

Nevada

Historical Society Quarterly

John B. Reid
Editor-in-Chief

Hillary Velázquez
& Frank Ozaki
Production & Design

Juliet S. Pierson
Manuscript Editor

Joyce M. Cox
Proofreader

Volume 59

2016

Numbers 1-4

Contents

- 1 Editor's Note
- 7 Reno at the Races
The Sporting Life and Progressive Reform
EMERSON MARCUS
- 26 The Bomb from the Bottom Up
Site Workers, Southern Nevadans, and the Nevada Test Site, 1951–1963
HARRY W. G. ROGERS
- 45 Mystery on the Mainline
What Wrecked the "City of San Francisco?"
CHRISTOPHER MACMAHON

Front Cover: George Wingfield stands with one of his horses in 1900. Wingfield owned and raced horses in Golconda before he made his fortune in the Tonopah and Goldfield mines. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

67 Washoe Redux
Territory, Sovereignty, and Anthropology
EDAN STREKAL

83 Notes and Documents
Mark Twain's Revolver: Myths and Realities
CHRISTINE K. JOHNSON

Book Reviews

94 *Changing the Game: Women at Work in Las Vegas, 1940-1990.*
By Joanne L. Goodwin (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2014).
Reviewed by Eileen V. Wallis

96 *Water Politics in Northern Nevada: A Century of Struggle.* 2d. ed.
By Leah J. Wilds (Reno & Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2014)
Reviewed by Christian Harrison

102 Cumulative Index – Volume 58

Editor's Note

While reading this issue's articles, I kept thinking about Harry S. Truman. Truman still holds the record for lowest approval rating during his last year in office at 22 percent (Truman was the first president for which Gallop polled on approval), although Richard M. Nixon (24 percent) and George W. "the Decider" Bush (25 percent) strove valiantly to match him. And while most if not all presidents hope for validation by future historians, few can please that persnickety Gallop group. Truman, however, is an exception; his historical rehabilitation has been extraordinary. In twenty-first century surveys of presidential scholars, Truman is routinely placed among the top ten of America's greatest presidents.

This rehabilitation was a surprise to me—I learned of it five minutes before writing this passage. I'm no presidential scholar, and so this is just personal preference, but I always found Truman ... well, difficult to like. I tend to side with George C. Herring and Arnold A. Offner on an assessment of Truman's personal style. Initially overwhelmed by a presidency that no one, not even Truman himself, predicted, Truman raised concerns among friends and foes alike for his seemingly simplistic black-and-white view of issues, his tendency for ill-considered tough talk, as well as his tendency to pride himself on his quick and firm decisiveness—with many decisions made without careful consideration of the issue's historical background or the long-term consequences of these decisions. As Henry Wallace put it, Truman tended to "decide before thinking."¹ He was the original decider!

Perhaps my personal views of Truman hardened, though, after I read his comments about Nevada from his private journal. I did not read all of Truman's private papers—I am no masochist—but I came upon an entry in his journal from January 1954 when searching for quotes about Nevada to share with my students. In this entry, he described a flight from the East Coast to San Francisco. The entry begins innocently enough: "We flew over the remains of the Great Salt Lake, the saltiest of the salty seas, which is slowly and gradually drying up." Okay, so far, so good. The entry continues:

Then we came to the great gambling and marriage destruction hell, known as Nevada. To look at it from the air it is just that—hell on earth. There are tiny green specks on the landscape where dice, roulette, light-of-loves, crooked poker and gambling thugs thrive. Such places should be abolished and so should Nevada. It should never have been made a state.²

Well, it seems we hitched a ride on the original straight-talk express! But perhaps a straightforward and direct style is exactly what was needed in the years after the war, and Truman's record of accomplishment speaks for itself.

Truman's thoughts on legalized gambling speak for themselves as well, and he was not alone in his hostility towards it. In this issue's first article, "Reno at the Races," Emerson Marcus addresses the hostility toward legal gambling and a little-known and mostly forgotten aspect of gambling in Nevada—pari-mutual betting on horse racing. Traditionally, historians have focused on casino gambling when discussing the history of Nevada's vice economy. That history emphasizes the 1909 legislative session that made gambling illegal in Nevada (and a felony to boot), and the 1931 legislative session revived Nevada's status as the sole state in the Union to legalize gambling. Thus, the period between 1909 (or 1910, when the gambling ban went into effect) and 1931 is traditionally described as a kind of interregnum, an interruption in Nevada's experiment with this type of legalized vice. The three most favored syntheses of Nevada history all agree—progressive reformers succeeded in ending open gambling beginning in 1910, and with some hesitation over the next five years (re-legalizing poker games, then banning them again) and with limited enforcement, so that illegal gambling continued underground until relegalization in 1931. In "Reno at the Races," Marcus argues—successfully, I think—that this narrative of Nevada's gambling needs to be revised. Rather than a view of 1910-1931 as a kind of dark ages of Nevada gambling, this period was one in which pari-mutuel provided a means for gambling revenue to continue its important role in the state, namely attracting tourists and generating revenue for Nevada's counties for infrastructure improvements (roads in particular). In 1923—the peak year of legal pari-mutuel gambling in Nevada, as Marcus tells us—\$1.7 million was wagered on Nevada horse races. To put his number in perspective, \$1.7 million in 1923 has the purchasing power of approximately \$28.8 million today. Not only does Marcus remind us of this important gambling history, but his research explains how this type of betting was able to negotiate a very hostile environment to gambling (one that had made games of chance a felony just five years earlier and, I assume, would have been applauded by Truman).

Truman had a more direct impact on the subject of the second article of this issue—the Nevada Test Site (NTS). Several sites were discussed for atmospheric atomic testing during Truman's first term, and the decision to hold these tests at the newly created NTS shaped the development of southern Nevada for decades to come. In "The Bomb from the Bottom-up: Site Workers, Southern Nevadans, and the Nevada Test Site, 1951-1963," Harry W. G. Rogers deepens and extends our knowledge and understanding of the NTS in the years when it operated at its peak. While this topic has been addressed ably from the perspective of the administrative agencies and management at the site, Rogers explores the topic through the eyes of those who worked there

who were below the executive level. Rogers has absorbed the lessons of the historians of labor and labor movements who have shown that laboring people are rarely passive recipients of decisions from the executive level, but rather are agents who strive to shape their conditions. Rogers reveals that very process at the NTS. Collective bargaining played perhaps the most important role, with the site averaging “one strike for every four explosions by 1962,” but non-union civilian groups pressured the Atomic Energy Commission for changes to both conditions (in the case of GIs who could not unionize) and southern Nevada as a whole who demanded significant economic benefits in exchange for hosting these tests.

The third and fourth articles of this issue have no relation to Harry Truman, although I would like to think he would have enjoyed both. In Christopher MacMahon’s “Mystery on the Mainline: What Wrecked the ‘City of San Francisco?’” the author addresses a little-known history mystery—the cause of the derailment of the passenger train “City of San Francisco” just west of Carlin, Nevada, on August 12, 1939. This tragedy resulted in twenty-four deaths and more than a hundred injuries. Citing numerous primary sources and analyzing the issue from an engineering perspective—the physics of the issue, if you will—MacMahon argues convincingly that sabotage is the only reasonable explanation for this tragic crash.

This issue continues with Edan Strekal’s “Washoe Redux: Territory, Sovereignty, and Anthropology,” in which Strekal addresses the history of the Washoe tribe’s claims for territory and compensation in the twentieth century. Strekal uncovers the role of two competing approaches to anthropology as the Washoe request for compensation went to the Indian Claims Commission. The debate centered around dueling expert testimony between noted anthropologists Julian Haynes Steward and his lesser known former student, Omer Stewart. In this article, Strekal not only reminds us of the importance of Washoe history to the history of Nevada, but he also reveals how shifting intellectual paradigms in the social sciences (in this case, the emergence of “applied anthropology” as an alternative to traditional theoretical approaches) can make an impact on real world situations and outcomes.

And finally, in this issue we continue our revival of the Notes and Documents section which presents more concise articles of interest, and this issue includes one of more interesting offerings to date. In this piece, Christine Johnson examines one of the Nevada Historical Society’s oldest artifacts—a fragment of a pistol said to have belonged to Samuel Clemens during his short residence in Nevada. Johnson does a wonderful job of weaving this tale and exploring the mysteries that surround it. This artifact provides insight into several interesting issues: Clemens’s fantastical version of journalism (with a story that seems more far-fetched than the Calaveras jumping frog); the two great men at the center of the Comstock’s school of “sagebrush journalism” (Dan DeQuille is part of the ownership chain); and the role of the Comstock’s seemingly endless fires in shaping Comstock history.

I think President Truman would approve of Johnson's piece in particular. From his personal journal quoted above, he continued:

Well we finally passed the hell hole of inequity [Nevada] by flying over one of the most beautiful spots in the whole world—Lake Tahoe. It is a lovely picture from the air and it must have affected the old pirates of the Comstock lode, the whores and gamblers of Mark Twain's time also because some very wonderful descriptions of it have been written in those times.³

Ah, yes—"the whores and gamblers of Mark Twain's time" —we seem to have found an aspect of Nevada history that interested Mr. Truman—its myths more than its realities. He was, after all, "an avid student of history [who] drew simple lessons from complicated events."⁴ But perhaps Truman's straightforward thinking and brusque decisiveness is just what today's chaotic and rapidly changing world needs most. Perhaps I could benefit from more of just such an approach. I am not sure; I'll need a few more years to think about it.

John B. Reid
Editor-in-Chief

NOTES

¹George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U. S. Foreign Relations since 1776* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 2008), 599; Arnold A. Offner, *Another Such Victory: President Truman and the Cold War, 1945-1953* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), 23.

²Robert H. Ferrell, *Off the Record: The Private Papers of Harry S. Truman* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1980), 317

³*Ibid.*

⁴Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 599.

Reno at the Races

The Sporting Life and Progressive Reform

EMERSON MARCUS

Harper's Magazine called horse racing "the most exciting feature of Reno social life" in 1925.¹ Walter Van Tilburg Clark described races at the fairgrounds in Reno during the interwar years as chaotic spectacles where even young children gambled and cultivated a "terrible racing instinct."² In 1923, a month-long race meeting in Reno generated more than one million dollars in legal bets.³ In the two decades preceding Nevada's wide-open gambling law of 1931, the state-run pari-mutuel system of betting implemented at the racetrack opened a wedge in the state's strict anti-gambling law (1910) and welcomed "beautifully gowned women and racing enthusiasts" to play the ponies in Reno.⁴ As horse racing and its legal betting attracted spectators, Reno developed and expanded a tourism-based industry. However, when other western states followed suit with similar forms of legalized horse-race betting laws during the Great Depression, out-of-state racing enthusiasts stopped coming to Reno, and Nevada pushed the envelope further with its wide-open gambling law.

As with many of Nevada's economies, horse racing in Reno experienced a boom and bust. In 1915, a popular thoroughbred racing publication noted Nevada, Maryland and Kentucky as the only states regulating pari-mutuel

Emerson Marcus is the State Historian for the Nevada National Guard and a technical sergeant in the 152nd Airlift Wing's public affairs office. He has a masters of arts in history from the University of Nevada, Reno. Prior to becoming State Historian, Marcus worked as a news and investigative reporter at the *Reno Gazette-Journal*. He lives in Sparks, Nevada with his wife, Sarah, and children, Jocelyn and Brockton.



George Wingfield stands with one of his horses in 1900. Wingfield owned and raced horses in Golconda before he made his fortune in the Tonopah and Goldfield mines. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

betting.⁵ The track remained a popular gathering place for Reno's business community, gamblers, divorce seekers, sporting men, and out-of-state visitors with wagers in hand in the 1920s, but that quickly changed in the 1930s.⁶ California approved pari-mutuel betting in 1933. Ohio, Michigan, and other states, including New York, did so by the end of the 1930s (thirty states legalized forms of pari-mutuel betting by 1974).⁷ This acceptance outside Nevada's borders consigned the state's horse racing attentions to small casino sports-book televisions playing far-off races for a gambling public.⁸

While much of the historiography of Nevada tends to focus on the state's vice economy through the lens of casino gambling, prostitution, and easy divorce and marriage, many historians and journalists have often overlooked horse-race betting's impact on the state's evolving policy concerning gambling.⁹ During the Progressive Era in America, horse-race betting wasn't near-

ly as accepted as it is today. As the sport commercialized in the United States at the end of the nineteenth century, tracks increasingly became dependent on bookmaker licensing fees. By 1910, anti-gambling laws across the country led to the closing of racetracks from the Belmont Stakes in New York to the old Santa Anita in California—and also in Nevada. To save the sport in the face of these reforms, many state legislators discussed pari-mutuel betting as a progressive form of gambling where bets entered a pool with odds based on the quantity of bets on a particular horse: calculated odds, not bookmaker speculation. In addition, the betting in Nevada was taxed, and the revenue was funneled to county road improvement projects.

In Nevada, sporting types in favor of pari-mutuel betting legislation included businessmen, ranchers, saloon owners, gamblers, and former miners seeking to loosen the reins of reform, especially moral reform. They sought an amendment to the progressive-reform-driven anti-gambling law passed in the 1909 legislature; it prohibited more than twenty card games for money, designating them as felonies—making the possession of a deck of cards punishable by a fine. It also prohibited slot machines.¹⁰ The law also banned horse-race bookmaking. In the following legislative session, in 1911, lawmakers proposed having pari-mutuel betting at the state-owned Reno fairgrounds as an avenue to roll back strict anti-gambling legislation with a different method of betting, one that arguably complied with progressive reform goals.

But reformers argued that easy divorce, gambling, and the ever-present saloon were out of step with the progressive hopes of building a “model commonwealth,” as Nevada’s U.S. Senator Francis Newlands often put it.¹¹ Even Nevada’s political kingmaker and preeminent banker George Wingfield identified himself as a progressive at this time, but he saw the suppression of gambling as well as other economic regulation as dangerous for what he called the “undeveloped state” of Nevada. He viewed moral reformers as a radical fringe element of the progressive movement.¹² Conversely, reformers often saw business arguments that backed permissive vice as “artificial stimulants” for the state’s economy, which made Nevada the nation’s “laughing stock.”¹³

From 1904 to 1914 reformers in Nevada adopted the referendum (1904) direct primaries (1909), initiative and recall (1912), a greatly expanded role of the state government in the regulatory powers of the Public Service Commission (1911), and also passed suffrage for women (1914).¹⁴ In addition, the anti-gambling law in 1909 and the 1913 extension of the divorce residency from six months to one year displayed the state’s commitment to social betterment and even moral reform of a state dependent on mining, ranching, and transportation industries. However, many with mining and ranching backgrounds, and especially George Wingfield, found women’s suffrage, business regulation, worker protection laws, and other moral reforms that prohibited gambling and track betting to be at odds with their business, political, and certainly cultural experience.

TRACK BETTING IN NEVADA

In 1913, Sam Davis included a chapter on "The Turf" in his *History of Nevada*. The two-volume history claimed that "from the earliest time horse-racing was a popular sport" in Nevada. However, Davis argued that it had "fallen into disrepute."¹⁵ While trotting, pacing and racing "speed programmes," or "speed contests," attracted large crowds at the annual Nevada State Fair beginning in 1874, these exhibitions ceased in 1901.

In the nineteenth century, Nevada featured popular horse-race events and nationally renowned owners, including Theodore Winters with his horse stables in Washoe Valley. In 1864, Winters purchased the undefeated Norfolk, an offspring of the famed horse Lexington, a Kentucky horse and America's most prolific sire in the 1860s and 1870s. No stallion in history ever led America's sire list more years than Lexington (1861 to 1875). With the combination of Norfolk and other fine horseflesh, Winters launched his breeding powerhouse, eventually producing Del Rio Rey, the nation's best two-year-old in 1889.¹⁶ However, Winters' fortune diminished in the 1890s. He died in 1906 as horse racing in the state entered what Davis described as its disrepute.

In addition, the state struggled even to hold a state fair, and leaders of the agricultural society lamented the state's lack of desire to fund the dilapidated track, which was largely a result of depleted state funds and a two-decade depression following Nevada's boom on the Comstock. Furthermore, horse racing was increasingly viewed nationally as populated by a seedy gathering of immoral gamblers and shady bookmakers. The integrity of the sport declined as its audience shifted from a planter aristocracy in the early nineteenth century to professional sportsmen. As Mary Jean Wall argues in *How Kentucky Became Southern: A Tale of Outlaws, Horse Thieves, Gamblers and Breeders*, many favored a national end of horse racing:

Early in the twentieth century, when Progressive Era reforms came into vogue, state legislative wallop would pack authoritative power into the escalating outcry to ban all Thoroughbred racing—everywhere.¹⁷

Amid this anti-gambling climate, the Methodist clergyman Reverend E. J. Bulgin conducted a series of revivals in Reno in 1908 that shook the city into action against its saloon industry. On one winter evening, Bulgin told a crowd inside a Reno church that "the spirit of grace might descend upon Reno and regenerate her during this period of revival, as it had on a number of California communities"—communities he had recently visited.¹⁸ For several nights at churches, large gathering halls, the high school, and the university, his lectures ran the gamut from scriptural interpretations of the Twenty-third Psalm to "The Unpardonable Sin" and an explanation of Hell—attracting

"one of the largest religious gatherings in the state's history."¹⁹ The lectures received wide attention in Reno's newspapers and struck a chord with those in attendance who were well aware of the vices of the town's saloon districts.

Two weeks after the revival, more than a thousand people met in Reno to discuss the prevalence of gambling in the city. After two failed attempts that year, Reno's anti-gambling lobby consolidated and wrote a petition to the city council for a special election for prohibition of gambling. Business interests and the Knights of the Royal Arch, an organization of saloonkeepers and liquor dealers, rallied to defeat the petition—1,779 to 1,196—but the progressive anti-gambling tide was growing. It eventually arrived at the state legislature the next year, in 1909, when Democratic Assemblyman George McIntosh of Elko proposed an anti-gambling bill. Reformers in the legislature presented an ominous situation and threat to the saloon interests of Reno and their business allies along Commercial Row. Urban Nevada—primarily Reno and Goldfield—sympathized more with gambling interests, mainly because the businesses resided there. Rural Nevadans sought the end of gambling in the state.²⁰ Even Assemblyman Lem Allen, who sympathized with horse race betting interests as a long-time president of the Board of Agriculture overseeing the State Fairs, could not overcome moral arguments during the legislative session, admitting he must side with anti-gambling interests if he expected "to get to heaven." The Women's Civic League followed Allen's statement with a letter containing the words: "Will you please help save our boys? Then stand with Lem Allen and go to heaven." While it came later to Nevada in comparison to other states, the Silver State's anti-gambling law was comprehensive, and strict.²¹

Within two years, though, businessmen in Reno, including George Wingfield, were publically discussing track betting under the pari-mutuel system as a way to weaken the strict law. Pari-mutuel betting was originally developed in France in the 1860s, and Kentucky became the first state to legalize it in 1906. In 1912, Maryland followed Kentucky's lead with its own pari-mutuel betting law. In 1915 state lawmakers around the country—in the face of anti-gambling laws—introduced versions of it based on the Kentucky model, which included a state racing commission managed by three to five representatives appointed by the governor. Taxes generated revenue for local governments. Heading into the 1915 legislature, the Nevada State Board of Agriculture, formerly referred to as the Agricultural Society, regained funding and backed the pari-mutuel system as a means to reinvigorate the state fair and encourage better horse breeding. According to R.W. Parry, the president of the State Board of Agriculture:

The desire to "have an interest," together with the spirit of speculation, is always abroad in distinct evidence no matter what sport may be patronized. The race horse in the eyes of many is a necessary evil.²²

Parry and others argued that horse-race betting could increase revenue and attract business from out of state. They additionally argued for the reduction of the divorce residency from one year to six months. Moral legislation became a distraction, he argued, as citizens focused attention on improving the business climate. When legislators met, the two horse-race measures—amending the anti-gambling law and creating a state racing commission—along with the shortening of the divorce residency from one year to six months were popularly known in the press as the session's "three liberal measures."²³

'IN THE HOLLOW OF HIS HAND'
— ANNE MARTIN, MAY 1915

Opening Nevada's twenty-seventh legislative session, Nevada Governor Emmet Derby Boyle called the state's situation "peculiar" because of its vast area and low population—"a state of small and isolated communities." Boyle added, "These conditions in themselves place an unusually heavy burden upon our taxpayers." One of the last states to centralize assessment and taxation on property under a commission, Nevada underwent a restructuring of its tax system after the authorization of a state tax commission in 1911. In response to its population more than doubling in a decade, Nevada's state expenditures exceeded one million dollars for the first time in 1914.²⁴

Pro-business interests sought compromise with reformers when legislators introduced the horse-race measures. Under the proposed pari-mutuel system, bettors entered betting pools against each other, and the house always took a profit through a commission, or "the rake." Winners would collect the remaining money depending on bets placed. The betting got more complex with more intricate bets (i.e., trifecta bets on the top three horses in order: win, place, and show).²⁵ Under the proposed bill in Nevada, the governor would appoint a five-member commission of "experienced horseman and stock raisers." The Racing Commission would take eight percent of all money bet, with the remaining money placed in a pool and distributed to winners. That eight percent funded race meetings and paid track personnel. One sixth of the commission's take was to be funneled to the state treasurer and distributed to counties for road improvement projects, giving the gambling legislation a uniquely progressive veil.²⁶

Backed by the university in Reno and religious and women's groups, opponents attacked the horse-race betting proposal. Their arguments addressed two points: morals and economics. They rejected rancher arguments that horse-race betting, allegedly incentivized through competitive racing, cultivated better breeding of horses in the state during a time when the demand for horses was on the rise, especially in Europe for the war effort. But in an even more heated debate, Nevada's repeal of the one-year divorce residency

split the state's senate. Only a "political deal" ended that standoff. In exchange for a vote to repeal the one-year residency, a Fallon senator demanded that the state fair be moved from Reno to Fallon. This re-established the six-month residency, to the joy of Reno's business community, which was seeking revenue from divorcees during their stay, but Fallon was the new home of the fair.²⁷

The Racing Commission bill passed in the Senate, 14-8. It was even more successful in the Assembly, passing 40-10,²⁸ but only after an amendment was added that definitively stated that speculative bookmaking would be prohibited. While moral arguments eventually lost after the passage of the racing law and divorce residency, Nevada's racing commission and how it regulated the races were shaped and amended largely by progressive arguments. Horse-race meets remained under the thumb of the state. Race meets were not to exceed thirty days, Sunday races were prohibited, and races could only be held during daylight hours.²⁹

If there was any doubt who was behind the horse-racing bills, the well-known Nevada suffragist, Anne Martin, let it be known that it was one man: George Wingfield. In a letter to the national suffrage leader Anne Howard Shaw in May 1915, Martin wrote that the legislature "lay in the hollow of his hand." Martin alleged that Wingfield accomplished the passage of horse-race betting, along with the shortening of the divorce residency, through a "system of trading votes." She wrote: "He is the open and acknowledged instigator of the race-track gambling bill, because he wanted gambling legalized for his race horses." She added: "Wingfield's hand is in every one of these measures."³⁰ Wingfield represented the interests of the ranchers, bankers, and businessmen, and he had the capital—obtained in the mines of Tonopah and Goldfield only a decade earlier and eventually from the state's banks—to push those interests.

A TRUE SPORT

Before his transition from the poker table to business manager, mine owner, and political king, George Wingfield lived the life of a true sport upon his arrival to Nevada in the late 1890s. As a boy, he had helped his family round up stock and he joined long drives to the shipping points. He enjoyed the cowboy life and developed a well-practiced poker face as a skillful young gambler. He also developed a love of horses. Before he made millions in Goldfield, Wingfield raced horses in Golconda in Humboldt County and at the state fair in Reno in 1899. That year in Reno, Wingfield's horse, Incindiator, placed third in two races at the Nevada State Fair.³¹ The *Golconda News* described Wingfield as a "crack rider" long before he was a shrewd gambler or secretive businessman.³² He even made a small fortune from the sale of his horses before leaving for the Tonopah boom. In Tonopah, Wingfield eventually partnered with George Nixon, a future United States senator from Nevada. As



George Wingfield poses for a photo in Winnemucca in 1898. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

a result of that partnership and the consolidation of the Goldfield mines under his thumb, Wingfield became one of the nation's most successful American businessmen of the early twentieth century.³³

As a millionaire, Wingfield acquired two livestock outfits, one in Lander County, Nevada, and the other north of Reno, the Pyramid Land and Stock Company. In 1910, he purchased a 320-acre ranch near Honey Lake that he called "Meadowbrook Ranch," a summer resort and the setting of many of his bear hunts. While livestock outfits and agricultural ventures in Churchill County (the Churchill Creamery) represented a steady industry compared to mining, his Meadowbrook Ranch was simply pleasure.

In 1914, Wingfield purchased land south of Reno for a horse stable, known as the Alamo Ranch, previously owned by the deceased Nevada Governor John Sparks. Wingfield also sought the establishment of an even grander stock operation. That year, Wingfield spent more than \$40,000 on thoroughbred horses from around the world. He maintained constant correspondence with trainers, and horsemen updated him on purchases along with the performance of his thoroughbreds at tracks nationwide.³⁴ Wingfield then financed and incorporated the Nevada Stock Farm, telling the *Reno Evening Gazette*: "I am not going into the racing business, but I do admire thoroughbred horses in this state."³⁵ However, in correspondence with his attorneys, Wingfield requested that the corporate charter include "the power to race or run horses in all states," and added that he "would rather that this be not mentioned in the articles of incorporation."³⁶ The incorporation mentioned land and water rights, along with raising cattle and the ability to "breed, raise and deal in horses." It added:

Both thoroughbred horses, work horses, race horses, and each and every other class of horses, and to carry on a general horse breeding business ... to do ... everything ... as is usually done by the owners of such classes of horses.³⁷

In 1914, Wingfield was already placing bets on his own throughbreds at out-of-state tracks. Bernard Baruch, the eastern capitalist who helped finance the merger of the Goldfield Consolidated Mining Company in 1907 and maintained a lengthy correspondence with Wingfield throughout his life, entered bets, most likely oral bets, for Wingfield at New York race tracks. One month before the 1914 election, Wingfield wrote Baruch:

From time to time, I may wire you to put down a bet on some of these horses myself if it is not too much trouble to you but if it is, please be frank to say so. I would not bother you with such matters but I do not know anyone else there who can take care of it as well as you can. If you have someone who can do this it is all right but if you have to do it personally, I do not want to bother you.³⁸

Whether he did it or someone else, Baruch obliged. Wingfield further requested Baruch to “please do so in such a way that none of it will get on the track.” In 1913, the New York State Court ruled horse race bets were legal when made orally (prohibiting the oral practice was an infringement on freedom of speech, according to the courts), making it possible for Baruch, or someone who worked for him, to make a bet on Wingfield’s behalf.³⁹

Following the passage of the 1915 horse-racing law in Nevada, though, Wingfield was free to openly bet on races in Reno—with a grand vision of a large-scale race circuit. Only days after the law’s passage in February of 1915, he told a crowd in San Francisco of his plans. The circuit, according to Wingfield, was to include Reno, Las Vegas, Goldfield, and other Nevada towns. He predicted a revival of horse racing throughout the American West while rather disingenuously saying that his main intention was to elevate horse breeding in Nevada.

My participation in the thoroughbred racing game will be simply that of one who loves horses. My interests in the revival of the game in Nevada is not in the role of promoter, but a horseman. I am working for the advancement of livestock breeding of all kinds, and I believe that it is essential to have racing to create a better grade of horses in general. My only object in wishing to get through the pari-mutuel bills was that the public’s interest in the horse is attracted when there is a chance to place a wager.⁴⁰

Regional headlines and editorials heralded the reorganization of the Nevada Jockey Club as the possible replacement of the California Jockey Club, the then preeminent western club. The *Sacramento Union* wrote that Reno was set to become the “Great American Monte Carlo.”

Reno, the Monte Carlo of America. That is what a number of Nevada millionaires are planning to make of the divorce colony by a revival of the racing game next year in the Sagebrush metropolis ... Little has been said of the project, and every endeavor has been made to have the establishment of so many stock farms in the state appear an accident. To this, the obvious answer is that there is but one purpose of raising racing horses—to race them.⁴¹

SELLING THE BET

In 1915, the saloon crowd in Nevada knew that the loosening of restrictive gambling laws faced a changing business and political dynamic: a rising female clientele as a result of the divorce industry and also of women’s

suffrage granted in the 1914 election. To accommodate the changing climate, race meetings accepted women with half-off entrance fees. Advertisements and news stories in the papers portrayed a different form of gambling and public socializing. Horse racing was out in the open, and under the sun, as the daytime-only law mandated, and pari-mutuel betting excluded bookies and pools. According to news reports, Reno's first race meeting in 1915 included "Ladies' Days," which attracted more than three thousand women to the track. The *Nevada State Journal* concluded: "just about every housewife in Reno is now counted as a regular patron of the amusement at the fairgrounds." Some women's groups continued their opposition to horse racing and, contrary to what the *Journal* wrote, many women remained harsh critics of the racetrack culture and voiced opposition in the 1917 legislature. Still, news stories asserted that the 2:00 p.m. race start time accommodated a housewife's "desire to enjoy the racing without in the least neglecting [her] household duties" before supper time. The *Journal* described the 1915 "Ladies' Day" as follows:

Never in the history of Reno, so I am reliably informed, have so many of our mothers, daughters, wives and sweethearts congregated together as were massed at the fair grounds yesterday afternoon. I know of a surety that it has never been my pleasure to view a more attractive picture than was presented by the more than three thousand women who had seats in the grandstands guests of the Fair and Racing association yesterday.⁴²

These crowds watched fast tracks where horses ran for stakes as high as \$2,000. The press described the Nevada Derby as the largest "assemblage of people imbued with the sporting instinct" since the Jack Johnson-versus-Jim Jeffries boxing bout in July 1910.⁴³ While several exulted in the day, it belonged to George Wingfield. The racetrack in Nevada attracted horses from across the nation, along with sportswriters, affluent spectators, and even Governor Emmet Boyle. The *Nevada State Journal* wrote, "The Reno track should be christened Wingfield Park in honor of the Nevada breeder, George Wingfield, who has done more for the advancement of the breeding of better horses than any other one man in the United States."⁴⁴

Positive anecdotes peppered news stories with flowery language describing a fast track, fun for men and women, and the words "gamble" or "bet" rarely appearing in print. For instance, the *Nevada State Journal* story following Ladies' Day at the track never once used the two words. It repeatedly described the bets as an "investment." While gambling was vile, an "inexcusable vice," Nevadans did not oppose "investments" in 1915, especially investments taxed for the betterment of roads. The saloon crowd and the now favorable press reports did more than cloak gambling in the attire of "investments"; it also presented opponents with a more culturally accepted, respectable manner of betting. The pari-mutuel system was "as simple as the A B Cs, once it is

understood, and now that the state has learned to place full confidence in the new method, there is every reason to believe the investments will be heavier" as horse racing becomes more established in the state.⁴⁵

While newspaper reports celebrated the races as high-class, cosmopolitan events, there were incidents of wrongdoing. In the second week of Reno's first racing meet in 1915, the commission revoked one jockey's license and suspended two others. Jockey Julius Washer bet on another horse in a race he rode. His horse finished third and the horse he wagered on finished first. In addition, two jockeys, T. Nolan and Robert Imes, were suspended from the meet for "conduct prejudicial to the best interests of the turf," specifically "associating with 'touts' and engaging in 'touting' themselves." (A tout was someone offering racing tips in exchange for a share of bet winnings.) The disbarment and two suspensions made front-page headlines. The message was clear: race betting under the pari-mutuel system was not all "square," as Wingfield had portrayed it. Still, swift justice followed the infractions and races continued.⁴⁶

In 1915, more than \$770,000 passed through the pari-mutuel machines in Reno during the first month-long race meet, from July 17 to August 14. More than \$60,000 was taken as a commission. One-sixth of that—\$10,316—went to county roads, as was stipulated under law. Track expenses show more than \$15,000 spent to regulate betting at the track, with more than \$9,000 on payroll, and an additional \$1,049 going to private detectives investigating the touts. The largest crowds usually followed local horses. Wingfield's prized horse that year, Celesta, won a \$1,000-stake race on August 7. One of his other horses, Star Shooter, also won, with more than eight thousand people in attendance. Local horses attracted the largest crowd of the entire meet, even more than the inaugural Nevada Derby. In 1916, as news from the tracks reported that plenty of money changed hands, Wingfield became the Racing Commissioner, a position he held for decades, even after his banks closed in the 1930s and he faced bankruptcy.⁴⁷

For the new commissioner, horse racing displayed the potential for tourism, and also rodeo, which sought to expand tourism in order to fill an event void left by the loss of the state fair to Fallon in 1915.⁴⁸ The same leaders in business and ranching brought Reno its first rodeo in 1919. These leaders included men such as ranching mogul William H. Moffet, who held an office in Wingfield's Reno National Bank Building, on the third floor. Moffat strongly agreed with Wingfield that horse racing, betting, and rodeo brought possibilities of tourism, especially with other states outside Nevada's borders prohibiting these types of events.

In addition, Nevada's county-roads fund continued to reap some benefit, but this was small in comparison to federal funds coming into the state from the Federal Aid Road Act (1921) that spawned the "road building decade," as Nevada Governor James Scrugham (1923-1927) called it. The thirty-day

summer race meet in 1923 produced more than \$14,000 for county roads; a respectable sum, but minuscule in comparison to the federal assistance that progressively underlined the state's reliance on road money from Washington.⁴⁹

Wingfield's Nevada Stock Farm, a sort of "plaything," as his biographer noted, repeatedly struggled to make profits, but racetrack crowds continued to gather. In 1922, the Silver State Jockey Club incorporated and requested a four-year \$20,000 contract with the State Board of Agriculture to hold meetings under the Racing Commission's guidance. In 1923, more than one million dollars was bet at the Reno track during a summer race meet—a record that would not be surpassed in the decade. Wingfield complained in annual reports to the governor that the private contractors who managed the meets were not as successful because they didn't get a cut of the takes from the pari-mutuel machines. In 1928, the Silver State Jockey Club reported a \$19,854.79 deficit. Popular race promoters, such as the California horseman William Kyne, sought to capitalize on state-run pari-mutuel betting in Nevada, but they rarely profited.⁵⁰

HORSE RACING'S BOOM AND BUST IN NEVADA

Still, Reno's 1923 race meeting saw more sums bet at the track than in any other year. The race meetings included attractions similar to those in the eight previous years of racing, including free admission for women one day each week. "Atmosphere! That's the best word to describe what one saw at the track today," one *Reno Evening Gazette* editorial exulted, "... colorful, cosmopolitan, kaleidoscope and such descriptive adjectives pop up." The editorial continued:

There is no more thrilling sight in all sport and pastime than to watch a running race in which thoroughbreds, everyone of them the descendent of a long line of racing ancestors, are competing ... Racing, properly conducted and safeguarded against abuse, is and always will be the greatest of all sports.⁵¹

Katharine Fullerton Gerould, *Harper's Magazine* essayist, wrote: "There is, you see, except in the racing season, nothing whatever to do in Reno; and the Silver State Jockey Club has only two meetings a year—early summer and early autumn. ... Even if you go to the races every day while they are on—and most people do—the two meetings together do not fill up many weeks."⁵² She called Reno's horse-racing scene "the most exciting feature of Reno social life."

However, Governor Boyle kept a watchful eye, if not a suspicious one, on the business. In 1916, after allegations that bets were being placed outside the fairgrounds at downtown Reno businesses, shielded from the Racing Commission's purview, Boyle wrote Wingfield: "While this is properly a matter for the local police authorities, I believe that the racing commission



General Thatcher, one of George Wingfield's thoroughbred horses, is seen in this photograph from 1923. General Thatcher was perhaps Wingfield's most successful horse, finishing third in the Preakness States in 1923. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

has perhaps as large an interest as anyone in seeing that the law is upheld and I would be glad to have your aid in any steps that may be necessary to secure its enforcement." Boyle at least mildly worried about horse-race betting in Nevada, even after signing it into law. Wingfield, then the Nevada State Racing Commissioner, responded three days after Boyle's letter saying that he "investigated" the inquiry and that "the report is entirely false."⁵³

Boyle agreed that out-of-state bets were outside the Racing Commission's jurisdiction, but he reminded Wingfield that any form of illegal horse-race betting in Nevada would "discredit" the Commission and was a "sufficient matter of interest to justify you in assisting the authorities in securing its suppression." Boyle's reminder shows more than just his trepidation about horse-race betting at the tracks, it also shows his fear that it would spread gambling in downtown Reno. It also elucidated a glimpse of Nevada's future, as Jim McKay and other business associates increasingly entered "race wire" services in the 1930s, taking bets in Reno on races at eastern tracks after Nevada approved wide-open gambling in 1931.⁵⁴

McKay, owner of the Bank Club in Wingfield's Golden Hotel and kingpin in the city's illegal drug and liquor trade with interest in Reno's legal prostitution establishments, worked closely with Wingfield at the Nevada Stock Farm in the 1920s; he resided on South Virginia Street near Wingfield's stables. He remained active in the state's horse-racing industry, along with his interests in racing and gambling south of the border in Mexico. McKay eventually served on the Racing Commission with Wingfield, and the two entered into horse-raising agreements. For example, in 1925, five Nevada Stock Farm mares were given to McKay free of charge with access to stallions at the farm, but only if McKay raised them and provided Wingfield with a 50 percent interest in their offspring.⁵⁵

In 1931, McKay played an influential role in the expensive renovations made at the state fairgrounds in anticipation of a fight between Max Baer of San Francisco and the "Basque Woodchopper," Paulino Uzcudun. Only months after the wide-open gambling law, McKay, Bill Graham, and Wingfield organized the bout to take place at the racetrack on July 4. Reno's architect Frederic DeLongchamps was hired to design a new clubhouse and arena expected to seat up to 20,000 spectators. Jack Dempsey, boxer, promoter, and Nevada resident under the state's new six-week divorce residency, entered into an agreement to promote the fight.⁵⁶ As the fight approached, horse races were held, including the Paulino Cup, Max Baer Cup, and the Jack Dempsey Cup. The festivities included the start of a 28-day race meet, as a wide variety of visitors arrived for events illegal outside Nevada, including Hollywood headliners Edward G. Robinson, the Marx Brothers, Buster Keaton, and W.C. Fields.⁵⁷

While Nevada's coming-out party following the 1931 passage of wide-open gambling brought nationwide publicity, it was the final time horse racing in Nevada attracted a substantial audience at the track. The Nevada State Racing Commission failed to organize a meeting in 1932 and did not oversee another large-scale race meeting the rest of the decade. The passage of pari-mutuel laws outside Nevada's border and the Great Depression killed the month-long race meetings inside the state. Feeling the effects of the worsening business climate in November of 1932, Wingfield sold the remaining thoroughbred horses at the Nevada Stock Farm—the "act of a despondent man."⁵⁸ The expensive hobby embraced during the good times of his wealth had become too expensive. Wingfield entered bankruptcy in 1935. While never at the same level of wealth or political power he wielded before the Depression, Wingfield did regain capital in the Getchell Mine in Humboldt County during the late 1930s. With that money, he again purchased horses, this time quarter horses, and raised them on his Spanish Springs Ranch north of Sparks. He owned about fifty horses there just before his death on Christmas Eve in 1959.⁵⁹

As the Great Depression ravaged Wingfield's wealth, California jumped at horse-race betting. William Kyne, a horseracing promoter who managed multiple racing meets in Nevada in the 1920s and even helped organize the Silver

State Jockey Club, led the charge for horse-race betting under the pari-mutuel system in California.⁶⁰ The push for legalization was met with failure early on. In 1926, legalization failed at the ballot box following an initiative petition. In 1933, though, eight years after California voters had defeated the pari-mutuel bill, Kyne knew that the political climate, given the Great Depression, was much more accepting of track betting in the state.

But California wasn't alone. Only weeks into Franklin Delano Roosevelt's presidency (following his landslide Democratic victory), twenty states around the nation proposed forms of pari-mutuel betting during legislative sessions. In the same year the nation repealed prohibition, but the anti-booze law was not the only form of morality legislation on its last legs. An *Associated Press* survey reported that twenty legislatures had "turned to the race track and legalized betting as a possible contributor" to "replenish depleted treasuries," just as Nevada had eighteen years before. One headline proclaimed "U.S. Blue Laws Being Wiped Out." As a reason for the sudden shift in policy change, the *Associated Press* reported:

Proponents of the various measures, especially in states where racing is allowed either by law or official sufferance, point out that betting is being carried on by some system or other wherever racing is allowed and that the state might as well be getting some revenue from it.⁶¹

California legalized pari-mutuel track betting in 1933. Washington, and several other states, also allowed pari-mutuel betting that year. Kyne's Bay Meadows Racetrack opened in 1934 and remained in operation into the twenty-first century.

As a result of the Great Depression and the fall of Wingfield's banks, along with the acceptance of pari-mutuel betting in other states, the *Nevada State Journal* reported in 1953 that the sport "hit the doldrums and was active in only a small way at fairs and rodeos."⁶² The sport in Nevada simply could not survive California's competition. In addition, the rise of news services, especially Moe Annenberg's *Daily Racing Form*, fed an insatiable appetite for up-to-the-minute racing news through the telegraph. While anti-racketeering prosecutors may have desired an end to Annenberg's business in order to stop the estimated fifteen thousand bookies operating nationwide—enabled by the telegraph service—it was deemed news, completely legal, and eventually served to bolster race-wire betting in Nevada in the 1940s, specifically operations led by Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel.⁶³ In 1941, as wire services expanded and became more accepted, the Nevada legislature legalized out-of-state race wire betting, a move which sought to eliminate debate on the legality of bookmaking operations in casinos as the telegraph service became increasingly popular. While Governor Edward Carville vetoed the legislation in 1941, siding with county district attorneys who were fearful of racketeering, he also de-

fended the sport inside Nevada, saying, "Wide open bookmaking would hurt all racing inside the state." A similar bill failed in 1939, but legislators overrode Carville's veto in 1941.⁶⁴ If the Depression and legalization of horse-racing in California began the sport's demise in Nevada, legalized race wires ensured that its presence in the state would never be at in-state tracks.

CONCLUSION

The early days of horse-race betting in Nevada came about following a compromise between the demands of reformers and goals of businessmen in the Progressive Era. In the end, business interests won out over reform, but not without two decades of gambling prohibition in the state. The goals of Nevada's sports and gamblers and those backing reform during the Progressive Era blended into what could be described as progressive gambling legislation at a time when other western states discussed it, but kept horse-racing gambling or pari-mutuel betting illegal under anti-gambling laws. Although the 1915 legislation passed in Nevada, it appeased reformers by keeping the anti-gambling law intact.

From 1915 to 1931 in Reno, month-long race meetings produced regional spectacles that catered to horse owners, gamblers, and even members of the city's growing divorce colony—a cosmopolitan clientele taking six-month sojourns. The events reflected early twentieth-century American sporting life—a life wherein men with the means and the leisure could indulge in racetrack entertainments and risks similar to their trips to the gambling tables in saloons prior to October 1910, when Nevada's anti-gambling law went into effect. With sporting life stymied in Reno and myriad types of gambling suppressed after 1910, a pushback came in the form of pari-mutuel horse-race betting—progressive gambling legislation—at the track, spearheaded by Reno's richest citizen, George Wingfield, and backed by Nevada's ranch and mining culture.⁶⁵

NOTES

- ¹Katharine Fullerton Gerould, *The Aristocratic West* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1925), 155.
- ²Walter Van Tilburg Clark, *The City of Trembling Leaves* (New York: Random House, 1945), 70.
- ³\$1.7 million for the entire year. *Nevada State Journal* (13 July 1923); *The Nevada Racing Commission's Annual Report* [signed by George Wingfield] (Carson City: State Printing Office, 1923).
- ⁴*Reno Evening Gazette* (9 June 1923).
- ⁵"Advancement of Racing by Pari-Mutuel Betting," *Thoroughbred Record*, 82, (16 October 1915), 186.
- ⁶*Reno Evening Gazette* (19 July 1920).
- ⁷U.S. Congress, *Commission on the Review of the National Policy toward Gambling Hearings on Pari-Mutuel Horseracing* [held March 4 and March 5, 1975] (Washington, D.C.: National Technical Information Service, U.S. Department of Commerce, 1975).
- ⁸Eric Moody. "The Early Years of Casino Gambling in Nevada, 1931-1945." Ph.D. Diss., University of Nevada, Reno, 1997, 296.
- ⁹Mary Jean Wall, *How Kentucky Became Southern: A Tale of Outlaws, Horse Thieves, Gamblers, and Breeders* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2010), 174.
- ¹⁰Moody, "Early Years," 21.
- ¹¹William D. Rowley, *Reclaiming the Arid West* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 113.
- ¹²*Reno Evening Gazette* (2 February 1915).
- ¹³*Reno Evening Gazette* (3 February 1915).
- ¹⁴Michael Green, *Nevada: A History of the Silver State* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2015), 181-93.
- ¹⁵Sam Davis, *History of Nevada*, vol. 2 (Elko: The Elms Publishing Company, 1913), 721-23.
- ¹⁶Robertson, William H.P. *History of the Thoroughbred Racing in America* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964), 120-123.
- ¹⁷Wall, *How Kentucky Became Southern*, 174.
- ¹⁸*Nevada State Journal* (22 January 1908).
- ¹⁹*Nevada State Journal* (27 January 1908).
- ²⁰Phillip I. Earl, "Veiling the Tiger: The Crusade against Gambling, 1859-1910," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* (Fall 1985), 174-204.
- ²¹*Ibid.*
- ²²State Board of Agriculture, *Annual Report* (Carson City: State Printing Office, 1914).
- ²³*Ibid.*
- ²⁴*Appendix to Journals of Senate and Assembly* (Carson City: State Printing Office, 1915), 6.
- ²⁵Haugen, David M. *Legalized Gambling* (New York: Facts on File, 2006), 18.
- ²⁶*Nevada State Journal* (25 January 1915).
- ²⁷"Clarence. J. Thornton: Entrepreneur: Agriculture, Business, Politics," Clarence J. Thompson Oral History Interview (UNOHP Catalog #105, 1982), by Mary Ellen Glass <<https://contentdm.library.unr.edu/cdm/ref/collection/unohp/id/2540>>
- ²⁸*Senate Journal of Nevada* (Carson City: State Printing Office, 1915), 91.
- ²⁹*Ibid.*
- ³⁰Nevada Equal Franchise Society papers (17 May 1915), Nevada Historical Society, Reno.
- ³¹State Agricultural Society, *Annual Report* (Carson City: State Printing Office, 1900).
- ³²Raymond, Elizabeth C., *George Wingfield: Owner and Operator of Nevada* (Reno, Nevada: University of Nevada Press, 1992), 16.
- ³³*Ibid.*
- ³⁴George Wingfield's financial statements, year ending 1914, George Wingfield papers, Nevada Historical Society, Reno.
- ³⁵Raymond, *Wingfield*, 112.
- ³⁶George Wingfield to Hoyt, Gibbons, and French law office (31 August 1914), George Wingfield papers, Nevada Historical Society, Reno.
- ³⁷Nevada Stock Farm incorporation papers (14 September 1914), George Wingfield papers, Nevada Historical Society, Reno.
- ³⁸George Wingfield to Bernard Baruch (10 October 1914), George Wingfield papers, Nevada Historical Society, Reno.
- ³⁹*Ibid.*

- ⁴⁰*Nevada State Journal* (21 February 1915).
- ⁴¹*Sacramento Union* (15 February 1914).
- ⁴²*Nevada State Journal* (21 July 1915).
- ⁴³*Reno Evening Gazette* (31 July 1915).
- ⁴⁴*Nevada State Journal* (17 July 1915).
- ⁴⁵*Nevada State Journal* (21 July 1915).
- ⁴⁶*Reno Evening Gazette* (22 July 1915).
- ⁴⁷*Nevada State Journal* (8 August 1915).
- ⁴⁸Moody, "Early Years," 19-23.
- ⁴⁹Scrugham, 525.
- ⁵⁰*Nevada State Journal* (13 July 1923); Nevada State Racing Commission, *Annual Report* (Carson City: State Printing Office, 1923).
- ⁵¹*Reno Evening Gazette* (9 June 1923).
- ⁵²Gerould, *Aristocratic West*, 155.
- ⁵³George Wingfield to Emmet Boyle (2 October 1916), George Wingfield papers, Nevada Historical Society, Reno.
- ⁵⁴*Ibid.* (29 September 1916 to 17 October 1916).
- ⁵⁵George Wingfield to Jim McKay (23 June 1925), George Wingfield papers, Nevada Historical Society, Reno.
- ⁵⁶Phillip Earl, *This Was Nevada* (Reno: Nevada Historical Society, 1986), 161.
- ⁵⁷Guy Clifton, *Jack Dempsey in Nevada* (Reno: Jack Bacon & Co., 2007), 55.
- ⁵⁸Raymond, *Wingfield*, 215.
- ⁵⁹*Ibid.*
- ⁶⁰*Nevada State Journal* (16 February 1957).
- ⁶¹*The Bakersfield Californian* (9 March 1933).
- ⁶²*Nevada State Journal* (6 September 1953).
- ⁶³Richard Davies and Richard Abram, *Betting the Line: Sports Wagering in American Life* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2001), 35.
- ⁶⁴Moody, "Early Years," 296.
- ⁶⁵*Reno Evening Gazette* (19 July 1920).

The Bomb from the Bottom Up *Site Workers, Southern Nevadans, and* *the Nevada Test Site, 1951–1963*

HARRY W. G. ROGERS

In 1957 the executives of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) informed civilians of southern Nevada that they were “in a very real sense active participants in the nation’s atomic test programme.”¹ This message was intended to reassure civil society that the experiments at the Nevada Test Site (NTS) were protecting national security, and yet, perhaps unwittingly, it acknowledged that the public were potential agents of change at the site. Contrary to the arguments in the current historiography, the AEC did not solely control the functions and purposes of the NTS, and non-executive site workers and social groups from Nevada had a significant influence on how the site would operate. These workers and civilians used their influence at the site to generate money for themselves and the local economy, and pressure the federal government to address growing concerns over nuclear fallout.

Between the opening of the Nevada Proving Grounds (later renamed the Nevada Test Site) in 1951 and the ratification of the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in October 1963, the site hosted eight test series and more than a hundred atmospheric detonations.² During this period it was the federal government’s

Harry Rogers is a historian from London, United Kingdom. He has been studying the cultural history of the western U.S. states for over the past five years and has previously studied at both the University of Oxford and the University of Kent. Harry has a particular interest in the nuclear history of the western states of Nevada, Washington, California, and New Mexico, and is a social and cultural historian.

only continental nuclear testing ground,³ and it formed an integral part of the nuclear technology site nexus, alongside Los Alamos Laboratory, New Mexico (where the bombs were designed), and the Hanford Nuclear Reservation, Washington (where plutonium was produced).⁴ Unlike Los Alamos and Hanford, the NTS was specifically designed for the detonation of nuclear weapons,⁵ and the federal government used the experiments to justify the industrialization of nuclear weapon technology⁶ at the height of the military-industrial complex⁷ and Cold War consensus.⁸

In addition to making Nevada a hub for nuclear technology, the site also bought new money and employment to the state.⁹ In 1951 the federal government gave the AEC an allowance of more than \$176,000,000 to manage the site, and after 1954 a large portion of this money was injected into Nevada's Nye and Clark counties via numerous construction and infrastructure contracts.¹⁰ The first contract in 1955 injected \$1,900,000 into the Las Vegas economy,¹¹ and in 1957 the AEC gave the construction companies a further \$19,000,000 for the development of the facilities for the sixth test series.¹² Even Project Pluto—scheduled for the end of 1958 and not requiring vast renovations of the NTS—brought a further \$1,900,000 to the region.¹³

The canon of NTS histories overwhelmingly consists of top-down analyses of how technocrats and the AEC controlled the functionality of the site. Thus far, the influence that non-executive workers and southern Nevada's civil society had on the NTS prior to the late 1960s has been significantly under-analysed. In his *Rereading the Nature of Atomic Doom Towns* (2012), Andrew Kirk claims that current scholarship follows one of two meta-narratives.¹⁴ The first narrative focuses on the famous scientists who were hired by the AEC to develop nuclear weapons, and the second concentrates on the protesters who in the 1970s brought attention to the damage caused by the experiments.¹⁵ A third narrative emerges when the NTS is analysed from the bottom up and focuses on the interactions of non-executive workers and civilians with the site. This narrative reveals that control of the NTS was contested, with various social groups influencing operations at the site.

Currently there is little scholarship that analyses the NTS from the bottom up, and, with the exception of publications by Alice Constandina Titus, Brian Balogh, and Michon Mackedon, there have been no histories of the interior workings of the NTS. Between 1983 and 2004, Titus was the author of three publications that assessed the NTS from within: "A-Bombs in the Backyard" (1983)¹⁶, "Bombs in the Backyard" (2001),¹⁷ and "The Mushroom Cloud as Kitsch" (2004).¹⁸ In her publications Titus analyses how AEC executives constructed methods to ensure public support for the experiments at the NTS.¹⁹ She argues that the federal government controlled civil society's engagement with the site by regularly reminding them of the unprecedented threats that nuclear conflict posed to the nation.²⁰

In *Chain Reaction* (1991), Brian Balough analyses how the technocratic elite determined the functionality of the AEC's facilities.²¹ Although his history provides an in-depth analysis of the management of the NTS, it does not address how those at the bottom (such as laborers, General Infantrymen, and on-site managers) influenced operations at the site. In *Bombast: Spinning Atoms in the Desert* (2010), Mackedon claims that the AEC used various pieces of celebratory literature to control public interactions with nuclear experiments.²² She argues that the federal government used its celebratory literature to discourage civilians from disrupting the tests by promoting the NTS as an integral part of national security.²³

This article does not intend to overturn or discredit the histories recounted by Titus, Balogh, or Mackedon, but it does aim to highlight the limitations of their research. By analyzing interactions with the NTS from the bottom up, it demonstrates how civil society and site workers influenced operations at the site. It argues that AEC executives had limited control of the NTS's purpose, and that, rather than participating with the site's role in military defense, non-executive workers and southern Nevadans used it to obtain money and affect how nuclear experiments are conducted.

Prior to this article there have been various events omitted from recent histories of the NTS. An analysis of these omitted events shows that federal funds, the opportunity to enrich the region, and fallout concerns encouraged non-executive workers and civilians to interact with the NTS and pressure executives and technocrats to address the issues within the site and southern Nevada. These events include organized labor's challenge to the AEC's practices at the NTS, the General Infantry's resistance to nuclear indoctrination at Camp Desert Rock, and civilian reaction to fallout.

In addition to analyzing the events currently omitted from the historiography, this article also shows how the NTS was a fractured and contested space that had various social and governmental groups competing to control it. This concept of space was influenced by Henri Lefebvre's "social space" theory in *The Production of Space*, and it reveals that the characteristics of the NTS resulted from the interaction of civilians and workers with the operations and assets at the site.²⁴

The AEC executives and laborers had fundamentally different interactions with the NTS. The executives saw the primary value of the site as a space for nuclear science and Cold War defense, while worker and labor groups regularly used it as a source of money and employment. In an attempt to control how the work force interacted with the site, executives engaged in dialogue with the workers to try and dictate its primary purpose as part of the military state.²⁵ In order to discourage laborers from disrupting tests by commencing strike actions, the executives commissioned various pamphlets that emphasized the value of the workers at the site. Pamphlets such as the *Nevada Test Site Information Handbook* (1957),²⁶ were distributed widely among

employees and they praised the laborers' roles in protecting the secrets of nuclear testing.²⁷

However, despite their attempts to use print to encourage employee support, the executives were ultimately unable to control the dialogue between themselves and the workers, and the laborers continued to value the NTS primarily as a financial cache. In an interview with the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, Bruce Church, one of the radiation specialists at the NTS, claimed that the salary overshadowed the prospect of working in nuclear defense.²⁸ He noted that after his hiring he "knew what that meant in the way of income, because the guys that worked at the test site got *per diem* [a daily allowance that was in addition to the salary], and we made as much money from *per diem* as we did salary."²⁹ He emphasized that he "jumped at the chance" because of the salary, and not because of the prospect of continuing his career as a radiation specialist at a renowned military establishment.³⁰

The attraction of lucrative employment at the NTS did not only overrule the executives' attempts to dictate the value of the site, it also led to widespread disengagement among the laborers with the ethics of working at a nuclear weapons facility. In an interview with the University of Nevada's Oral History project, Linda Smith, an on-site manager at the NTS, stated that the site's role in nuclear weaponry neither attracted nor discouraged civilians from seeking employment at the facility.³¹ She claimed that "there was no feeling or discussion about the fact that Nevada was being used in a negative way as a testing ground for this kind of technology."³²

The executives' attempts to discourage strike actions by installing a sense of nationalism and pride in the work force did not overrule the workers' desire to use the facility primarily as an opportunity to make large sums of personal wealth. The dialogue with which the executives tried to engage the workers mistakenly assumed that there would not be widespread impartiality to the ethics of the facilities and the AEC's goals in nuclear science.

Since the first labor conflict in 1953, strikes at the NTS were aided by a number of large unions, which included a division of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and the Independent Guard Association of Nevada. The unionizing of labor forces marked a turning point in the dialogues between the work force and executives, as laborers used collective power to challenge the executives' attempts to dictate how the site functioned. By unionizing and striking at the site (which averaged one strike per every four explosions by 1962), the laborers used grass-roots influences to improve working conditions and helped those at the bottom define operations.³³

In 1953, the Teamsters Union Local 631 established its presence at the NTS to represent the needs of security personnel and connect the work force to a national movement of organized laborers.³⁴ The Teamsters' first strike occurred shortly after, when the Security Services Company of Washington (SSCW) refused to recognize the union's right to represent security personnel.³⁵ In

retaliation, the Teamsters picketed what the *Nevada Citizen* referred to as “the naked show of old-time ruthlessness on the part of management,” and this led to the SSCW dismissing the staff that instigated the strike.³⁶ The strike occurred because of interplay between employment laws and federal incentives, with the laborers wanting to join a union as permitted by the National Labor Relations Board and the Taft Hartley Act, and the executives opposing this to maintain sole control of the work force.³⁷ The strike continued until the executives re-employed the dismissed employees,³⁸ and the AEC removed the sub-contracted companies’ right to dismiss NTS staff prior to executive permission.³⁹

The Teamsters instigated another strike between May and July 1957,⁴⁰ after the AEC hired an electricians firm to prepare the site for the seventh test series.⁴¹ The Teamsters interpreted the AEC’s decision as withholding labor from their members, and pressured executives into using the pre-employed laborers. The strike initially ended on 13 May, but re-emerged in late June after security personnel disputed the conditions of their annual wage increases.⁴² The two months of regular strike action set a new precedent of protest by the Teamsters, who used their disruption of the test series as a tool to ensure the continued employment of their laborers. The Teamsters’ influence at the site continued to grow after 1957, and in 1962 Glen Seaborg, chairman of the AEC, was forced to devise a procedure for preemptively stopping disgruntled Teamster members from striking.⁴³ In an entry made in his office diary in July 1962, Seaborg stated that having accepted the union’s terms, the executives would have to figure out how to “safeguard against the same thing happening at our other operations.”⁴⁴

In addition to joining the Teamsters, many laborers sought affiliation with a number of smaller unions at the site. One of the most notable of these was the Independent Guard Association of Nevada (IGAN), which appeared in 1957 and began striking after AEC executives refused to guarantee improved working conditions for security staff.⁴⁵ The IGAN maintained its 1957 strike until mid July, when executives agreed to a 10 percent wage increase and pension plan as compensation for the guards’ high-risk jobs.⁴⁶ The work of the smaller unions was integral in helping laborers regulate executive control of the NTS. Their influence was best demonstrated in 1963 after 3,000 employees (many of whom were associated with various unions) went on strike⁴⁷ to halt operations at the NTS’s Nuclear Rocket Development Station.⁴⁸ The strikers protested AEC regulations that permitted laborers to spend personal funds on site equipment and reclaim the costs in expenses, and sought to ensure that the AEC could not withhold funds from employees.⁴⁹ The strike lasted for over four months and ended in December 1963 after executives guaranteed that labor expenses were repaid and regulations were addressed.⁵⁰

By unionizing and using collective power to hold executive branches of the AEC responsible for employee welfare, NTS workers exercised their abilities to determine the conditions of practicing nuclear science at the facility. The AEC’s ability to dictate the functionality of the site was significantly undermined by



Las Vegas Atomic Energy Commission Nevada Test Site, ca. 1961, United Press Telephoto. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

the interactions that the laborers and unions had with executives. In an article published in the *Las Vegas Sun* on 14 October 1963, an unnamed AEC executive admitted that the institution had negotiated control of the facility and that "it would be subject to a picket line 'every time a union wanted something'."⁵¹

The AEC's practices of conducting nuclear science were also contested by the four-and-a-half-thousand members of the General Infantry (GI) at Camp Desert Rock.⁵² The GIs were not permitted to unionize and as a result, between 1951 and 1958, many members of the infantry discussed their use as atomic guinea pigs with journalists from local Nevada newspapers to pressure the AEC into changing how it conducted its experiments. Their accounts of the AEC's attempts to indoctrinate soldiers into nuclear warfare were further expressed in their continued underperformance in atomic training exercises.

The eight exercises of Operation Desert Rock were conducted until 1958 and were designed to encourage GIs to shed their fears of the use of an atomic weapon during war.⁵³ In an attempt to muster the GIs' support for their role in the operations, the AEC issued to each soldier various pamphlets that were designed to raise morale. One of the most notable examples of these pamphlets was *Background Information on Continental Nuclear Tests*, which was produced for the fourth test series in 1953; it reassured the GIs that the operations were both safe and important for nuclear science.⁵⁴

The executives used the pamphlets to try to convince the soldiers that they would be protected during the exercises, but the literature did not have the desired result, and the AEC was unable to muster support.⁵⁵ From the beginning of the first exercise in 1951, the negative responses that the GIs had to operations were far worse than the AEC had expected, and the soldiers reported their experiences to the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* and *Las Vegas Sun*. In their accounts, they commonly agreed that the nuclear bomb was a strong addition to the military's arsenal, but an impractical weapon of war that had crippling psychological effects on the soldiers.⁵⁶

By 1953, the GIs' concerns about their use at Operation Desert Rock worsened as the AEC stationed soldiers nearer ground zero,⁵⁷ and increased their exposure to the nuclear detonations.⁵⁸ In March 1953 the Staff Correspondent Sergeant of Camp Desert Rock alerted both the AEC executives and the general public of the dangers to which the soldiers were being exposed by telling the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* that the soldiers' concerns about their safety were rife at the camp.⁵⁹ Other staff sergeants questioned the plausibility of continuing the experiments under such ominous conditions by reporting to the press that soldiers continually failed to operate in nuclear battlegrounds as they became overwhelmed by the fear created by the nuclear explosions.⁶⁰ After 1953 the soldiers' reports to the press continued to fluctuate between the awe and destructive power of the nuclear weapon; a recurring feature of an overwhelming number of accounts was the debilitating fear that the AEC's experiments created.⁶¹

By using local media as a medium to engage with on-going political dialogue about nuclear safety and scientific practices, the GIs influenced how the AEC conducted its experiments at the NTS. Because the GIs were not allowed to go on strike or withhold their labor, they expressed their fears and concerns to local newspaper companies to draw the attention of the public and executives to the welfare of the soldiers during the testing. As the result of the GIs on-going reports of fear and inability to perform during nuclear combat, the AEC ended the soldiers' exposure to the tests in 1958 with the conclusion of Operation Desert Rock VIII.⁶² At the end of this exercise, the AEC executives accepted that it was not possible to stop the GIs from feeling an increase "in concern for both self and other troops" after an explosion, and they publicly announced the end of the Operation Desert Rock series.⁶³



Mouth of tunnel for underground atomic bomb test, Las Vegas Test Site, September 10, 1961, Associated Press. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

Since the start of the first test series the NTS was inundated with an interior power struggle as laborers, unions, and GIs challenged how the AEC executives operated the site. The AEC executives tried to exert their control of the NTS by producing various publications to construct a feeling of solidarity among them, the GIs, and the laborers, but these efforts were ineffective. Despite their various attempts, the executives were unable to get the laborers and GIs to interact with the NTS in the way they desired.

The laborers used strikes and union action to influence how the NTS was managed and to pressure AEC executives to change their practices regarding unionization, salary allocation, expenses procedures, and the use of military personnel in nuclear experiments. The interaction of the laborers unions,

and GIs with the AEC executives showed that control of the NTS was in a constant state of negotiation, and that the boundaries that nuclear science was permitted to occur within were not solely defined by those at the top.

Just as the non-executive workers gained influence at the NTS to better their own financial standings, so too did various groups of southern Nevadan civilians. In an attempt to encourage civil society to support the nuclear experiments, AEC executives developed various media campaigns that promoted the peaceful uses and marvels of nuclear-weapon technology. However, the AEC's media campaign was unsuccessful, and concerns about fallout and financial gains continued to dominate civil society's interactions with the site.

The southern Nevada civilians and the Las Vegas tourist industry put AEC executives under intense pressure to provide wealth and jobs in the state, and when this did not happen, they criticized the NTS. The reasons for the pressure were numerous and ranged from desire for compensation for the damage caused by fallout to that of the hotel casino owners in Las Vegas who wanted to use the NTS as a tourist space. The southern Nevadans tolerated the NTS only as long as it brought money and enterprise to Clark and Nye counties, and the negative operations of the site encouraged civilian resentment.

AEC executives devised a variety of different techniques to try and encourage southern Nevadan civilians to positively engage with the NTS. After 1951, the AEC started to promote the nuclear bomb as a scientific marvel and encourage southern Nevadan civilians to be proud of this new technology. In order to change the connotations of the nuclear bomb, the AEC produced various pieces of media that glorified the imagery of the atomic explosions as scientific spectacles.⁶⁴ The AEC executives attempted to convince civilians that the detonation of a nuclear bomb was an uplifting experience that provided Nevada with a symbol of its national importance.⁶⁵

As part of recreating the connotations of nuclear weapons, the AEC developed numerous methods of promoting the benefits that the NTS brought to the region. By the beginning of the third test series the executives had started to use local newspaper companies and television stations to promote the NTS's national importance to the civilians of southern Nevada.⁶⁶ This initiative saw the executives invite journalists to experiments at the NTS, with the expectation that they would be amazed by the detonations and tell their readers about the spectacle of the explosions.⁶⁷ In 1952, the AEC formalized this method as the Observer Project, and turned its attention to easing southern Nevadan concerns about the damage that the NTS was causing to the region.⁶⁸ During this project, the AEC tried to encourage local support by broadcasting nuclear explosions on Nevada's television stations and inviting news companies to broadcast a live detonation.⁶⁹

In 1955, AEC executives expanded the Observer Project to broadcast live detonations to all televisions across the nation.⁷⁰ To accompany this expansion, the AEC invited politicians and industry leaders to watch the detonations and give interviews about their experiences to the national press.⁷¹ In 1958, the AEC once again altered the Observer Project and increased the number of annual broadcasts.⁷² Once the executives set this precedent, television became the most commonly used medium to try to control the southern Nevadans' understanding of nuclear experiments.

Another of the AEC's techniques in the promotion of the NTS began in 1962, when the commission started publicizing the peaceful uses of the weapons.⁷³ The executives were keen to emphasize how the experiments at the NTS were pioneering techniques of "geographical engineering" (a process that used the destructive force of the explosion to remove mountains and free natural resources) and would probably be useful in ports and road construction.⁷⁴ In order to promote these benefits in Nevada, the AEC published a series of *Plowshare* pamphlets, which explained how the site was integral to the development of peaceful applications of nuclear technology.⁷⁵ The pamphlets stressed the importance of the NTS's role in these tests. A pamphlet from 1962 claimed "it is essential that all Americans gain an understanding of this vital force [the nuclear bomb] if they are to discharge thoughtfully their responsibilities as citizens and if they are to realize fully the myriad benefits that nuclear energy offers them."⁷⁶

By changing the connotations of the nuclear explosions the AEC tried to encourage increased public support for their experiments. Unlike the literature that the AEC executives developed for the laborers at the NTS, the pamphlets and television broadcasts encouraged readers and viewers to partly value the nuclear experiments as technological marvels. However, while the media campaigns managed to get southern Nevadans to appreciate the nuclear explosions in a new way, they did not give the AEC more control of the use of the site. By the AEC recreating the connotations of the weapons, the commission had given rise to the possibility of using the bomb as a lucrative tourist attraction.⁷⁷ Furthermore, the broadcasts did not succeed in getting southern Nevada's civilians to shed their concerns about the production of radioactive fallout.

Southern Nevada's civil society interacted with the production of fallout at the NTS to pressure the AEC into changing its operations and to claim large sums of money from the compensation-claims procedure. When analyzing the treatment of fallout, Michon Mackedon argues that the AEC operated on a "you" and "we" polarity, where the executives had disdain for criticism by the public (you) of the institution (we).⁷⁸ She claims that the AEC tried to discredit the fallout fears that were spread by individuals who were not formally associated with the NTS.⁷⁹ She shows that the AEC executives were adamantly trying to control the conversations about the fallout in the media, and reassure civil society that the radioactive debris from the NTS was safe.

When addressing the issues of fallout, AEC executives sought to reassure civil society that the irradiated debris that landed on food stocks and civilian property posed no immediate health risks. To achieve this, the AEC initiated Project Sunshine (a radiological survey that investigated the levels of fallout to which southern Nevada had been exposed).⁸⁰ Initially, the AEC kept the findings of Project Sunshine confidential, but in 1954, growing public concern forced the executives to declassify its results.⁸¹ The results showed southern Nevada had been exposed to low but potentially deadly levels of Strontium 90 (a highly radioactive isotope).⁸² These results exacerbated southern Nevadan concerns about the safety of the experiments at the NTS and led to accusations in the wider southern Nevada region that the AEC was withholding from southern Nevadans important information about the dangers of fallout.⁸³ To try and ease this pressure, the AEC published the pamphlet, *Atomic Test Effects in the Nevada Proving Ground Region*.⁸⁴ The pamphlet thanked the civilians for “accepting the inconvenience or risk” and tried to reassure the public that their protection was the commission’s primary concern.⁸⁵

The beginning of 1957 marked the start of media furor over the dangers of radioactive fallout. During this year various southwestern newspaper companies criticized the AEC for failing to provide southern Nevadans with adequate information about the nuclear tests.⁸⁶ The newspaper companies became hostile towards the AEC’s management of fallout emissions and printed a number of articles that condemned its management of fallout information.⁸⁷ In May 1957, the *Albuquerque Tribune* revealed that only 17 percent of southern Nevadans were able to provide an accurate description of fallout.⁸⁸

The concern that the AEC was withholding important information about fallout from southern Nevada led to growing resentment of the commission in the region. In May 1957, the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* showed this resentment when it reported that the AEC had brushed aside concerns about fallout expressed in “Clouds from Nevada,” an article published in *The Reporter* (a bi-weekly magazine published in Manhattan).⁸⁹ The article claimed that roughly 16,000 southern Nevada civilians had been exposed to enough fallout to permanently damage their health.⁹⁰ When AEC executives responded to the article, they did not discuss the civilians’ concerns, and they reasserted the claim that the NTS was being operated with the highest regard for public safety.⁹¹ The executives avoided discussing civilian fears about fallout and as a result the journalists condemned the AEC’s management of the NTS.⁹²

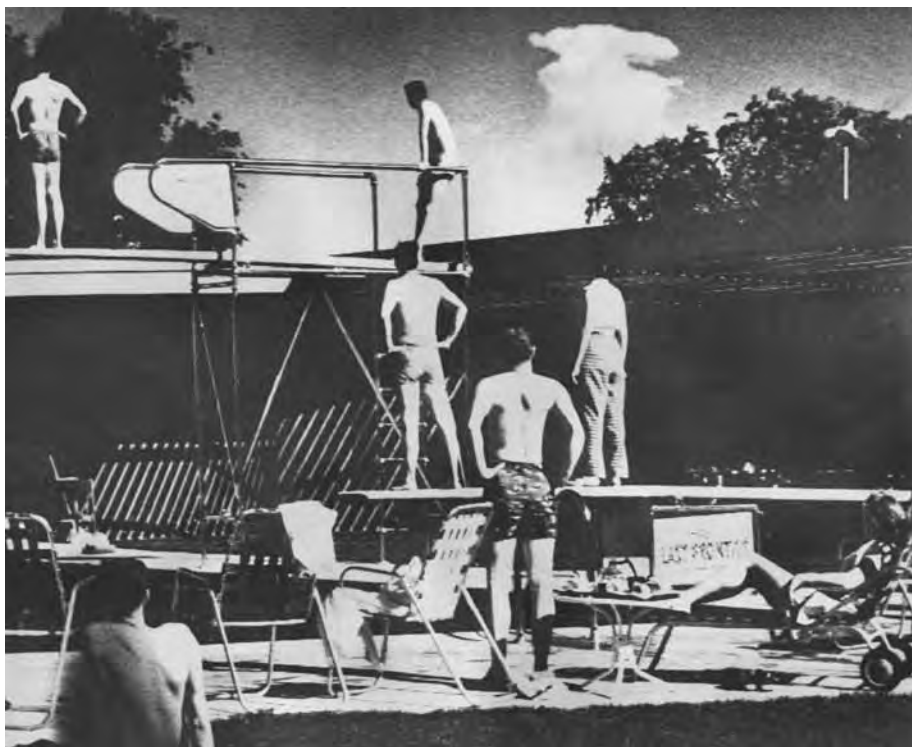
The AEC’s proposal to use nuclear weapons for peaceful purposes (such as destroying a mountain that would otherwise have to be tunnelled) led to further instances of southern Nevadan civil society criticizing the commission’s management of fallout.⁹³ The executives’ decision to showcase the peaceful uses of the bombs fueled southern Nevada’s concerns about radioactive debris.⁹⁴ The differences between the interpretations by southern Nevada’s industries and those of the AEC executives relating to the dangers of using nuclear weapons

heightened after Project Gnome (part of Operation Plowshare) assessed methods of transforming nuclear energy into steam.⁹⁵ The success of Project Gnome led to the AEC causing controversy in southern Nevada by experimenting with the use of nuclear explosions to free oil reserves in the state.⁹⁶ The technique was popular with AEC executives, but it produced criticism from the oil companies in southern Nevada, which were concerned that irradiated oil would damage the machinery it was used in, and cost the industry a significant amount of money.⁹⁷ As a result, the southern Nevada oil companies refused to endorse the use of nuclear weapons to obtain oil, and, prior to 1963, this refusal limited the AEC's peaceful experiments with nuclear weapons.⁹⁸

The growth of civilian and industrial distrust of the AEC's management of fallout was accompanied by an increasing number of damage claims being filed against the NTS. The AEC executives foresaw the high volume of claimants and created a procedure to reimburse civilians and local industries for the damages to their property.⁹⁹ The southern Nevadans used this procedure as another way of extracting money from the AEC and of claiming reparations for the damage caused by fallout. Initially there were very few claims filed against the NTS, and civilians requested only small sums of money for minor breakages, but this number grew as the experiments continued.¹⁰⁰ After the third detonation of the first test series, the AEC had received more than 50 damage claims.¹⁰¹ By the end of the first test series, the AEC had accumulated more than 160 compensation claims.¹⁰²

As the second test series approached, large claims started to become more common, and various southern Nevada companies used the procedure as a way of generating money.¹⁰³ A prime example occurred in November 1951, when a housing company in Henderson sought compensation for the alleged damage of roof tiles on all 219 houses in its building development.¹⁰⁴ To try to prevent civilians and industries from exploiting the system and obtaining large sums of money for minor damages, AEC executives were forced to establish a committee to thoroughly investigate all claims.¹⁰⁵ By 1954, these claims had become so regular that the executives were, on average, offering up to \$5,000 for each claimant.¹⁰⁶

Overall, AEC executives were not adequately informing southern Nevadan civil society about the dangers of the fallout produced at the NTS. The AEC was persuading southern Nevadans that the damage caused by fallout was not severe, while journalists from the wider Southwest contested these claims. The more aware southern Nevadans became of the dangers of fallout, the more they came to distrust the AEC's actions. As concerns about the lack of information grew, so too did southern Nevada's unwillingness to engage with the experiments that could bring more fallout to the state. To pressure the AEC into changing how it managed fallout, southern Nevadans refused to endorse peaceful experiments with nuclear weapons and increasingly extracted money from the claims procedure.



Tourists at the swimming pool of the Hotel Last Frontier in Las Vegas watch an atomic detonation at Frenchmen's Flat 75 miles away in 1953, United Press Telephoto. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

The pre-existing Las Vegas tourist industry used the presence of the NTS to generate money from the AEC's experiments. The industry adopted the AEC's redefinition of the nuclear explosions as a scientific spectacle and publicized the thrills of the atomic tests to potential tourists.¹⁰⁷ In "Seeing and Being Seen" (1999) Patricia Nelson Limerick claims that the NTS has a tourist appeal very similar to that of the National Parks.¹⁰⁸ It attracts visitors by offering them a chance to engage with a space that had obtained its significance through the manipulation of its natural features by the federal government and civilians.¹⁰⁹ The success of this attraction was aided by the unique circumstance that Las Vegas was the only U.S. city where thrill-seeking civilians could legally gamble while watching a nuclear detonation. By using the nuclear bomb as a lucrative attraction, the Las Vegas tourist industry limited the AEC executives' control of how the civilians both perceived and interacted with the NTS.

One of the tourist industry's most common techniques for generating money from the site was to offer visitors the chance to watch a nuclear explosion from a hotel casino in Las Vegas.¹¹⁰ To ensure a consistent customer base the hotels tailored their services to attract groups of atomic-bomb enthusiasts. One of the largest groups that these promotions enticed was the humorously named Ancient and Honorable Society of Atom Bomb Watchers.¹¹¹ The society, which consisted of workers from the NTS and the southern Nevada newspaper companies, was formed in 1951, and regularly rented rooms and conference centers at Las Vegas hotels to watch nuclear detonations.¹¹²

While the societies of atomic-bomb enthusiasts represented a focused group of tourists who were being targeted by the hotel casinos, they were far from the only civilians visiting the city to watch a detonation. By the beginning of the second test series the tourist industry was using the redefinition of the nuclear explosions to attract vast crowds from across the nation. As the second test series began in late 1951, the *Santa Fé New Mexican* reported that Las Vegas was hit by an increased surge of tourists, driven by the promise "of seeing and feeling the effects of a single 'baby A-bomb' blast."¹¹³

Between 1951 and 1955, the popularity of nuclear tourism increased significantly, and the number of tourists preemptively visiting Las Vegas with the hope of seeing an explosion grew with each successive test series. During this time the tourist industry took advantage of the mere speculation of the next explosion to attract visitors. By 1953, the hotel casinos of Las Vegas were becoming fully booked weeks in advance of the detonations, as tourists preemptively came to the city to guarantee themselves a chance to see a nuclear explosion.¹¹⁴ In 1955, the regularly delayed detonations inspired the creation of a new game in the casinos, betting on the time and date of the next explosion.¹¹⁵

By changing the connotations of the NTS from a military space to a tourist space, the Las Vegas tourist industry made it possible for the site to be used as a lucrative attraction. The interactions that the Las Vegas tourist industry had with the NTS showed another way that southern Nevadan civil society was able to use the presence of the site to enrich the state. By marketing the operations at the NTS as an attraction, the tourist industry limited the AEC executives' ability to control how southern Nevada civil society interacted with the site.

In summary, southern Nevada's civil society profited from the NTS in two ways. First, sections of society received large claims from the AEC's compensation procedure; and second, the Las Vegas tourist industry brought in a new stream of revenue by reconstructing the nuclear experiments into a lucrative attraction. Southern Nevada's civil society perceived the NTS as bringing both money and destruction to the region, and it interacted with the AEC's operations in a way that reflected this interpretation.

By using the AEC's definition of the nuclear bombs as scientific marvels the Las Vegas tourist industry was able to generate money from the military

space. But despite the AEC's creating the Observer Project and various pamphlets to encourage civilians to interpret the site as an integral scientific and military space, it was unable to stop the Las Vegas tourist industry from marketing it as a space of exhibitionism. For the civilians not involved in the tourist industry the NTS was the source of fallout in the state. The NTS's role in the production of fallout came under pressure from southern Nevada's newspaper companies and the civilians who exploited the AEC's compensation procedure. By interacting with the NTS as source of fallout and an attraction in the nexus of the Las Vegas tourist industry, southern Nevada's civil society limited the AEC's ability to dictate the purpose of the site.

Prior to this article, historians have overwhelmingly argued that the AEC controlled how the NTS operated and that, with the exception of the treatment of radioactive fallout, southern Nevadan civil society and the non-executive site workers had little influence on its functions. They have almost solely analyzed the NTS from the top down and failed to assess how the non-executive site workers and southern Nevadan civil society influenced the site. As shown throughout this article, when the role of the NTS is analysed from the bottom-up, non-executive workers and civilians are shown to be agents of change at the site.

The non-executive workers and southern Nevadan civilians had a significant amount of control over the operations at the NTS. Their ability to influence the AEC's operations was shown on numerous accounts, with examples ranging from the refusal of regional oil companies to endorse the peaceful applications of nuclear technology, to civilians preventing the AEC from using a bomb to destroy a mountain. Other forms of control ranged from laborers and unions striking at the site, to the GIs who prevented the AEC from continuing to use them as atomic guinea pigs.

In addition to influencing the AEC's operations, southern Nevada's civil society used its interactions with the NTS to redefine the purpose of the space. The tourist industry of Las Vegas used the AEC's promotion of the bomb to change the purpose of the NTS from a military and scientific space to a lucrative commercial attraction. By 1963, the AEC's ability to dictate the purpose of the NTS as a military space had been dismantled, and neither the Observer Project nor the employee pamphlets could control how the site would be used by civil society.

The interpretation of the NTS as a cache of exploitable money was rife among non-executive workers and southern Nevadan social groups, and it fueled both criticisms and support of the site. Non-executive workers and labor unions supported the AEC's management of the NTS for as long as it continued to pay the employees high wages. Southern Nevada retained support for the continuation of the bomb trials for as long as the tourist industry could keep marketing the explosions as a lucrative attraction and the AEC's fallout compensation procedure could be easily accessed.

On the whole, the AEC's ability to dictate the purpose and functions of the NTS was limited by the non-executive workers' and southern Nevadan civil society's interactions with the site. While the NTS was formally established for military defense, the non-executive workers and southern Nevada used it as a source and generator of money and the producer of radioactive fallout. As part of the grander narrative of the rise of the military-industrial complex, the disruption by the workers and civilians of the operations at the NTS undermined the notion that the federal government's military sites were hegemonic national institutions. Even the NTS, one of the federal government's most secretive and important Cold War military sites, had its operations limited by how laborers, soldiers, unions, local private industries, and tourist groups interacted with it.

NOTES

¹U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, *Atomic Tests in Nevada*, Nuclear Testing Archive (Las Vegas, NV0006327, 1957), p. 2.

²Richard L. Miller, *Under the Cloud: The Decades of Nuclear Testing* (New York: The Free Press, 1986), 8.

³Gretchen Heefer, *The Missile Next Door: The Minuteman in the American Heartland* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 52.

⁴John Wills, *U.S. Environmental History: Inviting Doomsday* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 52-53.

⁵John M. Findlay and Bruce Hevly, *Atomic Frontier Days: Hanford and the American West* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011), 4.

⁶Valerie L. Kuletz, *The Tainted Desert: Environmental and Social Ruin in the American West* (London: Routledge Press, 1998), 66.

⁷Margot A. Henriksen, *Dr. Strangelove's America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 79-80.

⁸Eugene R. Wittkopf and James M. McCormick, "The Cold War Consensus: Did it Exist?" *Polity*, 22:4 (1990), 627-28.

⁹Eugene P. Moehring, *Resort City in the Sunbelt, Las Vegas, 1930-2000* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2000), 13.

¹⁰Karen R. Jones and John Wills, *The American West: Competing Visions* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 219.

¹¹Headquarters Field Command, *Operation Teapot: Operational Summary*, Nuclear Testing Archive (Las Vegas, NV0008793, May 1955), pp. 31-32.

¹²Defense Nuclear Agency, *Operation Plumbbob: Report of Test Manager*, Nuclear Testing Archive (Las Vegas, NV0014661, December 1957), p. 11.

¹³"To Open Bids for More AEC Building," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, (2 October 1958), p. 1.

¹⁴Andrew Kirk, "Rereading the Nature of Atomic Doom Towns," *Environmental History*, 17:3 (July 2012), p. 641.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 641.

¹⁶Alice Costandina Titus, "A-Bombs in the Backyard: Southern Nevada Adapts to the Nuclear Age," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 26:4 (1983), 235-54.

¹⁷Alice Costandina Titus, *Bombs in the Backyard: Atomic Testing and American Politics*, 2d Ed., (Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2001).

¹⁸Alice Costandina Titus, "The Mushroom Cloud as Kitsch," in Scott C. Zeman's *Atomic Culture, How We Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2004), 101-25.

¹⁹Titus, *Bombs in the Backyard; Atomic Testing and American Politics*, pp. xiii-xv.

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. xvi.

²¹Brian Balogh, *Chain Reaction: Expert Debate and Public Participation in American Commercial Nuclear Power, 1945-1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 1-8.

²²Michon Mackedon, *Bombast: Spinning Atoms in the Desert* (Reno: Black Rock Institute Press, 2010), xiii-4.

²³*Ibid.*

²⁴Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: Blackwell Publishing, 1991), 72-85.

²⁵Lewis Strauss, *Men and Decisions* (London: Macmillan, 1963), 405-10.

²⁶U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, *Nevada Test Site Information Handbook*, Nuclear Testing Archive (Las Vegas, NV0130410, 10 March 1957), 1-32.

²⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 22-25.

²⁸Jeffery Richardson, "Interview with Bruce Church," Nevada Test Site Oral History Project (Las Vegas: University of Nevada, 27 April 2004), 2.

²⁹*Ibid.*

³⁰*Ibid.*

³¹Mary Palevsky, "Interview with Linda Smith," Nevada Test Site Oral History Project (Las Vegas: University of Nevada, 6 October 2006), 3-5.

- ³²*Ibid.*, p. 3.
- ³³"Nevada Test Site Average 1 Strike to 4 Explosions," *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 1962, p. 1.
- ³⁴Donald Garner, *The Rise of Teamster Power in the West* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972), 1-8.
- ³⁵"Nation's Atomic Programme Threatened by Employers," *Nevada Citizen*, (21 February 1953), p. 1.
- ³⁶*Ibid.*
- ³⁷"Threatened Strike of AEC Security Guards Settled," *Las Vegas Sun* (23 February 1953), p. 1.
- ³⁸*Ibid.*
- ³⁹"Nation's Atomic Programme Threatened," *Nevada Citizen* (21 February 1953), p. 1.
- ⁴⁰"Atomic Test Site Picketed by Union," *Albuquerque Tribune* (10 May 1957), p. 1.
- ⁴¹"Council Confab Today Acts to Solve Dispute," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (11 May 1957), p. 1.
- ⁴²"Teamsters Vote to Return to Work Today," *Las Vegas Sun* (13 May 1957), p. 1.
- ⁴³Glenn T. Seaborg, *Office Diary*, 18 July 1962, Nuclear Testing Archive, pp. 1-4.
- ⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p. 2.
- ⁴⁵"Await Results of Strike Action by Security Guards," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (3 July 1957), p. 1.
- ⁴⁶"AEC Strike Off as Guards Vote to Accept Offer," *Las Vegas Sun* (11 July 1957), p. 1.
- ⁴⁷"Test Site's Long Holiday," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (5 April 1963), p. 1.
- ⁴⁸Jude Wanniski, "Site Crews Poised for Strike," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (19 January 1963), p. 1.
- ⁴⁹"No Settlement in Test Site Strike," *Las Vegas Sun* (14 October 1963), p. 1.
- ⁵⁰"New Labor Agreements Now Effective at Nevada Test Site After Four-month Study," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (13 December 1963), p. 1.
- ⁵¹*Ibid.*
- ⁵²U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, Department of Defense, *History of Camp Desert Rock*, Nuclear Testing Archive (Las Vegas, NV0322977, 22 April 1952), p. 1.
- ⁵³Defense Technical Information Center, *Camp Desert Rock I*, Nuclear Testing Archive (Las Vegas, NV0767823, 1 February 1953), pp. 1-4.
- ⁵⁴U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, Department of Defense, *Background Information on Continental Nuclear Tests, Nevada Proving Grounds and Military Installations*, Nuclear Testing Archive (Las Vegas, NV0016359, 1953), pp. 17-18.
- ⁵⁵Robert D. Baldwin, *Staff Memorandum, "Experiences at Desert Rock VIII,"* Nuclear Testing Archive (Las Vegas, NV0751034, March 1958), pp. 46-49.
- ⁵⁶"Soldiers Who Felt Nuclear Blast from Trenches Give Few Comments," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (8 March 1955), p. 1.
- ⁵⁷Douglas Larsea, "Curiosity, Fear Fill GIs to Be Atomic Guinea Pigs," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (17 March 1953), p. 1.
- ⁵⁸U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, Department of Defense, *Background Information on Continental Nuclear Tests*, pp. 17-18.
- ⁵⁹*Ibid.*, p. 1.
- ⁶⁰"'Scared Down to My Toes,' Says GI from A-Bomb Area," *Albuquerque Tribune* (2 November 1951), p. 1.
- ⁶¹"Soldiers Who Felt Nuclear Blast," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, p. 1.
- ⁶²Baldwin, *Staff Memorandum, "Experiences at Desert Rock VIII,"* pp. 46-49.
- ⁶³*Ibid.*, p. 40.
- ⁶⁴Titus, "Mushroom Cloud as Kitsch," p. 105.
- ⁶⁵*Ibid.*
- ⁶⁶"Newsmen, VIPs Begin Arriving for Big Show," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (16 April 1952), p. 1.
- ⁶⁷*Ibid.*
- ⁶⁸*Ibid.*
- ⁶⁹"Vegas Atom Show to Be Televised," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (16 April 1952), p. 1.
- ⁷⁰"Nation to See A-Blast on Television Tuesday," *Las Vegas Sun* (22 April 1955), p. 1.
- ⁷¹"Big Civilian Audience to See Nevada A-Tests in April," *The Salt Lake Tribune* (9 February 1955), p. 1.
- ⁷²"AEC Invites Group to View Bomb," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (24 October 1958), p. 1.
- ⁷³U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, *Plowshare*, Nuclear Testing Archive (Las Vegas, 1961), 1-4.
- ⁷⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 1-4.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁷⁷"A-Bomb Stirs Resort City," *Santa Fé New Mexican* (1 January 1953), p. 1.

⁷⁸Mackeldon, *Bombast, Spinning Atoms*, pp. 48-49.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*

⁸⁰U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, *World-Wide Effects of Atomic Weapons, Project Sunshine*, Nuclear Testing Archive (Las Vegas, NV0717541, 6 August 1953), pp. 1-5.

⁸¹Hans Bethe to Willard Libby, 17 December 1954, Nuclear Testing Archive, pp. 1-3.

⁸²U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, *World-Wide Effects of Atomic Weapons*, pp. 2-4.

⁸³"AEC Reports on Results of Radioactive Fallout," *Albuquerque Tribune* (5 February 1955), p. 1.

⁸⁴U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, *Atomic Test Effects in the Nevada Proving Ground Region*, Nuclear Testing Archive (Las Vegas, NV0057724, 1955), p. 1.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*

⁸⁶"Survey Shows People Worry About Fallout," *Albuquerque Tribune* (23 May 1957), p. 1.

⁸⁷"Ill Effects from Tests Denied by AEC Chief," *Albuquerque Journal* (11 May 1957), p. 1.

⁸⁸"Survey Shows People Worry," *Albuquerque Tribune* (23 May 1957), p. 1.

⁸⁹"AEC Brushes Off Charges about Tests," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (10 May 1957), p. 1.

⁹⁰"Magazine Asserts Thousands in Utah, Nevada Exposed to Atom Test Fallout," *Albuquerque Journal* (9 May 1957), p. 1.

⁹¹"AEC Brushes Off Charges," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, p. 1.

⁹²*Ibid.*

⁹³"Atomic Test Set Inside Mountain," *New York Times* (7 September 1957), p. 1.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*

⁹⁵"AEC Gets Land for A-Explosion," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (4 June 1960), p. 1.

⁹⁶"A-Bombs May Be Used to Provide More Oil," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (10 December 1961), p. 1.

⁹⁷*Ibid.*

⁹⁸"The Peaceful Use of the Nuclear Explosion," *Manchester Guardian* (23 January 1962), p. 1.

⁹⁹U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, *Atomic Test Effects in the Nevada Proving Ground Region*, pp. 11-12.

¹⁰⁰"When You See That Flash... Duck, Stay Away from Windows," *Las Vegas Told*, *Albuquerque Journal* (5 February 1951), p. 1.

¹⁰¹Associated Press, "Damage Claims Piling Up in Nevada Atomic Tests," *Washington Star* (31 January 1951), p. 1.

¹⁰²"161 Claims for Damage By A-Bomb," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (29 November 1951), p. 1.

¹⁰³"AEC Explains Damage Claims," *North Las Vegas News* (29 November 1951), p. 1.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶Titus, *Bombs in the Backyard*, p. 34.

¹⁰⁷Karen R. Jones and John Wills, *The American West*, p. 286.

¹⁰⁸Patricia Nelson Limerick, "Seeing and Being Seen: Tourism in the American West," in *Over The Edge, Remapping the American West*, by Valerie J. Matsumoto (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 24-25.

¹⁰⁹*Ibid.*

¹¹⁰"A-Bombs Don't Scare Tourists," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (12 February 1951), p. 1.

¹¹¹"A-Bomb Watchers Will Form Society of Own," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (22 October 1951), p. 1.

¹¹²"Exclusive Organization Born of Las Vegas Boom," *Santa Fé New Mexican* (22 October 1951), p. 1.

¹¹³"Tourists Hit Vegas Eager for a Show," *Santa Fé New Mexican* (16 October 1951), p. 1.

¹¹⁴"A-Bomb Stirs Resort City," *Santa Fé New Mexican* (1 January 1953), p. 1.

¹¹⁵"Atomic Odds Flip Vegas Gamblers," *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (26 March 1955), p. 1.

Mystery on the Mainline

What Wrecked the "City of San Francisco?"

CHRISTOPHER MACMAHON

On August 12, 1939, the streamliner *City of San Francisco* violently derailed in the Nevada desert while enroute to San Francisco. The wreck would lead to the deaths of fifteen crewmembers, nine passengers, and injure over one hundred other individuals. At the time it was one of the worst transportation disasters in United States history, and the question which everyone sought to answer was "how did this happen?" From this question, multiple theories would develop to explain the cause of the crash. Yet this incident is more than just an investigation into a crash, for each explanation is rooted in something more.

Sinister evidence presented itself from the start: sabotage. But why would someone intentionally derail the train, especially in so remote a location? Was the streamliner the target, or was it just the first unlucky train to pass through the area? What technical knowledge would one need to undertake such a dastardly deed?

The year 1939 was another year of hardship for many Americans—just another in a long string of suffering that would become known as the Great Depression. American businesses were just as much victims as the average citizen, and the railroads were no different. It would come as no surprise then

Christopher MacMahon completed his undergraduate studies in history at California State University Channel Islands and is presently teaching abroad in Shaoxing, China. His interest is in nineteenth century American borderlands with an emphasis on Chinese immigration and intends to obtain a doctorate in this field. Christopher is a long-time member of the Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum and has been an active volunteer at the museum since the age of ten.

that negligence became a suspicion whispered by many. What were the conditions of the right-of-way? How well was it maintained? Was the operating crew adequately performing their duties?

This article will attempt to answer these questions, and in so doing will demonstrate that the cause of the wreck can clearly be identified as sabotage. Furthermore, by carefully examining each alternative theory of causation and comparing the theory against archival evidence, the article will show that the allegations of negligence on the part of the railroad and further accusations of cover-up can be discredited. What will remain is a preponderance of evidence showing this to be nothing less than a premeditated act of mass murder. The evidence will show that the *City of San Francisco* was the specific target of an unknown saboteur and that, given the manner in which the derailment was perpetrated, the saboteur must have had a working knowledge of railroads. The Great Depression is often pictured as Hoovervilles and Okies, of bread-lines and no-help-wanted signs; yet in this unique event one catches a glimpse at what can only be termed a violent act of resistance against the "Octopus of the West." In the Nevada desert, opulence came to an abrupt and dramatic halt, and those who had largely avoided the hardships of the Depression were given a glimpse of what it meant to suffer.

Very little has been published on this incident, and what is published is often little more than a summary of the event—an occasional article in a newspaper recalling an historical event, such as one that appeared in the *Reno Gazette-Journal* in July of 2014.¹ More commonplace is a small article in a magazine for railroad enthusiasts which generally lays out the events, discusses the derailment and rescue efforts, and culminates with the discovery of sabotage. In either case, this is nothing more than event history, telling a story for entertainment and nothing more. The only investigative work to be completed regarding the *City of San Francisco* is the book *Tragic Train* by Don DeNevi. Despite DeNevi's background as a professor and his claim to "tell the story in its entirety," the book is riddled with errors and contains no citations, no bibliography, no means to verify the information presented.² The absence of published material available regarding the incident therefore makes this present article even more relevant.

THE TRAIN

The *City of San Francisco* was one of the premier passenger railroad trains of its time. One of the first streamlined trains to be placed into operation, the *City of San Francisco* consisted of three power units and fourteen articulated passenger cars that stretched out 1,292 feet or just short of a quarter mile in length. Despite its length, the train was designed for speed. At a time when nearly all the leading passenger rail-service operations were still pulled be-

hind steam locomotives, the *City of San Francisco* was powered by six state-of-the-art twelve-cylinder diesel engines. With two engines per power unit, the *City of San Francisco* boasted an output of 5,400 horsepower,³ which allowed the train to travel up to speeds of ninety-five miles per hour in some areas.⁴ The train owed its speed not only from the power in the front, but also to the revolutionary design of the cars that the power units pulled.

The trainset for the *City of San Francisco* was built by the Pullman-Standard Car Manufacturing Company using the most modern engineering techniques. Rather than employing a heavy, all-steel construction, Pullman created a lightweight design for the new streamliner which utilized steel alloys for the frame and aluminum for the body. The difference was evident: the standard "heavyweight" steel passenger cars used throughout most of the United States at the time averaged eighty to ninety tons,⁵ but the lightweight cars in the *City of San Francisco* consist averaged sixty to seventy tons.⁶ As a whole, this meant the train was roughly 10 percent lighter than a standard consist. The train also incorporated the use of articulated cars, whereby several cars were semi-permanently attached to one another, sharing common axles. With fewer axles, more weight could be shed, and the passengers on board could enjoy a smoother ride because there was less vibration. The articulated cars also allowed for more interior space and ease of movement throughout the train, while simultaneously creating a smooth, sleek appearance on the outside that improved aerodynamics during operation.

The *City of San Francisco* was jointly operated by the Chicago and North Western, Union Pacific, and Southern Pacific railroads and made five round-trip runs between Chicago and San Francisco each month. The train followed the Overland Route—the original transcontinental route—which ran via Omaha, Ogden, Reno, and Sacramento between its two termini. The powerful motive power combined with the lightweight aerodynamic consist provided a speed of travel that was unparalleled. Advertisements for the *City of San Francisco* boasted an astonishing travel time of thirty-nine and three-quarter hours between Chicago and San Francisco. By comparison, the next fastest train on the same route was the *Challenger*, which traversed the route in seventy-two and three-quarter hours.⁷

Not only was it fast, but the *City of San Francisco* was also luxurious. In addition to the coaches, the train contained sleeper cars, a diner, a tavern-coffee shop, and an observation lounge. Sleeper cars varied in design from plain open-section sleepers to bedroom cars with bunk beds to roomette cars, which were "a modern type of individual bedroom." The roomette contained "a folding bed, converted into a spacious lounge seat when not in use" with "ample space for lounging, or undressing, before the bed is lowered."⁸ Each car aboard the streamliner was air conditioned, and restrooms, bedrooms, and roomettes were "equipped with special outlets for electrical razors and curling."⁹ Aerial antennas which ran along the top of the train allowed pas-

sengers to listen in to their favorite radio programs as they breezed through the countryside, and portable radios were made available free of charge. If all this were not enough, the train included hot and cold running-water showers, a full-service barber shop, and—a first on American railroads—an on-board registered nurse.¹⁰

Such diverse amenities meant that tickets did not come cheap: a coach seat cost \$90 round-trip. In addition, because of the pre-eminent status of the streamliner, there was also a \$5 extra fare added to the ticket price, bringing the round-trip total to \$95 (the equivalent of \$1,620 in 2015).¹¹ If this seems expensive, keep in mind that 1939 America was still in the grip of the Great Depression, and the average monthly income was just \$114.¹²

For many individuals, like Thomas Hood of Elko, Nevada, the streamliner evoked feelings of wonder and admiration as he watched it pass through town. Thomas remembered the train “never stopped in Elko, just went through town at forty miles an hour; bright yellow and all those people riding in luxury and looking out at us and we looking in at them, thinking that sometime we might be lucky enough to ride that train. I’m sure that there weren’t five people in Elko who had been on that streamliner. You had to pay an extra fare.”¹³

For others, like F. S. Foote, a Berkeley native who was then working for IBM in New York, the streamliner was a way to maximize his time back home.¹⁴ “I planned to be in Berkeley for eleven days. The only means for me to accomplish even that much time was ... to leave New York on Thursday evening August 10, making it possible for me to make connections with the ‘City of S[an] F[rancisco,]’ which left Chicago on Friday August, 11.”¹⁵ What Foote did not know when he purchased his coach ticket in July was that in only one month’s time he would find himself in the midst of one of the most contentious transportation disasters of the century and barely escape with his life.

THE CRASH

On August 12, all was normal on the trip west except for a slight delay incurred just east of Ogden, Utah. Foote recalled that the streamliner had been delayed by an hour because of a minor collision between a freight train and a switch engine that had blocked the tracks.¹⁶ When the operating crew took over in Carlin, Nevada, for the trip over their section into Reno, each crew member noted that the train departed twenty-nine minutes late, at 9:15 pm.¹⁷

At approximately 9:33 pm the *City of San Francisco* rounded a curve leading to bridge No. 5 crossing the Humboldt River. Engineer Ed Hecox noticed a green tumbleweed on the track ahead, remembering that it was odd to see a green tumbleweed in August. As the train reached the point on the track where the tumbleweed lay, Hecox stated rather modestly, “I struck it and felt myself derail. We ran across the bridge and came to a stop.”¹⁸

For the passengers riding in the cars behind, the experience was much more harrowing than the account provided by Engineer Hecox, who was at the head-end of the train. Foote, who was just leaving the coffee shop to return to his seat in coach recalled, "The car jumped the tracks, lights went out, and I had the feeling of being a die in a dice box. Breaking glass, grinding metal, then a moment of things happening too fast for comprehending or remembering."¹⁹ Other passengers shared similar memories. "The first thing we noticed was the car changing from smooth, easy riding, to roughness," recalled William Ruocco, Jr. "[T]he lights went out and we turned over twice and then the car rested at an angle."²⁰ A steward in the club car "Embarcadero" stated, "Suddenly I felt a jar. A moment later, the lights went out, and so did I."²¹ V. V. Welch, also in the "Embarcadero," recalled that "when the lights died we turned end over teakettle. I regained consciousness to find the car telescoped back to the place we had been sitting and playing cards."²²

Much of the tragedy had been compounded by the bridge over the Humboldt River. As the train derailed, it continued to travel down the tracks. The locomotive, two additional power units, the baggage car, and chair car "Market Street" continued across the bridge, coming to a stop approximately 907 feet later. The front left corner of the "Market Street" car had struck the steel girders of the bridge, which scraped along the left side of the car as it traveled across. Following behind "Market Street" were the articulated diner-kitchen cars "Presidio" and "Mission Dolores." The "Presidio" also struck the bridge truss, but this time did so with such force that the impact caused the west bridge abutment to move 1.5 inches of out alignment. Additionally, the impact caused the "Presidio" to uncouple from "Market Street," and the strain on the bridge was so great that it began to collapse. The "Presidio" fell to the river bottom below with the bridge landing on top of it. "Mission Dolores" would follow "Presidio" into the riverbed, crashing into the debris of the car and wreckage of the bridge. Of the twenty-four individuals killed in the wreck, all but three were aboard these two cars;²³ fifteen of those victims were the cooks and wait staff.²⁴

"Embarcadero" and the articulated sleepers "Twin Peaks" and "China Town" followed into the riverbed becoming entangled with the bridge structure. "Twin Peaks" and "China Town" became separated at the point of articulation. "China Town" fell between a gap in the debris from the wrecked bridge; it landed on and crushed the roof structure of the "Twin Peaks," which resulted in three additional fatalities. "China Town" came to rest at an angle on top of the collapsed bridge (FIGURE 1).²⁵ Two additional cars continued down the embankment into the riverbed, but did not suffer the extensive damage of those cars that became intertwined with the wreckage debris. Another two cars derailed without falling into the riverbed, and the final three came to a stop before becoming derailed.²⁶



FIGURE 1: "Southern Pacific Railroad (Streamliner) Wreck Near Carlin, 1939," Photograph by Earl Frantzen. Southern Pacific Transportation—City of San Francisco Wreck 1939 Collection, MS NC 505, photograph no. 277, Nevada Historical Society.

"As the engine stopped, I ran back," explained Hecox, "All I could hear was the screams and moans of the injured and dying ... I could not see a single living person."²⁷ After passing directions to Fireman Kelly, Hecox began running the one-and-a-half miles up track to the section house in Harney to summon aid.²⁸

Within hours, help began to arrive from the communities around the crash, and what they found was a scene of horror. "We got to the wreck and it was a horrible scene!" recalled Warren Monroe, who was the editor for the *Elko Independent*. "There were parts of human bodies scattered around; there were injured people moaning and groaning, waiting for help."²⁹ Flora Collins recalled walking along the side of a hill to get to survivors and observing a severed leg lying alone, its host nowhere to be found.³⁰ Les Moren, a physi-

cian from Elko, remembered seeing "dead bodies scattered around like cordwood."³¹ Moren also recalled how victims, once evacuated to the hospital at Elko, were placed anywhere space could be found. "We had the vice president of Standard Oil lying [on the floor] between two black porters on beds. They had better accommodations than the oil company official."³²

The news of the derailment captured the attention of the nation. People everywhere were all asking the same question: how could the most modern passenger train in service meet such a catastrophic end? For officials at the Southern Pacific Company, the initial evidence was chilling. At 8:30 am on the morning following the accident, Southern Pacific president A. D. McDonald sent a telegram from the company headquarters in San Francisco to the company's financial vice-president John G. Walsh in New York advising him of the derailment. "Preliminary reports from company officers at the scene of the wreck indicate that this was caused by malicious tampering of rails," wrote McDonald.³³ The news spread quickly throughout the country. Even the bilingual *Brownsville Herald* at the southern tip of Texas would carry news of the sabotage, informing its readers that the "disaster was caused by a rail which was moved by a person or persons unknown."³⁴

In the following weeks the Southern Pacific Company would do all it could to conclusively find the cause of the disaster. A board of inquiry was formed in Carlin to interview employees of both the Southern Pacific and adjacent Western Pacific Railroad; its purpose was to investigate the actions taken by employees prior to, during, and following the wreck. The board of inquiry investigated train operations as well as maintenance and upkeep of the rights-of-way of both railroads through the Humboldt River Canyon. Simultaneously, the Interstate Commerce Commission, the federal agency responsible for railroad oversight, was beginning an independent investigation of its own.

Meanwhile, McDonald was assuring the public and fellow railroad men that all was being done to solve the case. "All the evidence points to the fact that the wrecking of the streamliner was planned with craft and deliberation," McDonald wrote in his first press release following the accident. "Southern Pacific railroad police are at work on the case."³⁵ The officers from the Southern Pacific joined local officers from the Eureka and Elko county sheriff's offices and state officers from the Nevada Highway Patrol who were already on scene beginning the investigative process.³⁶ In addition, McDonald had also telegraphed J. Edgar Hoover, director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, requesting the assistance of his agents in the investigation. McDonald wrote to Union Pacific Railroad president Hale Holden on August 22 informing him, "I have had several talks with Mr. Hoover over the telephone and he assures me the F.B.I. will stay on the case to the end. He appreciates the importance of finding the guilty person as quickly as possible and has assigned to the case all the men he could spare."³⁷

THE NEGLIGENCE THEORY

Not everyone was content with the railroad's claim of sabotage, however. On August 17, 1939, the *Los Angeles Daily News* carried an article entitled "Employee Group Hints Roadbed Unfit for Use." The article centers on Ishmael Flory, secretary-treasurer of the Joint Council of Dining Car Employees, who stated that "his organization was not satisfied that a saboteur caused the wreck of the streamliner 'City of San Francisco.'" Flory wrote an open letter to Attorney General Frank Murphy urging him to look into the condition of the roadbed as a factor in the crash.³⁸

Others looked not to the condition of the roadbed, but at the speed of the train as a factor in the wreck. F. S. Foote, who had suffered a concussion, punctured lung, four cracked ribs, a broken sternum, and a broken jaw as a result of the wreck, stated that he was "very skeptical" of the railroad's "sabotage story."³⁹ Looking back on his experiences fifty years later, Foote would say "the sabotage story held up well enough, even though it was never really believed by those of us who were on the train."⁴⁰ Chris Sheerin, then editor of the *Elko Daily Free Press*, summarized it best in 1989 stating, "Sabotage, speed and a faulty roadbed have been blamed for the wreck. There is disagreement today, as there was at the time of the disaster."⁴¹ Now, seventy-five years later, questions and disagreements still remain over the cause of the accident. A case can be made, however, to disprove the alternative theories which point to negligence on the part of the Southern Pacific Railroad.

When negligence is the cause of a major railroad accident, there are generally two areas in which investigators focus their attention: operational negligence and negligent maintenance. It is these same two categories that theories for those who believe that the Southern Pacific Company was to blame for the wreck fall into. In regard to negligent maintenance, there were groups who maintained that the roadbed was not maintained to an acceptable level thus leading to the derailment. For those who point to negligent operation, all the theories center on the control of the train under Engineer Ed Hecox. The most popular of the theories claims that the train was traveling at an excessive speed in order to make up lost time, leading to the derailment. Other theories suggest that Hecox failed to brake for a rock or other object on the rail, striking it, and causing derailment.

Let us return to Ishmael Flory and the Joint Council of Dining Car Employees, for it is his open letter that points to the issue of negligent maintenance. "In the last few years there has been considerable curtailment of the money expended for the labor for the maintenance of the roadbeds of these carriers," Flory wrote. "If it is found that the condition of the roadbeds are a factor in this wreck," he continued, "this will represent criminal negligence against the employees and the public at large."⁴²

While Flory's statements may appear slightly peculiar when juxtaposed against the claim of sabotage being presented by the authorities and the press, they are not without background or merit. This was, after all, still the years of the Great Depression. A study that same year observed that "in no period in railroad history has the degree of financial distress been as serious."⁴³ Many roads throughout the nation were falling into serious decline. This claim can be further supported by the recollection of F. S. Foote: "Several remarks passed about the roughness of the roadbed since we left Ogden, and there was argument about the reason. Some said the Southern Pacific tracks were notoriously rough, while others said we were trying to make up time. The fact remains we were jostled considerably more than we had been since leaving Chicago."⁴⁴

However, the section of track on which the accident occurred was one of the main East-West arteries of the nation, and as a result received a high volume of traffic. The Southern Pacific profited from this traffic, and thus kept the track in good condition despite the hardships imposed by the Depression. The track was composed of 130-pound rail, the highest strength in the Southern Pacific system at the time, and had been replaced in 1931.⁴⁵ The service life for a piece of 130-pound rail fluctuated depending on the environment and amount of traffic carried over it; however, the mean service life was determined to be 22.5 years.⁴⁶ This places the track well within the acceptable limits of service.

Furthermore, the track had regularly been maintained. G. Bianchini was the section foreman for the ten miles of track outside of Harney, where the train met with derailment. Bianchini testified that he and the four men he supervised had made their most recent inspection of the track on Friday, August 11, the day prior to the accident. On this occasion they found nothing wrong with the track. The most recent work they had done in the area where the derailment occurred had taken place five months previously, when the crew raised the approach to the bridge.⁴⁷ T. L. Williamson, road master for the section of track between Rose Creek and Carlin also testified to the condition of the track. Williamson had conducted rolling investigations in his motor car on August 4, 7, 10, 11, and 12,⁴⁸ and a walking inspection of the track two weeks prior to the accident.⁴⁹ In all instances he found the track to be in good condition.

A bridge crew had been conducting regular maintenance on bridge No. 5, which had ended on August 5. The bridge gang had then moved to bridge No. 4, which was 1,160 feet to the West. The bridge gang passed over the spot of derailment four times on August 12 and found nothing wrong with the track conditions. In addition, a freight train had passed over the same track between 6:10 and 6:20 pm on August 12; the crew of that train testified that they saw nothing unusual along the track.⁵⁰ The track was also inspected independently by the Interstate Commerce Commission in their investigation following the wreck. The commission's report states, "The Commission's inspectors examined the track to a distance one-half mile east of the point of derailment and found it to be maintained in excellent condition."⁵¹ All the evidence points

to the fact that the Southern Pacific was maintaining its track appropriately. In the absence of any evidence showing the track to be in poor condition at the time of the derailment, negligent maintenance must be ruled out as a cause.

The speed at which the train was traveling is one of the more popular theories and remains an issue of contention to this day. This theory is constantly alluded to in the recollections of F. S. Foote as he remarks about the delay and the staff reassuring him that they can make up the time traveling through the Nevada desert. The speed of the train was also one of the specific allegations cited by Eleanor Wallar and her husband when they brought suit against the Southern Pacific Company seeking compensation for injuries sustained as a result of the train wreck.

Specified speeds along the route of travel are adhered to meticulously. Excessive speeds would not only exert more force upon the rail, leading to higher maintenance costs, but would also provide a rough ride for passengers. In an era before radio communication with dispatchers, movements along sections of track were dictated by timetables. The tables were used by dispatchers to determine where a train would be along its route based on the speed allowed and distance traveled. These speeds could be amended through special train orders issued to crews at stations along their routes. Both the Interstate Commerce Commission and Board of Inquiry reports indicate that the Southern Pacific was using timetables and train orders on the night of August 12. Therefore, one can easily compare the distance traveled and the length of time it took to traverse with the allotted speeds to determine if the train was traveling too fast.

The controlled speed through the curve at which the train derailed was 60 miles per hour. The curve was 3 degrees with a superelevation (bank) of 4.5 inches. The Southern Pacific's engineers calculated 60 miles per hour as the maximum speed over the curve. The speed was indicated on a speed board (similar to a speed-limit sign on a highway) approaching the winding canyon country: Engineer Hecox complied with it. Hecox testified that as he approached the sign he powered down the locomotive from 65 to 60 miles per hour. The speed was verified by a speedometer in the cab. When asked if he checked the speedometer at any time after the speed board appeared, Hecox responded, "I hardly ever take my eyes off the speedometer."⁵²

The testimony of head-end brakeman Elmer J. Thomas can provide an accurate accounting of the train's movements and speeds upon leaving Carlin and culminating with the derailment just before bridge No. 5. According to Thomas, the train left Carlin at 9:15 pm. Thomas had compared his watch to the station clock as required by regulation, and his watch had officially been compared and recorded in accordance with Southern Pacific's time-service rules just four days prior, on August 8.⁵³ The train continued at a speed of 60 miles per hour for six miles navigating through eight curves of 2.5 degrees or less before slowing to 45 miles per hour for several sharp curves, switches, and

the tunnel leading into Palisade. At that point there was a speed restriction in place through Palisade, so the train accelerated to the allotted speed of 55 miles per hour.⁵⁴ The train continued at this speed for approximately three miles, the maximum speed changed to 68 miles per hour. However, Hecox would testify that it was hard to get the train to that speed in the mountainous country and instead traveled at a speed of 65 miles per hour. The train continued at this speed until slowing for the aforementioned speed board prior to the curve where the train would derail.⁵⁵ The slow-down was for three curves, nos. 614, 613, and 612, which were equally sharp at 3 degrees. The train successfully navigated curve 614, but derailed partially through curve 613, at 9:33 pm.⁵⁶

With an average speed of 60 miles per hour, it would take the train sixteen minutes to travel the sixteen miles between Carlin and the point of derailment. Given the fluctuations in speed, however, the eighteen minutes elapsed would be an appropriate amount of time. If the train were traveling faster than allotted, it would have arrived at the point of derailment much earlier. In addition, those traveling on-board would have noticed sharper g-forces exerted through the winding canyon country had the train been traveling too fast. Brakeman Thomas was specifically asked if the train had exceeded its speed limit between the appearance of the speed board and the point of derailment. Thomas responded, "I am positive it was not because we get accustomed to that. We can more or less tell very easily whether we are running slow or fast and the minute we hit a curve faster than we should we can tell by the action."⁵⁷ Furthermore, Division Engineer Otis Weeks calculated that the locomotive and train set traveling through that curve would have to be traveling at a speed of 123.9 miles per hour before enough force could be generated to overturn the train.⁵⁸ Therefore, given the known speeds and time traveled over distance, combined with the fact that the train had traversed similar curves at a similar speed without incident, and given known speeds required for overturn to occur, one can only conclude that the train was traveling within the acceptable speed parameters.

Other questions of operational negligence point to possible inappropriate actions taken by Engineer Hecox. One suggestion follows Hecox's initial report that he believed he had struck a rock or other object on the track that resulted in the train's derailment. "It first occurred to me that someone had placed a rock and we had struck it," Hecox testified. "[I] looked at the pilot [cowcatcher] to see if it was marked and there was no mark."⁵⁹ Electrician I. L. Bauman, who had been in Power Unit 2 at the time of derailment, also took a look at the pilot and "could find no evidence of striking anything."⁶⁰ Photographs taken of the pilot of the locomotive at the scene also clearly show that there was no damage caused by striking an object. No evidence has yet been presented which can substantiate this theory.

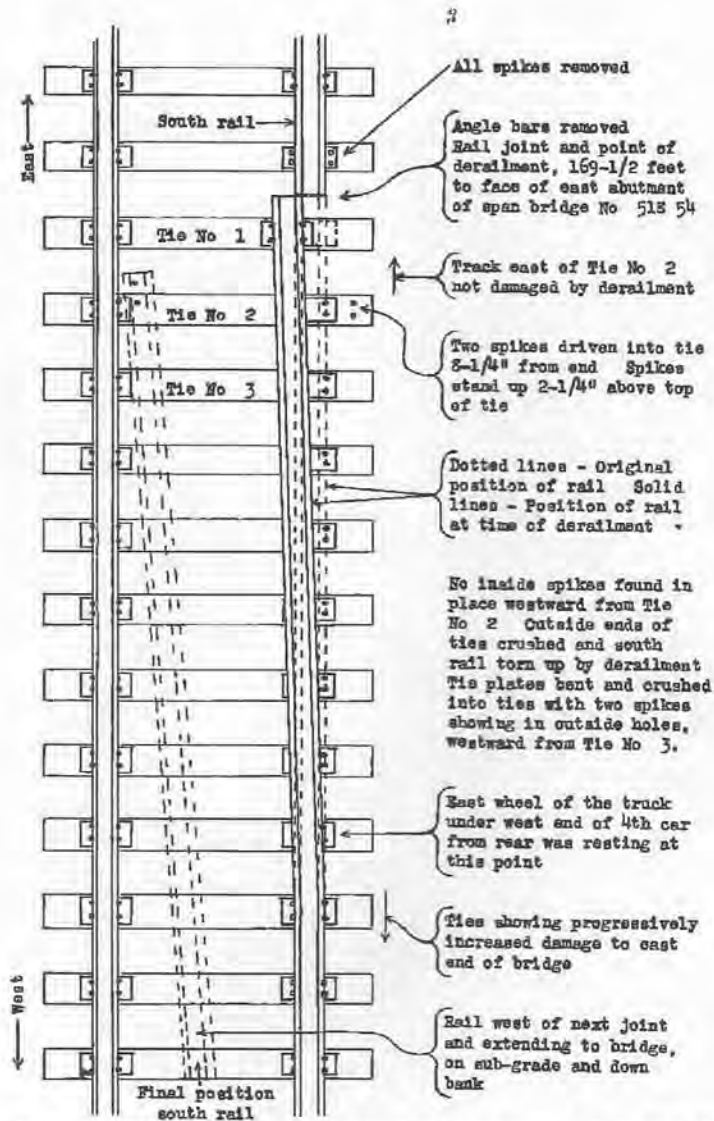


FIGURE 2 —Sketch showing normal misaligned and final positions of rail involved

FIGURE 2: United States Interstate Commerce Commission, *Report of the Director, Bureau of Safety: Accident on the Southern Pacific Railroad, Harney, Nevada, August 12, 1939, Investigation no. 2375*, United States Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C., 1939, page 6.

SABOTAGE OR COVER-UP?

If there is no evidence to support an assertion of negligence, then one must look at the evidence in support of the case of sabotage. The conclusion of the Interstate Commerce Commission's investigation was that "this accident was caused by malicious tampering with the track." The ruling from an independent agency reflected the cause determined early by the Southern Pacific Railroad in its Board of Inquiry investigation. This begs the question of how exactly was the track tampered with, and how can one conclude it was a malicious act?

Evidence from the scene showed that the outside rail had been moved out of alignment, forming a derailer—a section of rail that intentionally forces a train off a track (FIGURE 2).⁶¹ In the case of the *City of San Francisco*, the outside rail had been moved inward 4 □ inches from the normal alignment of the rail. To accomplish this, first several spikes had to be removed in order to move the rail out of alignment. In addition, the rail was separated at a connecting joint where two rails were joined together. This meant that in order to move the rail, the angle bars and bolts joining the two pieces together would also need to be removed. The tie plate connecting the rail to the tie was re-aligned to the new inward position, and then the rail was moved over the tie plate and partially re-spiked to hold the rail in place (FIGURE 3).⁶² The bond wires, which if broken would trigger a stop indication on the block signal, were straightened out but kept intact. Finally, the exposed portion of the misaligned rail was painted so that a locomotive headlight would not reflect off the metal, and the tumbleweed was placed over the spot to further obscure the tampered rail.⁶³

Every piece of evidence indicates sabotage. The location where the derailment occurred was in rough country at the farthest point away from towns and roads, away from prying eyes. The bolts which held the angle bars and joined the rails were found intact, not sheered, which meant that the bolts had to have been removed, and could not have fallen out of place from damage or forces acting upon them. Moving the rail inward would have forced the train off the rails to the left of the direction of travel. Damage to the wood ties as a result of the flanged wheels of the train traveling over them was on the left-hand side of each rail beginning at the point of sabotage and continuing to the point where the locomotive came to a stop. Investigators found no other evidence of derailment or dragging equipment preceeding the point of the misaligned rail; this indicated that the derailment began at that point. Furthermore, the tools required to conduct such an act, combined with the efforts to keep the bond wire intact and obscure the sabotage, all suggest that the individual(s) had a strong knowledge of how the Southern Pacific constructed and maintained its track.

There remains, however, one final possibility which must be disproven before one can definitively lay the cause to sabotage: cover-up. Joe Bell accompanied his father, a Beowawe constable, to the wreck that night. "As we



FIGURE 3: City of San Francisco Wreck Collection, photograph 739-6, photographer unknown. (*Northeastern Nevada Museum, Elko, Nevada*)

walked up the hill we heard the pounding sounds of spike mauls,” he recalled. “We climbed up the tracks and recognized the section foreman who was a friend and neighbor ... we looked under the car and it looked like they were moving a rail The next morning, we saw the headlines: ‘Sabotage!’ We questioned that in light of what we had seen and what we thought were other discrepancies.”⁶⁴

One must keep in mind that Bell’s testimony, along with those of other citizens who arrived early to help, were made in the middle of the night with only small fires and flashlights to provide light. The roadmaster for the section, T. L. Williamson, returned to the site a year later to observe the visibility conditions and found that visibility was limited to 200 feet, and improved to approximately 400 feet with adequate moonlight.⁶⁵ Bell’s statement can also be

corroborated by another eyewitness, Roy C. Mills: "Joe Bell and his dad were right. They saw the crew working under the car. That car had only its front wheels off the tracks and the men were getting the car back on the tracks."⁶⁶ While the efforts to rerailed the car are not specifically mentioned in any testimony, it is known that the car was rerailed and pulled out of the scene with several passengers on board.

T. L. Williamson testified that he was unable, crawling on his hands and knees, to fit easily in the space between the tie and the partially derailed "Union Square" car, which lay over the spot where the rail was tampered. Williamson said he had to squirm in order to fit in the gap. He estimated that the space between the ties and the car to be no more than 24 inches.⁶⁷ If the space between the car and tie was only 24 inches, there would have been no way for the Southern Pacific to create the appearance of sabotage after the fact. The claw bar used to extract rail spikes was 5 feet long. One would be unable to fit the bar in the limited space to pull the spikes up to realign the track. If the bar were shortened to fit, then it would not be possible to gain enough leverage to remove the spikes.⁶⁸ This would be further compounded by the fact that the Southern Pacific used four spikes per tie—two outer and two inner—on each rail. The Interstate Commerce Commission found twenty spikes removed from the south rail, which would further compound the difficulty of trying to fabricate the appearance of sabotage given the limited amount of space in which to work.⁶⁹ The rail was also found to have been respiked in place 4 □ inches inward. Driving spikes into a tie with no previously drilled holes would have required an individual to fully swing a spike maul to achieve the force necessary to drive the spike. This would have had to have been repeated several times per spike. Similarly, to remove the angle bars connecting the two sections of track together required removing square nuts which had to be turned through 90 degrees with a three-foot wrench to loosen. All of these tasks would have been impossible to accomplish in the limited clearance under the "Union Square."

Further evidence points to the fact that the rail had already been misaligned causing the accident. The front left wheel of the locomotive (FIGURE 4) was nicked as it struck the misaligned rail. The tampered rail was also chipped in a manner consistent with being struck by the flange of a moving train wheel. P. E. Graf, a mechanical engineer from Elko with no ties to the Southern Pacific, testified to seeing the chipped rail at the scene. When asked of the nature of the mark, Graf indicated that he believed the mark to be a "straight dent blow." Graf repeatedly stated that the dent could not have been caused by friction; when asked what he thought caused the mark, he stated, "I believe the rim of the wheel struck it."⁷⁰ The wheel of the locomotive could not have struck the misaligned rail if the rail was moved out of place after the fact. Therefore, the sabotage must have been conducted prior to the train's arrival at that spot.

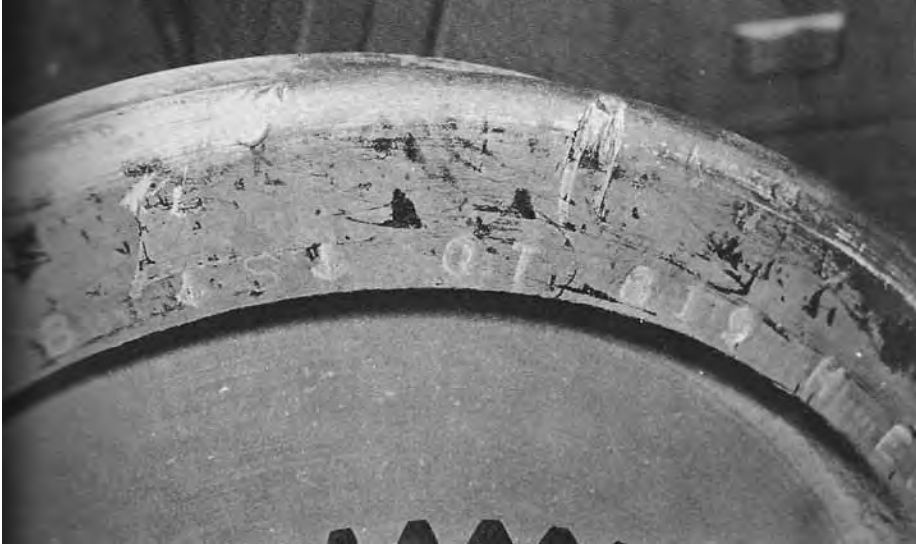


FIGURE 4: City of San Francisco Wreck Collection, photograph MS-39, photographer unknown. (*California State Railroad Museum Library, Sacramento, California*).

Another misconception commonly alluded to is that the agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation disagreed with the railroad's finding of sabotage. In his article "Recalling a Train Wreck," Howard Hickson twice states that the FBI disagreed with the conclusion of sabotage.⁷¹ If this is the case, why does the evidence speak to the contrary? In the case of *Wallar v. Southern Pacific Company*, the FBI presented its case files to the court; the files consisted of more than 850 pages and 202 photographs. If the FBI disagreed with the conclusion of sabotage, then why did the bureau provide evidence alluding to sabotage to the Federal District Court? Furthermore, documents obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request show that the bureau was continuing to follow up on leads into the case nearly 30 years later.⁷² Surely the bureau would not continue to search for a saboteur it did not believe existed for several years following the incident.

Perhaps the greatest proof that sabotage was indeed the cause of the wreck was the finding of the court in the *Wallar* case. The Wallars, husband and wife passengers on board the train, made a similar claim to Joe Bell, i.e., that the railroad fabricated the accident after the fact. The couple brought suit against the Southern Pacific. Here, evidence was presented by the Wallars to

support the suspicion of both negligence and a cover-up by the railroad, along with evidence to support a finding of sabotage by the Southern Pacific. In his opinion Judge St. Sure wrote, "The testimony offered to support the theory that the evidence of derailment was manufactured after the wreck by employees of the defendant railroad company is wholly insufficient and insubstantial. A suggestion so incredible cannot be sustained against the indisputable physical facts ... Upon a careful consideration of the whole case I am of the opinion that the plaintiffs have failed to sustain the burden of proof by a preponderance of evidence."⁷³ The court sided against the Wallars in every point of their argument.

Though no suspect was ever brought to justice, those investigating the wreck strongly believed the culprit to be a former employee of the railroad. The area in which the wreck was staged, the deliberate and methodical manner in which it was undertaken all point to someone familiar with Southern Pacific operations. Jobs were a prized commodity during the Depression, and it would be no far stretch for an individual who lost his job to become disgruntled and retaliate against his former employer.

Given the fact that a freight train had traveled over the site where the accident was to occur just hours before, one can only conclude that the *City of San Francisco* was specifically targeted. Not only was this train the pride of the Southern Pacific, but it was also a luxury liner, a train full of those with means in a time where many were simply struggling to get by. Targeting this train would ensure maximum publicity, and by default bring negative attention toward the Southern Pacific.

CONCLUSION

For too long mystery has surrounded the events that occurred that August night. Though we will likely never know who was behind the malicious act that resulted in the deaths of twenty-four individuals, I believe it can firmly be established that sabotage was indeed responsible for the wreck of the *City of San Francisco*. Testimony offered by officials show that the track was well maintained, regularly inspected, and was in good working order. An independent agency, the Interstate Commerce Commission, conducted its own investigation and came to the same conclusion. Given the knowledge of the distance the train traveled and the amount of time it took to traverse that distance, one can determine that the train was traveling within the acceptable parameters, and not at an excessive speed. A lack of damage to the pilot of the locomotive shows that the train did not strike an object. Furthermore, damage to the wheel of the locomotive indicates that the wheel struck a misaligned rail. To effect this, the track would have had to have been moved out of alignment prior to the locomotive reaching that point. Given this knowledge and the limited space at the point of misalignment after the wreck, the evidence

of sabotage could not have been staged after the fact. Finally, all major parties who investigated the wreck determined the cause to be sabotage. Even when a civil case was brought in Federal Court, no evidence could be found to support any instance of negligence or cover-up by the Southern Pacific. The question that remains is why?

I began this article by examining the lavish amenities that the *City of San Francisco* offered its patrons. This stands in stark contrast to the hardships that many in the country were still experiencing. It was a time where "all across the country, desperate young men were reaching for the grab irons of boxcars," and countless men criss-crossed the country by hopping a freight.⁷⁴ For those struggling simply to survive, the *City of San Francisco* was a nagging reminder that not everyone knew what it meant to suffer, that there were those who still found luxury in the midst of despair.

Similarly, the Southern Pacific Railroad had long held a special place of disdain in the hearts of many citizens of the West. Though the Progressive movement had curtailed some of the company's political clout, its economic control over the West still resembled the octopus depicted by G. Fredrick Keller half a century prior.⁷⁵ With the mounting economic hardships of the Depression, any drop in traffic could very well lead a railroad to insolvency. The Southern Pacific was no different.

When one understands the underlying economic dichotomy, suddenly much of the controversy surrounding this event comes into clearer focus. An event of this magnitude had the ability to ruin the Southern Pacific Company. If the railroad were to lose the trust of the public, ridership would decrease and freight shippers could move their business elsewhere. The railroad would not be able to absorb such a loss, and its future would most certainly be in doubt. It is for the company's future that the Southern Pacific battles in the months following the derailment.

For Ishmael Flory and the Joint Council of Dining Car Employees, the condition of the roadbed and track was a legitimate concern based on trends across the nation to defer track maintenance. For the Southern Pacific, the suggestion that one of the most highly traveled sections of its network was in disrepair was an allegation with potential serious repercussions. If a train derailed on their best section, then surely the safety of the rest of the route would be questioned. It is for this reason that Joe Bell's suggestion of a cover-up by the Southern Pacific was seen at the time, and continues to be seen by individuals today, as plausible, for it was the Southern Pacific who had everything to lose.

Yet one also finds the Depression at play in the work of the saboteur(s). A job was a highly prized commodity during the Depression, and a railroad job was a good job to have. Despite the negative image of the Southern Pacific among the populace at large, the railroad took good care of its employees, offering decent pay, advancement opportunities, and a healthcare plan for all employees that became the model for the major American railroads.⁷⁶ Because

of the manner in which the sabotage was conducted, the perpetrator would have had to have been a former railroad employee. The saboteur would have had to know which tools to acquire in order to pull the spikes, remove the angle bars, push over the rail, and re-spike it into its new position. The saboteur would not only have had to know about the bonding wires at the rail joints, but would also need to know that the Southern Pacific looped their bonding wires, allowing the saboteur to extend the wire without severing it and thus tripping a stop signal on the block. Furthermore, there was a joint track operation in place between the Southern Pacific and Western Pacific railroads; not only would the saboteur be required to know that westbound trains utilized the Southern Pacific tracks, but would also need to know which of those two sets of rights-of-way belonged to the Southern Pacific. Finally, by forcing the derailment just prior to the bridge, the saboteur(s) intended for the train to fall into the riverbed and possibly take out the bridge in the process, thus causing the greatest possible damage. Taken together, one can only conclude that such extensive knowledge was likely derived from having been employed by the railroad. In the turmoil of the Depression, losing a railroad job could provide the motivation for seeking revenge.

Finally, we come to the targeting of the *City of San Francisco* itself. The Southern Pacific operated several well-known passenger liners such as the *Coast Daylight*, *Overland Limited*, and *Sunset Limited*. Yet the choice to target the *City of San Francisco* is in and of itself telling. The streamliner was the pride of the Southern Pacific, its modern flagship of the line. The streamliner was also a symbol of opulence. Targeting the *City of San Francisco* was sure to gain national attention and cause the most harm to the Southern Pacific's image. To the perpetrator, it also had the added benefit of laying low those who had largely avoided the anguish felt by so many Americans during the Depression.

Because no individual was ever apprehended, and there remains no deathbed confession, we will likely never know who derailed the *City of San Francisco* or why. However, one cannot ignore the omnipresent role of the Great Depression in this incident. While one cannot point to any empirical evidence to substantiate this claim, it remains the only viable explanation for every portion of the event. Economic hardship caused by the Great Depression can explain why some individuals would claim negligence, why some would allude to a cover-up, and why an individual would maliciously derail the *City of San Francisco*.

NOTES

¹Chris H. Sheerin and Paul Leonard. "From 1939: 20 Known Dead in Train Wreck," *Reno Gazette-Journal* (7 July 2014).

²Don DeNevi, *Tragic Train "The City of San Francisco": The Development and Historic Wreck of a Streamliner* (Vancouver: Evergreen Press, 1997).

³Chicago and Northwestern Lines, Union Pacific Railroad, and Southern Pacific Lines, *The Streamliner City of San Francisco* (promotional pamphlet, circa 1939), Southern Pacific Transportation—City of San Francisco Wreck 1939 Collection, MS NC 505, Nevada Historical Society, Reno.

⁴H. E. Watts and J. K. Parkinson, *Southern Pacific Company Board of Inquiry Report* (19-21 August 1939), City of San Francisco Derailment Collection, MS-39, California State Railroad Museum Library, Sacramento, 115.

⁵Pullman Car Records, Pullman Digital Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago.

⁶*Southern Pacific Company Board of Inquiry Report*, 233.

⁷Southern Pacific Company, *Time Tables for Train Distribution: Overland Route* (August 1939), City of San Francisco Train Wreck Collection, Northeastern Nevada Museum, Elko, Nevada.

⁸Chicago and Northwestern Lines, Union Pacific Railroad, and Southern Pacific Lines, *The Streamliner City of San Francisco* (promotional pamphlet, circa 1939).

⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *CPI Inflation Calculator*. http://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm.

¹²Dianne Petro, "Brother Can You Spare a Dime? The 1940 Census: Employment and Income," *Prologue Magazine* 44:1 (Spring 2012), digital.

¹³Howard Hickson, "Recalling a Train Wreck: City of San Francisco Streamliner —1939," *Northeastern Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* 80:1 (Winter 1980), 3.

¹⁴F. S. Foote, "City of San Francisco Wreck: Eyewitness Account, 1939 Near Harney," *Northeastern Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* 90:1 (1989), 15.

¹⁵F. S. Foote, "Detailed Account of My Recollection of City of San Francisco Accident" (13 September 1939), City of San Francisco Train Wreck Collection, Northeastern Nevada Museum, Elko.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷*Southern Pacific Company Board of Inquiry Report*: Engineer Hecox, 1; Fireman Kelly, 29; Head-end Brakeman Thomas, 102; Rear-end Brakeman Webster, 116.

¹⁸*Southern Pacific Company Board of Inquiry Report*, 2.

¹⁹Foote, "Detailed Account of My Recollection."

²⁰Hickson, "Recalling a Train Wreck," 7.

²¹*Ibid.*, 8-9.

²²*Ibid.*, 9.

²³United States Interstate Commerce Commission, *Report of the Director Bureau of Safety: Accident on the Southern Pacific Railroad, Harney, Nevada, August 12, 1939, Investigation no. 2375*, (United States Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C.), 1939, 7.

²⁴*Southern Pacific Company Board of Inquiry Report*, list of fatalities, 1-2.

²⁵Earl Frantzen, "Southern Pacific Railroad (Streamliner) Wreck near Carlin, 1939," Southern Pacific Transportation—City of San Francisco Wreck 1939 Collection, MS NC 505, photograph no. 277. Nevada Historical Society, Reno.

²⁶Interstate Commerce Commission, 9-10.

²⁷Hickson, "Recalling a Train Wreck," 5.

²⁸*Southern Pacific Company Board of Inquiry Report*, 1-3.

²⁹Hickson, "Recalling a Train Wreck," 9.

³⁰Flora Collins interviewed by Howard Hickson.

³¹Hickson, "Recalling a Train Wreck," 11.

³²*Ibid.*, 15.

³³A. D. McDonald, telegram to John G. Walsh (14 August 1939), Southern Pacific Transportation—City of San Francisco Wreck 1939 Collection, MS NC 505, Nevada Historical Society, Reno, Nevada.

³⁴"Investigation in Train Derailment," *Brownsville Herald*, Brownsville, Texas (14 August 1939), volume XLVIII, no. 36, page 1. Original in Spanish: *el desastre fué causado por un riel que fué movido, por una persona o personas desconocidas*.

³⁵A. D. McDonald, press release (18 August 1939), Southern Pacific Transportation—City of San Francisco Wreck 1939 Collection, MS NC 505, Nevada Historical Society, Reno.

³⁶Requests were sent to the Elko County sheriff's office, Eureka County sheriff's office, and Nevada Department of Public Safety under the Nevada Open Records Act in an effort to obtain documentation from these early investigations. None of the aforementioned agencies maintains records dating back to this period.

³⁷A. D. McDonald, letter to Hale Holden (22 August 1939), Southern Pacific Transportation—City of San Francisco Wreck 1939 Collection, MS NC 505, Nevada Historical Society, Reno.

³⁸United Press, "Employee Group Hinted Roadbed Unfit for Use," *Los Angeles Daily News* (17 August 1939), clipping, Southern Pacific Transportation—City of San Francisco Wreck 1939 Collection, MS NC 505, Nevada Historical Society, Reno.

³⁹Foote, "Detailed Account of My Recollection."

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 11.

⁴¹Hickson, "Recalling a Train Wreck," 19.

⁴²*Los Angeles Daily News* (17 August 1939).

⁴³Quoted in Robert G. Gallamore and John R. Meyer, *American Railroads: Decline and Renaissance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 105.

⁴⁴Foote, "Detailed Account of My Recollection."

⁴⁵United States Interstate Commerce Commission, 3.

⁴⁶J. B. Baker, "Economic Weight of Rail for Varying Traffic Conditions," *Engineering News-Record* 85, no. 15 (17 October 1920): 716.

⁴⁷*Southern Pacific Company Board of Inquiry Report*, 194.

⁴⁸*Wallar v. Southern Pacific Company*, 37 F. Supp. 475 (N. D. Cal. 1941).

⁴⁹*Southern Pacific Company Board of Inquiry Report*, 198.

⁵⁰*Wallar v. Southern Pacific Company*.

⁵¹United States Interstate Commerce Commission, 26.

⁵²*Southern Pacific Company Board of Inquiry Report*, 5-6.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 102.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 113-14.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 6.

⁵⁶Curves numbers are labeled west to east, beginning in Sacramento. The reverse order provided is in the order in which the train would have arrived at them.

⁵⁷*Southern Pacific Company Board of Inquiry Report*, 113.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 216.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 2.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 55.

⁶¹United States Interstate Commerce Commission, *Report of the Director Bureau of Safety: Accident on the Southern Pacific Railroad, Harney, Nevada, August 12, 1939*, Investigation no. 2375 (United States Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C., 1939), 6.

⁶²Photographer unknown, City of San Francisco Wreck Collection, Photograph 739-6, Northeastern Nevada Museum, Elko.

⁶³United States Interstate Commerce Commission, 29, 32-33.

⁶⁴Hickson, "Recalling a Train Wreck," 7.

⁶⁵T. L. Williamson, letter to G. W. Luhr (13 August 1940), City of San Francisco Derailment Collection, MS-39, California State Railroad Museum Library, Sacramento.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*

⁶⁷*Southern Pacific Company Board of Inquiry Report*, 206.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, 27.

⁶⁹United States Interstate Commerce Commission, 13.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, 50-52.

⁷¹Hickson, "Recalling a Train Wreck," 2-26.

⁷²See United States Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Special Agent in Command, Las Vegas Transmitting Memorandum to Special Agent in Command, Sacramento, Regarding*

City of San Francisco Derailment of Southern Pacific Train Near Harney, Nevada, 8/12/39; Federal Train Wreck Statute [FTWS] (26 November 1965); and Idem, Special Agent (Name Withheld) Transmitting Memorandum to Special Agent in Command, Las Vegas, Regarding City of San Francisco Derailment of Southern Pacific Train Near Harney, Nevada, 8/12/39; FTWS (23 December 1965).

⁷³*Wallar v. Southern Pacific Company.*

⁷⁴James R. Chiles, "'Hallelujah I'm a Bum,'" *Smithsonian* 29:5 (August 1998), 66.

⁷⁵The Southern Pacific gained the derogatory characterization of an octopus from the political cartoon "The Curse of California" in the San Francisco magazine *The Wasp* (19 August 1882). The image formed the inspiration for the title of Frank Norris's *The Octopus: The Story of California*, which was highly critical of the railroad monopoly in California. Though the story uses fictional characters and a fake railroad, the events were based on experiences of California farmers and ranchers in their fight against the Southern Pacific. The characterization stuck.

⁷⁶The Southern Pacific created a network of hospitals along its routes, and hired several doctors and nurses to ensure the best care for its employees and the communities it served. Many of these medical professionals were dispatched to the wreck site following the derailment. For more information on the Southern Pacific's benefits and medical program, see Richard J. Orsi, *Sunset Limited: The Southern Pacific Railroad and the Development of the American West 1850-1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

Washoe Redux

Territory, Sovereignty, and Anthropology

EDAN STREKAL

In 1974, after more than twenty years of litigation, the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California received settlement from the federal government in the form of five million dollars; the settlement was based on the incursion of white settlers into the tribe's ancestral homelands beginning in the mid nineteenth century. This outcome represented a culmination of the tortuous route followed by the Washoe toward reorganization into a tribal entity and recognition of their traditional homelands.

Although seemingly paltry, the settlement allowed the Washoe a basis from which to build. Through investment, a portion of the sum went toward expanding tribal development, education programs, and general welfare. The remainder was distributed on a per-capita basis, mainly to elderly tribal members who had waited decades for recompense.¹ As the 1990s progressed, the Washoe continued to make advances which included a 1997 decision by the United States Forest Service that awarded thirty-year permits for tribal use of lands at Lake Tahoe's Meeks Creek Meadow and granted the tribe the

Edan Strekal was born and raised in Carson City, Nevada and attended Carson High School. He received a B.A. in history in 2008, and M.A. in history and cultural geography in 2012, both from the University of Nevada, Reno. Edan is interested in Nevada and the West, issues of race and ethnicity, and Great Basin Indian culture. He currently holds a Project Archivist position at the Special Collections and University Archives of University of Nevada, Reno, which allows him to remain immersed in the subject matter that he enjoys most.

right to act as lessee of the Meeks Bay Resort. More recently, in 2007, the Washoe gained another victory with the ruling by the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals that ended rock climbing at Cave Rock.² These developments were a far cry from predictions made in the mid nineteenth century, which surmised that the Washoe would not require further consideration because of their impending extinction.

With the conclusion of World War II, Congress showed interest in settling all outstanding Indian claims against the United States, including contractual, non-contractual, legal, and non-legal claims. On August 13, 1946, the Indians Claims Commission Act (ICC) passed both the House and Senate and became law. That act opened the door for federally recognized Indian tribes (under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934) to claim monetary compensation for lands and resources ceded to the expanding American nation under conditions of duress.³

Early explorers, writers (including Mark Twain in his 1872 *Roughing It*), and ethnographers often dismissed Great Basin Indians as existing in a static state, at the mercy of their environment and with no established relationships or tribal affiliations beyond family units or bands. Into the early 1930s government officials and anthropologists questioned the legitimacy of the political and social organizations of Nevada's indigenous peoples. By the 1940s, however, tribal status became a *fait accompli* for many native peoples of the Great Basin; this was thanks in part to the efforts of federal officials, including John Collier, commissioner of the Office of Indian Affairs, and the mandates of the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act, which effectively ended the allotment policy instituted by the assimilation efforts put forth in the 1887 Dawes Severalty Act.⁴ Nevada's recognized tribes included the Northern and Southern Paiute, Western Shoshone, Goshute (in the far eastern portion of the state), and the much smaller Washoe, whose traditional homelands transcend the borders of Nevada and California. The Washoe completed their corporate charter and received official tribal status in 1937.⁵

Determined to "right old wrongs," the commission offered tribal descendants financial compensation in exchange for outstanding land claims and lost resources.⁶ The effectiveness of cases brought before the ICC depended heavily on the expertise of anthropologists, ethnographers, historians, land appraisers, and attorneys. The majority of the cases involved inadequate compensation for past-ceded lands and resources as defined in treaties, or, in the case of the Washoe people, no treaties, and no compensation. Traditionally, Indian land claims against the United States based on treaties or contracts were long-standing without the proper legal machinery or desire in place to address them. Prior to the establishment of the ICC, indigenous groups bringing grievances to the federal government were first required to obtain a special act of Congress for their case to be considered. Legal "technicalities" in the litigation phase often caused the dismissal of many of these cases.⁷

Following submission of the initial claims by the lawyers and legal teams representing various Indian tribes, especially in the Far West, it became increasingly apparent that anthropologists would become critical for the cases before the ICC and so they were called to serve as expert witnesses on behalf of the Indian tribes (plaintiff) and the federal government (defendant). The ICC process represented one of the first instances in which anthropologists dealt extensively with contemporary issues surrounding indigenous peoples. The role of anthropologists and the development of “applied anthropology” in ICC cases marked a pivotal change in the practice and methodology of American anthropology.⁸

In Nevada and portions of eastern and northern California, groups of Paiute, Shoshone, Maidu, Pit River, and Washoe all laid claim to lands and resources. Lawyers called on anthropologists to aid in sorting competing native claims. Their task required verifying the length of time and boundaries of occupancy by native groups or tribes. The standard argument offered by government lawyers was that indigenous people only used portions of their territories at any given time. Anthropologists working on behalf of the Indians utilized linguistic patterns, archaeological evidence of occupancy, and the testimony of indigenous informants to cast a larger network of established indigenous territorial claims.⁹

Often overlooked by historians, the experience of the Washoe in the context of westward expansion represents a partial success story. Until the discovery of gold in California in 1848, the Washoe conditioned their environment to their own needs, without the interruption of Euro-Americans.¹⁰ The discovery of valuable minerals first in California and later in Utah territory (which was to become Nevada) caused an immense influx of population from the outside world. These events forever altered the lives and cultures of indigenous peoples in the Far West. Considering the rapidity with which miners, ranchers, loggers, and settlers occupied and exploited Washoe’s traditional homelands, the tribe never formally entered into any treaties with the federal government. By the late 1850s, the Washoe population was scattered and numbered only around 900 and was shrinking. Through the 1860s, reports from state and federal officials regularly cited the miserable condition of the Washoe people. In the absence of treaty recognition, the Washoe were left on the fringe of the newly arrived white society without any land and, consequently, without homes for decades to come.

Prior to the arrival of Euro-Americans into the Far West, the intermountain region between the Sierra and the Rockies was not devoid of human habitation. Although the Great Basin proved one of the last unexplored portions of North America, and later became included in the United States after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, it was “home” to various indigenous peoples whose ancestors had lived and subsisted in the region for thousands of years. Many independent cultures, languages, and socio-political relationships

existed in this remaining portion of North America's uncharted and sparsely populated "wilderness." What Americans referred to as the western "frontier," Native Americans would refer to as their home, and the creation place of their people.

The Washoe have never been as numerous as neighboring indigenous peoples of the Great Basin, mainly the Paiute and Shoshone. For thousands of years, their tiny bands of kinfolk and family groups occupied a small portion of land on the western edge of the Great Basin—extending from Lake Tahoe (*Daowaga*) in the west, to the Pine Nut Hills along the eastern front of the Sierra, and north up to Honey Lake, California.¹¹ Linguistically, the Washoe language, a Hokan language, is not in the same linguistic family as others found in and amongst the Great Basin. The Washoe language relates more closely to those found beyond the western slope of the Sierra, toward the interior of California.¹² Traditionally, the Washoe Indians exhibited characteristics found in both California and Basin Indian cultures. The Washoe shared cultural similarities in their bark dwellings and basketry techniques with other groups in California, and subsistence cycles and social organization that reflect those found in Shoshonean groups in the Basin.¹³

The anthropologist James Downs suggested that because the lifeways of the Washoe differed little from neighboring peoples, early explorers who met bands of Washoe people in western Nevada "seem not to have differentiated them from the other pedestrian hunting and gathering peoples of the area." Given the rugged, varied, and inconsistent environmental conditions of the Great Basin, up to and including the base of the Sierra, indigenous people relied on a variety of resources scattered throughout the region, many of which were available only seasonally.¹⁴ In their quest for sustenance, the Washoe drew on the resources of the arid desert region of the Great Basin, the string of lowland valleys lying along the eastern edge of the Sierra Nevada and the series of high mountain valleys near and around Lake Tahoe. Tribal traditions even recall long trips during the summer months that took families to the shores of the Pacific Ocean to trade and gather shellfish.¹⁵

At its peak, prior to white settlement, the Washoe population was believed to consist of around 3,000 individuals.¹⁶ Even with their small number, the Washoe occupied nearly 13,000 square miles in Nevada and California. Some estimates placed the population density at about four persons per square mile, with about one-third of the total population in California, the other two-thirds in Nevada living in small groups or "bunches" made up of several families.¹⁷ They relied on "basic" techniques for survival. Prior to the arrival of Euro-Americas, the Washoe were without agriculture, domesticated animals, metallurgy, or basic knowledge of pottery making. Although anthropologists have implied that the Washoe exhibited the practices of primitive humans, other more recent ethnohistorians, including the Washoe expert Matthew Makley, have disagreed with this notion saying that the "primitive" technologies of

the Washoe necessitated a close connection with and intimate knowledge of the land.¹⁸ These earlier assertions illustrate the theoretical view that all humans, regardless of history, environment, and worldview, fit into a concrete model of “cultural evolution.” This view of cultural evolution dominated the field of anthropology well into the twentieth century and emerged as a prominent feature of ICC legal defense teams working on behalf of the federal government.

White settlement in Washoe territory beginning in the mid nineteenth century dramatically changed the Washoe people’s way of life. Anglo trappers and explorers trickled into the Great Basin beginning in the 1820s. Their travels throughout the region in search of furs preceded the arrival of permanent white settlements in the Far West, but served as a catalyst for what would eventually alter the lifeways and wellbeing of the Washoe.

Scholars have noted the differing frontier experiences of indigenous peoples and Euro-Americans. The Native American historian Donald Fixico claims that rather than pushing “forward” toward “progress” or “civilization,” the indigenous populations sought to push back in order to protect their lands and resources.¹⁹ Up until the nineteenth century, Washoe homelands remained guarded by their remote geographic location, which left them mostly insulated from outside influences. In 1827, while traversing the Great Basin, the American explorer and fur trapper Jedediah Smith stumbled into Washoe territory in the foothills of the eastern Sierra. The Washoe showed hostility toward Smith and his men by throwing rocks at the explorers. This encounter may represent the first meeting between the Washoe and a group of non-natives in their territory.²⁰ In recording his encounter with the indigenous peoples of the Great Basin later on, Smith described them as “the most miserable objects in creation.”²¹

Subsequent encounters with Anglos (either American or British) likely occurred through the 1830s as fur trapping expeditions ventured further into the Great Basin to compete over control of resources. But it was not until 1844 that the expedition of John C. Frémont crossed through Washoe territory on its way to Oregon. Frémont’s journal contains the earliest written accounts specifically describing the Washoe people as different from other Indians in the region.²² Upon encountering an individual Washoe man, Frémont recognized that, “Here we ceased to hear Shoshone language—that of this man being perfectly unintelligible.” Frémont’s party did make contact with several other small groups of Washoe while in the Sierra. His detailed observations indicate that the Washoe were welcoming hosts when they offered him and his men pine nuts, which was the highest form of hospitality the Washoe could offer to a visitor.²³ Items were exchanged between the two groups, and the expedition departed. This meeting was significant because it represents the first recorded instance of the Washoe meeting and receiving material goods from a non-native culture.²⁴

Following the Frémont expedition, other emigrants began passing through Washoe lands on their way to Oregon and California. With the discovery of gold in California in 1848, and of gold and silver in Nevada roughly ten years later, the populations of each area swelled. White emigrants unfettered by federal Indian policy (usually attributable to the absence of a formal governmental structure in the territories) used sheer force and overwhelming numbers as a means of obtaining and settling land. Scornful attitudes and notions of Indian inferiority (especially when relating to those living in the Great Basin maligned by notable authors and popular travelogues), further added to an unwillingness, when taking land, to obtain consent, or enter into a treaty.

White settlers seized the land, fenced off large tracts to be used for agriculture and husbandry, and diverted waterways for irrigation.²⁵ The General Land Office offered titles to Washoe lands to individual settlers and to the Central Pacific Railroad Company without the government first mediating or extinguishing the Washoe claim to those lands.²⁶ As a result, the areas that the Washoe had relied on for centuries for hunting, fishing, and gathering were suddenly inaccessible. This left them destitute and homeless on the peripheries of the larger white society, reliant upon theft and handouts from sympathetic whites.

As early as 1859, Indian Agent Frederick Dodge of Carson Valley recommended setting aside reservation land for the Washoe as a means of "protecting" them from the larger white population, noting that whites and Indians were incapable of living amongst one another.²⁷ This recommendation was consistent with similar recommendations for a Pyramid Lake reservation for the Paiute. Agent Dodge's initial recommendations even suggested a joint reservation for the Washoe and Paiute near Pyramid Lake, but the idea was quickly abandoned with many officials citing the idea that the Paiute were already on a "road to higher civilization," and placing both groups together would be detrimental.²⁸ Six years later the Washoe population was estimated at just 500 individuals. The 1866 annual report of the Superintendent of Nevada Indian Affairs, H. G. Parker, even claimed that locating reservation land for the Washoe was unnecessary "in view of their rapidly diminishing number"²⁹

Successive reports continued to reinforce the notion of the poor and miserable condition of the Washoe. Again, in 1867, Nevada Indian Superintendent T. T. Dwight acknowledged the dire condition of the Washoe population in his annual report. Dwight's report stated, "They gather around towns ... begging, working a little, and drinking whiskey ... the same general rules should be adopted as recommended for the Pah-Ute [*sic*], placing them on ... some reservation ... they are poor and miserable and in need of immediate care."³⁰ The report called for Congress to appropriate lands to avoid any further trouble with the Washoe—claiming a small appropriation would be adequate, especially when compared to appropriations spent on other Indian groups elsewhere.

As the degradation of American Indians continued at large across the United States in the latter portion of the nineteenth century, white reformers took notice. They began publicly commenting on the poor condition of America's indigenous peoples, attributing it to the shameful treatment by the federal government. The novelist and poet Helen Hunt Jackson and George W. Manypenny, former director of the Office of Indian Affairs, emerged as two of the most influential figures in the movement for Indian reform in the 1880s. While they publicized the tragic plight of the American Indians, they also believed native peoples possessed the potential for swift advancement into American society through assimilation.³¹ The reformers might have believed they had the Indians' best interests in mind, but their resolutions included the abandonment of tribal practices and the assimilation of Indians into mainstream American society. Supported by contemporary anthropological thought, specifically of the American anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan, early notions of Indian assimilation taught that "races" moved through phases of civilization, beginning with savagery, moving to barbarism, and ending with civilization.³²

From the time of white incursion onto Washoe lands, it took more than forty years for any land allocations to be instated, and almost seventy years for reservation lands to be established. Section 4 in the (1887) Dawes Severalty Act (Indian Allotment Act) that allowed landless Indians to acquire some land, gave the Washoe, by the 1890s, a legal means to regain some of their lost lands.³³ Initial requests from the Washoe asked for not only the Pine Nut Hills, but areas around Lake Tahoe too. Since privately owned real estate constituted most of the land around Lake Tahoe by the end of the nineteenth century, their only options became allotments in the Pine Nut Hills, to the east of Carson City, or no land at all.³⁴

Under that provision, some individuals received land grants. Between 1893 and 1910, allotments, mostly in the Carson Valley, resulted in the Washoe people gaining control of approximately 67,500 acres of ancestral pine-nut lands in 434 allotments. Most of the allotments were full quarter sections (160 acres), with none less than 120 acres.³⁵ As a people however, the Washoe did not obtain all of the lands that they wanted. Much of what they did receive was barren and without water sources, which left it virtually worthless for habitation and agriculture. Acquisition of these lands was mostly symbolic owing to the cultural richness of the area, but it was insufficient for transforming the Washoe into small American farmers, a prominent objective laid out in the Dawes Act.

Clearly, allotments did not solve the problems of the Washoe. Through the early decades of the twentieth century, though, concerned citizen groups, primarily women's clubs, made appeals to U.S. senators Francis Newlands and Key Pittman to help the Washoe. Both introduced legislation designed specifically to aid Nevada's landless Indians.³⁶ Throughout 1915 and 1916,

Senator Pittman of Nevada, a member of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, became a valuable ally for the Washoe when he called for appropriations to buy land for "homeless non-reservation" Nevada Indians. In 1916, after much internal deliberation about the requested amount, Pittman settled on \$15,000 and Congress approved the Indian Appropriation Act of 1915. The following year, the Office of Indian Affairs hired Lorenzo D. Creel, who had been working with landless Indians in Utah, to purchase lands for Nevada Indians. Creel's tireless efforts resulted in the purchasing and creation of the Carson Indian Colony, Dresslerville (near Gardnerville), and the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony.³⁷ Although national Indian policy of this time emphasized reducing reservations, in Nevada. The creation of reservations became the dominant issue in the second decade of the twentieth century.

The various colony lands provided a valuable platform from which the Washoe could begin to build. While acquiring lands was considered a victory for the Washoe, most unassimilated reservation Indians were still not legally considered citizens of the United States; they did not have the right to vote (it was not until 1924 that Congress passed the Indian Citizenship Act) and the Washoe were not yet fee-simple owners of that land in a common-law context.³⁸ Rather, they were still wards living on lands held in trust by the federal government.

Following the 1928 *Merriam Report*, which declared the Dawes Act a complete and total failure, and the creation of the Washoe Tribal Council and charter in 1937 under the Indian Reorganization Act, the Washoe received an unprecedented opportunity to file suit against the federal government for past transgressions. The case of *Washoe Tribe of the States of Nevada and California* (plaintiff) v. *the United States* (defendant) grew out of decades of disenfranchisement of the Washoe people and the confiscation and exploitation of their traditional homelands in Nevada and California.

In 1946, when Congress approved the Indian Claims Commission Act, the ICC emerged as a fact-finding body, which intended to hear and rule on grievances resulting from pending Indian claims. If claims were substantiated, and did not conflict or overlap with other active claims, then the plaintiff would receive a monetary award. Aside from offering recovery funds, the ICC act intended to remove the federal government from the Indian land business entirely. Exchange of a valid land claim for money further precluded a tribe from land returned. Critics of the policy claimed that the government was the winner in the end by extinguishing Indian land claims and offering monetary compensation for illegal takings of tribal land without fully acknowledging the moral aspects, which suggests that the claims and their settlement did not revolve entirely around legal and financial considerations.³⁹

In 1948, under the guidance of the attorney George F. Wright of Elko, the Washoe Tribal Council met in Dresslerville to discuss the possibility of filing a claim against the federal government for lands lost in Nevada and California. The U.S. Department of the Interior officially recognized and approved the

contract for Wright to be the Washoe Tribe's lawyer in October of 1948.⁴⁰ The Washoe claim, or "docket 288," was one of 617 dockets brought in front of the ICC. The first tasks of the Washoe's legal team, originally composed of George Wright in Nevada and two D.C.-based attorneys of "excellent reputation," C. T. Busha Jr. and John Lewis Smith, Jr., was to establish the land boundaries of the Washoes, as well as whether any treaties existed, and an estimated date for when the land was taken.⁴¹

The key to a successful claim was proof that an Indian tribe had occupied lands from "time immemorial" until a later specified date when it was lost to federal malfeasance.⁴² Initially, the legal team based their estimations on information gleaned from early sources of Nevada history (including Hubert Howe Bancroft and Sam P. Davis) and oral histories provided by tribal elders. Using this information, they were able to determine the rough demarcations of Washoe territory. It was also important for the legal team to distinguish the Washoe of both states as one people; this was to avoid having those living in California lumped into the larger group classified as "the Indians of California," which did not constitute any particular tribe, but rather the scattered remnants of many different groups residing within the borders of California.⁴³

Three years later, in August 1951, the Washoes's legal team filed their suit for an estimated 6,318,080 acres of land across two states; the acreage was worth approximately \$89,496,808 (this was determined at \$1.25 an acre with retroactive interest and estimates for lost resources). The times of taking were officially set at March 3, 1853, in California and December 31, 1862, in Nevada. Washoe land claims included areas of Lake Tahoe and lands up to and including the Comstock. It can be stated without hyperbole that Washoe territory encompassed some of the most valuable real estate in the American West.⁴⁴ Following the submission of the claim, the legal team scrambled to secure more research as a means of strengthening their claim. It was at this time that the legal team began consulting unofficially with several members of the Anthropology Department of the University of California Berkeley, including Robert Heizer and Alfred Kroeber, to help solidify Washoe land boundaries.⁴⁵

In early 1955, U.S. Department of Justice lawyers offered their written defense in response to the initial Washoe claim. The first part of the defense began by dismissing the Washoe as not being a legitimate "tribe, band, or other identifiable group of American Indians," and instead classified them as a group of nomadic family groups with no concept of property ownership. The defense continued by first stating "that 'original Indian title' or occupancy and possession of the land ... described ... by the plaintiff does not constitute a property interest under the Constitution of the United States." The defense challenged virtually every aspect of the Washoe claim and requested that it be dismissed.⁴⁶ The hearing was set to take place later in the year in San Francisco. In the meantime, both the plaintiff and defense moved to hire expert witnesses in the form of professional anthropologists.

In the Washoe litigation, two prominent and well-respected anthropologists of their time—each employing different methodology to study the Indians of the Great Basin—challenged one another in front of the ICC. Julian Haynes Steward of the University of Illinois and his less-well-known antagonist Omer Call Stewart of the University of Colorado (recommended by Alfred Kroeber) offered contrasting expert opinions regarding the Washoe Indians in ICC docket 288.⁴⁷ Julian Steward's approach to studying Indians of the Great Basin relied heavily on theories, laws, and typologies. The Native American historian Ned Blackhawk, author of *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (2006), asserts that Steward's scientific-theoretical approach to anthropology left him disconnected from the everyday struggles of his informants.⁴⁸

Steward's former student (and camp cook), Omer Stewart, on the other hand, focused more on the humanistic and applied aspects of fieldwork to make his case. Stewart was a thoroughgoing cultural relativist following in the footsteps of Alfred Kroeber, Franz Boas, and Alexander von Humboldt (who advocated unity in diversity).⁴⁹ Stewart believed Great Basin Indians were not static or strictly products of their environment; rather, they were active and capable participants constantly working to manipulate their environment.⁵⁰

Steward and Stewart shared similar academic backgrounds, but their expert testimony in ICC cases concerning the Great Basin Indians placed them in opposing camps. Their conflicting views about the nature of the Washoe command consideration in light of ICC decisions. Differing anthropological viewpoints presented to the ICC in the case of the Washoe reflect a chapter in the interplay between the often conflicting conclusions of anthropologists and the historical events that shaped the lives of native peoples, particularly when disputes were presented to courts and commissions of government agencies, which had the power to determine both the welfare and destiny of indigenous people.

Julian Steward's approach to studying Indians of the Great Basin, which became known as "cultural ecology," relied heavily on theories, laws, and typologies that he established between 1918 and 1943 while completing fieldwork among the Northern Paiute and Western Shoshone. On behalf of the federal government, Steward argued that the Washoe, like other indigenous peoples of the Great Basin, possessed the "most natural" cultures. As a result, their level of social and cultural progress was stunted, and they lacked organized governmental structure and property ownership outside of the family unit.⁵¹ Steward's approach resembled the methodology employed by earlier ethnographers, including John Wesley Powell and Lewis Henry Morgan.

Steward's theories received criticism from scholars and other anthropologists, especially Omer Stewart. More recently, scholars have accused Steward of practicing "bloodless ethnology," which left him disconnected

from the everyday struggles of his subjects. Despite the lack of popularity of his theories, Steward continued to dominate the “ethnographic universe of the Great Basin.” Between 1935 and 1946, he even served as director of the Bureau of American Ethnology at the Smithsonian Institution.⁵²

Steward’s former student from the University of Utah, Omer Stewart, representing the Washoe, focused more on the humanistic and applied aspects of fieldwork to make his case. Unlike Steward, Stewart spent substantial time completing fieldwork among the Washoe near Gardnerville, Nevada. Stewart and his wife even spent their honeymoon in Dresslerville among the Washoe. Steward admitted during the hearing that he did not have the same firsthand knowledge of the Washoe that his adversary did. This proved to be a detrimental blow to the defense’s testimony.⁵³

Stewart maintained that Steward had a certain distaste for Indians that he carried with him throughout his career. Stewart even accused Steward of using his models to demonstrate that “Indian people never used the land in the highest and best way, so they deserved to relinquish the land to Euro-Americans who represented a socially more advanced stage of evolution.”⁵⁴ Later in his career, Stewart was quick to condemn Steward’s ethnocentric attitude toward American Indians. Stewart’s work embraced the methodology and spirit of “applied anthropology” rather than an adherence to theoretical systems. His concrete arguments and examples ultimately supported effective testimony in the courtroom in the Washoe case. He suggested that the added research “effectively conveyed a very real sense of the lives of members of a tribe as well as reinforcing the assertion of pre-contact occupation of a definable area.”⁵⁵

With the assistance of Omer Stewart and testimony provided by Washoe elder Richard Barrington of Sierraville, California, who had been living in Washoe territory since 1880, the Washoe case remained valid through the title phase of the litigation process. In January 1958, after more than two years of deliberation, the ICC ruled that the Washoe Tribe was a distinct unit, separate from the “Indians of California.” In 1959, a compromise over a boundary line that had been agreed upon by Stewart and Kroeber was struck over disputed lands in Sierra Valley, California. Under the agreement, the Washoe’s claim shrank to 1,555,000 acres of land lost. The claim still included valuable real estate at Lake Tahoe and on the Comstock. The agreed-upon territorial boundaries and acreage proved to be the most accurate description of Washoe territorial boundaries and is still recognized today.⁵⁶

Longstanding anthropological debates regarding Basin Indians surfaced during the ICC hearing, with Omer Stewart and Julian Steward at the forefront—the advocate versus the scientist. Notions of sovereignty, social and political organization, and Great Basin Indian inferiority became the focal points of theoretical contention. Steward’s theories highlighted longstanding ethnocentric attitudes held toward American Indians. Anthropologists of

the Omer Stewart persuasion were key in legitimizing Indian land claims, especially for the Washoe. It is doubtful that their claim could have proceeded beyond the preliminary hearing without the testimony and cooperation of Stewart and his colleagues in the Anthropology Department at the University of California, Berkeley.

Despite seemingly insurmountable odds, the ICC recognized the Washoe's claim to lost territory and occupation and use over said territory. Without the research and testimony of expert witnesses, especially the anthropologists who testified in the preliminary round of hearings, it is doubtful that the Washoe claim would have survived to receive recovery funds. Over-all, the long and tedious process resulted in a partial victory for the Washoe people. Detracting from "the victory" was the lengthy duration of the hearings, and most disappointing, with no ancestral lands to be returned, the reward was lower than expected. The settlement did allow the Washoe Tribe to invest 70 percent of the award into tribal operations and programs and provide the remainder as per-capita payments to older members of the tribe. Other objectives outlined in the general plan for use of the claims funds were further consolidation of the tribe, improvement of tribal lands including housing and public services, raising the standard of living through education, and the creation of jobs.⁵⁷

Docket 288 was a long-fought battle. The amount of time and resources required made it evident that the government's lawyers and experts were not willing to cede to Indian claims without a thorough trial and extensive litigation. The initial purpose of "righting old wrongs" appears to have been lost or at least distorted over the ICC's lifetime. The government, eager to move out of the Indian business, may have been unaware of the claims struggle to follow. The claims were complicated by disputed land boundaries, the application of Anglo traditions of land tenure, cultural misunderstandings, and the inadequacy of monetary compensation to mend past injustices.

To many American Indians, debate over their claims seemed unnecessary, but in accordance with the American legal system, a trial, complete with evidence and testimony, was required to determine "fair" compensation. The commission was not set up to hear moral arguments, but inevitably it did. The initial purpose was to hear facts and base settlements on concrete evidence, valid exhibits, and expert testimony. In many respects, the government lawyers' defense against the Washoe claim appeared desperate, but it should be understood that it was their job in the advocacy system of law to discredit and trivialize aspects of the claims.

Whether or not the final settlement of five million dollars that was issued to the Washoe in 1974 represented justice or insult will be a continuing question, but it was a reality that the tribe made the best of. The ICC was beneficial in affording a relatively small tribe such as the Washoe the opportunity to be recognized, state their case, sue for compensation, and receive an award. The

Washoe were not simply looking for a handout (as some critics alleged about so many other groups seeking compensation under the legal framework of the ICC).⁵⁸ The land and resources that for centuries (since “time immemorial”) had been vital to their ancestors’ survival were no longer theirs, and they submitted a claim for recognition of past injustices.

The claim acknowledged their attachment to the land and their reliance on its resources. Filing a claim did prompt members of the Washoe Tribe in California and Nevada to collaborate and form a stronger internal bond, with the settlement lending validity to the tribe and traditional territory claims. The ICC claim also marked a major step in decolonization for the Washoe people. The assessed and reassessed property values considered all possible variables to correspond with fair-market-values at the time of taking. This process corresponded with proper American legal framework, the system in which the Indian tribes were required to work. While difficult to place a monetary value on ancestral lands, many of which were considered sacred, the Washoe compromised by accepting settlement terms which would go on to promote the welfare of its individuals, communities, and tribe.

NOTES

¹Warren L. d'Azevedo, "The Washoe People in the Twentieth Century: A Paper Presented to the Third Annual *Wa-She-Shu-Edeh* Festival of Native American Arts and Culture at Tallac Historic Site, Lake Tahoe," 30 July 1993.

²Matthew Makley and Michael Makley, *Cave Rock: Climbers, Courts, and a Washoe Indian Sacred Place* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2010), 1, 71.

³Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and American Indians: Volumes I and II Unabridged* (Lincoln: Nebraska University Press, 1995), 1019.

⁴Frederick E. Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 70.

⁵Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, *Constitution and By-Laws of the Washoe Tribe, Nevada and California: approved January 24, 1936* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1936), 1-2.

⁶Harvey Rosenthal, *Their Day in Court: A History of the Indian Claims Commission* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), vii-viii.

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸Omer C. Stewart, "Kroeber and the Indian Claims Commission Cases," reprinted from "Alfred L. Kroeber: A Memorial," 1961, Omer Call Stewart Papers, collection no. 86-03, box no. 1, University Archives, Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno (cited hereafter as Stewart MSS), 181-83.

⁹*Ibid.*, 185-86.

¹⁰Grace Dangberg, *Washo Tales* (Minden, Nev.: Grace Dangberg, 1968), 1-2.

¹¹Matthew Makley, "These Will Be Strong: A History of the Washoe People," Ph.D. diss., Arizona State University, Phoenix, 2007, 1-2.

¹²Alfred L. Kroeber, *Handbook of the Indians of California* (New York: Dover Publications, 1976), 569-70.

¹³Robert F. Heizer and Albert B. Elasser, "Some Archaeological Sites and Cultures of the Central Sierra Nevada," *Reports of the University of California Archaeological Survey*, no. 21 (1953), 4.

¹⁴Martha Knack and Omer Stewart, *As Long as the River Shall Run: An Ethnohistory of Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 1-11.

¹⁵James Downs, *Two Worlds of the Washo: An Indian Tribe of California and Nevada* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1966), 4, 37.

¹⁶Kroeber, *Handbook of Indians of California*, 570-71.

¹⁷Warren d'Azevedo, "Washoe," in *The Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 11, William C. Sturtevant, ed., Warren d'Azevedo, vol. ed. (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1986), 484-85.

¹⁸Makley, "These Will Be Strong," 50.

¹⁹Donald L. Fixico, "From the Other Side of the Frontier," Donald L. Fixico, ed., *Native Views of Indian-White Historical Relations* (Chicago: The Newberry Library, 1989), 8.

²⁰Jedediah Smith, *The Southwest Expedition of Jedediah S. Smith: His Personal Account of the Journey to California, 1826-1827*, George R. Brooks, ed., (Glendale, Cal.: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1977), 171-72.

²¹Peter Farb, *Man's Rise to Civilization as Shown by the Indians of North America from Primeval Times to the Coming of the Industrial State* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1968), 16.

²²Jo Ann Nevers, *Wa She Shu: A Washo Tribal History* (Reno: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada, 1976), 38-39.

²³John C. Frémont and Samuel M. Smucker, *The Life of Col. John Charles Frémont: and his Narrative of Explorations and Adventures in Kansas, Nebraska, Oregon, and California* (New York: Miller, Orton & Mulligan, 1856), 379-86.

²⁴Downs, *Two Worlds of the Washo*, 73.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 75; U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs: Accompanying the Annual Report of the Secretary of Interior, for the Year 1861* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1861), 111-12.

²⁶"Petition of Plaintiff," August 9, 1951, George F. Wright Collection, no. 90-37, series 1, box no. 1, correspondence, (University Archives, Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno (cited hereafter as Wright MSS)).

²⁷U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs: Accompanying the Annual Report of the Secretary of Interior, for the Year 1859* (Washington D.C.: George W. Bowman, Printer, 1860), 375.

²⁸U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs: Accompanying the Annual Report of the Secretary of Interior, for the Year 1861* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1861), 18.

²⁹U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs: Accompanying the Annual Report of the Secretary of Interior, for the Year 1866* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1866), 115-16.

³⁰U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Report on Indian Affairs, by the Acting Commissioner for the Year 1867* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1868), 170-71.

³¹Robert M. Utley, *The Indian Frontier of the American West 1846-1890* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), 210.

³²Lewis Henry Morgan, *Ancient Society: Or Researches in the Line of Human Progress from Savagery Through Barbarism to Civilization* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1887), 3-4.

³³Makley, "These Will Be Strong," 95-96; Makley and Makley, *Cave Rock*, 13.

³⁴Nevers, *Wa She Shu*, 62; Makley and Makley, *Cave Rock*, 13.

³⁵Susan Wise Ford, "Lorenzo D. Creel and the Purchase of Land for Washoe Colonies, 1917" (M.A. thesis, University of Nevada, Reno, 1989), 93-94.

³⁶Elmer Rusco, "Purchasing Lands for Nevada Indian Colonies, 1916-1917," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 32:1 (Spring 1989), 8-9.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 8-18.

³⁸Ford, "Lorenzo Creel," 130; Rosenthal, *Their Day in Court*, 17-18.

³⁹Petra Shattuck and Jill Norgren, *Partial Justice: Federal Indian Law in a Liberal Constitutional System* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 142-43.

⁴⁰"Agreement Associating Attorneys in Connection with Certain Claims of the Washoe Tribes of the States of Nevada and California," July 30, 1948, Wright MSS; George F. Wright to Mr. Hank Pete, Washoe Councilman, 31 March 1948.

⁴¹"Agreement Associating Attorneys" George F. Wright to Mr. Hank Pete, Washoe Councilman, Wright MSS; "Meeting," Dresslerville, 21 April 1948, Wright MSS.

⁴²Martha C. Knack, *Boundaries Between: The Southern Paiute, 1775-1995* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 246.

⁴³Rita Singer, Attorney Advisor of Department of the Interior Sacramento Area Director James B. Ring to Carson City Superintendent Burton A. Ladd, 5 April 1951, Wright MSS.

⁴⁴George F. Wright to C. T. Busha, 8 July 1951, Wright MSS; C. T. Busha to George F. Wright, 13 August 1951, Wright MSS; "Petition of Plaintiff," 9 August 1951, Wright MSS, 3.

⁴⁵Robert F. Heizer to George F. Wright, 9 December 1953, Wright MSS.

⁴⁶Knack, *Boundaries Between*, 246-47; "Plaintiff's Object to Defendant's Requested Findings of Fact and Plaintiff's Reply," March 1959, Wright MSS.

⁴⁷George F. Wright to Robert F. Heizer, 26 May 1955, Wright MSS; Omer C. Stewart to George F. Wright, 11 June 1955, Wright MSS.

⁴⁸Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 11-12; Carol Howell, ed., *Cannibalism Is an Acquired Taste: and Other Notes* (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1998), 143-51.

⁴⁹Franz Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1911), 1-29.

⁵⁰Omer C. Stewart, *Forgotten Fires: Native Americans and the Transient Wilderness, Edited and with Introductions by Henry T. Lewis and M. Kate Anderson* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), 4-5.

⁵¹Marvin Harris, *The Rise of Anthropological Theory* (Walnut Creek, Cal.: Altamira Press, 2001), 374-77.

⁵²Howell, *Cannibalism Is an Acquired Taste*, 5; Alice B. Kehoe, "Where were Wovoka and Wuzzie George," in *Julian Steward and the Great Basin: The Making of an Anthropologist*, Richard O. Clemmer, L. Daniel Myers, and Mary Elizabeth Ruddens, eds. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1999), 164-66.

⁵³George F. Wright to John Lewis Smith Jr. and Nicholas Allen, 27 September 1955, Wright MSS.

⁵⁴Stewart, *Forgotten Fires*, 20-21.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*; Virginia Kerns, *Scenes from the High Desert: Julian Steward's Life and Theory* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 5.

⁵⁶Earl Barrington to Perry Morton, 19 June 1959, Wright MSS; Nicholas E. Allen to Judge Francis M. Goodwin, 25 February 1958, Wright MSS; Makley, "These Will Be Strong," 224-25.

⁵⁷"Washoe Indians' Fund Distribution Plan Set," *Nevada State Journal*, 10 December 1974.

⁵⁸Nevers, *Wa She Shu*, 35.

Notes & Documents

Mark Twain's Revolver: Myths and Realities

CHRISTINE K. JOHNSON

The “Duel that Never Was,” is one of the most interesting of the myths and legends pertaining to Mark Twain’s days in Virginia City in 1864. A single artifact at the Nevada Historical Society in Reno might help keep this legend alive, a remnant of a revolver—a burned metal frame—which the Society has held for more than a century.

MARK TWAIN IN VIRGINIA CITY

Samuel Clemens, not his alter ego, Mark Twain, arrived in Nevada in 1861.¹ The relatively short history of Samuel Clemens in Virginia City is based on circumstance; however, his brother, Orion Clemens,² was responsible for bringing him to Nevada. As history reflects, Abraham Lincoln appointed Orion, who served as Secretary for the Territory of Nevada from 1861 to 1864,³ and Orion offered his brother Samuel, “the sublime position of private

Christine K. Johnson, Ph.D., is the Curator of Artifacts at Nevada Historical Society. The author would like to thank Arline Laferry for her research assistance on several of the nineteenth century Virginia City residents mentioned herein, and for the identification of Scholl & Roberts Gunsmiths located on B Street in Virginia City. Additional thanks to Fred Holabird and Holabird Americana for their assistance with initial artifact identification, and to the Remington Company for their research on the artifact.

secretary under him" (Twain 1872, p. 19). As a result, Samuel Clemens arrived in Nevada in 1861. In contrast to Orion, Samuel was a lively character who tried his hand at a variety of trades during his life, but is most famously remembered in Nevada for his affiliation with the *Territorial Enterprise*, where his writing skills flourished, and he composed editorials and covered local news and Nevada politics, which included "concocting occasional hoaxes and diatribes" (Twain 2002, p. 56). As the great American author and Nobel Prize winner Ernest Hemingway said in 1935, "all modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain, called *Huckleberry Finn*" (PBS).⁴ Perhaps Abraham Lincoln's greatest gift to American literature was nominating Orion as the Secretary of the Nevada Territory; had he not, Samuel Clemens may never have evolved into Mark Twain, to become later elevated to the status of "Father of American Literature," a designation assigned by playwright and Nobel laureate Eugene O'Neill.

BRIEF HISTORY BEHIND THE LEGEND

The legend of "the Duel that Never Was" comes from a story dating back to 1864, which holds that Samuel Clemens challenged James Laird of the *Virginia Daily Union Newspaper* (a rival to the *Enterprise* at the time) to a duel. The two of them "swapped insults" and sparred back and forth in the newsprint for a time (Twain 2002, p. 67) over comments Clemens made in the *Enterprise* accusing the Sanitary Commission of a misappropriation of funds (a joke for which he later apologized).⁵ The *Union* continued to criticize Clemens, and Clemens, (after his colleague Steve Gillis⁶ goaded him), exhausted his patience and challenged Laird to a duel, to which Laird agreed. What exactly happened after that is the stuff of legend. As the story goes, Laird and his "second"⁷ were approaching the site for the duel when they heard a gunshot and saw a bird drop from the sky. When Laird and his second arrived and asked who had shot the bird, Gillis⁸ is said to have credited Clemens with the kill (Beebe 1954). Laird, at the advice of his second, then bowed out of the duel. Despite the uneventful ending to the duel, Governor James W. Nye issued a warrant for the arrest of Samuel Clemens because Clemens had broken the Territory's law prohibiting dueling (a law which included challenging others to duels). Clemens, realizing his situation, decided to leave town immediately, "fearing two years in prison for the felony," and both Clemens and Gillis left on a stagecoach on May 29, 1864, and headed for San Francisco (Twain 2002, p. 67). The Twain/Gillis exodus was such an event that the *Gold Hill Evening News* featured it the next day (Twain 1957). Although both Gillis and Twain later wrote about this incident, it might be assumed they exaggerated the story's elements.

Aside from the historical (and perhaps embellished) references to this duel, the last existing reminder of this story lies in the gun that Clemens supposedly

carried to the duel. The accession record for an artifact at the Nevada Historical Society states that it is the remnant of a gun once carried by Clemens, who later gave it to his friend and colleague, Dan DeQuille (FIGURES 1, 2). Clemens and DeQuille were friends, roommates, and professional colleagues at the *Territorial Enterprise*, and it is known that DeQuille⁹ and Clemens remained friends for more than thirty years until DeQuille's death, in 1898. Clemens was noted to be carrying a revolver in Virginia City on May 25, just four days before leaving Virginia City; this was at the height of the tensions between Clemens and Laird.¹⁰ While the historical record does not clearly reflect that Clemens gave the gun to DeQuille upon his departure to San Francisco, it is implied, as history would have Clemens carrying a gun near or at the time of the duel, and Twain himself wrote that he feared prosecution for the crime of dueling; it therefore seems plausible that he might have chosen to dispose of the gun as a result, DeQuille being an obvious if not convenient choice with whom to bestow the evidence.

GUN INFORMATION

The gun today exist only as a remnant (FIGURE 1), making it difficult to assess much other than to identify its maker with certainty and possibly trace its serial number. Holabird Americana of Reno, Nevada, identified the Society's gun remnant (2014), and the Remington Company confirmed it (2016) as being the remains of Remington model 1858, named for the year it was patented. Unfortunately, the Remington Company states that because of damaged records, the serial number cannot be further associated with a date of manufacture, but did confirm that this particular model was produced between 1863 and 1875, and was known to have been sold for both military¹¹ and civilian use (Remington 2016). Known to have been distributed in the "American West," the Remington 1858 had an octagonal barrel and fired a .44 caliber bullet; it was said to be very accurate and capable of considerable power (Bequette 1998).

ARTIFACT INFORMATION

The accession record for this artifact is detailed. As such, it states that the Nevada Historical Society in Reno currently holds the remnant of a revolver that Samuel Clemens carried while in Virginia City, and specifically notes that the piece is "just a frag[ment]," and has "passed through [the] Virginia City Fire" (FIGURES 1, 2). Although Virginia City had several fires, the most notable after Twain's 1864 departure was in 1875, known as the "Great Fire." The gun was donated to the Society in 1910, the same year that Clemens, by



FIGURE 1: Remnant of 1858 Remington revolver. (Nevada Historical Society artifact number: HM-13109-G-1)

Acc. No.	Name	Mark Twain Revolver..
341	Locality	Virginia City, Nev.
Date of Acc.	No. of Specimens	1
1912	Received from	J.A.Conboie
Orig. No.	Collected by	Miss Wier
	When collected	1910
Class	Remarks	Barrel, cylinder and wood from grip gone - just a frag. left. Carried by Mark Twain in Va. City; later given to Dan de Quille; after his death given to J. E. McKinnon leasee of the Enterprise. Passed thru Va. City Fire (over)

FIGURE 2: Original accession card for the revolver. (Nevada Historical Society records, 1912)

then known as Twain, passed away. The record further reflects that the piece was passed to John E. McKinnon (lessee of the *Enterprise* at the time) after DeQuille's death. McKinnon leased the *Enterprise* property in December of 1893 and kept the gun until sometime after 1898, when he passed it on to Joseph Conboie;¹² both men were known to have been involved in many of the same organizations, including the Knights of Pythias. Conboie, the last owner of the gun remnant, was (among other things) the undertaker in Virginia City at the time, and donated the artifact to the Nevada Historical Society in 1910.

Conboie, as the last entrusted person owning the piece, was a charter and life member as well as the vice president of the Nevada Historical Society (NHS 1920) in its early years; it is said he knew Jeanne Wier (founder of the Historical Society, beginning in 1904) personally. Conboie, in Virginia City since the 1870s, was deeply involved with several organizations, including the Odd Fellows and Knights of Pythias; he was elected to several political offices, and was "held in the highest esteem throughout the state" (Wren 1904, p. 356). Conboie, who died in 1918, donated many artifacts to the Society over several years. Among the items donated are some of his personal items, the patent documenting his invention of embalming mitts, and the Twain revolver. This information evokes several questions.

DISCUSSION

An initial question is how Twain came to possess this particular gun. Several gun models have been associated with or written about by Mark Twain, but the artifact donated by Conboie and held by the Society today is identified as a Remington revolver, model 1858.¹³ "The Navy Colt Revolver was the gun of the American West," wrote Twain, who in *Roughing It*, also claims to have come west with his "Smith & Wesson 7-shot" (Twain 1872, p. 23). The Smith & Wesson, which may be lost to history as he mentioned he lost everything in the fire of 1863 in a letter to his mother and sister on August 5 that same year (Twain 1988, p. 261). If Clemens lost everything in the fire of 1863, including the Smith & Wesson, it seems plausible that a new gun would have been acquired sometime thereafter. Although Twain admired the Navy Colt Revolver, no reference has been found to confirm that Twain owned the Colt; however, according to Lucius Beebe (1954) in his history of the *Enterprise*, "Newspapermen of the time commonly carried arms and had frequent recourse to them, so that the Colt's Navy .41, a favored weapon of the period, was as familiar a property to publication offices as type case and imposing stone" (p. 29). Lucius Beebe (1954) also mentioned that "all the records which may have been kept of the details [of the *Enterprise*] of its conduct as a business were lost in the Great Fire of 1875" (p. 35). These records may have included confirmation as to whether the *Enterprise* may have held its own weapon, and if so, reference to the make and model.



FIGURE 3. Young America Engine Co. #2, July 4, 1862. (*Nevada Historical Society photography collection*)

Regarding Twain's dueling incident, Beebe (1954, p. 82) describes that "to test the Colt's Navy revolver which his principal would shortly carry, Gillis ... shot the head off a sage hen at the edge of the glade just as Laird's seconds arrived to make final arrangements." This infers that the gun carried to the duel was a Colt Navy, but no reference can be found to Beebe's source. As the Society's artifact is neither the Smith & Wesson nor the Colt Navy revolver mentioned in available literature, a question of how and when Twain acquired this Remington remains valid. A photo in the NHS collection depicts the Young American Engine Co., #2, on July 4, 1862 (FIGURE 3). At closer look, present in the background is the building of the only known gunsmith in Virginia City at the time, Scholl & Roberts Gunsmiths, at 66 B Street. Might this be where Twain acquired a Remington, after the fire of 1863 and before the duel in May 1864?

Assuming Twain left DeQuille with a working tool, not a remnant of a gun, the piece is whole upon Twain's departure in 1864. The Nevada Historical Society Papers (1913-16) describe the acquisition of the gun as a "once

serviceable pistol used by Mark in Virginia City. Each step of its wanderings since it passed from its original owner to experience the “big fire” with Dan DeQuille and finally to become the property of the State is carefully recorded” (NHS 1916). Another question, then, lies in DeQuille’s keeping of the gun after it becomes a fragment in the Great Fire of 1875. Twain is said to have given the gun in 1864 to DeQuille, who keeps this piece until his death in 1898. The Great Fire of Virginia City happened on October 26, 1875, eleven years after Twain left Virginia City. It is apparent that DeQuille made an effort to retrieve this piece out of the ashes. Can the reason be attributed to sentiment? DeQuille was a dear friend of Twain’s, and more than a decade had passed since Clemens left Virginia City; by now the author, as Mark Twain, was becoming famous for his writing, having published *Roughing It* and other pieces.¹⁴ DeQuille’s efforts to retrieve the piece may in fact be sentimental, an idea with potential for skepticism. However, there are a variety of examples that can be looked to in order to defend this notion: a section of the World Trade Center is currently on display at the National Atomic Testing Museum in Las Vegas, and scores of Titanic relics have been put on display across the globe to transport onlookers to the moment the great ship sank. The USS Arizona Memorial is a shrine to those entombed below the water, and online exhibits devoted to the 1906 San Francisco earthquake have been constructed, to name but a few remembrances of tragedies.¹⁵

Similarly, the Nevada Historical Society has on display (and in stored collection materials) several artifacts that date to the time of the Great Fire, and other fires in historic Nevada towns.¹⁶ These pieces are burned and scarred as a result of fire exposure, yet people extracted and saved them and later donated them to the museum. This gun fragment being extracted from the fire is therefore not unique.

Another question lies in the timing of the transfer of the artifact from DeQuille to McKinnon. The gun was passed to McKinnon after DeQuille’s death. However, records reflect that DeQuille died in Iowa in 1898, and was “collected” by his daughter in Virginia City and transported to Iowa the previous year. A question of how the gun makes it into McKinnon’s hands, then, is unclear. Were DeQuille’s possessions distributed by DeQuille (who was considered feeble) or his daughter at the time of their departure from Virginia City in 1897? Or was the piece sent back to McKinnon after DeQuille’s death in 1898? Either scenario supports an air of sentimentality still surrounding this artifact. DeQuille’s desire to pass it on to McKinnon in any situation suggests an attribution of personal value for the piece, and the chain of custody to this point reflects Twain to DeQuille to McKinnon, all men affiliated with the *Enterprise* over more than a thirty-year span of time. McKinnon’s later dispatch of the piece to Conboie is as well support of valuation of the artifact. McKinnon and Conboie lived in Virginia City at the same time, and traveled in some of the same civic circles. It is plausible that Conboie’s interest and dedication to Nevada’s history were known to McKinnon, and as McKinnon left Virginia

City sometime near the turn of the century, his deliberate passing of the piece to Conboie seems to further validate the idea that the men who kept this piece valued it. McKinnon's deliberate act leaving it in Virginia City with Conboie validates the artifact's importance to the men charged with caring for it over the course of almost half a century.

Finally, the question of whether this gun was in fact tied to the infamous duel is at hand. Guy Rocha (2001) points out that Clemens himself wrote that he may have been planning to leave Virginia City absent any duel; "I wanted to see San Francisco, I wanted to go somewhere" (Twain 2002, p. 67). The duel "may have hastened Clemens' departure but it was not the sole reason he left for California" (Rocha 2001). This does not remove the gun from belonging to Twain; rather, it simply raises the question of whether the duel was the reason for leaving Virginia City. But if there was no duel, why was the gun left behind by Clemens?

FINAL THOUGHTS

Dueling was a common practice in the nineteenth century, so much so that one of the agenda items printed in the official report of the debates and proceedings in the Constitutional Convention of the State of Nevada held on July 4, 1864, was entitled "Dueling—Again."¹⁷ (670). It is of interest that the Clemens/Laird duel was not the first fought between the competing newspapers; a more famous duel between Tom Fitch of the *Virginia City Daily Union* and Joe Goodman of the *Territorial Enterprise* occurred the year before, in 1863. To the dismay of the *Union's* Mr. Fitch, Goodman shot him in the leg, and Fitch walked with a "pronounced limp for the rest of his life" (Beebe 1954, p. 42). The lesson seems to have gone unlearned by the *Union* men, as Clemens lured Laird to a duel the following year, if the myth of the Duel that Never Was is true. It was not until twelve years later, in 1876, that Nevada saw its last formal duel fought (Beebe 1954, p. 42).

Perhaps Effie Mona Mack assessed Samuel Clemens best when she described him:

Never before nor since in any part of the world, not even in the Gold Rush to California, was there such an extravaganza put on as in the Rush to Washoe. And there never has been a writer before or since Mark Twain who has left such a vivid picture of it. During these years he was Nevada—restless, bibulous, jocular, speculative, boisterous, rough, and crude. (1947)

A final word might be said about the Clemens family. They were extremely important in Nevada's history, in Samuel's legacy with the

Territorial Enterprise, and Orion's importance as the first and only Secretary of the Territory. Orion's daughter, Jennie, died at the age of nine, an event which is said to have destroyed Orion, and Twain developed a hatred for, and later wrote about, undertakers based on what he perceived to be the mistreatment of grieving families in the form of overcharging and the handling of services associated with Jennie's death. This is ironic inasmuch as it was the Virginia City undertaker who later sought to commemorate Mark Twain in 1910, by donating the remnant of his gun to the Nevada Historical Society.

The Society also received items belonging to Twain around the same time, including his pipe, which his daughter, Clara,¹⁸ donated in 1909. The records reflect that at the time of her donation, Clara Clemens, the second of three daughters of Samuel and Olivia Clemens, and the only one who survived Samuel at the time of his death, attached a letter to the donation. In the letter, she "speaks of her father's regard for the work of the NHS," which is perhaps another testament to the idea that Jeanne Wier and the Nevada Historical Society were entrusted with the treasures of the State, one of them being Twain's gun the next year, in 1910 (NHS 1916).

As it stands, the gun remnant at the Society has a noteworthy provenance associated with its accession; but significant questions remaining to be answered, more than a century after it was donated. What is known, and is often the case in the scientific world, that when something cannot be proven, one must look to what can be disproven. Given the prominent and credible people affiliated with the care and keeping of this artifact over the course of half a century, and absent any questions as to their intent, the focus must remain on the gun. Having considered the details of the gun, its make and model and the appropriate timeframes, what is certain is that the remnant cannot be excluded from having been a Mark Twain possession, and further—from possibly being the gun from the fabled "Duel that Never Was."

NOTES

¹1835-1910. Samuel Clemens began using his pen name "Mark Twain" in February 1863 (Beebe, 1954:71).

²1825-1897. Clemens was the first and only Secretary of the Nevada Territory.

³He was responsible for the creation of the territorial seal created for the Nevada Territory, a brass which is on display at the Nevada Historical Society, Reno.

⁴Quote by Ernest Hemingway, 1935, in "Mark Twain's Adventures of Huckleberry Finn." Public Broadcasting Service. (accessed 3 May 2016. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/cultureshock/flashpoints/literature/huckt.html>).

⁵Reuel Gridley had raised money for the Sanitary Commission to support wounded Union soldiers by carrying a fifty pound sack of flour through many towns in Nevada. This sack is also on display at the Nevada Historical Society today.

⁶Gillis pressed Clemens to avenge himself by challenging Laird to a duel, and stated that if Clemens were to be killed, Gillis would print "a fine obituary notice in the best space the *Enterprise* afforded" (Beebe 1954, p. 81).

⁷A "second" is a term used to define a trusted friend, sidekick, or representative in a duel.

⁸Gillis was both a friend and colleague of Clemens at the *Enterprise* (Twain 2002).

⁹Pen name of William Wright (1829-1898).

¹⁰Smith, in Twain 1957, p. 201.

¹¹Primarily for the Union Army during the Civil War.

¹²Colonel Joseph Anthony Conboie (1830-1918).

¹³Identified by experts with Holabird Americana (2014) and confirmed by the Remington Company (2016).

¹⁴*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* was published later in 1876, and *Huckleberry Finn* followed in 1884-85.

¹⁵The Bancroft Library at University of California, Berkeley.

¹⁶The Society holds a variety of materials from events such as these, including those currently on display—silver eggcups pulled from the ashes of the Great Fire in Virginia City and a partially melted clock from the Goldfield fire of 1905.

¹⁷A primary concern regarding this issue was whether people who had been convicted of dueling in other states would be allowed to vote in Nevada.

¹⁸Clara Clemens married and became known as the Countess Gabrilowitsch in 1909; she later inherited her father's entire estate as his next of kin, in 1910.

REFERENCES

- Beebe, Lucius. *Comstock Commotion: The Story of the Territorial Enterprise* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1954).
- Clifton, Guy. "An Artifact of Mark Twain's 'Duel That Never Was.'" *Reno Gazette Journal* (19 December 2014).
- Fanning, Philip A. *Mark Twain and Orion Clemens: Brothers, Partners, Strangers* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003).
- Henrick, Kim. "Joseph Conboie, Virginia City Undertaker." *Nevada in the West*, Winter 2013.
- Holabird, Fred. Personal communication, artifact identification, April 2014.
- Kaplan, Justin. *Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991).
- Mack, Effie Mona. *Mark Twain in Nevada* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947).
- Marcot, Roy M., James W. Bequette, and Joel J. Hutchcroft. *Remington: "America's Oldest Gunmaker"* (Peoria, Illinois: Primedia, 1998).
- Nevada Historical Society Papers, 1913-16, Vol. 1, 1916.
- Nevada Historical Society Papers, 1920, Vol. 2, p. 239. "In Memoriam."
- Nevada Historical Society, photography collection, 1862.
- Official Report of the debates and proceedings in the Constitutional Convention of the State of Nevada (4 July 1864), 670.
- Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), "Mark Twain's Adventures of Huckleberry Finn." (accessed 3 May 2016. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/cultureshock/flashpoints/literature/huckt.html>).
- Remington Company, personal communication, artifact identification (15 March 2016).
- Rocha, Guy, "Twain Flees Nevada," *Reno Gazette Journal*, (5 May 2001), sec. E.
- "Nevada Editors Here," *San Francisco Call*, 24 April 1896, 79.
- Saucerman, James. R. "Mark Twain's Pistol Characterizations in *Roughing It*," *Mark Twain Journal* 191 (Winter, 1977).
- Schmidt, Barbara. "Mark Twain's Quarrel with Undertakers: It All Begins with Jennie." Twain Quotes. <http://www.twainquotes.com/jennie.html>
- Twain, Mark. *Mark Twain of the Enterprise: Newspaper Articles and Other Documents, 1862-1864*, edited by Henry Nash Smith, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), 201, 204.
- Twain, Mark. *Roughing It* (Hartford: American Publishing Co., 1872).
- Twain, Mark. *Mark Twain's Letters, Vol 1: 1853-1866*, editors: Edgar Marquess Branch, Michael B. Frank, Kenneth M. Sanderson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).
- Twain, Mark & Milton Meltzer. *Mark Twain Himself: A Pictorial Biography* (St. Louis: University of Missouri Press, 2002).
- Wier, Jeanne. accession records, Nevada Historical Society artifact collection, 1912.
- Wren, Thomas. *A History of the State of Nevada, Its Resources and People* (St. Louis: Lewis Publishing Co., 1904), 356.

Book Reviews

Changing the Game: Women at Work in Las Vegas, 1940-1990. By Joanne L. Goodwin (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2014).

At first glance, Las Vegas may not seem like a likely place to study the history of women's work. The assumption has perhaps been that Las Vegas, with its economy based largely on tourism and gaming, is too unique to serve as a case study. Indeed, the scholarly literature until now has largely skipped over Las Vegas in favor of cities such as New York, Atlanta, and San Francisco. But as Joanne L. Goodwin convincingly argues in *Changing the Game: Women at Work in Las Vegas, 1940-1990*, post-World War II Las Vegas is actually one of the most important cities we can study if we want to understand the opportunities for and the contradictions inherent in women's paid labor. Goodwin demonstrates that between 1940 and 1990 Las Vegas had higher percentages of women working than did the nation on average. Moreover most of the jobs held by women in Las Vegas fall into the traditionally female-dominated service economy (food service, secretarial work, housekeeping, etc.). Las Vegas is thus an excellent reflection not only of the types of work American women performed in the twentieth century but also of women's work in the early twenty-first century.

Changing the Game is based heavily on oral histories gathered through the University of Nevada, Las Vegas's Las Vegas Women Oral History Project collection. Goodwin wisely lets her subjects do the talking. She provides only historical and contextual framing in the introduction and conclusion and at the beginning and end of each chapter. The interviewees themselves represent a tidy cross-section of post-war Las Vegas careers open to women: management, gaming, dancing, housekeeping, etc. Other than geography a handful of similarities tie these women together. Most entered the labor market as young women just before or just after World War II. Financial need and opportunity, including both relatively high pay in Las Vegas and a lack of opportunities in other states, drove many of them into the local economy. Most of the narrators express a conscious sense of themselves as pioneers both for settling in Las Vegas and for entering into wage work. All but one interviewee were wives and mothers when they started working, or became a wife and mother during the course of their working lives. These women's stories, as Goodwin points out, challenge public assumptions that the women working in postwar Las Vegas were all either prostitutes or showgirls. Indeed, these women, including the showgirls interviewed, have little to say

about sex work other than to acknowledge it existed. The women in Goodwin's book craved respect for their work and respectability within the community.

Race powerfully shaped these women's experiences. The book includes several oral histories from African-American women, including the club owner and activist Sarann Preddy and Hattie Canty, a culinary worker and Culinary Workers Union organizer. They speak to a very different Vegas than the one experienced by their white counterparts. Informal segregation after World War II confined African Americans to the city's Westside. Most jobs remained race segregated into the 1970s. Many of the women interviewed combined their working careers with social activism on a wide range of topics. The African-American women in particular highlight their evolving awareness of the social and structural barriers that limited their opportunities. The benefits of unions and of protective legislation, particularly for those in less "desirable" jobs such as culinary work and housekeeping, are also a recurring theme in the book. Hattie Canty directly connects her gender with her union activism. She tells her interviewer, "you know, women are over one-half of the people in this union. Women are just goin' forth. They are just doin'. We know what to do and that's to take care of the responsibility. Take care of the membership out there."¹

Goodwin's book also provides an interesting overview of the evolution of both Las Vegas the tourist destination and Las Vegas the community. Many interviewees express nostalgia for the days when the mob controlled Las Vegas. Goodwin explores this theme and concludes that the nostalgia is not for the mob itself but for the "small town" feel of Las Vegas in the 1940s, '50s, and '60s, when most casinos were locally owned. Interviewees lamented the rise of a modern, corporate Las Vegas that increasingly separated employers from employees.

As its title implies, *Changing the Game* redresses the imbalance in our understanding of women's paid work in the American service economy. It is hoped that subsequent scholarship will build on Goodwin's work and compare and contrast Las Vegas with other cities, particularly other "sunbelt" cities such as Phoenix, Houston, and Los Angeles. Goodwin's book ends in 1990 just as Latinas were emerging as a major part of Las Vegas workforce. Thus there are no Latinas among the interviewees featured here. If it hasn't already done so, I have no doubt that the Las Vegas Women Oral History Project will capture those women's stories as well. Goodwin's eminently readable and well-grounded work should serve as an excellent introduction for anyone interested in Las Vegas's history, in women's labor history, or in the interplay of race and gender and its impact on economic opportunity in the United States.

Eileen V. Wallis

California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

¹Joanne L. Goodwin, *Changing the Game: Women at Work in Las Vegas, 1940-1990* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2014), 142.

Water Politics in Northern Nevada: A Century of Struggle. 2d. ed. By Leah J. Wilds (Reno & Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2014)

Without question, the most consequential, and contentious, themes of western water politics over the past fifty years include the assertion of Native American water rights, rapidly growing urban populations, threats to endangered species, and federal involvement at the highest levels. Most people who read about these issues reflexively think they must be looking at a story about the Colorado River. However, as Leah Wilds shows in her recently published second edition of *Water Politics in Northern Nevada*, the Colorado is not the only river that engenders political conflict. As it turns out, even small waterways like the Truckee, Walker, and Carson rivers are sources of volatile legal confrontations among a host of competing interests. Though Wilds focuses on three small waterways in northwest Nevada—a comparatively small and specific area of the American West—the themes she examines and conclusions she draws can be applied to the larger region as a whole. Wilds could just as easily have been writing about water politics in Arizona, Colorado, or California.

Wilds's central argument is that changing demographics are forcing major changes to western water law. At the turn of the twentieth century, agriculture held the greatest amount of political power over western water rights. Local and federal officials helped protect agriculture's favored status. Wilds explains the process by which this relationship began to change. The most obvious factor was that the West began to grow, and formerly disenfranchised groups like Native Americans began to flex their political muscle. Wilds explains how for several decades Northern Paiute Indians lobbied the federal government to increase their share of the Truckee River. By the early 1900s, agricultural interests in Fernley and Fallon had appropriated the lion's share of the waterway, with disastrous results for the Lahontan cutthroat trout and cui-ui, both fish integral to the tribe's livelihood. These two species of fish are endemic to the terminal Pyramid Lake, into which the Truckee River flows, and became endangered in the early twentieth century. Ultimately, the Paiute tribe was successful in wresting a larger share of the Truckee River for itself, an effort that led to the restoration of the Pyramid Lake fishery.

In a way, Wilds is following in the footsteps of the late Marc Reisner, whose seminal work, *Cadillac Desert: The American West and its Disappearing Water*, points out numerous water-related conflicts and ill-advised schemes throughout the region. As any reader knows, Reisner subjected the Bureau of Reclamation to especially harsh criticism in that work. In Wilds's book, she criticizes not only the Bureau, but also the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District (TCID), arguing that both agencies failed to anticipate the changing demographic shifts in northern Nevada, and how these developments would necessitate a change in water policy. Indeed, it was only after Senator Harry Reid repeatedly prodded the Bureau of Reclamation and the TCID that they came to the bargaining table.

Wilds moves beyond Reisner, however, in that, while she does examine conflict, she also presents the other side of the coin, resolution. Much has been made of western water wars, perhaps too much, for in many of these analyses, the conflict is presented as the end result. Wilds presents a refreshing revision to this over-worn narrative. While legal confrontations have indeed often been part of the regional political milieu, conflict resolution has occurred just as often. As Wilds points out, threats of conflict made long-term planning for a host of northern Nevada interests impossible. Wilds shows how ultimately, the federal government, Northern Paiutes, and various farming districts came together to craft an agreement in which each party got at least a little bit of what it wanted.

While the conflicts over northern Nevada's waterways have historically not received as much press coverage as those concerning the Klamath, Columbia, or Colorado rivers, it may only be a matter of time before this changes. After all, Apple Computers and Tesla Motor Company recently located major production and design centers in Reno. These facilities are expected to attract tens of thousands of new residents to the Truckee Meadows. Not only will these facilities need water, but so, too, will the new homes, schools, parks, and residents themselves. This will place ever greater stress on the Truckee and Carson rivers. Wilds's book is perfectly suited to help make sense of just this type of situation. Given its short length (only 113 pages of text), and detailed insight into the major users of water in northern Nevada, *Water Politics* is a quick read and helps provide valuable context for better understanding water use in Nevada and in the region more broadly.

Christian Harrison

CUMULATIVE INDEX - VOLUME 58

2015

COMPILED BY NEW WEST INDEXING

Numbers 1-4

1 - 98

2015

*Numbers printed in boldface refer to
photographs and illustrations*

- Abbott, Carl: review of his *How Cities Won the West*, 75-77
- Abrams, David, 37
- Aikman, Duncan, 59
- Ambrosio, Anthony: arrest of, 19
- Apache Hotel, 57
- Arizona Biltmore, 48
- Arizona State University, Stout and, 70
- Arlington Lodge, 49
- "An Artists' Perspective on Sarah Winnemucca" (Victor), 31
- Austin, Nev., 66, 68
- Baad, Charles, 57
- Bannock War, 35, 39
- Barbara Worth Hotel, 49
- Bartlett, Edward, 35
- Baruch, Bernard: Wingfield and, 69
- Battle Mountain, Nev., 66, 68
- The Battle Mountain Scout*, 68
- Bauer, William J., Jr.: review of his *We Were All Like Migrant Workers Here: Work, Community, and Memory on California's Round Valley Reservation, 1850-1941*, 73-74
- Berkley, Shelley, 30
- Betty O'Neal mine, 68, 69, 70
- Biarritz, 54
- The Big Bonanza* (DeQuille), 32
- Biltmore chain, 48, 57
- Black Canyon, 49-50
- Board of Regents, Stout and, 70
- Bolton, Linda, 34, 39
- Boulder Canyon Project, 47, 56
- Boulder Dam, 21, 47, 57, 59
- Boulder Highway, 57, 60
- Bowen, M. J., 13, 16, 17, 19; Camp Mount Charleston and, 15, 18
- Boyle, Emmet, 47
- Bracken, Walter, 50, 53, 54, 58; photo of, **51**; public-spirited citizens and, 51-52; Frank Riley and, 56-57; George Wingfield and, 56
- Brady, Harriet, 36
- Bryce Canyon National Park, 49, 54
- Bureau of Public Roads, 8
- Bureau of Reclamation, 8
- Burge, Florence, 67
- Burns, Ralph, 35, 36
- Cahlan, Al, 50, 52
- Cahlan, John, 59, 64 n.75
- Calvin, E. E., 52
- Camp Charleston Mountain, 9, 13; CCC enrollees at, 14, 15; decline of, 17; morale at, 15-16; photo of, **14**; recreational infrastructure for, 21
- Camp Lamoille: barracks, **10** (photo); discipline problems at, 19; morale at, 15, 17, 18; recreation at, **18** (photo), 21, 22; tents at, **11** (photo); work projects at, 12-13
- Camp McDermitt, 34, 35

- Camp Paradise Valley, 13
 Carpenter, Cari M., 32, 35, 36
 Carson Valley, 32
 Cashman, James, 52, 54, 55
 CCC. *See* Civilian Conservation Corps
 Cedar Breaks, 54
A Century of Dishonor (Jackson), 36
 Chamber of Commerce, 45, 47, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 56, 58
 Charleston Park, 13
 Chelsea Hotel, 44
 Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), 4;
 article about, 6-26; camps, 7, 9, 12, 19, 21; enrollees, 14, 15, 21, 23 n.3; influence of, 6-7, 8, 20, 22; popularity of, 23 n.1; projects by, 12, 20, 22; USFS and, 9, 11, 20, 21
 Clark, Ed, 58
 Clark, William A., 45, 64 n.75
 Clark County, Nev., 47, 53; growth of, 21
 Colorado River, 59
 Coolidge, Calvin: Boulder Canyon Project and, 56
 Corbusier, Fanny, 34, 35, 42 n.24
 Corkhill, Charles, 45
 Cornero, Frank, 57
 Cornero, Louis, 57
 Cortés, Hernan, 32
 Cotton, John: arrest of, 19
 Crumley, Newton, 69
 Cui-ui Eaters, 3
 Culture: Chicano, 32; Indian, 34

 Davies, Richard O.: review of his *The Main Event: Boxing in Nevada from the Mining Camps to the Las Vegas Strip*, 71-72
 De Long, John, 19
 Death Valley, 49
 Department of Agriculture, 9
 DeQuille, Dan, 32
 Desert Inn, 48, 54
 Division of Grazing, 7, 18
 Divorce, 55, 57, 59, 64 n.64, 71
 Dunlap, Ivan, 12, 17

 Eagles, 52
 Earl, Marion, 59
 Egyptian Ambassador Hotel, 57
 Eisenhower, Dwight D., 30
 El Centro, 49
 El Mirador, 48
 El Rancho Vegas, 60; photo of, 60
 El Sonador, 60
 Eldorado Canyon, 53
 Elko County, Nev., 21, 22
Elko Independent, 32
 Elko Police Department, riot call to, 19
 Elko rail depot, 12
 Elks, 52
 Ely, Dorothy: on Winnemucca, 36
 Emerson, Ralph Waldo, 29

 Fechner, Robert, 9, 16, 17
 Federated Indian Women's Club, 37
 First State Bank, 58
 Fisher, J. C., 45
 Flower Festival, 43 n.52
 Fort McDermitt Paiute-Shoshone Indian Reservation, 42 n.24
 Foster, Jonathan, 4; "Opening the Mountains: The Civilian Conservation Corps and the U.S. Forest Service at Lamoille Canyon and Mount Charleston, Nevada," 6-26
 Fowler, Catherine S., 42 n.22
 Fred Harvey Company, 48
 Frémont, John C., 3, 29
 Fremont Street, 62 n.36; photo of, 48
 Frist, Bill, 29
From Grease Paint to Gold: The Life of Noble Hamilton Getchell (Getchell), 67

 Gay, Sam, 47
 Getchell, Noble Hamilton, 5; article about, 66-70; mining industry and, 66, 68; photo of, 67; University of Nevada and, 69; George Wingfield and, 69
 Getchell Library, 5, 69, 70
 Getchell mine, 69, 70
 Gibbons, Jim, 29, 39
 Glick, George Washington, 30
 Gragg, Larry Dale, 4-5; "'A Long Struggle and Many Disappointments': Las Vegas's Failure to Open a Resort Hotel, 1905-1940," 44-65
 Grand Canyon, 48, 49, 54, 58
 Grand Canyon National Park, 49
 Gray, Carl, 54
 Great Depression, 8, 9
 Great Salt Lake, 3
 Green, Michael, 5

- Green, Rayna, 32, 41 n.12
 Griffith, E. W.: resort of, 13, 14
 Guazzo, Pat: arrest of, 19
 Guinn, Kenny, 29
- Happy Days* (CCC newspaper), 17
 Harriman, Edward H., 45
 Hastert, Dennis, 29, 39
 Hayes, Rutherford B., 29
 Hedrick, Georgia, 37
 Hesse, Fred, 53
 Hoover, Herbert, 53, 68
 Hoover Dam, 8
 Hotel Arlington, 49
 Hotel Chelsea, 49
 Hotel Nevada, 49
How Cities Won the West (Carl Abbott),
 review of, 75-77
 Hubbell, Charles, 45
 Hull, Thomas, 4, 5, 60
 Hulse, James W., 5; "Noble Getchell: 'Mr.
 Republican' During Nevada's New
 Deal," 66-70
 Humboldt County, Nev., 69
 Humboldt Mountain Range, 7
 Hunsaker, Walter, 53, 57
 Hunt, Jessie, 53
 Hunt, Leigh, 54, 55, 57, 58, 59, 60; career of, 53
 Huyssen, Andreas: influence on, 29
- "The Indian Camp," 32
 Indian Relocation Act, 40
 Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada, 37
 Irwin, William J., 16, 17
- Jackson, Andrew, 40
 Jackson, Helen Hunt, 36
 Julian, E. A., 56
- Kenlan, Charles, 16
 Kuyuidika-a (Cui-ui Eaters), 3
 Kyle Canyon, 13, 14, 21
 Kyle Springs, 13
- La Malinche, 32
 La Posada, 48
 La Vitte, Frenchie, 17
 Lamoille Canyon, 4; article about, 6-26; morale
 at, 18, 19; projects at, 12; recreation at, 22
 Lamoille Canyon Scenic Byway, 12
 "Landing of Columbus" (Vanderlyn), 40
- Las Vegas, Nev.: growth of, 21; photo of, 48;
 railroads and, 46; resort hotels in, 44-65
Las Vegas Age, 45, 46, 52, 56; Richmond and, 44
 Las Vegas and Artesian Park Estates, 56
 Las Vegas Land and Water Company, 45, 50,
 51, 52
Las Vegas Review, 45, 50, 52, 59; labor dispute
 and, 47
 Las Vegas Valley, 13, 45, 53
 Lawrence, T. J., 56, 57
 Leopold, Aldo, 20
Life Among the Piutes: Their Wrongs and Claims
 (Winnemucca), 29, 33, 35, 39; controversy
 over, 36
 "'A Long Struggle and Many
 Disappointments': Las Vegas's Failure to
 Open a Resort Hotel, 1905-1940" (Gragg),
 4-5, 44-65
 Lord, Eliot, 5
 Lovelock, Nev., 29, 36
 Lyndgaard, Kyhl, 3-4; "Sarah Winnemucca
 Goes to Washington," 27-43
- MacKaye, Benton, 20
 Madrait, Salvadore, 47
 Maher, Neil, 20
*Main Event: Boxing in Nevada from Mining
 Camps to the Las Vegas Strip, The* (Richard
 O. Davies), review of, 71-72
 Mann, Mary, 36
 Marshall, Bob, 20
 Martin, Anne, 59
 Martin, Roy, 49, 52, 53, 54; Alex Richmond
 and, 50; George Wingfield and, 56
 Masonic Order, 52
 McCarran, Patrick: statue of, 30, 32
 McCarthy, Joseph, 30
 McClure, Andrew S., 42 n.28
 McDonald, A. H., 57
 McDonald Hotel, 57
 Meadows (hotel), 57, 58
 Meserve, Fessenden: on Hunt, 53
 Mining, 55, 66, 68
 Moehring, Eugene P., 5; book review by, 75-77
 Monte Carlo, 45, 54
 Morro Bay Vista, 56
 Mount Charleston: article about, 6-26; morale
 at, 15, 19; recreation at, 13-14, 21, 22;
 visitors to, 14
 Murdoch, Paul, 18

- Nation*, 59
 National Statuary Hall, 27, 29, 36, 37, 39, 40
 Native Americans, stereotypes about, 32
 Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs, 37
 Nevada State Capitol, 37
 Nevada Women's History Project, 37
 New Deal, 6, 8, 66, 69
 "Noble Getchell: 'Mr. Republican' During Nevada's New Deal" (Hulse), 66-70
 Nora, Pierre, 29, 39
 Northern Pacific, 48
 Northern Paiutes, 3, 4, 29
 Nystrom, Eric, 47

 Oasis, 48
 Oddie, Tasker: Getchell and, 70
 "Opening the Mountains: The Civilian Conservation Corps and the U.S. Forest Service at Lamoille Canyon and Mount Charleston, Nevada" (Foster), 4, 6-26
 Overland Hotel, 49; photo of, 49
 Owen, Willis, 56

 Paiutes, 3, 4, 29, 30, 35, 36, 37, 39, 43 n.52
 Paramount Investment Corporation, 57
 Patterson, Edna, 22
 Peabody, Elizabeth, 36
 Pelosi, Nancy, 27, 29, 32, 35
 Pink Tea gatherings, 37
 Pittman, Key, 55
 Pocahontas, 32, 34
 "The Pocahontas Perplex" (Green), 32
 Po'Pay, 39, 43 n.49
 Porter, Carrie Townley, 37
 Powell, Malea, 32, 34, 41 n.12
 Progressive Era, 20
 Pyramid Lake, 29, 35, 36
 Pyramid Lake Paiute Museum, 36
 Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation, 30, 36
 Pyramid Lake Paiutes, 35, 36

 Railroads: strike, 46, 47; tourism and, 47-48
 Recreation, 12, 13-14, 20; photo of, 18
 Red's Ranch, 22
 Reid, Harry, 29, 30, 35
Reno Evening Gazette, 67
Reno Gazette-Journal, 30
 Resort hotels, article about, 44-65
 Revolutionary War, 39
 Richmond, Alex, 44, 49, 55, 58-59; Las Vegas and, 62 n.36; Martin and, 50
 Riley, Frank N., 54, 55, 58, 59; Bracken and, 56-57; Chamber of Commerce and, 56
 Rio Buenaventura, 3
 Riverside Hotel, 55, 57
 Roberts, Randy: book review by, 71-72
 Robertson, R. B., 50, 53, 54, 57, 58
 Robinson, Frank, 58
 Rogers, Will, 39
 Roosevelt, Franklin D., 7, 9, 69
 Roosevelt, Theodore, 53
 Rosowski, Edmund, 12
 Rotary Club, 52
 Rowley, William, 8
 Royer, Joe, 22
 "Ruby Hunters Cut Way in 'Alps'" (*Happy Days*), 17
 Ruby Mountain, 10, 22
 Runte, Alfred, 48

 Sakakawea, 39
 San Bernardino Mountains, 49
 San Pedro, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake Railroad, 45
 Santa Barbara, Calif., 49, 50, 53
 Santa Fe Railway, 48
 "Sarah Winnemucca Goes to Washington" (Lyndgaard), 27-43
 "Scalping of an Emigrant Girl by a Bannock Scout," 32
 Scherer, Joanna Cohan, 32-33, 34
 Scrugham, James, 49, 50, 52
Seattle Post-Intelligencer, 53
 Sequoyah, 39
 Silvagni, P. O., 57
 Smith, John, 32
 Southern Pacific, 48, 69
 Spring Mountain National Recreation area, 20
 Squires, Charles "Pop," 52, 56, 57, 58, 64 n.64; photo of, 46; on real estate, 47; resort hotels and, 45, 54
 Stabler, Scott L.: book review by, 73-74
 Statue of Liberty, 31, 39
 Stewart, William Morris, 68
 Stockman, A. W., 15, 16
 Stout, Minard: dismissal of, 70
 Strikes, railroad, 46, 47
 Stromberg, Ernest, 40

 Talbott, Ninen, 57
 Tannheimer, Louise, 39
 Thocmetony, 30, 40

- Thomas Canyon Campground, 21
 Thompson, Frank, 54
 Timmons, Edna, 13, 19
 Timmons, Tim, 13, 19
 Tisinger, Danielle, 35
 Tonopah Highway, 13
 Tourism, 20; community promoters and, 47-48; railroads and, 47-48
- Underwood, Gilbert Stanley, 54, 56, 57
 Union Pacific, 44, 45, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 54, 59; layoffs by, 46-47; resort hotels and, 58
 United States Army, 9
 United States Capitol, 3-4; statues at, 27, 40
 United States Forest Service (USFS): article about, 6-26; CCC and, 9, 11, 20, 21
 University of Nevada: centennial history of, 70; Getchell and, 69; library at, 66, 67
- Vanderlyn, John, 40
 Victor, Benjamin, 29, 40; personal responsibility of, 31-32; statue by, **28** (photo), 33, 39, 41; Winnemucca and, 31, 34
 Virginia City, Nev., 32, 34
 Vizenor, Gerald, 43 n.53
 Voorhees, Alexandra, 36
- Walker River Paiutes, 37
 "War Dance, The," 32
 War Department, 9, 16
 Warner Pocket Map, 3
We Were All Like Migrant Workers Here: Work, Community, and Memory on California's Round Valley Reservation, 1850-1941 (William J. Bauer, Jr.), review of, 73-74
 Whittemore, C. O., 45
 Wiesler, Harry, 60
 Wingfield, George, 55, 57, 58, 66; Bernard Baruch and, 69; Walter Bracken and, 56; Fremont Street and, 62 n.36; George Getchell and, 23, 39; Dr. Roy Martin and, 56; photo of, **55**
- Winnemucca, Sarah, 3-4; article about, 27-43; autobiography of, 29, 33; death of, 30, 32; legacy of, 35, 37, 39; performance by, 32, 34, 40; photos of, **31, 33, 38**; statue of, 4, 27, **28** (photo), 30, 32, 37, 39, 40
 Women's suffrage movement, 37
- Zanjani, Sally, 36, 42 n.28
 Zentmyer, George, 47
 Zion National Park, 49, 54

Nevada

Historical Society Quarterly

CALL FOR PAPERS

The *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* is actively seeking articles for future issues. We invite and encourage papers related to any aspect of Nevada history, the Great Basin, and the West.

While our focus is original scholarly research, the *Quarterly* accepts shorter articles for a section called "Notes and Documents." This could include shorter essays of interest to our readership as well as commentary upon particularly interesting or important primary sources.

Instructions for Submissions and Abstracts

Please send paper drafts or proposals to the Editor-in-Chief (jreid@tmcc.edu). Full manuscripts should be sent in electronic form to the editor and should be between 4,000 and 7,000 words. Please include at least one photograph of image to accompany your article. For the "Notes and Documents" section, please submit short proposals only. Although electronic submission is preferred, paper submissions are acceptable and should be sent to the Nevada Historical Society in Reno.



Nevada Historical Society

NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

ADVERTISEMENT GUIDELINES

The advertisement guidelines are the basis for promoting publications of historical merit based upon regional history including the West, the Great Basin and Nevada. The quarterly publication assists in fulfilling the mission for the Nevada Historical Society.

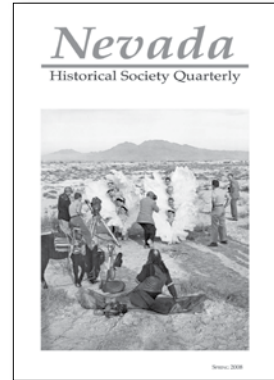
Publication Trim Size:

7" x 10"

Sizes & Specs:

Black & White Ads only
Artwork format: 300 dpi PDF

Ad size	width	x	height (no bleed)
Quarter page	3"	x	2.5"
Half page	6"	x	5"
Full page	6"	x	9"



NHS Quarterly Advertising Rates:

The *NHS Quarterly* gives discounts for the purchase of multiple advertisements based upon number of ads and ad size. The general location of the advertisements will be located at the end of the quarterly.

Ad size	4x	2x	1x
Quarter page	60.00	70.00	80.00
Half page	100.00	120.00	140.00
Full page	150.00	175.00	200.00
Premium Location: Back Inside Cover	1x		
Half page	200.00		
Full Page	275.00		

NHS Quarterly Deadlines:

Issue print date	Reserve date	Artwork due
Spring (March)	December 10	end of December
Summer (June)	March 10	end of March
Fall (Sept)	June 10	end of June
Winter (Dec)	September 10	end of September

Catherine Magee
cmagee@nevadaculture.org
775-688-1190, ext. 222

Nevada

Historical Society Quarterly

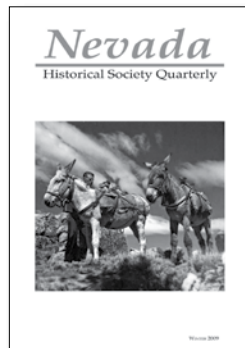
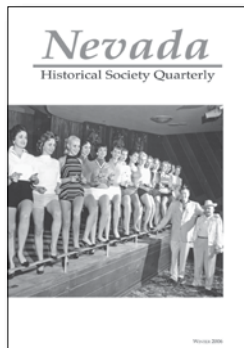
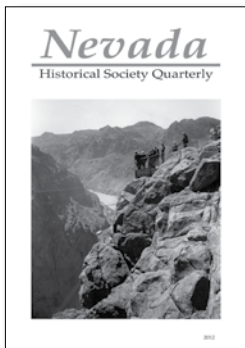
BACK ISSUES

Thank you for reading the *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*.

Did you know that the Society has a surplus of printed *Quarterlies* from years past? If you like the feel of an actual book in your hands call, email or come in, and pick up a back copy, ranging in years from 1964 through Fall of 2004, for only \$6 each. Read the Fall 1987 issue which includes an essay and historical photographs of Nevada's nuclear test site. Or perhaps choose the *Quarterly* from Summer 1990, a special art issue, which includes full color prints of paintings by recognized artists of Nevada landscapes—McClellan, Latimer, Caples, and Sheppard, just to name a few. Purchase the *Summer 2002 Quarterly*, a special oversized issue, which features the photography of Lee Brumbaugh, the Society's curator of photography since 1996. We have more recent issues ranging in price from \$10 to \$15 each.

Come in to the Museum Store and request a previous copy of a *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*. We are happy to pull back issues from our enormous collection.

For more information, please call 775.688.1190 ext. 221 or email Dorothy Barry at dnbarry@nevadaculture.org



Nevada Historical Society Membership

Giving to the Nevada Historical Society is the perfect way to embrace Nevada's rich heritage

A year's membership includes:

- ☐ Nevada Historical Society Quarterly publications (except at the Student & Senior level memberships)*
- ☐ unlimited free admission to all seven museums in the Nevada Division of Museums and History
- ☐ e-newsletter, regular email announcements to upcoming and current exhibitions
- ☐ free exhibit events and programs, and a 15% discount in all museum stores when you present your valid membership card!

Membership amounts over \$20 can be tax deductible and support state level museum operations. Donations can be 100% tax deductible and you specify what your donation supports at NHS. Donors and Members reap more than benefits—you are supporting Nevada's oldest cultural institution!

Membership Categories

- ___ Yes, I want to become a member of the Nevada Historical Society at the following membership level:
- ___ Yes, I want to renew my membership at the following level (renewal date_____)

- | | |
|--|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$35 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$60 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Institutional | \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining | \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing | \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron | \$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor | \$1,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student* | \$20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior* | \$20 |

**Valid ID required, does not include Quarterly publications*

Donations and Gifts *You choose what your money benefits beyond membership!*

- ___ Yes, I want to join the new **499 Club** with an additional donation of \$499, beyond my membership to be used for:
- ☐ general use ☐ events ☐ collections ☐ conservation
- ___ Yes, I want add an additional donation to my membership with a gift of \$_____ to be used for:
- ☐ general use ☐ events ☐ collections ☐ conservation
- ___ No, I do not wish to be a member of the Historical Society. Please accept my tax deductible gift of \$_____ to be used for:
- ☐ general use ☐ events ☐ collections ☐ conservation

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: Home _____ Business _____

Email _____

The Society respects your right to privacy. We will not share your e-mail address with other organizations.

Mail this form and your check to:

Nevada Historical Society, Attn: Membership, 1650 N.Virginia St. Reno, NV 89503