 1986 [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers]; Dallas interview.

<sup>31</sup>*Mason Valley News* (18 April 1986), pp. 1, 3; *Fernley Leader/Courier* (23 April 1986), pp. 1, 8.

<sup>32</sup>*Fernley Leader/Courier* (14 May 1986), p. 4; *Mason Valley News* (16 May 1986), sec. 2, p. 2.

<sup>33</sup>Second Judicial District Court of Washoe County case no. 86-3810: Complaint (2 May 1986), Proposal by Creative Marketing. (15 January 1986), and Pamela Dallas, letter to Robert and Margaret Askew, 23 April 1986 [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers]; *Mason Valley News* (9 May 1986), pp. 1, 8; *Fernley Leader/Courier* (14 May 1986), p. 1.

<sup>34</sup>*Reno Gazette-Journal* (20 April 1986), pp. 1C-2C; (21 May 1986), pp. 1C-2C; (30 May 1986), p. 2C; (22 June 1986), p. 6D; *Mason Valley News* (23 May 1986), pp. 1, 2, 8; (30 May 1986), p. 1; (27 June 1986), pp. 1, 7, 8; *Fernley Leader/Courier* (28 May 1986), pp. 1, 4; (13 June 1986), p. 2; (25 June 1986), p. 1.

<sup>35</sup>Fred Schoonmaker, letter to James Powell, 26 April 1986, and Second Judicial Court of Washoe County, case no. 86-3810 (2 May 1986): First Amended Answer and Counterclaim (1 July 1986) [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers]; Dallas interview.

<sup>36</sup>U.S. Bankruptcy Court, District of Northern California case no. 83-00523 (9 March 1983); U.S. Bankruptcy Court, District of Nevada, 85-1169 (13 August 1985), and Second Judicial Court of Washoe County, case no. 86-3810 (2 May 1986): Answer and Counterclaim (27 May 1986) [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers]; *Reno Gazette-Journal* (26 April 1986), p. 2C; (20 May 1986), pp. 1C-2C; (21 May 1986), pp. 1C-2C; (30 May 1986), p. 2C; (22 June 1986), p. 6D; *Mason Valley News* (2 May 1986), pp. 1, 7; (13 June 1986), pp. 1, 8; *Fernley Leader/Courier* (13 June 1986), pp. 1, 3; *Washington [D.C.] Blade* (6 June 1986), p. 9; "Public Notice to All Residents of Lyon County," unsigned but assumed to have been written by Schoonmaker (18 April 1986); James Powell, letter to Fred Schoonmaker, 21 April 1986 [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers]; *Advocate* (14 October 1986), pp. 10-11, 20; solicitation letter, 20 July 1986 [GLBT MS 1990-15 (Fred Schoonmaker Papers)].

<sup>37</sup>Theodore Tucker, letter to Robert Askew, 14 January 1986, and Theodore Tucker, letters to Fred Schoonmaker, 18, 20 January 1986 [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers]; Tucker, letter to the author, 7 May 2004 [UNLS, Stonewall Park].

<sup>38</sup>Tucker, letter to the author, 7 May 2004 [UNLS, Stonewall Park].

<sup>39</sup>Tucker, letter to Askew, 14 January 1986, and Tucker, letters to Schoonmaker, 18, 20 January 1986 [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers]; Tucker, letter to the author, 7 May 2004 [UNLS, Stonewall Park].

<sup>40</sup>*Fernley Leader/Courier* (13 August 1986), pp. 1, 8; (3 September 1986), pp. 1, 8; (10 June 1987), p. 18; (7 October 1987), pp. 1, 8; *Mason Valley News* (15 August 1986), pp. 1, 8; (29 August 1986), p. 1, and sec. 1A, p. 2; (26 September 1986), sec. 1, p. 8; (5 June 1987), sec. 3, p. 4; (17 July 1987), sec. 3, p. 4; (25 September 1987), p. 1; (2 October 1987), pp. 1, 8; *Advocate* (14 October 1986), 10-11, 20; Second Judicial Court of Washoe County, case no. 86-3810 (2 May 1986): Default judgment (30 September 1986), Order Setting Aside Default Judgment (7 October 1986), and Dallas v. Askew, Washoe County Second Judicial Court, case no. 87-3874 [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers]; Dallas interview.

<sup>41</sup>*Bohemian Bugle* (October 1986), pp. 1, 11, 14; *Death Valley Gateway Gazette* (10 October 1986), pp. 1, 3, 6; (17 October 1986), pp. 1, 18; (31 October 1986), pp. 1, 11; (7 November 1986), p. 2; (21 November 1986), p. 2; *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (3 November 1986), pp. 1A, 3A; (15 June 1987), p. 1B; Stonewall Park publicity brochure, and solicitation letters from the NALAG [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers]; *Advocate* (14 October 1986), pp. 10-11, 20.

<sup>42</sup>Robert "Rob" Schlegel, interview by Author, 9-11, 21-22 March, and 11 April 1998.

<sup>43</sup>*Reno Gazette-Journal* (5 February 1984), p. 2C; (9 July 1985), p. 2C; (10 July 1985), p. 13A; (10 October 1986), pp. 1C-2C; (1 November 1986), p. 1C; (4 November 1986), p. 1C; (9 November 1986), pp. 1D, 3D; *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (9 October 1986), p. 1B; (3 October 1986), pp. 1A, 3A; (11 January 1987), pp. 1B, 3B; *San Francisco Chronicle* (10 October 1986), pp. 1, 24; *Death Valley Gateway Gazette* (10 October 1986), pp. 1, 3, 6; (5 December 1986), pp. 1, 12; *Las Vegas Sun* (10 October 1986), p. 4B; *Sacramento Bee* (19 October 1986), pp. A1, A28; *Bohemian Bugle* (October 1986), pp. 1, 11, 14; (November 1986), pp. 1, 8, 10, 12; (December 1986), pp. 1, 14; *Washington Post* (9 December 1986), pp. C1, C4; *Advocate* (23 December 1986), pp. 15-16; (20 January 1987), pp. 14-15; Fred Schoonmaker, letter to "Ann," 16 January 1987 [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers].

<sup>44</sup>James "Jim" Spencer, letter to Fred Schoonmaker, before 15 September 1986; Certificate and Articles of Incorporation for FESCO, Inc. (30 October 1986); and Deed of Trust (1 November 1986) [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers]; Schlegel interview.

<sup>45</sup>Schlegel interview.

<sup>46</sup>*Bohemian Bugle* (October 1986), pp. 1, 11, 14.

<sup>47</sup>Stonewall Park at Rhyolite solicitation letter (ca. November 1986) [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers].

<sup>48</sup>Sumpter interview; Baker interview.

<sup>49</sup>"Instructions to Rhyolite" flier (ca. 2 November 1986) [UNLS, Stonewall Park].

<sup>50</sup>Schlegel interview.

<sup>51</sup>Baker interview; Dallas interview.

<sup>52</sup>*Washington Post* (9 December 1986), pp. C1, C4.

<sup>53</sup>*Las Vegas Review-Journal* (9 October 1986), p. 1B; (3 November 1986), pp. 1A, 3A; (11 January 1987), pp. 1B, 3B; (15 June 1987), p. 1B; *Death Valley Gateway Gazette* (24 October 1986), pp. 1, 2, 20; (31 October 1986), pp. 1, 11; (7 November 1986), pp. 2, 4; see *Bohemian Bugle* (November 1986), p. 2, for publisher Rob

Schlegel's ironic reply to Garrett's Stonewall coverage (Major Garrett went on to become a noted conservative journalist who served as senior editor and congressional correspondent for *U. S. News & World Report*, White House correspondent for CNN, and congressional correspondent for the Fox News Channel).

<sup>54</sup>*Las Vegas Sun* (10 October 1986), p. 4B; *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (17 December 1986), p. 7B; Schlegel interview.

<sup>55</sup>*Death Valley Gateway Gazette* (10 October 1986), pp. 1, 3; (25 October 1986), p. 8; *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (9 October 1986), pp. 1B, 3B; (19 October 1986), p. 3C; *Las Vegas Sun* (10 October 1986), p. 4B; *San Francisco Chronicle* (10 October 1986), pp. 1, 24; *Sacramento Bee* (19 October 1986), pp. A1, A28; *Washington Post* (9 December 1986), pp. C1, C4; *Weekly World News* (25 November 1986).

<sup>56</sup>*Reno Gazette-Journal* (9 November 1986), pp. 1D, 3D; *Washington Post* (9 December 1986), pp. C1, C4; *Sacramento Bee* (19 October 1986), pp. A1, A28; *Death Valley Gateway Gazette* (10 October 1986), p. 6.

<sup>57</sup>*Las Vegas Review-Journal* (19 October 1986), p. 10B.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 3CC.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 10B; *Death Valley Gateway Gazette* (24 October 1986), p. 2; *Weekly World News* (25 November 1986).

<sup>60</sup>*Bohemian Bugle* (November 1986), p. 10; *Reno Gazette-Journal* (9 November 1986), pp. 1D, 3D; *Washington Post* (9 December 1986), pp. C1, C4; *Advocate* (23 December 1986), pp. 15-16; *Gaybeat* [Cincinnati, Ohio] (February 1987), pp. 1, 6; *Los Angeles Times* (15 February 1987), sec. 6, pp. 1, 8.

<sup>61</sup>Schlegel interview; *Gay Life* (January 1985), p. 5; Richard Bryan, letter to Fred Schoonmaker, 29 December 1986 [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers].

<sup>62</sup>*Bohemian Bugle* (November 1986), pp. 1, 8, 10, 12; *Advocate* (23 December 1986), pp. 15-16; Schlegel interview.

<sup>63</sup>*Sacramento Bee* (19 October 1986), pp. A1, A28; *Death Valley Gateway Gazette* (21 November 1986), p. 2; (5 December 1986), pp. 1, 2, 12; (19 December 1986), p. 2; *Reno Gazette-Journal* (17 December 1986), pp. 1C-2C; *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (17 December 1986), p. 7B; (11 January 1987), pp. 1B, 3B; *Advocate* (20 January 1987), pp. 14-15.

<sup>64</sup>Fred Schoonmaker, letter to James "Jim" Spencer, 25 February 1987, and Schoonmaker, letter to "Ann" [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers].

<sup>65</sup>Baker interview.

<sup>66</sup>Caldwell interview.

<sup>67</sup>Stonewall Park Thunder Mountain solicitation letters (December 1986, January 1987) [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers]; *Reno Gazette-Journal* (17 December 1986), pp. 1C-2C; (8 January 1987), p. 3C; (17 February 1987), pp. 1C-2C; *Las Vegas Sun* (18 December 1986), p. 2A; *Lovelock Tribune* (18 December 1986), pp. 1, 12; *Death Valley Gateway Gazette* (19 December 1986), p. 2; *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (11 January 1987), pp. 1B, 3B; (15 June 1987), p. 1B; Schoonmaker, letter to "Ann," Fred Schoonmaker, letter to "Diane" (undated), map to Stonewall Park Thunder Mountain (undated), and Stonewall Park Thunder Mountain resident's pledge [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers]; *Los Angeles Times* (15 February 1987), sec. 6, pp. 1, 8; *Advocate* (17 February 1987), p. 26; *Gaybeat* (February 1987), pp. 1, 6; *Alternate News* [Kansas City, Mo.] (6 March 1987), pp. 4, 32; *Bohemian Bugle* (June 1987), p. 22; Caldwell interview.

<sup>68</sup>Caldwell interview; Sumpter interview.

<sup>69</sup>Thunder Mountain Gay and Lesbian Alliance Articles of Incorporation (15 December 1986) and Certificate of Incorporation (30 December 1986), Real Estate Contract of Sale between Marguerita Arthe Marin Caldwell and Fred Schoonmaker (18 December 1986), Quitclaim Deeds nos. 151623 and 151624, (Pershing County, Nevada, December 17, 1986), and solicitation letter (January 1987) [[Kansas City, MO]].

<sup>70</sup>Pledge, "Communal Effort: Resident" [GLBT MS 1990-15 (Fred Schoonmaker Papers)].

<sup>71</sup>Membership forms (ca. January 1987), solicitation letter Schoonmaker, letter to "Ann" [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers]; *Los Angeles Times* (15 February 1986), sec. 6, pp. 1, 8.

<sup>72</sup>*Las Vegas Review-Journal* (11 January 1987), pp. 1B, 3B.

<sup>73</sup>*Reno Gazette-Journal* (8 January 1987), p. 3C; (17 February 1987), pp. 1C-2C; *Los Angeles Times* (15 February 1987), sec. 6, pp. 1, 8.

<sup>74</sup>*Los Angeles Times* (15 February 1987), sec. 6, pp. 1, 8; *Reno Gazette-Journal* (17 February 1987), pp. 1C-2C.

<sup>75</sup>Schoonmaker letter to "Diane"; *Alternate News* (6 March 1987), pp. 4, 32; *Bohemian Bugle* (June 1987), p. 22; *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (15 June 1987), p. 1B.

<sup>76</sup>Fred Schoonmaker, letter to Robert "Rob" Schlegel, 15 December 1987 [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers]; Baker interview; Washoe County District Health Department, Acknowledgment of Notification (23

March 1987) [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers]; *Los Angeles Times* (15 February 1987), sec. 6, pp. 1, 8; Sumpter interview; Dallas interview; Forms W2 (1984, 1985, 1986), Reno, Nevada Food Stamp Office Monthly Report for Fred Schoonmaker (April 1987), Social Security Administration Disability Denial Notice (4 May 1987), and Social Security Administration Supplemental Security Income Notice of Award (4 June 1987) [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers].

<sup>77</sup>Tucker, letter to the author, 7 May 2004 [UNLS, Stonewall Park].

<sup>78</sup>Theodore Tucker, letter to Fred Schoonmaker, 3 May 1987 [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers].

<sup>79</sup>Nevada State Board of Health, meeting agenda (21 January 1987), and Senate Bill 542 hearing, Nevada State Senate Committee on Human Resources and Facilities, minutes and exhibits (1 June 1987) [author's collection]; *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (21 May 1987), p. 8B; (11 July 1987), p. 3B; *Las Vegas Sun* (24 May 1987), p. 3B; (13 July 1987), p. 2B; (28 February 1989), p. 8B; *AIDS and Nevada: Policy Recommendations*, Report to Governor Richard Bryan and the Nevada State Board of Health by [the] Nevada Statewide AIDS Advisory Task Force (16 September 1987) [author's collection].

<sup>80</sup>Caldwell interview.

<sup>81</sup>Caldwell interview; Tucker, letter to author, 7 May 2004 [UNLS, Stonewall Park].

<sup>82</sup>Caldwell interview.

<sup>83</sup>Baker interview; Caldwell interview.

<sup>84</sup>Attorney's Trust Account check no. 2386, (24 December 1986), and ledger (16 December 1986 – 1 May 1987) [GLBT History, Schoonmaker Papers]; Sumpter interview; Caldwell interview.

# *Notes & Documents*

## *New Acquisitions at the Nevada Historical Society*

NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY STAFF

### MANUSCRIPTS

#### American Gaming Archives

In 2006, the Nevada Historical Society began receiving business records and artifacts to be included in the American Gaming Archives (AGA), a collection established for the purpose of preserving and making available to researchers significant materials that document the history of commercial gambling (gaming) in the United States. The ultimate objective of the AGA is to create a comprehensive collection of essential gaming records and equipment, as well as to develop an electronic guide to both the materials in the AGA collection and gaming history resources that exist elsewhere in public or private repositories.

Because of Nevada's pioneering and longstanding role in the development of commercial gambling in the United States, it was decided by the AGA overseers that this state should be the home for its collection, and that the Nevada Historical Society and the Nevada State Museum, Las Vegas, both of which have research libraries as well as museums, would be the most suitable institutions to hold the collection.

The AGA was created and is currently directed by Howard W. Herz, a Minden resident who is a recognized authority on gaming collectibles and the evolution of casino gaming in Nevada. Since 2007, the AGA has concentrated on collecting records from the country's principal manufacturers of gaming equipment and supplies. The result of this effort has been the acquisition of major groups of records from Mason and Company, T. R. King, Hunt and Company (all donated by David D. Sarles of Williamsville, New York), and the Burt Company (donated by Arthur P. Girard of Bay Harbor Island, Florida, with the invaluable assistance of James Blanchard of Portland, Maine). Accompanying these records, which span the period of the 1920s to 1990s, are unique gaming artifacts, from chip dies, playing cards, and dice to casino furniture and antique cheating devices. Other substantial donations of gaming-related publications and casino artifacts

have been made by Howard Herz. At the present time, the focus of the collection is expanding to include the acquisition of artifacts and records pertaining to slot machines and other mechanical and electronic gaming devices, as well as materials relating to casino advertising.

It is expected that the growing AGA collection will complement the collections of gaming-related publications, records, and artifacts already held by such Nevada institutions as the Nevada Historical Society, the Nevada State Museum, Las Vegas, the Nevada State Museum (Carson City), and the libraries of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and the University of Nevada, Reno.

### Black Springs Community Collection

At least as early as the 1920s, the area north of Reno known as Black Springs was the site of a bar or roadhouse and other scattered buildings. By the late 1940s, when a post office was established, Black Springs had developed into a small rural community of inexpensive homes, a library, and a few businesses that served local residents and travelers on U.S. Highway 395 who were driving between Reno and the nearby Reno Army Air Base—later Stead Air Force Base. (In the 1980s, the Black Springs residential area was renamed Grand View Terrace by Washoe County, but it is still most commonly identified by its older name.)

During the early 1950s, the racial make-up of the predominantly white Black Springs community began to change. The Reno real-estate and insurance agent John E. Sweatt purchased several parcels of land at Black Springs and started to sell lots at a fraction of what comparably sized parcels in Reno cost. In selling the lots to any buyers who could afford them, regardless of race, he allowed African Americans who were unable to purchase homes in Reno, where dwellings were more expensive and most neighborhoods were unofficially racially restricted, to become homeowners.

Black Springs grew into a racially diverse unincorporated settlement with a strong sense of community, but with few services provided by Washoe County. The substantially black population worked determinedly to better the area, eventually forming an improvement association and acquiring a water company, fire station, church, paved streets, a park, community center, and other public amenities.

Among the longtime residents and community leaders of Black Springs were Helen and Ollie Westbrook, who settled there in the mid 1950s. Fortunately for Nevada's historians, the Westbrooks saved a large and rich group of documents, photographs, and other materials that record their activities and the development of the Black Springs neighborhood. We wish to thank their granddaughter, Helen Townsell, for donating this important collection to the Nevada Historical Society for preservation and use by present and future generations of researchers interested in the history of the unique Black Springs community.

## Patricia Shannon Papers

In the summer of 1968, a Reno city park was constructed by volunteers in the space of two days. It was named Pat Baker Park, after the individual who came up with the idea for an "instant park" in a disadvantaged neighborhood of northeast Reno and who spearheaded the project. The story of the park's construction attracted national attention—even becoming the subject of one segment of the CBS News correspondent Charles Kuralt's popular "On the Road" television feature. Pat Baker Park became a model for similar community projects around the country.

On the fortieth anniversary of the park's creation, Patricia Shannon (née Baker) donated to the Nevada Historical Society a substantial collection of personal papers documenting the planning and building of the park. Containing letters, newspaper clippings, photographs, and numerous park-committee records, the collection documents the development of the park from conception and planning through the actual construction during July 19-21, 1968.

The donated materials have been preserved through the years by Shannon, who—as Pat Baker—was living in Reno in 1968 and working as assistant director of advertising and public relations at Sierra Pacific Power Company. She now makes her home in Montana where, in 2002, she wrote a memoir, *Charles and Me*, about her long relationship with Charles Kuralt, which developed after they met when he came to Reno to cover the "instant park" story.

## Reno Kindergarten Association Records

A substantial group of records documenting one of Reno and northern Nevada's most significant early educational institutions, the school operated by the Reno Kindergarten Association, has been given to the society by the Washoe County School District. The donated materials contain minutes of association meetings, membership and subscription lists, and financial records from the period 1896, when the association was formed, to 1923. Prominent among the participants in the organization were Elizabeth Babcock (the founder), Hannah K. Clapp, Abby A. Nichols (the first teacher hired), Mary B. Fulton, Jean Hodgkinson, Ella Stubbs, Margaret Gulling, Alice Thoma, and Florence Church.

We wish to thank not only the Washoe County School District for donating this important collection, but also Dale Sanderson, the district's recently retired plant-facilities superintendent, for his assistance in making the transfer of the records possible.

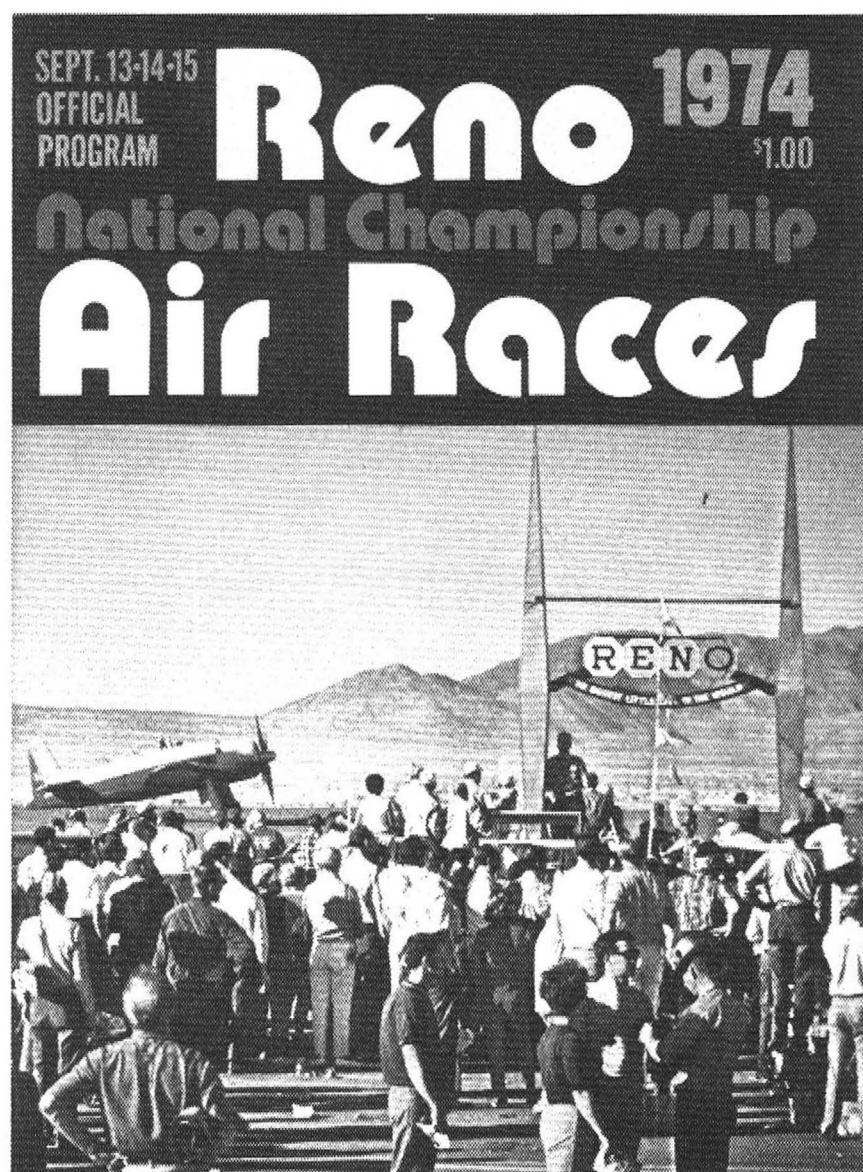
Eric Moody  
*Curator of Manuscripts*

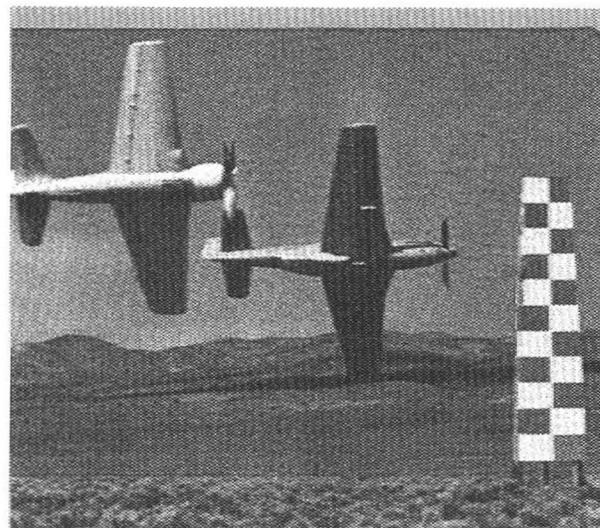
## LIBRARY

The library recently received a generous donation from Dick Tolman, who is currently a docent at the Nevada Historical Society. Dick used a ScanPro 2000 while doing genealogy work in Philadelphia. The ScanPro 2000 is a microfilm reader that uses the latest in cutting-edge digital technology. He was very impressed by it and saw the need for a new microfilm reader here at the NHS library. We are grateful that Dick purchased a ScanPro 2000 for the library, and we are now better able to serve our patrons. Thank you, Dick!

The library also recently received a significant donation of Reno National Championship Air Races memorabilia. This donation comprises brochures, posters, programs, pins, and patches from more than forty years of the Reno air races. There were many items included that we did not previously have. We are pleased to be able to add these wonderful materials to the Nevada Historical Society's Reno Air Races collection.

Michael Maher  
*Librarian*





## 4 thrill packed days

**Sept. 22-25, 1966**

**THURSDAY, SEPT. 22** — Qualifying races, aerobatics, balloon races and exhibitions.

**FRIDAY, SEPT. 23** — Stock plane and midget races, crop duster free-for-all, final unlimited class qualifying and exhibitions.

**SATURDAY, SEPT. 24** — Aerobatics finals, 19 cu. in. midgets and exhibitions.

**SUNDAY, SEPT. 25** — Finals: Unlimited class planes, midgets, aerobatics; also exhibition events.

### FLY-IN INFORMATION

The following airports in the area are prepared to accommodate visitors:

**RENO MUNICIPAL AIRPORT** — Three miles from downtown Reno. Maximum capacity, 2,000 aircraft. Operates 24 hours a day. Standard Oil Chevron fuel — 80/87, 100/130, 115/145 and jet fuel. Reno flying service offers special tie-down price of \$5 for five days. First day free, courtesy of Harolds Club. Includes Harolds Club courtesy package. Information: (712) 323-7175.

**VISTA AIRPORT**, Sparks, Nevada — Located 2½ miles from downtown Reno. Maximum capacity 100 aircraft. Operates daylight hours only. Standard Oil Chevron fuel — 80/87, 100/130. Daily tie-down rate, \$1.

**CARSON CITY AIRPORT** — Located 27 miles from downtown Reno. Maximum capacity 500 aircraft. Operates daylight hours only. Standard Oil Chevron fuel — 80/87, 100/130. Daily tie-down rate, \$1 for first 200 spaces reserved; all other aircraft \$1 plus one-time charge of \$1.50 for tie-down rope if not furnished by aircraft owner.

**FALLON AIRPORT** — Located 60 miles east of Reno. Free transportation from Fallon to Air Races.

**TRUCKEE-TAHOE AIRPORT** — Located in California 40 miles from downtown Reno. Maximum capacity 1,500 aircraft. Operates 24 hours a day. Standard Oil Chevron fuel — 80/87, 100/130. Daily tie-down rate, \$1 for first 100 spaces reserved; all other aircraft, \$1 plus one-time charge of \$1.50 for tie-down rope if not furnished by aircraft owner.

**LAKE TAHOE AIRPORT** — Located in California 56 miles from downtown Reno. Maximum capacity 100 aircraft. Operates 24 hours a day. Shell fuel — 80/87, 100/130. Daily tie-down rate, \$1.50 single engine and \$2.50 twin engine.

**LIMOUSINE SERVICE** from all airports listed above to downtown Reno. **CAR RENTAL SERVICE** available at Reno, Carson City, Truckee-Tahoe and Lake Tahoe airports. Advance reservations for car rentals advisable.

**PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION** available from downtown Reno terminals to site of air races.

### HOTELS & MOTELS

**HOTEL & MOTEL RESERVATIONS** — Please fill out reservation card and return with \$10 deposit (check or money order) made payable to Reno Chamber of Commerce. Reservations will be confirmed.

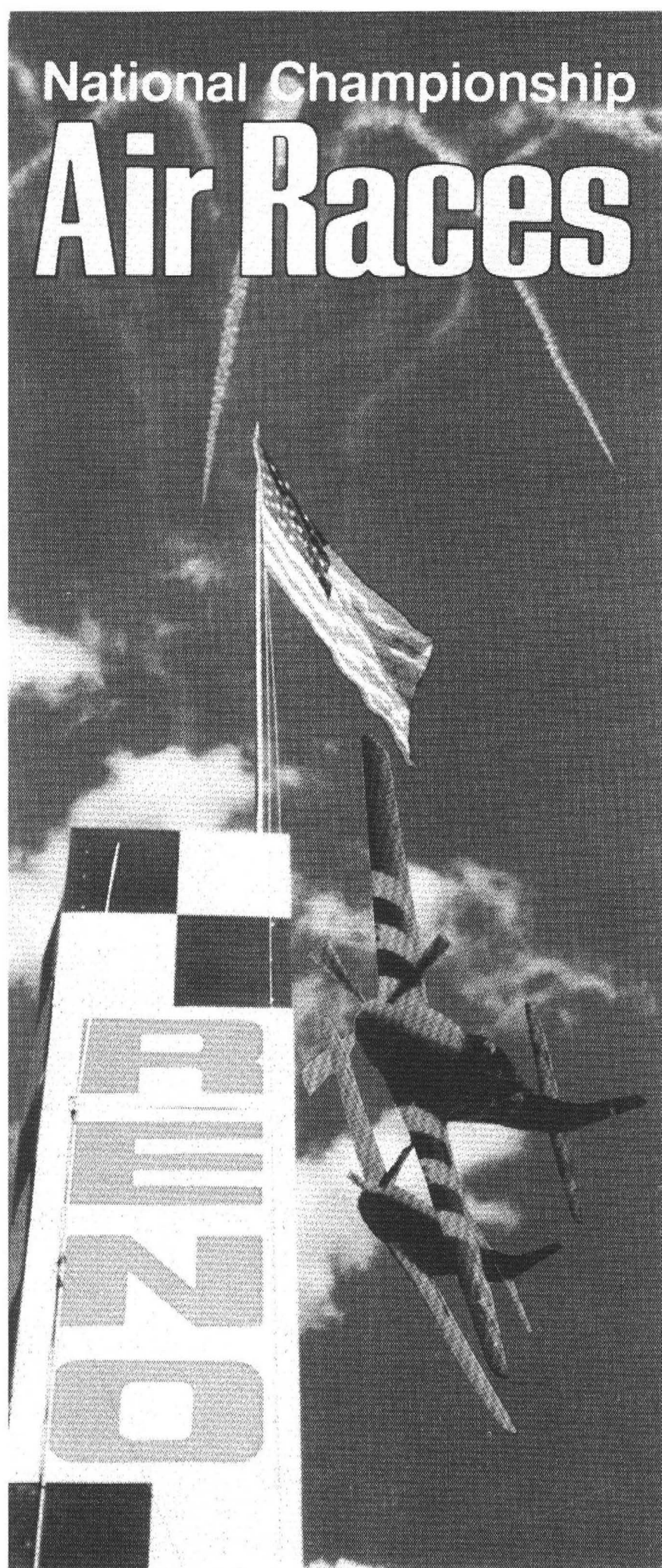
### TICKET PRICES

**DAILY GENERAL ADMISSION** — Adults, \$3. Juniors (12-18), \$1.50. Children under 12, free.

**DISCOUNT RATE SEASON TICKETS** — Substantial savings are provided by special advance discount season tickets which provide admission for all four days for \$10. (This special discount rate is available only until Sept. 1.) Address your order to:

National Championship Air Races  
P.O. Box 1420, Reno, Nevada





## PHOTOGRAPHY

Anne Adams Helms has provided an important donation of carte-de-visite photographs from Carson City and Comstock studios, including portraits of famous Nevadans. Note Ms. Helms's maiden name: How many people know that the wife of Ansel Adams, who was probably the most famous American photographer of the twentieth century, was a native of Carson City. Besides the early photographs, Ms. Helms, Ansel Adams's daughter, has donated a bound genealogy of the Adams family, which covers not only her father and mother, but references other Nevada names such as Barkley, Conlin, Morton, Aymar, Cromwell, and Brey.

The collection includes photographs of the territorial governors James Nye and Isaac Roop, Robert Howard, and most important, our only portrait of Frank Ludlow, one of Carson City's earliest photographers. Robert Howland was the first and possibly toughest warden of what was then the territorial prison at Carson City. Samuel Clemens described Howland as a gentle, amiable little man, until crossed. On Howland's first day as warden, a new inmate and no-



Virginia City, Grant's visit, C & C RT. Photographer unknown. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

torious criminal refused to come out of his cell for the daily routine. Howland had a long bar of iron heated red hot and personally prodded the prisoner until a submissive attitude was obtained. Our new acquisition is our first image of Howland as a young man. In his youth Howland was a miner and shared a cabin with Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) at Aurora in 1862. Unlike Twain, Howland succeeded in mining, becoming a superintendent at several mines and then a co-owner in at least two enterprises.

Several original carte-de-visite scenes of the Comstock are also valuable additions, despite the small size and fading inherent to these earliest Nevada photographs. One is an original of the view of the Wells Fargo office in Virginia City by Lawrence and Houseworth of San Francisco. Previously, the society possessed only a copy of this famous image. Another card is a copy of Timothy O'Sullivan's famous 1863 photograph of the Gould and Curry Mill in Virginia City. It bears the logo of the Sutterley Brothers Studio on the back and thus could be the earliest known example of photographic "theft" in Nevada. A third image, also from the Sutterley Studio, appears to depict Silver City, the smallest of the Comstock towns, and could be among the earlier known views.

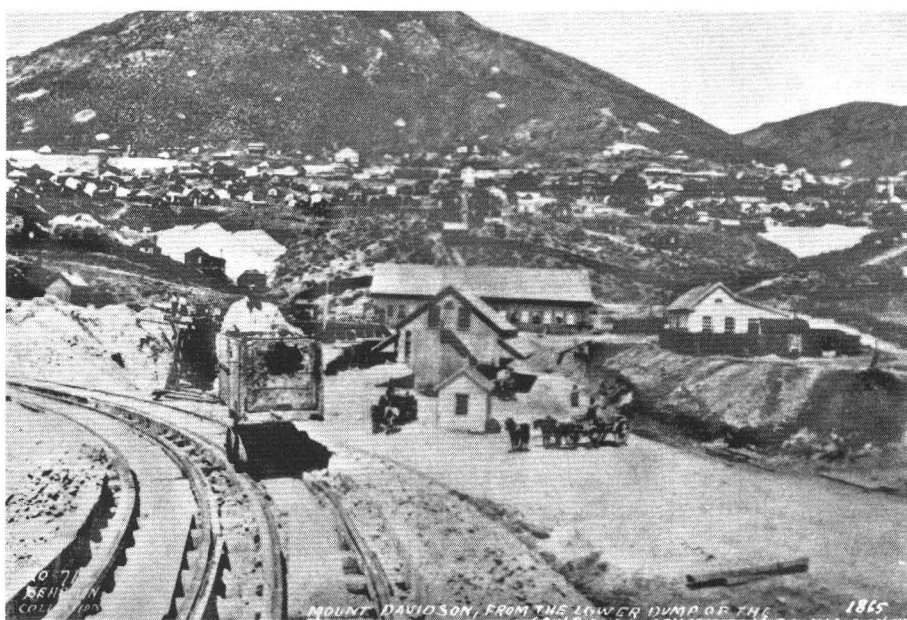
Lee P. Brumbaugh  
*Curator of Photography*



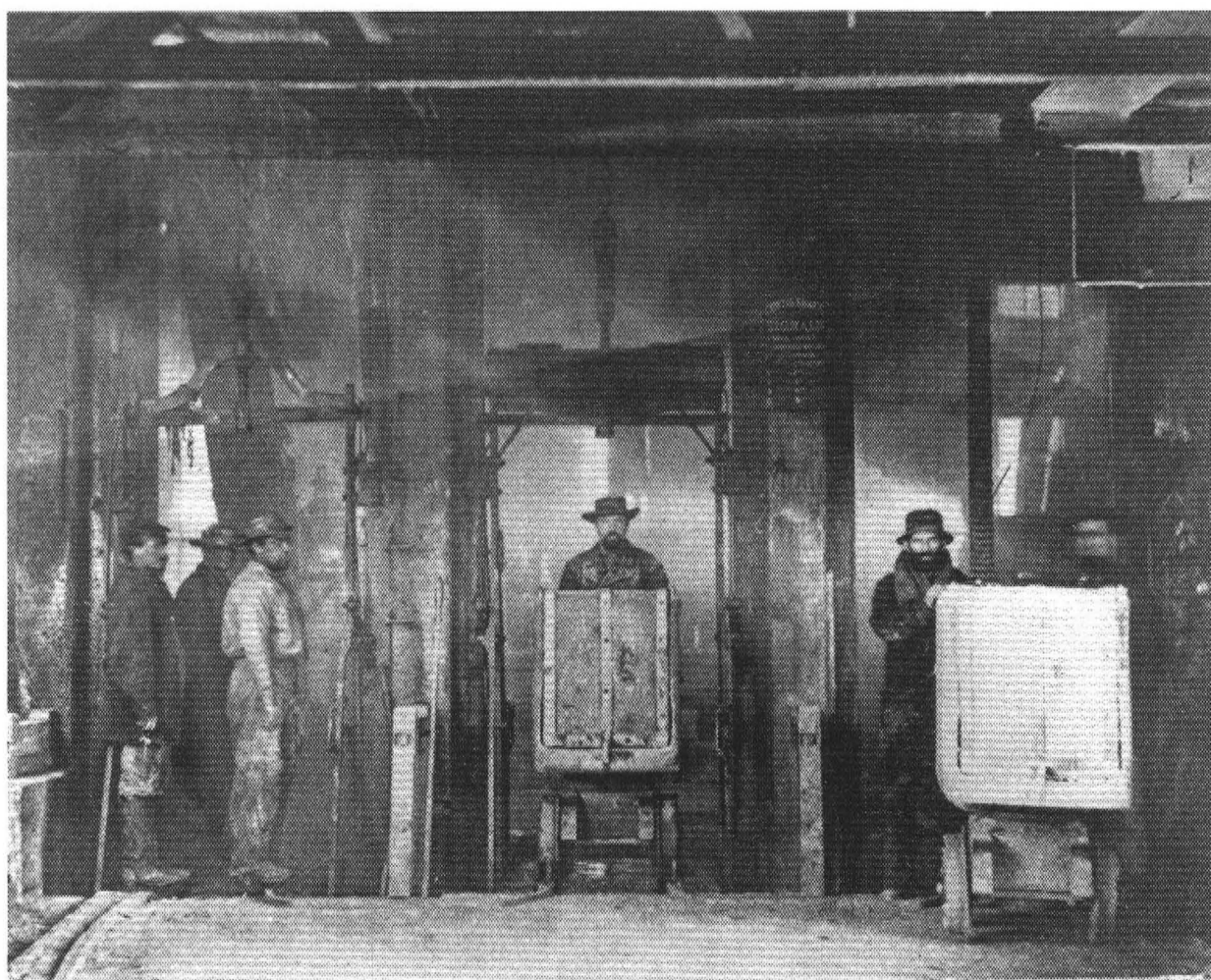
Robert Howland, c1860s. Carte-de-visite portrait, albumen print, no studio mark. Robert Howland was friends with Samuel Clemens and became the first warden of the territorial prison at Carson City. Photographer unknown. (*Nevada Historical Society*)



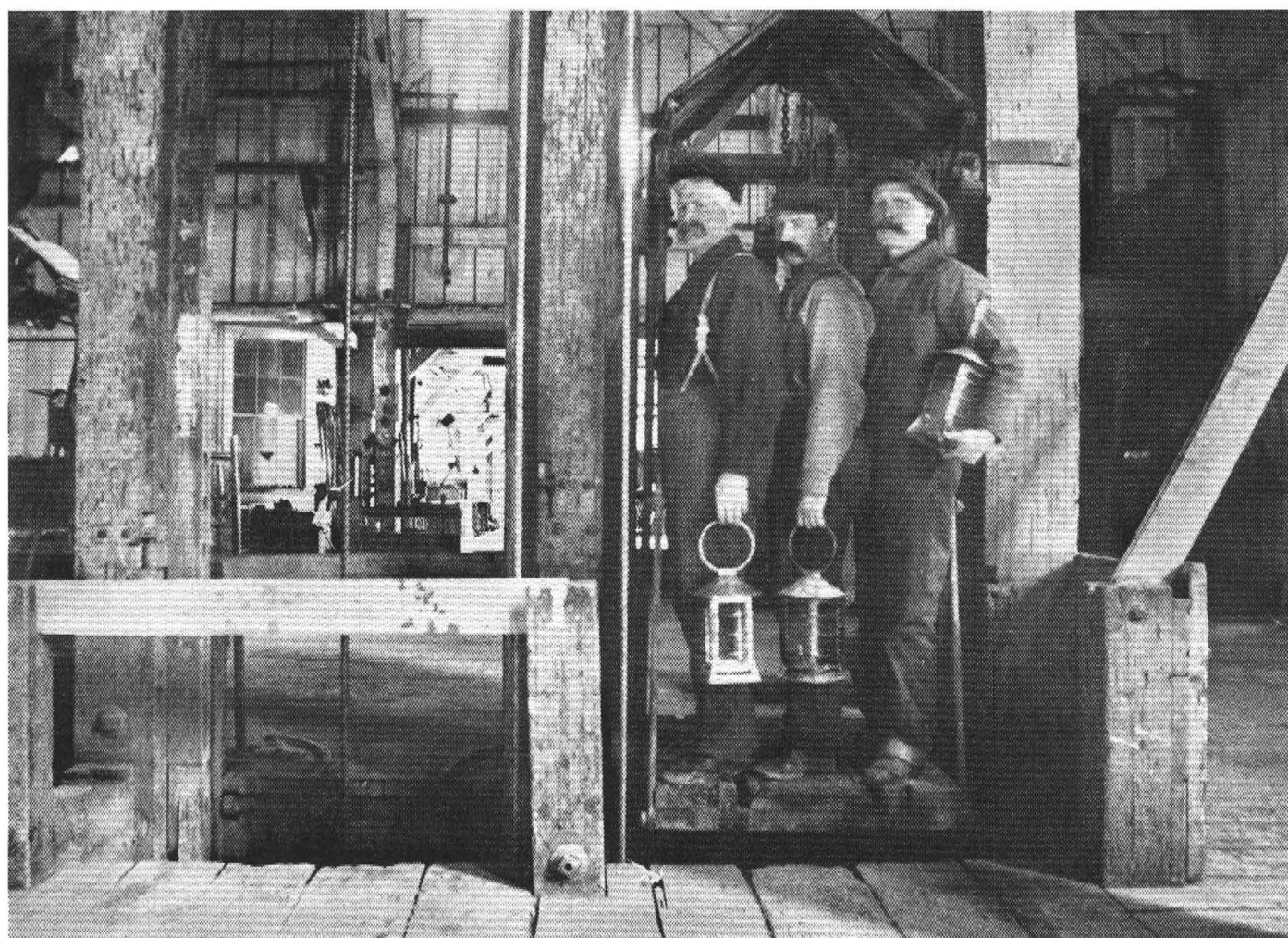
Self portrait by Carson City photographer, Frank Ludlow, c. 1867. Albumen print on carte-de-visite mount. (*Nevada Historical Society*)



Virginia City and Mount Davidson from the dumps of the Gould & Curry Mine, c. 1865. Copy print from the *Oakland Tribune*. Photographer unknown. (*Nevada Historical Society*)



Curtis Shaft, Savage Mine, Virginia City, c. 1869. Tim. Photographer unknown. (*Nevada Historical Society*)



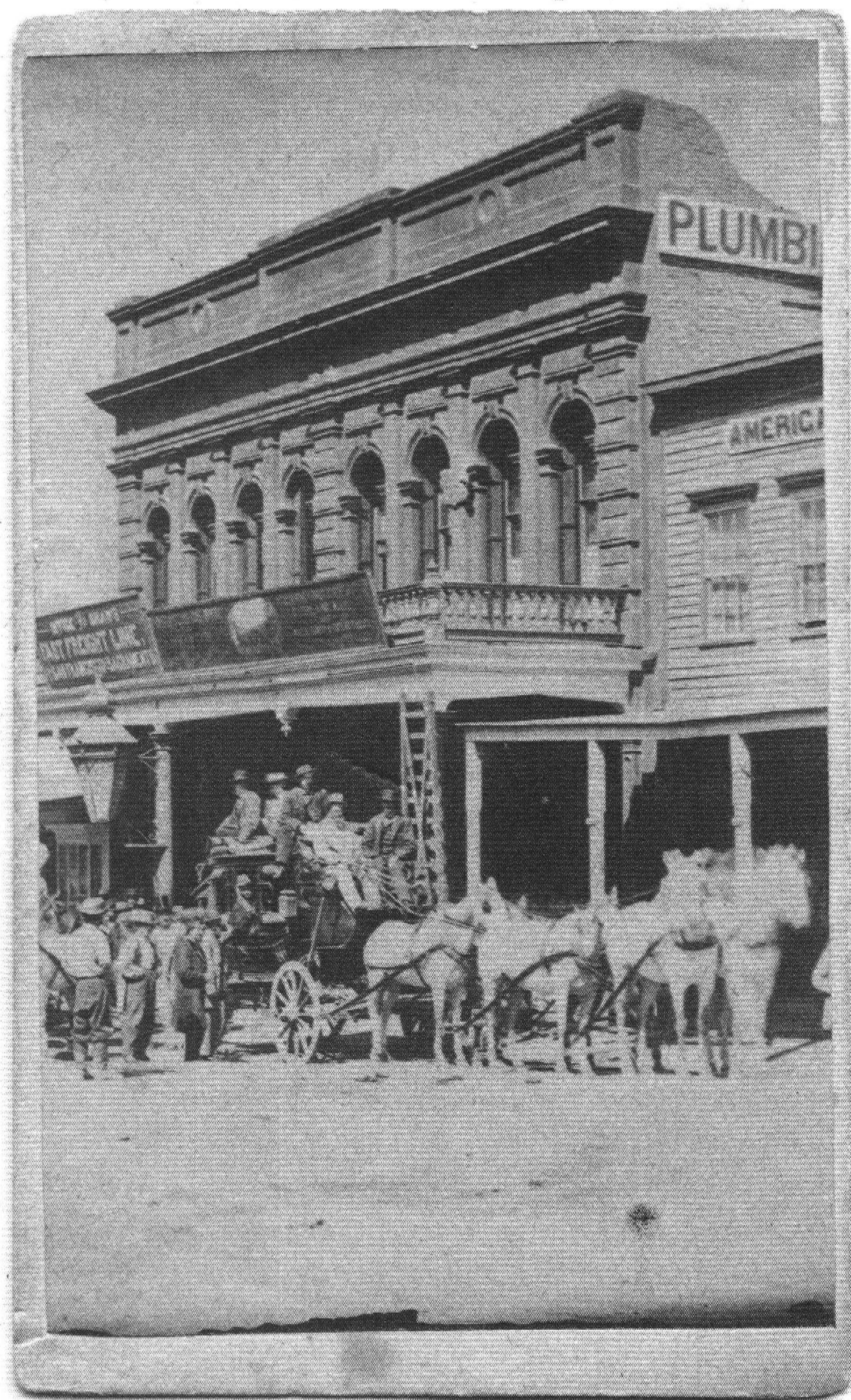
Virginia City, Consolidated Virginia and California Hoisting Works (C & C), miners in cage, c. 1890s. Photographer William Cann. (*Nevada Historical Society*)



Discovery of the Comstock re-enactment for postcard. Photographer unknown. (Nevada Historical Society)



Piper's Opera House, exterior. Photographer unknown. (Nevada Historical Society)



Wells, Fargo and Company Express Office, "C" Street, Virginia City, c. 1860s. Copyrighted by Lawrence and Houseworth Studio, San Francisco. Albumen print on carte-de-visite mount. Photographer unknown. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

## Book Reviews

*A Candle in the Night: Basque Studies at the University of Nevada 1967-2007.* Edited by Pedro J. Oiarzabal, with assistant editors Kathleen Coles and Allison Tracy (Reno: University of Nevada Oral History Program, 2007)

"During the darkest day of the Franco era when we were denied our language, our culture, and our identity, we were consoled by the knowledge that an American university in Nevada had lit one small candle in the night," said Basque President Jose Antonio Ardanza on a trip to Reno in March of 1988.

From the title of the book to the edited interviews that follow, Pedro Oiarzabal uses others' words—principally faculty, staff, and scholars—to chronicle the development of Basque Studies at the University of Nevada, Reno. Sifting through more than a thousand pages of transcripts, Oiarzabal shapes the interviews into a narrative that reveals the multidimensional history of Basque Studies and its offspring, the Basque Studies Library, the Basque Book Series, and the University Studies Abroad Consortium.

In this process Oiarzabal reveals much more than a stale institutional history. Rather, the narrative cracks open a broad spectrum of issues including nationalism, global migration, ethnic identity, transnational exchanges, organizations shaped by personalities, the importance of resilience, personal commitment, egos and extraordinary selflessness, and community building.

*A Candle in the Night* is the latest publication of the University of Nevada Oral History Program. As R. T. King, its director states, the oral history project "reaches a large non-academic audience by publishing books and producing video documentaries based on selected parts of its work." This book largely succeeds in accomplishing that goal.

Oiarzabal divides the interviews into three sections. In part one, William Douglass, the only remaining founder, chronicles the program's inception in 1967 through its emergence as the leading national and international research and educational institute of Basque culture outside of the Basque Country. In part two, other contributors add their reflections as the Basque Studies program evolved with the development of an extensive library, a series published by the university's press, and special projects that included the creation of a Basque-English dictionary. Finally, in the third part, the interviewees outline the creation and growth of the University Studies Abroad Consortium, one of the central offshoots of the Basque Studies program.

The book's greatest features also limit it. Since stories are remembered differently by different people, each account presents only that one person's perspective. Without commentary, the discrepancies in any oral history may be overlooked by the reader. In addition, by allowing the story to be told through interviews, the reader is drawn into these narratives, yet is left to make conclusions on his/her own. Oiarzabal edits but does not editorialize: A reader unfamiliar with the story may not be able to read between the lines.

Although the book was published on the fortieth anniversary of the creation of Basque Studies at the University of Nevada, Reno, Oiarzabal accurately places it within the broader context of anniversaries celebrated. The year 2007 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the first edition of *Sweet Promised Land*, Robert Laxalt's award-winning book that chronicled the Basque immigrant life in the American West. This same year also commemorated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the University Studies Abroad Consortium, which has grown into the second largest international programs consortium in the United States.

While spin-off entities of Basque Studies are featured, the individual stories remain central to the creation of the Basque Studies program. Douglass, a non-Basque and native of Reno, offers the perspective of the founder and the longtime coordinator. The Basque Country-reared scholars Gorka Aulestia, Joxe Mallea-Olaetxe, and Joseba Zulaika reveal how Basque Studies offered them an opportunity as they contributed their exhaustive work. Linda White, Sandra Ott, and Jill Berner, all non-Basque employees of Basque Studies, offer yet another perspective to the institutional growth. These women all found their way to Basque Studies through unique routes and like Douglass played central roles in its development. Finally, Carmelo Urza, Marcelino Ugalde, and Kate Camino, all Basque Americans, reveal the legacy and the ever-broadening impact of Basque Studies.

Yet their narratives reveal a much larger story. People from many walks of life came together to accomplish something nobody initially imagined. From old-world Basques to people having no prior knowledge of Basques, this history chronicles an American ethnic story. It tells of how an immigrant group attracted enough attention that an academic program with many offshoots grew up around it. In this process those involved with Basque Studies built their own community while they also heavily influenced the very community they researched.

John P. Bieter, Jr.  
Boise State University

*Chicana Leadership: The Frontiers Reader*. Edited by Yolanda Flores Niemann, with Susan H. Armitage, Patricia Hart, and Karen Weathermon (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002)

*Chicana Leadership* consists of fifteen articles and a comprehensive introduction mainly drawn from *Frontiers*, a journal of women studies that published four special issues dedicated to Chicanas. The stated goal was to inform the public, including Chicanas, in order to raise critical consciousness and to facilitate personal and collective empowerment.

The principal editor, Yolanda Flores Niemann, crafts her introduction with skill and discipline. She informs the reader what to expect within the monumental work. She identifies each of the fifteen articles and includes the essence of each in a sentence. For example, when describing Cordelia Candelaria's contribution with respect to La Malinche, she points to the origin and social construction of the label and its impact on contemporary Chicanas. Maxine Baca Zinn's contribution concerns itself with the combination of gender with ethnic identity. Essays on the nature of poetry and short stories, as well as on art performers, and literary activism follow Zinn, written by a variety of authors such as Roberta Fernandez, Yolanda Broyles-Gonzalez, and Margarita Cota-Cardenas. The Cota-Cardenas article is entitled "The Faith of Activists," and uses poetry to address a woman's perspective in two worlds.

The nature of stereotypes continues to be challenged as Chicana diversity is addressed by Patricia Zavella, while the issue of lesbian identity is included in an article by AnnLouise Keating. Other contributors include the labor/social historians Sarah Deutsch and Antonia Castaneda, whose scholarly articles focus on the California and Colorado frontiers. Activism and unionization are combined with the maintenance of traditional cultural patterns, while the latter articles focus on immigration, education and community. The purpose of this work was to break stereotypes of Mexican-American women and to examine their roles as dynamic leaders, activists, and scholars—and the purpose was accomplished.

The collected articles are substantive, informative, and well written. The method of presentation is excellent. But for the person who is looking for a quick read, forget it. These articles will make a person think and examine relationships in an entirely new way. It will take some time to digest the materials. In the process, the reader will find an enjoyable presentation of facts and history. The work starts off with the article by Cordelia Candelaria on Malinche and it is an excellent beginning, given the nature of the principal character.

Professor Niemann ends the collection with an article of her own entitled "The Making of a Token," which is an excellent conclusion of this reader devoted to Chicana issues. She examines her first "four shaky years as an assistant professor." And her observations ring so true for minority faculty in American institutions. The institutional political games played with her

included an anonymous racist hate mail as well as her colleagues debating the value of a Mexican-American woman. I have shared those experiences as my own academic career progressed through four decades and three states. Niemann concludes by warning faculty of the consequences of tokenism, racism, stigmatizing, and stereotyping, as "These effects can be psychologically, physically, and professionally damaging."

This particular work is useful in that the articles can be taken out of the reader and used in various classroom situations. The Candelaria article can be used when discussing the conquest of Mexico and the psychological impact of European conquest, while the Deutsch article can be used in a class on the American Southwest; other articles lend themselves to literature classes, philosophy courses, and sociology courses.

In summary, this work is one that should be read and used by sociologists, historians, and academics in all of the social sciences. And it is one that should be read by all genders.

David A. Sandoval  
*Colorado State University-Pueblo*

*Contact: Mountain Climbing and Environmental Thinking.* By Jeffrey Mathes McCarthy, ed. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2008)

Adrenaline can be found in the pages of this recent, well-edited book by Jeffrey Mathes McCarthy that features mountain-climbing narratives from around the world including tales of traverses in the Alps, Alaska, Greenland, Canada, Patagonia, Africa, Antarctica, Spain, Oregon, and Washington and, of course, that mecca for climbers—Yosemite and the Sierra Nevada. Editor McCarthy, in a strong and readable introduction, discusses the evolution of climbing from conquest for queen and country in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to the idea of connection with nature and caretaking in the twenty-first century.

He begins contact with an analysis of Thoreau's climb up Mount Katahdin in New England (the subject of his essay "Ktaadn"), where Thoreau loses his ego and merges with the vertical wilderness of the mountain. An unbalanced Thoreau states, "Who is this Titan that has possession of me? . . . *Contact! Contact! Who are we? Where are we?*" It is an appropriate metaphor for these twenty-three selected narratives whose authors range from John Muir and Gary Snyder to Yvon Chouinard, Arlene Blum, Mark Jenkins, and John Daniel.

The book is an excellent mix of climbing stories, harrowing epics on rock and ice, strong writing, vivid description, and insight into the motivation behind some of the world's best climbers both male and female. The editor states, "This anthology is for climbers, outdoor lovers, and people involved with environmental issues,"

which may be true, but the lack of a glossary and the constant reference to technical climbing terms limits understanding by a lay audience. That said, the “clean climbing revolution,” or not installing pitons, is fairly well articulated, and the evolution in climbing ethics is apparent in several essays as is the understanding of carbon footprints and the energy climbers expend to get to remote climbing locations.

This book is about facing your fear. It’s about intense concentration while flirting with death. It’s about that aching stretch to a fingerhold or toehold that just might not be there, and then that ecstatic, life-affirming moment when the wind stops and you find a narrow shelf just below an open route to the summit.

*Contact* excels with descriptions of endurance, decision making, teamwork (or the lack thereof), and numbing exhaustion. Peter Metcalf writes in “Running on Empty,” “This is already day nine of what we had thought would be a six-day alpine blitz. We are no longer in control of the situation. The best we can do is battle from a defensive stand” (p. 72). As weather deteriorates, equipment fails, and supplies run low, human reserves ebb. Facing frostbite and failure, Metcalf eerily recounts, “After the second pitch I no longer feel alone while descending. I sense the presence of another force or spirit—a fourth member with whom I am in perfect contact. Perhaps this is due to the feeling of detachment my still alert mind has from my weary body” (p. 81).

This Alaskan story is strangely reminiscent of John Muir’s classic account of his solo ascent of Mount Ritter in the Sierra Nevada where he states, “After gaining a point about halfway to the top, I was suddenly brought to a dead stop, with arms outspread, clinging close to the face of the rock, unable to move hand or foot either up or down. My doom appeared fixed. . . . But this terrible eclipse lasted only a moment, when life blazed forth again with preternatural clearness. I seemed suddenly to become possessed of a new sense. The other self, bygone experiences, Instinct, or Guardian Angel—call it what you will,—came again, every rift and flaw in the rock was seen as through a microscope, and my limbs moved with a positiveness and precision with which I seemed to have nothing at all to do. Had I been born aloft with wings, my deliverance could not have been more complete” (p. 207).

These mountaintop epiphanies are echoed in other essays in the book, and certainly Muir’s experience in the Sierra helped create in him environmental consciousness ahead of his time. McCarthy, a climber and chair of an environmental studies and associate professor of English at Westminster College in Utah, is correct to describe the mountaineer Muir as “the grandfather of American environmentalism.” The tightest sections of the book focus on conquest and connection and the power of mountains and wilderness landscapes to alter, change, and “untether” mountain climbers who truly live in a world above us. Lynn Hill explains, “But that night as we fell asleep under the bright stars, we both felt a sense of completion—as though everything we had ever done had led us to this summit” (p. 197). Climbing as personal transcendence and intimate connection with nature is indisputable, but as Terry Gifford later adds, “Climbing, as much as it briefly reconnects us personally with nature, is still environmental escapism” (p. 219).

And that is where the section on caretaking, like a stretched rope or a broken crampon, seems weakest. The editor did not discuss dead bodies and empty oxygen bottles littering Mount Everest or the major cleanup efforts ongoing in Nepal. There was no mention of garbage at popular rock-climbing sites in Yosemite where, according to the Associated Press, in November 2007, "volunteers packed out 900 pounds of abandoned rope, snack wrappers and toilet paper strewn around some of Yosemite National Park's most cherished crags." Clean climbing may be a virtue, but so is the concept of Leave No Trace, which means leaving no trash at base camps and erecting no new cairns on summits in African national parks as described in the book.

*Contact* is an excellent alpinist anthology, an important book for a new, younger generation of climbers. An Outdoor Industry Association survey shows that the number of climbers grew from 7.5 million to 9.2 million from 2004 to 2005 with a whopping increase of 30 percent for those climbing artificial walls. Unfortunately, many of those indoor climbers think of the outdoors as just a dirty gym. They know how to climb. What they need is a short course in environmental ethics. They want the adrenaline rush and the peak experience of higher, faster, stronger with the body in flow, to cite from Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, but eventually all mountain climbers descend, and the exhilaration of personal achievement must be paired with humility and stewardship of those delicate alpine meadows, granite rock faces, and retreating glaciers.

The Colorado Fourteeners Initiative states, "Get out, get up, give back." Volunteers work on trail maintenance, clean up routes, and help high alpine environments which are getting hammered by weekend warriors bagging peaks. An expanded section on caretaking, including examples of serious stewardship with specific case studies of successful cooperative work projects, would have made *Contact* an even better book.

Andrew Gulliford  
*Fort Lewis College*

*Famiglia e Cucina: Stories and Recipes from Northwestern Nevada's Italian-American Community.* Edited by Mary A. Larson (Reno: University of Nevada Oral History Program, 2007)

*Squisito*—often a reviewer may summarize a book in one word, usually a word such as *riveting*, *pedestrian*, *tedious*, or even *readable*, but never *delicious*, either in English or Italian. Yet whoever reads *Famiglia e Cucina*, this 115-page book whose title perfectly describes the contents, will almost certainly begin to taste the fresh, home-grown vegetables, especially the cloves of garlic chopped into fine, and sometimes not quite so fine, pieces; the freshly baked

Italian or French bread, the handmade *polpette* (meatballs) filled with the same spices *nonna* (grandmother) used in Lucca, or was it Genoa, or even that village near the Swiss border too small to appear on the map? Turning the pages, our reader will be transported in time and space to *la cucina* of a small home owned by second-generation Italian Americans in the Reno area. There he will prepare *una bagna cauda*—literally a hot bath in the Italian spoken in many areas of northern Italy in decades past—first putting oil, chopped garlic, and anchovies into an electric frying pan with the heat set so low that it simmers as the flavors blend together, then cutting cauliflower, mushrooms, zucchini, broccoli, artichokes, and carrots into bite-size pieces so that they may be added to the simmering brew, followed by thin strips of steak and chicken, and also quite possibly scallops and shrimp. Unless our reader chooses to avoid alcohol, this feast may well be enjoyed with a glass or two of wine made from grapes grown in the backyard.

Indeed, on almost every other page, one finds a recipe that makes appealing a second or third visit to Italy, with more time passed in the restaurants and bars than in the museums and cathedrals. Of course, better yet would be invitations to dine with the Italian cousins of the men and women who contributed their recollections and recipes to the Oral History Program. While enjoying the descriptions of main dishes such as *fagiole con salsicce* (beans with sausage), *ravioli*, and *gnocchi*, the readers who have—as does this reviewer—a sweet tooth, will relish the recipes for *biscotti* with almonds or anise and *the panettone* Pucci style as they are transported to one of the many *pasticcerie* (pastry shops) that bring so many to Italy, again and again. This reviewer confesses to recalling often the sweet delights of the Pasticceria Siciliana, located just a few minutes from his room near the central train station in Rome.

Those who eat to live rather than live to eat will be pleased to find that the interviewees also provide examples of generally accepted principles of immigration studies. Many recall that a sibling or cousin or uncle or even a close friend of their grandparents left the poverty of some village in northern Italy to seek a better life, often in northern California, sometimes in northern Nevada, and occasionally in other states; meeting there with some relative success, he had urged family members and friends to join him. Then, after the grandparents had achieved some modest success, they would encourage other relatives or friends from their birth village to join them in America. This type of chain migration was quite common for most of the European immigrant groups coming to America in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and certainly characterizes the great migration of Mexicans and other Latin Americans to the United States in recent decades.

The interviewees provide further evidence that, for migrating Italians, part of the appeal of both northern California and northern Nevada was that if one did not strike it rich by mining gold or silver, one could find work and earn enough money to buy property; and, most important, they would plant the fruit

trees—cherry and fig were most popular—and establish the gardens with garlic, onions, eggplant, and tomatoes that reminded the new arrivals in America of the positive aspects of life in Italy. Many of those interviewed vividly described how much they enjoyed the fresh fruit and vegetables. They recalled, too, how their mothers, aunts, and sisters regarded the many hours spent preparing elaborate holiday meals as a pleasant social experience.

Worth noting is that the ancestors of most of the Italian Americans interviewed for this book came from northwestern Italy, and others from north central or northeastern areas. As about 80 percent of Italian Americans have ancestry in areas south of Rome—Sicily, Calabria, and Campania being especially well represented—those who organized this oral history project contributed to a broadened understanding of both the Italian immigrant experience generally and, more specifically, the Italian-American experience in Nevada.

Alan Balboni  
*College of Southern Nevada*

*Fuel for Growth: Water and Arizona's Urban Environment.* By Douglas E. Kupel (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2003)

Douglas E. Kupel challenges some of the most prevailing assumptions about western water history in his study *Fuel for Growth*. In particular, Kupel argues that western water “icons” Donald Worster and Marc Reisner have emphasized arguments that do not fit all regions in the American West. In Arizona, for example, Kupel asserts that the state’s water history has not been characterized by the conflict that has colored treatments of water history in other parts of the region. A water-rights attorney for the City of Phoenix, Kupel opts for what he calls a “more conservative approach”—to define the construction of water infrastructure as but one of several important components of modern urban development. Arizona’s urban water story, according to Kupel, differs little from that of most American cities. It is the story of trying to provide water to meet the needs of present populations and of future growth. Domination by a small group of water-policy elites or the all-bending force of aridity has little to do with Arizona’s municipal story, according to Kupel.

*Fuel for Growth* tells the story of Arizona’s urban water development from the ancient Hohokam culture to the present, with an emphasis on the cities of Phoenix, Tucson, and Flagstaff. Kupel’s focus, however, is on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as arid Arizona struggled to find and deliver an adequate water supply. Arizona’s water system, like that of other nearby western states, was built from Spanish, Mexican, and American precedents. After major towns like Tucson, Phoenix, and Flagstaff began to grow, water needs were met first

by individuals, then private companies, and finally by the cities themselves as they took control of the water utilities by the early twentieth century. Following municipal ownership, the question of how to expand and cope with growth became paramount. Arizona cities, like the rest of the American West, benefitted from an increasingly close relationship with both the Bureau of Reclamation and other federal agencies. During the New Deal era, funds from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and the Public Works Administration helped finance expansion of city water systems. Another strategy used by the cities was to continue to purchase small private water companies that still served areas adjacent to the cities. As the cities grew and annexed these areas, the municipal water systems expanded as well. Kupel argues, as many scholars do (see notably Gerald Nash's several books on the twentieth-century West), that World War II inspired a "westward tilt" that brought money and people to the American West, and provided some of the catalysts for full-scale reclamation development. By the 1950s, Arizona had become one of the fastest growing states in the nation.

With tremendous urban growth, the stage was set for the most important era of water-infrastructure development in Arizona. The Central Arizona Project (CAP), which in 1968 passed Congress as the Colorado River Basin Project Act, allowed Arizona to develop its entitlement to 2.8 million acre-feet of water from the Colorado River. This controversial project, fought by the growing environmental movement, resisted by Indian tribes who feared damage to their lands, and target of a budget-minded President James E. Carter, ultimately provided the basis for the state to meet the demands of its growing population. Orme Dam on the Fort McDowell Indian Reservation was a part of the CAP planning targeted by Carter's budgetary axe. The CAP was significantly altered after its authorization in order to better meet Arizona's needs and the major criticisms of its opponents.

*Fuel for Growth* is a solid, state-based analysis of how urban Arizona has coped with its water problems. However, it is so locally centered that many readers will likely tire learning about local land purchases for water plants, new intakes, and filtration-plant construction. Kupel also employs a rather tedious formulaic style of organization in which he introduces a chronological period, finds a few common themes, and discusses how each applies to the Phoenix, Tucson, and Flagstaff urban situations. He does this for all fourteen chapters. Kupel also seems to tread lightly around Arizona's Native American water situation. Indians play only a minor role in *Fuel for Growth*, even though their dire economic situation is clearly related to their inability to retain or realize what water and land resources they had. When the topic is discussed, Kupel argues that the relationships of groups like the Yavapai and Pima people to the demands of municipalities were rarely exploitative, but usually cooperative and mutually beneficial. Kupel maintains that federal actions during the 1930s (such as the passage of the Indian Reorganization Act) helped tribal leaders gain new

levels of sophistication in their relationships with other government entities. This is asserted by the author, with little solid proof offered.

As for Kupel's contention that his study does not conform to recent water historiographical trends associated with the Reisner-Worster School that are critical of western water-policy formulation, the author seems to be looking at a proverbial water glass that is always half full. By emphasizing community infrastructure development, he is clearly overlooking political conflicts that played out at the federal, state, and tribal levels. Kupel prefers to examine how each city confronted its water issues rather than telling the story of the political conflicts which shaped Arizona's water story, a tale that has played out in a land of water scarcity. Organized as it is, *Fuel for Growth* reads more like a parallel water history of the three cities and their unique water infrastructures. Heavy on technical details, *Fuel for Growth* will still be of interest to urban scholars of the West, but its over-all contribution to the debates among the major schools of western American water history are rather negligible.

Steven C. Schulte  
*Mesa State College*

*John Sutter: A Life on the North American Frontier.* By Albert L. Hurtado (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006)

If you have ever wondered how John Sutter, well positioned to become one of America's richest men by means of his extensive holdings in the Sacramento Valley at the beginning of the 1849 California Gold Rush, instead ended up petitioning the government for money, Albert Hurtado provides the answer. Moreover, he provides it without the defects that he observes have flawed the previous eight biographies of Sutter: Insufficient referencing, inattention to Sutter's post-1848 life, and, worst of all, fictionalizing.

Hurtado begins *John Sutter* with a thorough dissection of his subject's character traits, many already emerging during his youth in Europe. Although Hurtado fully credits Sutter's positive qualities and achievements, he does not find it "a hero's tale" (p. xiii). Johann August Sutter was a Swiss citizen born in a small German town in 1803, his father the foreman of a small paper mill. Sutter was to far exceed the middle-class aspirations of his parents, despite lack of success in his early undertakings. Facing debtors' prison in 1834 and leaving behind his wife and five children, not to be reunited with them for many years, he embarked upon his western adventure.

In a roundabout journey that also took him to the Sandwich Islands and Alaska, Sutter at last, in 1838, at age thirty-five, reached his destination, California. The region remained under loose Mexican control, but a man of vision

could commence building a vast empire centered on an adobe fortress in the Sacramento Valley. Lacking funds, Sutter's empire was in truth an empire of debt, his usual practice being to pay each creditor something but never to settle in full. Oddly enough, this protected him because, in the author's words, "If his fortunes crumbled, the wealth of many others would follow him into the dust" (p. 107). Hurtado manfully slashes his way through the dense thickets of Sutter's financial affairs, more successfully, it appears, than did Sutter, who "probably did not know the full extent of his obligations" (p. 297). The author's detailed knowledge of the California milieu, even including horse-branding practices, gives added authority to his theories about what transpired.

John Marshall's discovery of gold in 1848 at Sutter's Mill might have been Sutter's salvation, but in fact it proved to be his undoing. A host of gold rushers squatted on his Sacramento lands, effectively dismantling his empire, and unscrupulous dealers pounced upon this easy target Hurtado calls "one of the poorest businessmen in the history of capitalism" (p. xiii). His army of Indian workers largely deserted him, as did other employees. For a while he retreated to Hock Farm, a property farther north. In 1865, almost destitute, he left California, never to return. Sutter died in Lititz, a small town in Pennsylvania, in 1880.

Many early California pioneers remembered him kindly for his generosity and hospitality. When emigrants became stranded in the Sierra Nevada (including a remnant of the Donner group), he sent relief parties to their rescue, welcomed hundreds of them into his establishment, and helped them obtain land and passports, as well as immediate necessities. "Sometimes my houses were full of emigrants, so much so that I could scarcely find a place to sleep myself," he reminisced (p. 90). The American settlement he fostered undoubtedly influenced the easy American conquest of Mexican California. Readers interested in pioneer California will find much of value in this book, as well as a cautionary tale on overextended credit with considerable relevance to present times.

Sally Zanjani  
*University of Nevada, Reno*

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