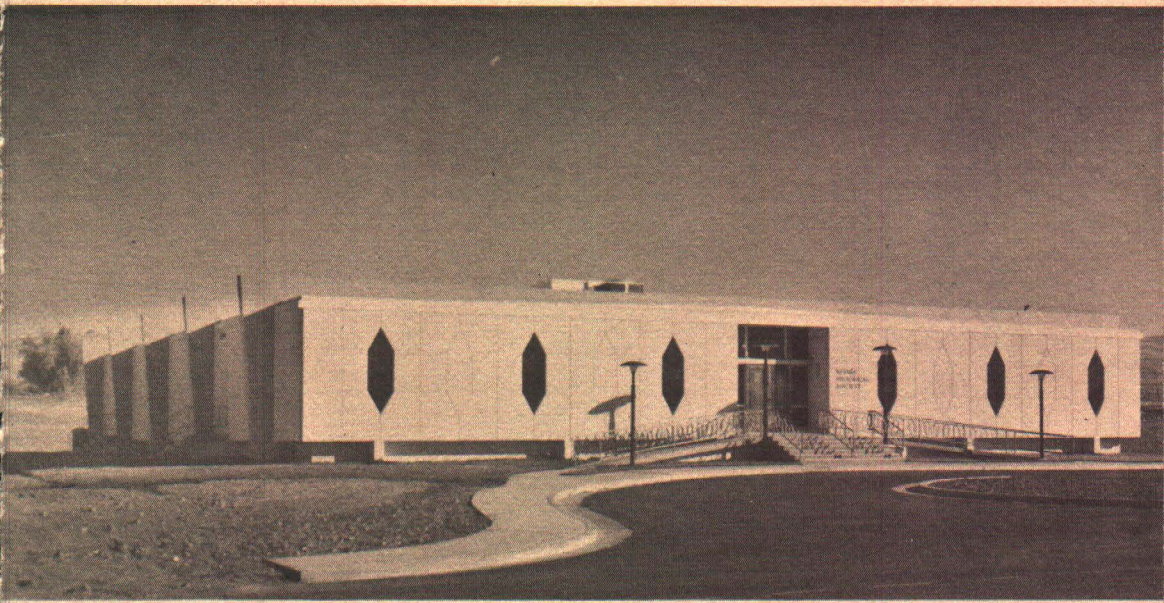


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Quarterly



Fall • 1970

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THE COVER

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Soon after the turn of the century the Basque Bar appeared in Nevada towns as a recreation and amusement center for immigrant sheepmen. Among the approximately 750 persons in the Austin area in 1910 were some 25 Spanish, 10 French, and 15 Portuguese sheepherders and agricultural laborers. They frequented Domingo's Bar. Domingo Acorda is behind the counter. The proprietor of a Chinese restaurant is pictured with the sheepmen. Picture taken in 1909.

The Immigrant in Nevada's Short Stories and Biographical Essays

by Wilbur Shepperson

WHEN ADMITTED to the Union in 1864, Nevada was already a colorful immigrant society. On a percentage basis, by 1870 it had grown into the largest foreign-born state in America. With 44.2 percent of the population being foreign born, 7 percent more of Nevada's inhabitants were immigrants than that of second place California. The state continued to attract large numbers of immigrants until after World War I. In the nineteenth century the state drew Irish and Cornish miners, Italian and Swiss charcoal burners, German ranchers and merchants, Chinese domestics and laborers, and French-Canadian woodcutters. After the turn of the century, wave after wave of Greeks, Slavs, Danes, Japanese, Italians, and Basques flooded in to fill the new industrialized mines, operate small businesses, and expand the livestock and dairy trades.

Some features of immigrant life have survived in Nevada by their being grafted onto the general culture. Basque restaurants, Greek bakeries, and Cornish pasties suggest simple Old World customs which blended and accommodated themselves to the new environment. But in a more fundamental sense, it was the infusion of spice and muscle and diversity that made the immigrant historically significant. And it was his response

Wilbur Shepperson has been a professor of history at the University of Nevada since 1951. He has written widely on the subject of European emigration to the United States and on Nevada immigration. This article is taken from chapter 6 of his new book, *Restless Strangers*, © University of Nevada Press 1970.

to a volcanic, unstratified, and isolated environment which stimulated much of the literary and biographical comment. Perhaps the scores of themes set forth by short-story writers and the various impressions left by contemporary biographers can help to reveal the immigrants' impact upon, and reaction to, the rudimentary Nevada society.¹

The majority of Nevada's short stories derived from some historical event in which the legend lived but the social significance was lost. Like most westerns, the tales emphasized crime and retribution. They were simple and direct, crude and popular. Facts were used as long as they did no violence to the writer's instincts, and the literary license taken by the authors seldom blemished and never deformed the local history. Of course, the value and the validity of the events depended on the outlook of the reader, and frontiersmen were notoriously receptive to entertainment and story telling of every kind.

Oft-Told Tales

A wide range of writers has fictionalized Nevada's past, but works like those by W. A. Chalfant have tended to embody the most traditional and popular lore. Chalfant's *Tales of the Pioneers* (1942) and *Gold, Guns, and Ghost Towns* (1947) reproduced dramatic episodes associated with the frontier. The author grew up with the tales he told. Born in the newly founded boom camp of Virginia City, he was introduced to newspaper life by his father. The family later moved to Independence, California, where young William joined the elder Chalfant in the publishing trade. By the time of his death in 1943, Bill Chalfant had become the dean of California's newspapers editors. His two volumes include stories set in Nevada and eastern California and emphasize amusing incidents and legendary and historical accounts generally drawn from the files of old newspapers. The large number of foreign-born characters used by Chalfant points to the high percentage of immigrants in the area, as well as to the contemporary journalist's search for color and the spectacular.

Of the many books of Nevada short stories, seven volumes stand out as manageable collections which lend themselves to immigrant research and analysis. Six of the seven volumes borrow heavily from newspaper accounts and are made up of the Chalfant type of vignette; one book, Ralli's *Nevada Lawyer*, embraces a more modern and versatile theme. The works provide an opportunity for an investigation into the use selected writers have made of Nevada's various nationalities. Statistics cannot prove the worth of literature, but empirical data can be useful in measuring and documenting the attention given to the foreign born. In short, the immigrant involvement in, and stimulus to, Nevada literature can be measured by seeing how frequently they appear in that literature.

Clel Georgetta's *Wool, Beef, and Gold* (1956) comprised thirteen human-interest stories set in the vicinity of the author's ancestral home

in eastern Nevada. As the grandson of a French army officer who immigrated to Eureka, Georgetta grew up in an area and among the people about whom he wrote. With both French and Swiss customs influencing his homelife, and with a constant infusion of immigrants into eastern Nevada, he became sensitive to the foreign impact on the folklore of the state. Of the thirteen stories in *Wool, Beef, and Gold*, two were centered around foreigners, two others introduced foreigners as major figures, and three spoke or dealt indirectly with ethnic groups. A Chinese cook, a Mexican shepherd, a Spanish nobleman, an English bride, and a band of Gypsies typified the diversity of Georgetta's immigrant characterizations.

In "A Pair of Shoes," Antonio Saville was a cultivated drifter who became, in turn, Spanish nobleman, American jockey, and western ranch hand. His touch of refinement made it easy for him to seduce Lila, the wife of Basque rancher Domingo Etcheberren. In careless indifference, Antonio borrowed a friend's horse to facilitate his nocturnal visits with the lady, thereby implicating the friend. After much confusion, Domingo sorted out the facts and then killed the aging Don Juan in a gun battle. The action emphasized the basic similarity between the moral code of old Spain and that of the new West.

"They Die in the Spring" also employed Basque characters, but Rick Novarra and his English wife were forced to cope with issues more complex and involved than an illicit love affair. As a Nevada Basque, Rick met and married an English girl while he was a soldier in Europe during World War I. The two made the long and, for the bride, somewhat frightening journey from England to a sheep ranch two hundred miles from a railroad in central Nevada. Although the Englishwoman married Rick mainly because of a psychological problem (she had failed to have a child by her first husband), she adjusted to the Basque-American society, overcame the hardships and loneliness, and eventually became a successful writer and interpreter of the region. Georgetta's foreign-born sketches were of a piece, motivated instead of merely researched, and planned instead of merely reproduced. They did not deal with the taming of the Nevada frontier, but they used the frontier as a canvas against which the tales were told.

Nell Murbarger's *Ghosts of the Glory Trail* (1956) appeared in the same year as *Wool, Beef, and Gold*. The works differed markedly in style, but were similar in content. *Ghosts of the Glory Trail* was aggressive and quick, and devoted in large measure to ghost towns and to the miners who inhabited them. Murbarger's introductory paragraphs suggested the focus for her work and presented the characters to be used in her vignettes. For centuries the remote land of Nevada knew only sagebrush and jackrabbits, and then suddenly it became flooded with "prospectors, mining engineers, surveyors, opportunists, long-line skinnners, faro dealers, tradesmen, painted women of the night, bull-whackers, saloonkeepers,

assayists, Chinese, Indians, Cousin Jacks, Yankees, Chileans [and] Mexicans. . . ."²

Of the book's thirty-eight episodes, twenty-eight were set in Nevada. Five of the twenty-eight were immigrant oriented, and four of these five focused on the Chinese. Murbarger's frequent treatment of the Chinese theme resulted in part from the historical period in which her anecdotes were set and in part from her search for humor. Most of the accounts were drawn from the nineteenth century when the Chinese loomed large as a factor in Nevada life and thought. As early as 1870, 7.4 percent of the entire population of the state had been born in China; it rose to 8.7 percent in 1880, and leveled off at 6.0 percent by 1890.³ In 1880, almost two of every five foreign-born men in Nevada were Chinese. Such captions as "Where Ghosts Wear Pigtales," "Tybo was Allergic to Orientals," and "Six-Toed Chinaman of Charleston" reveal Murbarger's jocular approach. The one non-Chinese immigrant plot emphasized the rugged character of an Englishman with an Indian wife who lived in southern Nevada for over three-quarters of a century. In addition to the five tales based on an immigrant theme, nine other stories in *Ghosts of the Glory Trail* referred to foreign-born groups or used immigrants as secondary characters.

Murbarger's second volume of short stories, *Sovereigns of the Sage*, was published in 1958. It followed the pattern of *Ghosts of the Glory Trail* in that each anecdote was built around a single incident and developed only one or two characters. The tales were too short to offer a secondary or related theme and too direct to suggest nascent ideas or an interpretation of society. The nationality of characters was not stressed unless they were of particular significance to the plot. Of the fifty semi-fictionalized vignettes comprising *Sovereigns of the Sage*, thirty were set in Nevada. Nine of the thirty were immigrant narratives or used the foreign born in supporting roles. Again, the Chinese appear most often, but members of at least ten other nationalities were introduced.

"Seventy Years in a Country Store" and "Man Who Lived in Borax Marsh" typify the use Murbarger made of the immigrant. The first tale revolved around the life of August D. Lemaire, a Frenchman who became a storekeeper in Battle Mountain in 1880. Over the years, he served Chinese laborers, Basque sheepmen, Welsh ranchers, Portuguese farmers, and assorted foreign-born drifters. The equable Frenchman became a relevant and sustained force in a discordant and volatile society. The second immigrant tale, "Man Who Lived in Borax Marsh," portrayed an artistic and romantic German who devoted his life to chasing rainbows. After several years as a prospector, he sought steady employment at a motion picture studio in Hollywood, but the lure of the desert drew him back to Columbus, Nevada, and Borax Marsh. When not painting, he prospected for gold and finally devised an intricate engineering plan

for locating and refining the metal. Like many another fanciful prospector, he died in poverty convinced that he was the heir to riches.

Taken together, Murbarger and Georgetta employed immigrants in some fashion in about half of their Nevada stories. They did not, however, emphasize the same nationalities. Georgetta favored the Basques, while Murbarger more often observed the Chinese. In a total of fourteen essays using immigrants in *Ghosts of the Glory Trail*, the Chinese appeared in twelve, Mexicans in four, English in three, Germans in two, Irish in two, Slavs in two, Chileans in one, and Canadians in one. Murbarger's foreign born were natural and engaging and revealed the tough and stubborn quality necessary for survival on the frontier. Georgetta's foreign born, on the other hand, demonstrated that in remote Nevada, tradition, culture, and background were constantly threatened by the struggle, passion, and audacity of the new society.

Between 1946 and 1951, Harold's Club of Reno prepared weekly fictionalized newspaper advertisements based on Nevada history and folklore. Each item appeared as a brief, manageable anecdote designed for popular reading. The stories were too slight and uncomplicated to allow for contradictions or subtlety in their characterization, and deep emotional expression was never attempted.

In 1951, 204 of the dramatized advertisements were incorporated into a book of vignettes and issued as volume one of *Pioneer Nevada*. The illustrated tales tended to emphasize Nevada's rugged landscape, aggressive inhabitants, and exciting history. They were direct, muscular, violent, spectacular, and humorous. The subject matter ranged from romantic yarns about Spanish outlaws with their hoards of gold to courtroom scenes where Chinese swore an oath over the carcass of a chicken. One of the more dramatic plots dealt with the Indian brave who saved the lives of two German prospectors because he, too, had been born in Germany. Equally as imaginary was the report of six hundred Cornish women who were left widows in eastern Nevada, and the tar and feathering of an Italian merchant at Eureka. The clash between Irish and Cornish laborers in Belmont and the unity of Irish and Cornish miners when they drove the Chinese from a railway construction site on the Comstock were only slightly fictionalized incidents drawn from Nevada newspapers. Of the 204 entries found in volume one of *Pioneer Nevada*, thirteen were immigrant stories, fifteen used foreign-born characters in secondary roles, and twenty-two others referred to foreign-born persons or ethnic groups.

Volume two of *Pioneer Nevada* (1956) incorporated the historical and fictionalized sketches which had been published between 1952 and 1956. Of the 159 single-page accounts, nine were immigrant centered, and eight used the foreign born in secondary roles. Most of the immigrant-oriented tales in volume one and all of those in volume two were confined to the era before 1885. The plots tended to emphasize Mexican

ore discoveries, French activity along the Humboldt River, Chinese railroad construction, and Irish mining ventures. The Slavs, Italians, Greeks, Japanese, and other nationality groups were generally overlooked.

Both volumes of *Pioneer Nevada* concentrated on action and anarchy in the wild West and generally ignored the corporate complexity of community life. The tales were too short to be plotted, too popular for satire, and too quick for character motivation. They failed to invite or command strongly polarized emotion. There was neither bitter hatred nor true admiration. But the abbreviated incidents capture and reproduce the contemporary milieu, and they point up the extent of immigrant involvement in everyday life. Furthermore, they punctuate the ethnic and occupational diversity of the immigrants. *Pioneer Nevada* mixed myth with fact, blended human attributes into the physical environment, and suggested the pattern of immigrant assimilation into Nevada society.

Jean McElrath's *Aged in Sage* (1964) was designed as a work of "humorous memories . . . modified with a modicum of history."⁴ Most of *Aged in Sage*'s thirty-six short stories were set in Elko County and the remainder in adjacent counties in northern or eastern Nevada. Half of the accounts referred to immigrants. Some eight were immigrant-dominated, while four others cast foreign-born characters in significant secondary roles. Several of the plots used persons from two or three foreign countries, but of the eighteen stories built around foreigners, the Germans dominated in four, the Basques, Chinese, and Irish each in three, and the Italians, English, Welsh, Mexicans, and Canadians in one each. In addition, Swedish, Swiss, Cornish, Portuguese, and Hungarian characters were scattered throughout the tales. The shooting of a Basque herder by a native cowboy in "Sheep Claim" illustrated the ethnic problems of open range and reemphasized the Basque involvement in the age-old sheepman-cattleman conflict. Accounts of Billy the Kid and his life among Mexican friends in Elko County, the shooting of the badman Sam Brown by a German farmer, and the Basque who was tricked into a badger fight were old Nevada folk stories.

The badger fight long remained one of eastern Nevada's most beloved and hilarious entertainments. Perhaps both to conceal their nostalgia and to demonstrate their independence, the frontiersmen developed loud and pungent amusements. The fun was often in the form of a hoax, designed to bewilder those not in on the secret. The outsider, and particularly the immigrant, provided an ideal subject. In McElrath's story, the Basque Alec Sepulvada prided himself on his great strength and daring, so it was relatively easy to inveigle him into pulling a badger from a barrel so that it might be attacked by an English bulldog. After extensive preparations were made and a large crowd had assembled near Elko's Commercial Hotel, Sepulvada jerked the rope which was to drag the badger from its den. A white china "thundermug" sailed out to greet the unsuspecting and easily humiliated foreigner.

Much has been written about the Atlantic crossing and the overcrowded steerage of immigrant ships, but for Europeans bound for the American interior the overland journey often proved equally difficult. After surviving the voyage with its dangers of typhus and dysentery, after escaping exploitation by bond brokers, forwarding agents, and boarding-house runners, most immigrants bound for Nevada still faced the hazards of ship, rail, or stage travel and the very real problem of not being able to speak the native language in a totally alien environment. Elderly Basques still remember that upon leaving Europe they knew the names of only two American cities—New York and Winnemucca. For thousands of such persons the traumatic experience of migration was not the arrival in New York, Chicago, or even Omaha, but rather the ordeal of locating friends or relatives in the peculiarly mobile and isolated mining camps of the West.

One of the more intrepid and indefatigable of McElrath's immigrant characters was the Spanish youth in "The Cock Crowed in Basque." The annals of American history are filled with accounts of spectacular heroism and examples of incredible determination, but few frontiersmen demonstrated higher resolve than that shown by Ramon Oyarbide and his partner Pedro as they traveled from their Pyrenees homeland to the mines of Berlin, Nevada.

Ramon and Pedro followed a traditional route by first sailing for England where, after the usual confusion, they embarked at Liverpool for New York. During the ocean voyage and the rail trip across the United States they suffered only minor hardships. In crossing Nevada, however, the railroad conductor forgot to transfer them to a branch line at Battle Mountain and did not discover his error until they had traveled over 200 miles west and were nearing the California border. Callously set off the train with their luggage, the two youths followed the railway tracks back to Reno, where they eventually caught a Carson and Colorado work train and were carried 150 miles southeast to the town of Luning. Since neither of the migrants spoke English, the Italian-born station agent at Luning drew a crude map showing the desolate 63-mile trail over the mountains to Berlin. Having no concept of the distance, the terrain, or the climate, Ramon and Pedro started the trek on foot. They quickly became lost and consumed their meager provisions; Pedro collapsed of thirst, and Ramon had resigned himself to death on the desert when in the still morning hours he heard a rooster crow. The sound led him to an isolated stage station and the help of its Swiss proprietor. Although the migrants finally arrived at Berlin, Ramon followed the traditional Basque pattern and quickly deserted the central Nevada mines for the northern Nevada grasslands. He eventually achieved prosperity and respect as a rancher.

Jean McElrath mixed fable and fabrication to produce vignettes in the western tradition. The tales made no attempt to reveal the complexity of man's subconscious or the raw and corrosive violence of an isolated

society. Rather they were carried along by their zest, adventure, and the rediscovery of the casual and pragmatic relationships of westerners. McElrath, like most Nevada short-story writers, used immigrants freely in her work. The brief anecdotes suggest the course by which some of the foreign born were initiated into Nevada life and the strange paths by which they became community leaders. Even the boisterous and oversimplified accounts of love, violence, pathos, and exploitation helped to provide an understanding of the immigrant.

Of the seven compilations of short stories under consideration, only Paul Ralli's *Nevada Lawyer* (1949) dealt with immigrants caught up in twentieth-century urbanization. Ralli was born ethnically a Greek and legally an Englishman on the ancient island of Cyprus. He migrated by stages, first traveling to Europe and later moving to the United States. He worked as a laborer, lumberjack, steelworker, actor, and lawyer, before becoming city attorney for Las Vegas. Scattered through the forty-seven chapters of *Nevada Lawyer* were approximately one hundred semi-fictionalized accounts of experiences with local associates and famous or interesting clients. The vignettes were uniform neither in length nor in method of presentation, but the parade of foreign-born clients through Ralli's Las Vegas office gave the book international flavor.

Numerous Mexicans, some rich, some poor, and some romantic, sought Ralli's services. There was the Greek woman whose husband invariably beat her when business declined, and the Irish woman who refused to forgive her Italian husband of adultery until she could participate in a similar experience. There was the clever English defendant who flattered the judge by addressing him as "m'lord," and the Italian, thirty years younger than his wealthy wife, who eloped with his step-daughter. There were Irishmen with their customary lack of respect for public officials, and wealthy Greek and Italian gamblers with their flair for the mysterious. Many of the tales were told with tongue in cheek, and most were designed to show the variety and excitement of Las Vegas life. Ralli seldom supplied trenchant comments on society, but he explored the legal labyrinths of a gambling mecca and he noted the city's attraction for the foreign born.

Collections of essays with Nevada settings range from the idealistic and sentimental *In Miners Mirage-Land* (1904) by Idah Meacham Strobbridge to the penetrating and subtle *The Watchful Gods and Other Stories* (1950) by Walter Van Tilburg Clark. But the seven volumes under consideration seem to typify the use made of the immigrant by most short-story writers. Clel Georgetta in *Wool, Beef, and Gold*, Nell Murbarger in *Ghosts of the Glory Trail*, and Jean McElrath in *Aged in Sage* used foreign-born characterizations in some half of their Nevada stories. Considering the popularity of the Indian, the cowboy, the outlaw, and other peculiarly western themes, the immigrant motif was surprisingly vital to Nevada authors. Of course, the plots were not designed to arouse a special

interest in immigrant problems, or to stimulate concern over immigrant failures, or to inspire a greater appreciation of immigrant contributions. The foreign born were used first because they were there and the writer subconsciously, or artistically, or realistically, sensed their unique link between Nevada and the entire world outside. The immigrants gave a story greater universality at the same time that they provided authors with unique material for character study. The immigrant also supplied color and culture, variety and vitality to what would otherwise have been a less complex, less diverse, and less reflective literature.

Historical Biographies

The place of the immigrant in Nevada literature could be assessed, or placed in perspective, if similar literary surveys were available for other western states. In the absence of comparable studies, perhaps fuller meaning can be supplied by relating the immigrant of the short story to the immigrant of historical biography. In the final analysis the acuteness of any phenomenon can be seen best through a multifaceted lens. In Nevada there has been a peculiarly close relationship between reflective research and creative writing, between history and literature.

Over the half century in which Nevada was absorbing most of her immigrants, four chroniclers compiled almost two thousand biographical essays. The historical biographies failed to offer sophisticated insights into the national origins or the settlement patterns of the people. And the subjects in the biographies were drawn mainly from a select economic and political class which was quite distinct from those commonly used by novelists. Few of the personal sketches were designed as sensitive literary interpretations; rather, the biographers often sought to sell their books by mentioning as many local residents as possible.

But despite the commercialism and the amateurism, the selectivity and the insensitivity, the biographical case studies provide data which can be correlated with details drawn from the seven volumes of short stories. In brief, something can be learned and many questions posed through the assessment of the historical profiles. For example, did a higher percentage of Nevada's foreign born or of its American born achieve recognition? Did the biographical historians or the writers of fiction most often note and utilize the immigrants? Did the practitioners of the two disciplines discover the same national groups, observe similar immigrant characteristics, and follow analogous ethnic themes?

Although poorly organized and badly written, the first major history of Nevada has proved the most original, inclusive, and useful study yet produced. Edited by Myron Angel and published by Thompson and West, *History of Nevada: With Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Its Prominent Men and Pioneers* appeared in 1881. Two hundred and eight biographical accounts were scattered throughout the work. Forty-six, or 22 percent, of the sketches dealt with immigrants. The forty-six

included fifteen Germans, eleven Irish, seven Canadians, four Scots, four English, two Welsh, one Austrian, one Spaniard, and one Frenchman. Nine of the forty-six migrants were married to persons of the same national origin, nine had American-born mates, eight were single, one was married to a person of a different foreign nationality, and the marital status of nineteen is unknown.⁵ The forty-six immigrants were engaged in six basic occupations: eighteen were in agriculture, nine in the professions, seven in business, four in mining, four in government service, and four worked as skilled craftsmen.

It should be emphasized that the forty-six immigrants noted in the biographies were included because of their attainments, and not because they had subscribed to the history. Although only 22 percent of the sketches dealt with immigrants, 29 percent of the 962 prepublication subscribers were foreign born.⁶ Even more significant, there was no correlation between the biographies and the purchasers of the volume.⁷

Despite the wealth of social material contained in *History of Nevada*, the narrative sections of the book gave no special thought or notice to the immigrant. The one exception was in the reoccurring references made to the Chinese. The book was written before the foreign born had been isolated for study and before they were recognized as a unique phenomenon basic to America's rapid development. Angel included many of the English- and Germanic-speaking immigrants in the biographies, but he failed to identify the large foreign-born population or to sense the heterogeneous quality which the migrants had contributed to Nevada life.

The last 450 pages of Thomas Wren's *A History of the State of Nevada, Its Resources and People* (1904), were given over to 381 brief biographical essays; 128, or slightly over 33 percent, dealt with foreign-born subjects. As in Angel, the Germans led the list with 32 biographies. There were 29 Irish represented, 21 Canadians, 17 English, 5 Danes, 5 French, 4 Scots, 3 Poles, 3 Italians, 3 Swiss, 2 Welsh, 2 Portuguese, 1 Australian, and 1 Mexican. Of the 128, 66 were married to a spouse of the same nationality and 12 were married to a spouse of another European nationality; 95 had arrived in the United States as adults (over sixteen years of age). At least 22 of the 128 came directly from their homeland to Nevada, and 27 others arrived in the state within five years after migrating to the United States. Only 3 of the 128 were in the country over twenty years before locating in Nevada.

Since the majority of foreigners migrated as adults, married European spouses, and traveled more or less directly to the state, their Nevada home life unquestionably reflected their European speech and culture. Indeed, 6 of the 128, after settling in Nevada, were sufficiently tied to the Old World that they returned home and only after further reflection re-entered the United States and again located in Nevada.

Eighty percent of Wren's foreign born had at some point in their career engaged in mining; however, only 10 of the 128 accepted mining as

their terminal occupation: 51 were employed in agriculture, 46 in business, 11 in crafts or services, 8 in government service, and 2 in the professions. One hundred became at least nominally active in politics: 67 as Republicans, 23 as Democrats, 7 as Silver party members, and 3 as Independents.

Although writing 128 biographies about immigrants, Wren, like Angel, tended to be unaware of the unique human transitions and adjustments which his sketches suggested. Since over one third of his "important" Nevadans were foreign born, he presented evidence of a major ethnic influx and a grand international fusion, but he failed to evaluate his findings. The provincial tone of Wren's work and the political conclusions at which he arrived seldom drew on the wealth of diverse social material at hand.

Sam P. Davis, longtime editor of the *Morning Appeal* and author of *The First Piano in Camp*, published his massive two-volume *The History of Nevada* in 1913. Davis devoted several chapters to the development of literature, drama, religion, medicine, and education, but despite the book's considerable social and cultural orientation, the foreign born were not recognized as interesting contributors to Nevada life.

In the second part of volume two, Davis included 495 biographies of outstanding Nevadans, of which 104 followed the pattern set by Angel and Wren and even further emphasized the Germanic leadership within the state: 40 were German, 20 Canadian, 18 Irish, 7 English, 6 Danish, 4 French, 3 Swiss, 3 Welsh, 1 Norwegian, 1 Austrian (Yugoslav), and 1 was from Bermuda. Seventy-eight of the 104 came to the United States as adults and 49 arrived in Nevada within five years after migration. Only 5 lived in the country twenty years or more before arriving in Nevada. Thirty-two were married to spouses of the same nationality, and 6 to spouses of another European nationality. Thirty-eight chose American-born spouses. By 1913, business had replaced agriculture as the major occupation of the migrants: 38 were in business, 29 in agriculture, 15 were artisans or service personnel, 9 were in mining, 7 in government service, and 5 in the professions. In addition to the 104, at least 45 other biographical sketches dealt with American-born persons whose parents had migrated from Europe to Nevada.

The Davis volumes further emphasized the pattern of selection established by Angel and Wren. Although the Germans, Irish, and English had for decades ceased to be the major immigrant groups in Nevada, their representation among the "prominent" elements of the state remained constant. Few of the Italians, the Greeks, the Slavs, or the Orientals had gained positions of influence and respect.

Out of a total of 836 biographical sketches carried in James G. Scrugham's *Nevada: A Narrative of the Conquest of a Frontier Land* (1935) 163, or 20 percent, dealt with immigrants from twenty-one countries.⁸ Of the 163 foreign born, 116 had migrated as adults, and 45 had traveled

directly to Nevada. Thirty-three others were in Nevada within five years after their arrival in the United States, and only 11 had lived twenty years or more in the United States before settling in the state.

The number of immigrants married to foreign-born spouses had decreased from earlier biographical lists. Only 39 of the 163 had immigrant spouses of the same nationality, and 9 were married to immigrants of a different foreign nationality. The political sentiment of the leading immigrants remained constant, with approximately twice as many being affiliated with the Republican as with the Democratic party. Forty-six of the 163 were engaged in business, 42 in agriculture, 22 were artisans or service personnel, 21 were in the professions, 16 in mining, 8 in government service, and 7 in unidentified occupations.

While never consciously aware of the foreign born, Angel, Wren, Davis, and Scrugham provide biographical guidelines which suggest the immigrants' place in Nevada life. In the selection of 1,920 "leading" Nevadans in the fifty-four years between 1881 and 1935, 441, or approximately 23 percent of the total, were foreign born. The overwhelming majority of the immigrants included in the volumes were from Canada and northern Europe, with Germany providing the largest number of subjects. Most of the foreign born arrived in Nevada as adults, within a few months, or at most a few years, after leaving their homeland. A large number migrated with (or later chose) a spouse who was also foreign born. Those included in the biographies tended to be agriculturists or businessmen, and they were generally devoted to the principles of the Republican party.

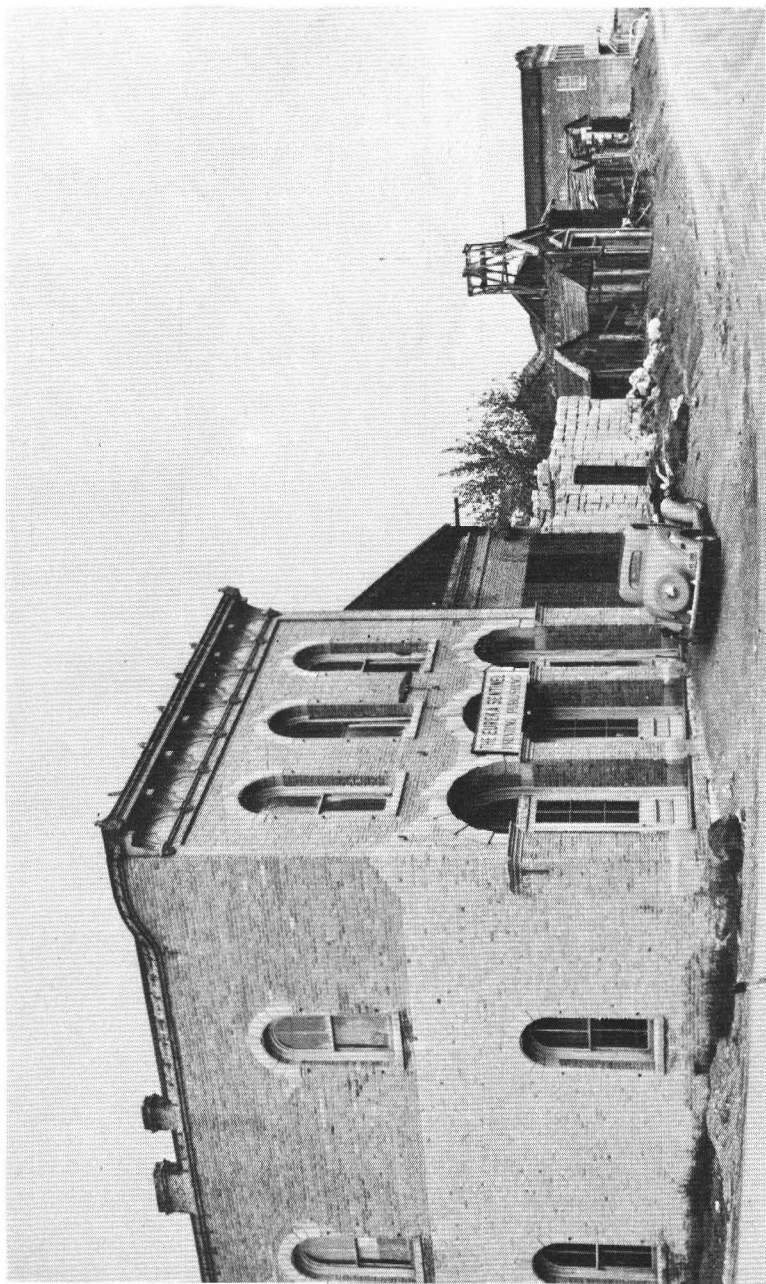
Clearly, the beliefs and activities of the 441 migrants were shaped in part by their background, traditions, and foreign experiences. But it would seem that neither they nor others of their class and station provided the truly meaningful and exciting characters around which many of the best immigrant short stories were woven. Most of the foreigners included in the biographical entries led no social or political revolution, provided no hostility to power abused or justice thwarted, and attacked no idols in the pursuit of truth. They were not among the subdued in the "Italian Wars" of Eureka, or among the quelled in the "Japanese War" at Caliente, or among the suppressed in the Chinese encounter at Gold Hill, or among the accused in the Basque shooting at Gold Creek.

Among the 441 biographies, there were only two Basques; yet the Basques have provided the focus for more Nevada fiction than any other ethnic group. There were only two Mexican biographies; yet the Mexican in Walter Van Tilburg Clark's *The Ox-Bow Incident* revealed much about man and about the Nevada frontier. The Chinese were repeatedly employed by Nevada authors; yet none of the biographical essays was devoted to a Chinese. And conversely, 115 of the 441 accounts were about Germans and 84 about Canadians; yet the Germans and Canadians produced little inspiration for major Nevada writers.

Some of the short-story writers allowed their intuition or their insight to transform immigrants into meaningful and artistic figures. By exploiting the past they have helped to preserve it. The few authors who challenged the old interpretations, probed for a new realism, and noted the ethnic transmutation of the society are obviously indispensable. But scores of lesser writers and journalists have also discovered the rich heritage bequeathed to the state by immigrants. Many of the bad books about active men and many of the dull stories about interesting lives have served a purpose. Their loose ends are an antenna by which imaginative writers and social historians receive signals from a dim and poorly charted past.

Nevada's foreign nationalities tended to fall into three categories. The interest and training of the observer seems to have determined what he saw. The Canadians and northern Europeans received the bulk of the historical and biographical attention, but much less notice by the short story writers. The Basques, the Chinese, and the Mexicans were generally ignored by the biographers but were often developed as literary characters. The Italians, Portuguese, Greeks, Slavs, and Japanese were strangely neglected in both biographical history and in the short stories. The latter nationalities often represented a human flood surging into the state, but they received neither scholarly nor imaginative treatment. For example, at the turn of the century, Nevada was attracting a larger per capita Italian migration than any other state in America. Yet, only 10 of the 441 biographies and only 6 of the 125 short stories introduce an Italian. The figures typify the literary and historical oversight and imbalance that has long perplexed immigration studies.

1. An evaluation of the immigrant in Nevada's book length fiction proved too lengthy to be included in this article. For the immigration themes found in Nevada journalism see my article "Immigrant Themes in Nevada Newspapers" *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, Summer, 1969.
2. Nell Murbarger, *Ghosts of the Glory Trail* (Palm Desert, California: Desert Magazine Press, 1956), p. 2.
3. Peterson and Lewis, *Nevada's Changing Population*, p. 26.
4. Jean McElrath, *Aged in Sage* (Private Printing, 1964), see Dedication.
5. For the purpose of marriage statistics the English, Scots, and Welsh are considered one nationality.
6. There were 986 subscribers, but 24 were organizations.
7. Among the foreign-born groups, the Germans led in purchasing the study with seventy-one prepublication orders. They were followed by the Irish, the Canadians, and the English. But Danes, Swedes, Australians, Portuguese, Italians, Poles, Swiss, and three South Americans also subscribed to the history, and not a single immigrant from any of these eight nationalities was included in the biographies.
8. Canada furnished 36, Germany 28, England 27, Ireland 15, Denmark 13, Italy 10, Scotland 7, Switzerland 5, Yugoslavia 3, Portugal 3, Sweden 3, France 2, Norway 2, Mexico 1, Wales 1, Spain 1, Finland 1, Lebanon 1, Austria 1, and Syria 1.



Eureka Sentinel building.

Three Nevada Newspapers: A Century in Print

by John Folkes

THE 1870s witnessed an unprecedented growth in American journalism. The number of newspapers in the United States almost doubled during those years, reaching about ten thousand by 1880.¹ A rapid popularization of the press, the beginnings of economic revival in the South, and the remarkable growth of the West all contributed to the development.² In the area west of the Mississippi journalism blossomed rapidly. There, early newspapers served as a link between the more secure, safe, cultured East and the new, often precarious, and provincial West. Using small hand-operated presses, the printer-journalist fast became a town's surest promoter—sometimes he was needed to ensure the town's survival. Obviously newspapermen could not be sedentary individuals. On the contrary, especially in the West, most went from one town to another, starting a newspaper, staying until the bubble burst, and then leaving. These early pioneer journalists were too deeply involved in the promise of the West to miss the excitement of each new land rush.

Gold had attracted great masses of people to the Pacific Slope in 1849; among them were printers, some old and experienced, some greenhorn devils, but all eager for new adventures. Many were caught up in the "fever" and were swept away into oblivion with other unfortunates who

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never struck it rich. A few remained in their profession and a surprisingly large number of these established newspapers in the Intermountain Basin. Indeed, almost everywhere there were people, no matter how precarious their settlement, there was a newspaper.

Scarcity of reading material made the newspaper popular. It was often the only real way in which western pioneers, away from home, in a harsh environment, and often lonely, could break loose and escape for a time the worries of living. The frontier newspaper became a source of relaxation by providing entertaining information about the outside world. This, perhaps, accounts for the fact that almost every frontier town in the United States could boast of at least one newspaper and some had many more. Consider for example the journeyman-printer who "used the stump of an ancient oak as his editorial chair and the top of his beaver hat as a table to bring out the first issue of the *Omaha Arrow* just twenty-eight days after the village was planted."³ By "1840 the West could boast one newspaper for every 12,000 persons."⁴ Barely four years after its declaration of independence from Mexico, Texas could claim thirteen newspapers.⁵ Within a decade after attaining statehood, Nebraska had more than a hundred. Within a scant five years after the multitude had poured into San Francisco to go to the gold fields, that city could count more newspapers than London, England.

It was from those few intrepid souls who gave life to a newspaper that we have learned most of what we know today about the boom and bust period of early Nevada and the West. They recorded Mormon penetration into the state, exciting events such as the first and last train robberies in the West, and news of nation wide importance such as the Newlands Reclamation Project. Often with a good deal of perception they sketched such historic happenings as the Oklahoma land rush, the bloody end of the Dalton Gang in Kansas, the long and dramatic fight to conquer Colorado River floods, and the lurid escapades of desperados.

In the 1860s fortune hunters poured eastward across the Sierra lured by stories of fabulous silver finds. In Gold Hill and Virginia City, in Washoe City and Carson, in Reno, Austin, Eureka, and Pioche, the printer-journalists set up their presses and commenced putting out weeklies. For the most part they prospered. The next decade saw the Queen of the Comstock give birth to sixteen newspapers, three of which were printed in German.

Though prolific, early days of newspapering in Nevada saw little attempt at professional journalism. Efforts were stumbling at best. Most who got out a newspaper did it almost single-handedly and with a hand-operated press. Very few printers had the financial backing to afford steam presses. Thus, it was not from want of news but because of the sheer physical and mental exhaustion of publishing a daily that most earlier newspapers were weeklies. Besides, most early Nevada communities could not support a daily. It is little wonder that sometimes headlines

were printed upside down, dates and volume numbers and even days of the week were often in error, and occasionally entire pages were inserted backwards.

As a state, Nevada was only six years old when the great period of American newspaper publishing began in 1870. Bret Harte's book *The Luck of Roaring Camp* was a best seller that year. The previous year the completion of the transcontinental railroad brought Nevada within easy reach of the outside world. These events, together with the discovery of the Big Bonanza in Virginia City in the early seventies, created the wild excitement which brought thousands to the silver mines of Nevada and over \$74 million to the investors in the Consolidated Virginia.

Throughout its history Nevada has seen the publication of over four hundred different known newspapers. Currently there are a little over twenty being published in the state, three of which were established in 1870—the *Eureka Sentinel*, the *Nevada State Journal*, and the *Pioche Record*.

On July 16, 1870, Abraham Skillman and Dr. L. C. McKenney established the *Eureka Sentinel*. Skillman, the real force behind the *Sentinel*, had come West in 1850. Locating first in San Francisco, he worked as a printer on the *Pacific News*, one of the first newspapers in that city. By 1853 he was with the *Shasta Courier* where he remained for about sixteen years. In May of 1870 Skillman removed to eastern Nevada and purchased the *Shermantown Reporter*. After his partner in the Shermantown publication died unexpectedly, Skillman moved his printing press (an old Washington which had earlier been used to print the *Nye County News*) to Eureka and in a tent on Buel Street started the weekly *Sentinel*. Except for the years 1873–1875 when he was publishing the *White Pine News* at Hamilton, Skillman was associated with the *Sentinel* until his death on August 1, 1900. During President Cleveland's first term he was Internal Revenue Collector for the District of Nevada and Utah. After Skillman's death his son Edward took control of the *Sentinel* until his retirement in 1941. Thereafter, Willis Skillman took over publication. The *Sentinel* is currently being printed at a central plant in Tonopah.

It is not surprising that a newspaper was founded in Eureka in 1870. Discovery of the Reese River mines in 1862 and the subsequent establishment of Austin brought many people to Lander County.⁶ The strike which gave the name Eureka to a very rich area in east-central Nevada came in 1864. Ore from the Eureka District provided an extremely valuable combination of lead and silver. However, the ore was not then refinable. There were several half-hearted attempts to process the metals but all failed because there was not enough know-how locally to treat the ore successfully. Indeed, it was not until after 1868 when the excitement over Treasure Hill had subsided somewhat that several miners began to take a closer look at the old diggings at Eureka. Soon thereafter, the Eureka District began to develop. But the real history of Eureka

began with the discovery of a workable flux with which to separate the silver from the lead. This came in 1869. Subsequently, furnaces were built and Eureka became widely publicized. The July 16, 1870, issue of the *Sentinel* noted: "eight months ago, where the town of Eureka and its furnaces now stand, was a wild waste."

Before 1870 there were probably not more than a hundred inhabitants in the Eureka area. In fact, in 1869 the camp consisted of only one or two log cabins. But by mid-1870, the town had grown to 640 persons. That year four daily stage lines ran between Elko and Hamilton with stops at Eureka. One line was averaging about ninety persons per week for Eureka via the Central Pacific Railroad depot at Palisade. Many tents and crudely improvised buildings were thrown up to handle this inflow. The boom was on. Forty-three houses were built in a week. And as the miners and merchants flocked to the District they brought not only their personal belongings, but their houses and stores as well. By July of 1870, 38 buildings had been moved in from Carlin, Hamilton, Treasure City, Shermantown, and even Elko. The same year saw the completion of three restaurants, a number of hotels, a hospital, a skating rink, some miscellaneous stores, the usual number of saloons and dance halls, a brewery, and of course a jail. By the end of 1870 the town had 246 buildings and a population of 668. Lots which had sold for \$250 or less in 1870 brought double, even triple, that figure the next year. The gross yield of ore from the Eureka District amounted to over \$3 million from 1865 to 1870; in the next five years nearly \$11 million was realized.⁷ After ten years Eureka became the second most important city in Nevada. By 1880 it had a railroad, it was the county seat, two telegraph companies were there, and its population was over four thousand.

Interestingly, Eureka suffered the urban ills in the 1870s which still plague many cities a hundred years later. Furnaces built there during the seventies created thick smog. As early as 1871, smoke pouring from smelters was so bad that many people in the town were becoming ill from noxious fumes, some even succumbing. The May 24, 1871, issue of the *Sentinel* had a lengthy article suggesting various remedies or relief from lead poisoning. Soon Eureka was one of the unhealthiest towns in the West, having some seven cemeteries—a large number for a community of about a thousand people.

The great decades of Eureka history were the seventies and the eighties. Eureka never really recovered from the serious depression which struck the mining industry in the late 1880s. That, together with the falling price of silver, serious flooding of the mines, and the carrying of Eureka ore to Salt Lake smelters, finally brought an end to Eureka's boom. The town hung on hoping for a revival which never came except in occasional short-lived bursts of activity. The railroad remained until 1938 when it finally stopped operating. But the *Sentinel* is still circulating and still lively.

While Eureka was in its heyday, another town in the western part of

Nevada was beginning to make its appearance. By the seventies it was the center of the most promising agricultural district in the state and the most important station in Nevada on the Central Pacific and Virginia & Truckee railroads, both of which served the growing demands of the Comstock. Reno, in 1859, was called Fuller's Crossing and served for a number of years as a river crossing and rest stop for many freight teams and pack trains moving back and forth to the great silver area around Virginia City. In 1863 M. C. Lake bought out Fuller, and two years later the first permanent building, a quartz mill, was built near Lake's Crossing. Settlers moved to the area both to farm the region around Truckee Meadows and to develop the town.

With the Union Pacific Railroad making great advances westward from Omaha, Charles Crocker, one of the magnates behind the Central Pacific, began to push the construction of that railroad east, across the Sierra. In early 1868 the eastbound rail line neared Lake's Crossing which was then being considered by the Central Pacific as one of its main stations on the transcontinental run. The boom in Virginia City influenced the final decision and in May of that year Lake deeded eighty acres, almost his entire holdings, to Crocker. The settlement was rechristened Reno and town lots were placed on the market. News of the Central Pacific's acquisition spread like wildfire. People rushed to the new town in anticipation of what the railroad would bring. Hastily constructed shanties were thrown up overnight and down by the Truckee River there was a tent city. Saloons were opened and did a lively business. On June 18, 1868, the first train arrived from Sacramento, and a few days after the golden spike was driven at Promontory Point in May, 1869, the first one arrived from the East.

Reno came alive with activity. Stages left daily for Steamboat, Washoe, and Virginia City. Long trains of freight wagons moved in and out of the city carrying goods to and from the railroad. There were more jobs available than persons to fill them, for the population grew rapidly. With additional people came more saloons, gambling halls, and bawdy houses, and it was not long before Reno took on the appearance of a real western town. Churches were built, schools planned. Hastily constructed shanties gave way to neat dwellings and substantial frame buildings. For miles up and down the Truckee large and fruitful farms were in evidence. By 1870 Reno had over a thousand people. The valley was indeed booming. In this setting, on November 23, 1870, J. G. Law and Company brought the *Nevada State Journal* to Reno.

The *Journal* was published weekly from a small printing shop on Virginia Street between First and Second streets. After the first issue of Reno's newspaper the *Gold Hill News* commented: "in politics the *State Journal* is good, square, honest Republican, something required in Washoe County, and its future intention is well set forth by Lincoln's motto borne at the head of its column 'With malice toward none, with

charity to all, and with firmness in the right.'"⁸ A year after its founding the *Journal's* proprietors pointed out the reasons why they had established a newspaper in Reno: "Our faith was based upon its superior advantages for trade and travel, and its abundant water power for milling and manufacturing purposes of every description together with the agricultural capacities of the Truckee Valley, and others adjacent thereto. . . . Reno is destined to be a city of no mean magnitude."⁹

The owners of the *Journal* met with instant success. They could not have arrived at a better time. The founder of the newspaper, Josh Law, was born in North Carolina in 1843. He engaged in the printing business at an early age and soon went to Nevada, attracted by stories of great silver strikes on the Comstock. His partners on the *Journal* were W. H. H. Fellows, an old printer, and E. A. Littlefield. There is little doubt that the real journalistic talent in the *Journal* was Littlefield. Like Law and Fellows he was a printer, but there the similarity ended. He had vast newspaper experience beginning in Rhode Island where he was born, in Minnesota where he edited the *Goodhue County Republican*, and in California where he was associated with the *American Flag*, the *Klamath News*, the *Stars and Stripes*, and the *Sacramento Union*. Littlefield used this background to good advantage on the *Nevada State Journal*. From the beginning the newspaper had a wide circulation. But Littlefield could not remain long in one place, so in the fall of 1871 he sold his interest in the *Journal* to Law and Fellows and left Reno. To Law, without the talents of Littlefield, the burden of running the newspaper became almost unbearable. Soon he married the daughter of W. H. Barnes, sold the *Journal* to C. C. Powning, and went into the grocery business in Reno. In 1875 he was appointed Postmaster at Poehville, Washoe County, at the magnificent sum of \$12.00 a year. Eventually Law sold his grocery business and moved to California. Fellows stayed with the newspaper and worked with Powning until he too sold his share on the 5th of September, 1874. Under Powning the *Nevada State Journal* continued to prosper, eventually to become one of the leading newspapers of the state.

What the *Nevada State Journal* was and still is to western Nevada, the *Pioche Record* was to the southeastern part of the state. The pioneer newspaper of Lincoln County, the *Ely Record*, as it was first called, was established at Pioche on September 17, 1870, by W. H. Pitchford and Company. From a tent on Main Street the newspaper emerged as a weekly, then became a daily, and then went back again to a weekly, fluctuating with the fortunes of the town.

Mormons were probably first to develop the area. Much of the early mining efforts centered around famous Panaca Ledge, discovered in the winter of 1863-1864. But efforts of the miners there in the sixties were largely unsuccessful and they were constantly harassed by Indians. In 1869 a San Francisco entrepreneur named F. L. A. Pioche bought up

many of the original mining claims near the town of Panaca and organized the Meadow Valley Mining Company. Again, as in Eureka, attempts to refine the ore on a large scale at first proved unsuccessful. Metallurgists soon developed a chemical process using quicksilver which made separation of silver from the ore economically feasible. A mill was built northwest of Panaca, a well was sunk, and the camp of Pioche was born.

There were temporary wood buildings in the village by late 1869, and a score of tents spread across the bluff. By winter Pioche was the most active and important town in southeastern Nevada. Nearly a thousand houses were said to have been built, and lots sold for over \$100.00 each. By the end of 1871 there was a population of nearly two thousand, and a superb stone building, sometimes referred to as the "Million Dollar Courthouse," was under construction.¹⁰ Finances notwithstanding, the people of southeastern Nevada argued that Lincoln County was rich enough to foot the bill from its seemingly unending supplies of lead, zinc, and silver ore. Although Pioche produced over one hundred million dollars in bullion, the wealth was not inexhaustible. Today the empty courthouse still stands in Pioche, and most of the people have left.

Nearly all mining camps on the frontier saw the construction of wooden structures with false fronts. But fires in pioneer western towns often made short work of these hurriedly built establishments. Pioche was no exception. On its first anniversary the *Record* reported that a roaring fire driven by hot desert winds had laid waste to a great portion of town. The *Record* office was almost entirely destroyed but somehow the newspaper managed to survive. Apparently the presses were still operative.

Two years after its inception the newspaper's office was located on the east side of upper Main Street. That same year the *Record* bought out its competitor, a Republican sheet known as the *Pioche Daily Review*. By 1873 the newspaper had a steam press, recently shipped in from Chicago. The *Record* was indeed prospering. In succeeding years the office of the press was at the west end of Locour Street near Main (in Lynch's brick building) and in the Odd Fellows' building on Main Street.

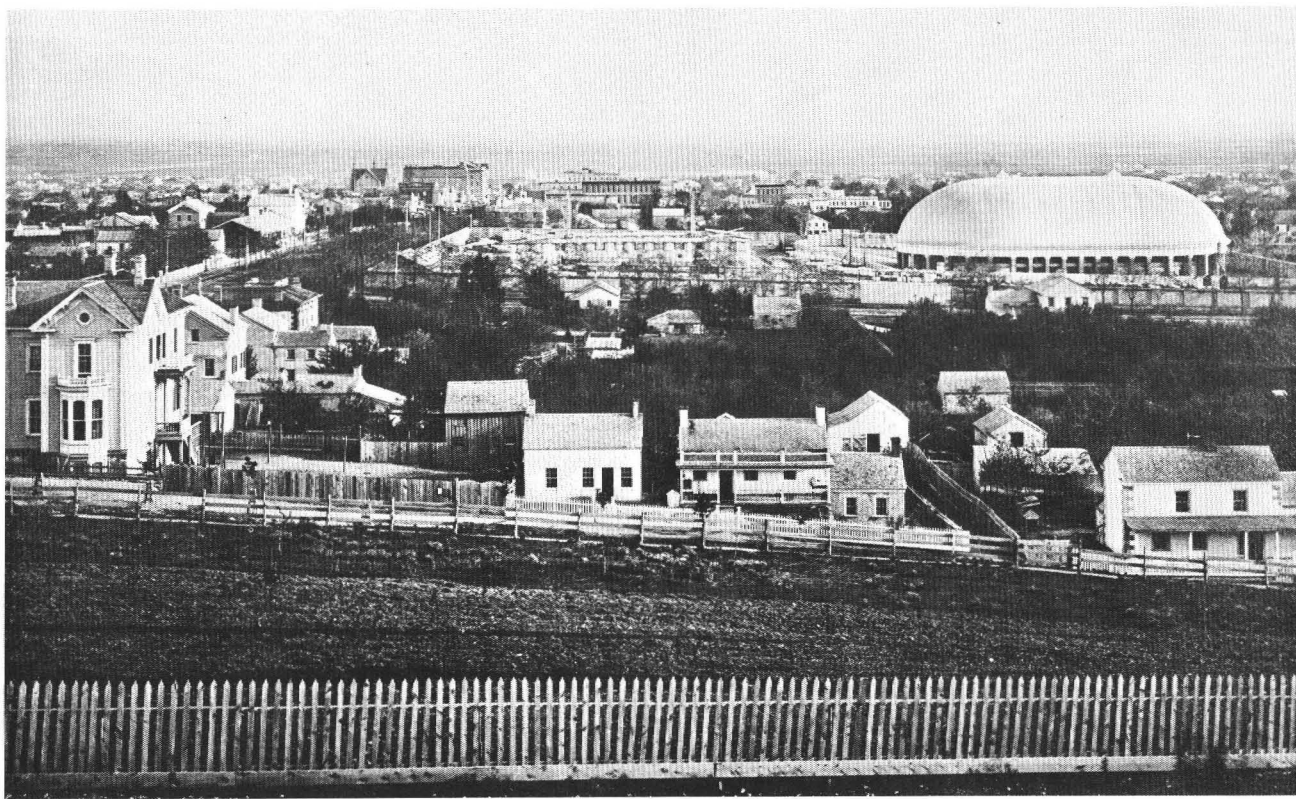
The *Record* had numerous editors and publishers during its long existence. Pat Holland assumed control after the fourth issue and soon R. W. Simpson was his partner in the operation. Although many names were associated with the newspaper's early growth, Pat Holland was the real force behind the scenes.¹¹ He, more than anyone else, kept the newspaper alive during the sometimes disastrous, often hectic, and seldom commonplace years of early Pioche. After 1875 Holland relinquished ownership of the *Record* to the Record Publishing Company which continued to issue the newspaper for many years.

During its peak Pioche had daily contact with Palisade, Salt Lake City, and Hamilton. The *Record* was consistently optimistic about the future of the town especially during the prosperity of late 1872 and until the

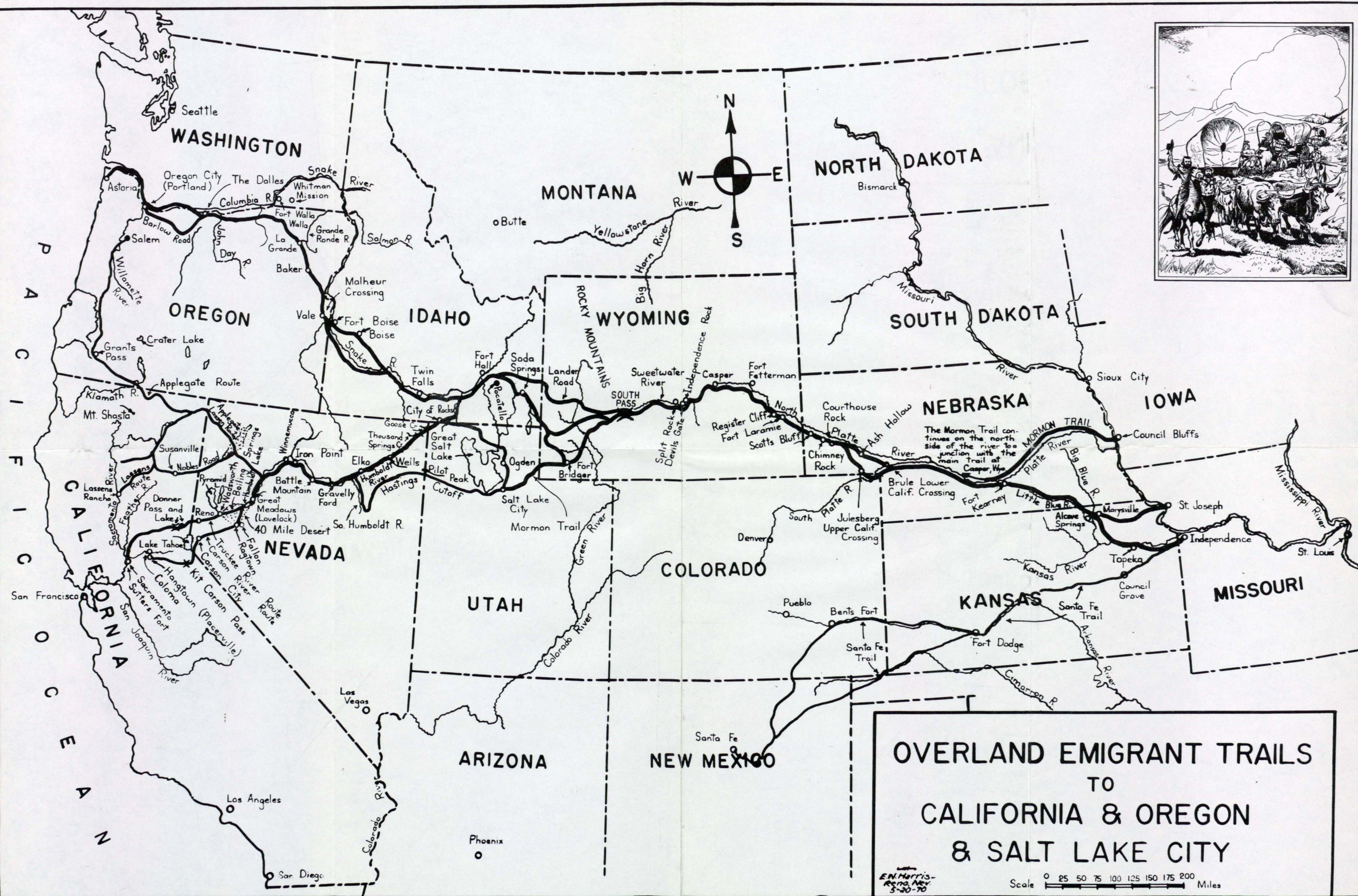
close of 1873. The paper showed boundless enthusiasm as many stone buildings were erected and the population of the area approached six thousand people. But Pioche, like Eureka, suffered from a drop in the price of silver, too much water where it was not wanted and too little where it was needed, and the inevitable exhaustion of the ore body. Rapid decay occurred after 1876 when the principal mines began to shut down. And yet, Pioche did not die easily. There were many revivals and residents of the town hung on waiting for the "good old days" to return. Like the old people, the *Pioche Record* is still there, waiting.

The Eureka Sentinel, *Nevada State Journal*, and *Pioche Record* have transformed thousands of nondescript news items into local color. They competed with the town grapevine and at the same time gave extensive coverage to state, national, and international affairs. For years the newspapers tended to fill a literary vacuum. They have been both pragmatic and romantic, exuberant and quarrelsome. They have helped to clarify, interpret, and perhaps even transform Nevada life.

1. Robert W. Jones, *Journalism In The United States* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1947) p. 387.
2. Frontier journalists frequently perpetuated many delightful hoaxes in their publications, or covered running feuds, more often imaginary than true, between the editors of rival newspapers. In a kind of early yellow journalism, notables like Mark Twain and Alf Doten of the *Territorial Enterprise* often peppered the news with sensationalism. It sold newspapers.
3. Ray Allen Billington, *America's Frontier Heritage* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966) p. 80.
4. *Ibid.*
5. On July 26, 1970, the *Austin* [Texas] *American-Statesman* celebrated the beginning of its 100th year of continuous publication.
6. Eureka was then part of Lander County and did not become a separate county until March 1, 1873.
7. Frederick W. Reichman, "Early History of Eureka County, Nevada, 1863-1890." Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Nevada, 1967, p. 121.
8. *Nevada State Journal*, November 23, 1870, p. 2, c. 5.
9. *Ibid.*, November 25, 1871, p. 2, c. 2.
10. The construction of the courthouse cost the tax-payers of Lincoln County \$75,000, but according to most accounts it should have cost no more than \$16,400 for the courthouse and \$10,000 for the jail.
11. Some twenty-nine persons were associated with the publication of the *Record* from its beginning in 1870 to 1970.



Salt Lake City about 1875, showing construction of the Temple had not progressed too much after Yager had stopped there in 1863. The domeshaped building is the Tabernacle on the Temple grounds.



**OVERLAND EMIGRANT TRAILS
TO
CALIFORNIA & OREGON
& SALT LAKE CITY**

E. N. Harris -
Reno, Nev.
3-30-70

Scale 0 25 50 75 100 125 150 175 200 Miles

The Yager Journals: Diary of a Journey Across the Plains

Part Three

*Camp Echo Creek.*⁷⁴ *Evening*—Leaving our late camp we passed the rocks which was three hundred yards below the camp, we followed on down the kanyon and little creek, one & a half miles, to its junction with Yellow Creek another very small creek. We crossed Yellow Creek, crossed a small bottom of black rich land, passed the station on the right of the road, before spoken of & commenced to ascend an easy sloping hill or mountain. When near the summit of the mountain the road became steep. From the summit of the mountain we could see for many miles in every direction. Behind us and to our left we could see the snow clad Unita⁷⁵ Mountains & before us we could see over the peaks of mountains below us, down in to a valley some distance beyond. All around us was most beautiful scenery, hundreds of peaks rose up, some green with some kind of herb & others bare, like waves of the ocean. Passing over the mountain we descended a long partly steep kanyon; following down it through all of its meanderings we finally arrived at its junction with a valley & Echo Creek, where we carrelled for night. We have traveled six miles since noon & fifteen to day. We have a very fine spring of ice water here. The remains of an old ranch is here. The grass is fine all the way down the kanyon we have just left, it is also fine here. We have had fine roads to day, some little of it steep, but the most of it was gradually decending & did not require much "breaking". The sage is much thinner & smaller today than yesterday. Since we left Muddy Creek the soil on the mountains as well as in the valleys has been improving, that is there

is more soil & less sand hence the grass is improving also. Whill on drill this evening we were marched down to look at a cave⁷⁶ on the right hand side of the valley a few hundred yards below camp. It is ovel in side & out side as if it had been made by a plasterer for a bake oven. It is about thirty feet deep. Its walls in side all around & over head is covered with names. Before getting to the cave we passed a curious cliff of rock the lower half red & the other yellow.

Camp Echo Canyon Saturday 11th. We left our late camp early this morning, crossing Echo Creek and passing over a rise we decended in to Echo Canyon & creek, down which we traveled passing a station at the end of several miles. Just above the station on the same side, the right hand, are some rocks in the shapes of a sugar bowl with top on, a tea pot, and carved in to many other shapes looking like ancient arkitecture. The heavy cornice of ancient temples castles & monuments of every device are presented in beauty and magnificance. Some all red & some red & yellow. How these rocks were formed thus is a question. The action of the weather may have had something to do with their formation, though they appear as if the chisel of man had formed them. On the right hand side is a continuous line of these cliffs, down to our present camp. Some of the rocks are formed like Kneedle Rocks of pebles cemented to gether by burnt & melted sand. Some of it is one solid hard rock, others will crumble & let the pebles fall out. This canyon is very narrow, the steep mountains rising up on both sides. It is not over three hundred yards any where & less in many places. Fine grass all the way the uper part being the finest. Scruby cedar grow in the crevices and on the sumit, in places, of the cliffs. Echo Creek follows down the canyon; We crossed it in several places on rude bridges. Willows grow thick on its banks. We found several springs of ice water at the foot of the left hand bluffs. Several branch canyons come down from both sides. One of them from the left hand brought a small creek with it. The left hand mountains that is bordering the canyon are not very rocky there is occasionally a cliff but they dip towards us while the right dip from us. This canyon is said to be twenty five miles long. We saw several miles back on the right hand bluff what appeared to be two indians⁷⁷ watching us. Of course it created some little excitement as we were told that the Utes were at war with the government, at least was ordered to keep off the road & when caught on it, were shot. We were told to shoot at any indian we saw on the road as they would not appear for any good. Whether they were indians or not we did not ascertain

Camp Red Bluffs. Evening—We left our noon camp after two oclock in the evening; passing some large cliffs of red & yellow rock, the first one I will call "Pulpit Rock. The caping stone is in the shape of a pulpit, & it is surrounded but lower down by a number of other pulpits. At the lower end of Pulpit Rock is a fine spring, running from under the cliff.

We passed two other fine springs on the same side of the canyon, the right hand. About three miles brought us to a stage station. Below the station the canyon became quite narrow, so narrow that there was scarcely room for the creek & road both. At this point the beautiful cliffs on our right ceased but recommenced below, becoming larger and more beautiful as we advanced until we arrived at camp for night. After supper I and several others took a jaunt to the top of the bluffs on the right. We supposed it to be the summit or about the summit of the mountains but when we reached the summit of the cliffs we appeared as far from the summit of the mountains as from camp; up we went again pulling up by sage & other bushes until we had ascended to that point where we supposed to be the summit far above us towered the summit; the canyon & camp was lost to view nothing but peaks & cliffs covered with bushes met the eye—must we go to the summit was the question—the cry came up from stragglers below, “are you on the summit?” we answer “no!” and they way we went until we again had reached what we thought would be the summit but the summit still towered above us—our band had dwindled to a few the sun was down & the shades of evening was spreading over the mountains—off we bound after resting a little & did not stop nor look back until a cry from below came up from disappearing ones “come back” All had given up the task but one other than my self—must we two go on—darkness was over spreading nature—and we are in a hostile land the thought of giving up without gaining what we set out for was cutting—but we must yield—Down down we went the loose rock rattling under our feet. It is useless to say the downward trip was dangerous as well as rough for night had come on and we could ill see to pick our way; sometimes at a single step we would go down ten feet ploughing up the sand & rock with our heels until some stout sage brush or other bush would arrest our downward course, sometimes running narrow risks of tumbling over some precipice—but down we went more tumbling & falling than walking catching at the bushes as we went—but down we plunged aiming for a gulch, ever anon an unlucky step when down we would go sometimes sage brush rock & all in a pile against some stouter brush or in some dent or hole—but up at it again—until a fall into a deep & steep rocky gulch apprised us that a few more unlucky slides & falls would land us in to camp. We soon reached the foot of the gulch—and then the camp—scratched bruised & wet with perspiration to say nothing of rents in our clothing. The mountain consisted of cliffs sand & boulders. The cliffs became more & more of the cemented boulders & sand as we advanced on our road this evening.

Over Hanging Cliffs Sunday Morning 12. After leaving our late camp, we came to where the canyon became very narrow. The cliffs this morning are very large red & over hanging & mostly composed of pebbles & melted sand. The scenery is the most sublime that I have seen in the canyon. We soon came to the old Mormon fortifications,⁷⁸ composed of

rock walls about four feet high built across two canyons coming in from opposite sides of Echo & the tops of the cliffs on each side of the mouth of the right hand canyon. I walked over to the right hand fortifications to more closely examine them. They were built to resist the authority of the United States. A half mile more, from the fortifications found me seated under this red over hanging cliff writing while the wagons are catching up; but the wagons have all passed now so I must be off.

Camp Weber River Noon—Six miles from our late camp found us at the mouth of the canyon Weber or Weaver River I am not now able to determine which as the inhabitants living on it do not agree. The six miles we traveled the canyon was narrow rough & brushy. At the junction with the river there are several ranches and a stage station. Each ranch had a small piece of land attached which was planted in wheat corn & vegetables which was watered by irrigation, that is water conducted in to the gardens from the creek in a ditch. The corn was about a foot high. The wheat was heading & the Irish potatoes were blooming. Some of our train bought onions lettuce peas & fresh butter. They gave twenty five cents per pound. We are now entering the Mormon settlements. Two miles up the river & we crossed Grass Creek a very small creek, & going a few hundred yards we camped passing two Mormon ranches just before crossing the creek. Evening. We have spent since noon laying in the shade of our wagons on the grass conversing with different Mormons on the subject of their religion & other things. I visited one old Mormon family living just below camp & set a couple of hours. Late in the evening a Mormon lady visited our camp. They all believe that the bible permits a plurality of wives. I heard this lady argue for one hour justifying plurality of wives &c. She said the time would come when "seven would cleave unto one man" & that the day was not far distant. She said that the Mormon prophets prophesied this war & how it would terminate. She said that neither would whip but they would fight on devouring one another until all was slain with the exception of the women & children & such of the men as fly to Zion that is to the Mormons. After which there would be but one church & that would be the Mormon church. She said the whole world would be involved in this war before it is done; all except the Mormons; and all nations would fall, kingdoms would crumble & amid the wreck of the works of man Zion would rise on this hemisphere & New Jerusalem on the other.

Camp Silver Creek Monday 13th We started early this morning from Camp Weber River following up the river three miles to Chalk Creek, which is a very respectable size creek. At this point another Mormon settlement commenced, extending up the river several miles and also up Chalk Creek for a couple of miles as far as I was able to see. The bottoms were narrow and watered by irrigation from the creek & river. The Mormon houses were mere log huts small and rudely built and covered

with mud, as about all the houses in this part of the country are. These huts were in clusters and the farms must be small as both bottoms would not make more than two or three good farms in Kentucky. I noticed some double cabins with a family in each. Very likely one man is lord over several of these familys having several wives. Their fencing is made of pols of quakeing asp mostly put up something on the order of "post & rail" some of it & some on the order of a worm fence. Crossing Chalk Creek we traveled on up the river through settlements passing a coal mine on the left of the road. The work of getting out coal was going on at the time. Three miles more to Hoyets flouring mill It was built of stone & run by water from the river. About two miles more and we forded the river. It is a small stream not larger than a good big creek. Two miles more over hills leaving the river to the left brought us to the river again, about half mile below the mouth of Silver Creek, & near a stage station & to noon camp. The bottom all the way up the river was enclosed & green patches of wheat, barley, oats, corn & vegetables but not much corn was scattered along the river. Some of the crops looked fine, others will not yeald a great deal, but all looked fresh & green. Every little strip of bottom is taken up and the Mormon huts are thick From Camp Red Bluffs Echo Canyon to our present camp, and at this point, with the exception of Camp Weber River and one little spot below it there is scarcely any grass atall uninclosed but plenty of sagebrush.

Camp Parleys Park Evening—After our stock had browsed a little on what grass they could find on the sides of the mountains & in the gulches, we started again passing the station & on to the mouth of Silver Creek. Up this creek⁷⁹ we turned leaving Weber to our left. On this creek there is a narrow strip of bottom, very narrow & ran up to a point runing entirely out, which is all taken up & enclosed. About two miles brought us to a saw mill, which was sawing pine. The logs was small; they are hauled down from out of the mountains. Above the saw mill the mountains rise steep from the creeks margin. The road here ascended the side of the mountain on the right hand side of the creek & continued on the side for several miles. Here we entered what is called Silver Creek Canyon so narrow that the road is dug out on the side of the mountain ascending & decending first on one side & then the other of the creek, nearly the whol way to Parleys Park. The road is so narrow that switches are dug out occasionally for passing. Soon after we got on to Silver Creek we came to a different kind of rock from any kind & I had noticed. They looked like old ash banks full of rock; in nature something similar to Kneedle Rocks The diffrence was these were of the collar of ashes, filled with fragments of rough porus chared rock, in fact the whole looked like huge masses of cinder, of burnt sand & rock. The cinder was hards as I could hardly find a piece that would brake off all though it had a crumbling appearece The cliffs are full of holes jaged and without form. Near the uper end of Silver Creek Canyon on the right principally, we came

to some more of the same kind of cliffs; they stood up like rough seeples. After about eight miles travel from noon camp we emerged from the kanyon in to an opening. Here is a good bottom but it is enclosed by a temporary fence next to the road but none on the rear and offered as pasture for ten cents per head per night. Crossing over a hill about one mile farther to a larger bottom we camped for night in Parleys Park. There is nothing here that resembles a park, according to my notion of a park, nothing but an opening in the mountains. There is not much grass here, the most of it eaten down and dried up. There is a fine spring here which furnishes water for our stock as well as for cooking purposes & for our selves. Snow is visable in the mountain gulches on the opposite side of the park several miles distant. A mule & horse train is camped near us. Silver Creek we left to our left soon after emerging from the kanyon.

Camp Parleys Kanyon Tuesday 14. We left about the usual hour of starting, one mile decen brought us to a ranch. At this ranch there is some fine grass and a large body of it but it is enclosed by a temporary fence on the front, next to the road & by the mountains on the rear & can not be pastured without paying ten cents per head per night. Turning the ranch to the right we crossed a little creek & followed it up passing sever Mormon huts & a stage station, we turned to the right & found the mountains closing on us, and also found our selves ascending rapidly; so much so as to make the road steep, & adding to the difficulty of the road, it became rocky. Passing a ranch on our left, where there was several wimin that wanted to sell us cheese, we crossed a little rapid stream of coald water comeing down from the right. We soon found our selves tugging up a narrow kanyon the same little creek or a branch of the same was becomeing less, finally heading in a spring. Nine miles found us on the sumit of the "pass" or "divide" as it is called & a rapid decent of one mile found our selves in Parelys Kanyon and at noon camp. We scarcely had room for camp without occupying the road, & it was the first place found that was sufficiently wide to camp. As it was we had to string our wagon up & down the kanyon as they best could to keep clear of the road. The mountains green with herbage rise loftily on either side. A thicket of quaking asp is on our left & a little creek on our right. It is useless to say anything about grass for if the grass was on the sides of the mountains it would puzzle an ox to get it. On the other side of the "divide"⁸⁰ before reaching the sumit we got came to scattering cedar that was strate & large enough for small saw logs the first I had seen that could be used for anything else than fuel Up on the sides of the mountains to the left was a large forest of pine or cedar that appeared to be large enough to be used for lumber, though the largest that I was near would be considered too small for saw logs in the states.

Salt Lake City Wednesday 15. Well here we are in the great Mormon City. Yesterday we left our noon camp & moved down the kanyon three

miles & camped at Camp Parleys Canyon No 2. No grass with the exception of a little scattering grass up a gulch to the right. Just above camp is a mormon ranch. In the evening late a young Mormon miss dressed in flashing collors visited the camp flirted & flounced around a little & then disappeared, but I do not think there was any hearts pearced or bones broken and every thing went on as before. The only thing that was very noticable was the almost continuous dust that we had to endure from the wood & market wagons that was almost continually passing. This morning we left early. Eight miles brought us out of the canyon & in sight of Salt Lake City. The cliffs changed as we advanced & the mountains seamed higher & higher as we went down deeper & deeper mid frowning cliffs The deepest canyon that I have yet been in. The cliffs becoming a white stone in thin layers or scales like slate, standing on edge. At first as thin as a paist board but getting thicker & harder as we advanced finally we came to a streak burnt red as brick, then it change to a darker collor. We passed several little Mormon shantys on our way down, a little saw mill among the rest, stuck where hardly any body but a Mormon would live. As we emerged from the mountains in to the Valley of Great Salt Lake to our right close to the foot of the East Mountians lay the great city of the Latter Day Saints, Salt Lake City. Seven miles more decending a good part of the way, found us at our present camp on Emigrant Squar in the city.

Friday 17. On Wednesday evening. I went around to see the City. I first went through the business part of the city, the next that attracted my attention was the theater which is not quite completed though sufficient to be used. It will be a very good building when complected. The lower portion is built of stone the remainder of dobys or dried brick. It would be called a very respectable theatre in Louisville Cincinnatti or St. Louis. Turning up a cross street I passed in front of a stone wall built of boulders put up in cement with numerous towers on each side of every entrance; in side of this wall is a number of buildings by shade trees probably the residence of som Mormon dignitary, "titheing office" &c and among the rest is a finely finished mantion built of sun dried brick, plastered out side with cement & painted yellow; a portico in front with a lion on the top of it; a building that would have been an ornament to some of our eastern cities This was the mantion of the great Mormon head & prophet Brigham Young. One of his wives was sitting on the deck of the portico enjoying the cool evening; she seamed quite pensive; she was thinking probably of her darling Brigham and longing to be in his armes (so was all the ballance of his wives I expect but some of them was doomed to be only spectators) "What a fine thing it is to have a husband." This stone wall must have enclosed thirty or forty acres all set in trees. The next curiosity I came to was another wall built partly of stone & sun dried brick. The foundation was stone comeing above the ground & the wall was caped with stone; the remainder was built of sun

dried brick plastered with cement. This wall enclosed ten acres. Passing through a large wooden gate I found my self in front of the temple & tabernicle now in course of construction. Only the foundations is laid of any of the work, the temple towers & tabernicle. The temple independent of the towers will be when finished a building one hundred & eighty six feet long by one hundred & twenty four wide & will be eighty feet high. The towers are to be one hundred and sixty feet high. The tabernicle will be when finished, two hundred and fifty feet long by one hundred & fifty feet wide Gray granite is the material used in building the whole, temple towers & tabernicl. The walls of the temple are eight & a half feet thick. The temple was much farther advanced at one time but owing to some defect of the wall it was torne down and better material put in. Every rock is numbered at the quarry & comes ready dressed for a certain place. I sit down on one of the stones and talked with the gate keeper for a couple of hours. He was a laim man walking on one leg only with crutches. He seamed to be a Scotchman. About sun set I helped the gate keeper close the massive gate & returned to camp. Take the city all over it is unlike any city I ever saw. The streets are at right angles. There are but few houses on a squar the remainder of the ground being set out in fruit & shade trees flowers & cultivated in vegetables. It is nothing at all uncommon to see a small field of wheat, rye, oates or corn in the midle of the town. Beautiful shade trees on the sidewalks & clear cool water runing in every gutter on every side of the streets. From these gutters pipes & trenches run in to the yards & gardens and eregate the flowers & vegetables The water runs both ways so that the squars are surrounded by runing water. Every thing looks fresh and green. It rains here sometimes in the summer but it is very seldom. The vegetation in the city & the whole valley is watered by eregation from the Jordon River and other streams that come down out of the mountains. The crops of every kind look fine expecially wheat and barley. An abundance of most every kind are brought to us generally by female marketers in buckets & baskets & every way & Emigrant Squar is thronged from morning untill night. They are great people to trade for most any thing old clthes sugar coffe tools wagons; the ladies seamed to want whoop skirts & they traded for second handed & every kind, and all seamed to think we wanted to get rid of every thing we had for any thing we could get & seamed to be very much surprised if we did not take what they offered telling us that we would "throw it away before we got across the plains" Salted trout from Utah Lake & fresh chubs from the Jordon is brought to us. We paid twelve & a half cents for salted trout, twenty five cents for butter, fifteen cents per doz for egges, eighty cents per bushel for oats, one dollar & a quarter for one hundred pounds of hay, ten cents per loaf for bakers bread, ten cents per pound for butter crackers, fifteen & twenty five cents per dozen for apricots. They brought in crees, molasses, currents gooseberrys, onions, old and new irish potatoes, redishes, beets, green

apples &c. I suppose these people that come to trade with us are generally the poor class if they are not God help the poor class. Though they all appear cheerful & contented They believe that only those of their belief will be saved. They claim that they are to build Zion while the Jews build New Jrusalem where Christ and his people will dwell when he comes. They say that after the states are made desolate from this war, which they say will be, they will returne to the states and occupy them. That the wives & children of both parties will be left for them to take care of. Their prophet Brigham Young tells his people to extend their houses so as to be able to take in the wives & families of those who are falling in this war. That is they are to add them to their number of wives The Mormon wimin have to work so that the support of a dozen wives is not as heavy as one would imagin, as they have to work to help support them selves & children. I was told by them that it is quite common to have several wives & their children & that their wives get along quite peacable. I suppos that this is only the case with the poorer class which is the largest class; I suppose those who are able have seperate rooms for their wives. They are mixture of nations some Americans but I think mostly foregners who when they come here are in distitue cercumstances as a general thing. And I suppose that Brigham gives them all farmes in the valley, that wants them. The mormons tell me that they are settled as far south as three hundred miles from here, & that the teritory has a population of two hundred thousand souls. They think they are now able to resist successfully the authority of the United States. Some say they dont care which the North or the South whips others wish the South would whip. Hay oats rye barley & wheat harvest is now progressing & harvested fields are to be seen in every direction. Take the Valley of Salt Lake as it is seen from the mouth of Parley's Canyon & only a strip of the great valley, which extends from mountains to mountains every way appears to be in cultivation; only a strip of green the rest is parched and dry. A party of Utes painted and dressed in flashing collors are in the city. They pretend to great friendship. They are very dareing and are shrewde tribe of indians. We are now two thousand feet lower than we were when on the sumit of the pass or divide at the head of Parely Canyon.

*Camp Weaver*⁸¹ *River No. 2.* Sunday 19th We left Salt Lake City late in the evening on Friday 17th, passing a long the foot of the East Mountains, crossing the water of a hot spring of strong sulphur water about four miles from the city. I did not get out of the wagon to examin the spring as it was night About eight miles from the city we lost our road in the darkness & was forced to camp. There was only three wagons, the train having left the city the morning of the 16th & were now ahead of us. We haistily made our beds.

Saturday Morning 18., we rolled out without breakfast & going a circutous rout, though out of our road as it proved, to an old Mormon

farmers house & camped for breakfast. After breakfast we got back in to the right road, which soon brought us on to the east shoar of Great Salt Lake; this we followed for about eight miles to a very pleasant little plantation about eighteen miles from the city where we nooned. Some of the boys went out hunting here while the teams were eating & resting & killed seven or eight sage chickens and a rabbit. We crossed a briney creek deep with mud, on our way to this point & broke a single tree⁸² & got my self bespattered all over with mud & brine. The shoar of the lake is covered with clean white salt, in some places deep enough to be shoveled up & thrown in to a wagon. The citizens of Salt Lake City & the country around, do not have to make their salt, but only go to the lake shoar & the salt banks and shovel it in to their wagons. Salt Lake has no outlet though a number of streams run in to it There is but little of any thing alive on the land unenclosed some low scruby weeds in places though dead; but as a general thing the land looks quite barren. After noon—three oclock we started again following along the shoar of the lake, but farther off than in the morning and getting farther off as we advanced till sun down, when we halted for supper up on a high ridge. The roads from the city thus far, good but no grass but that, that was enclosed. After a supper of irish potatoes coffe & crackers we rolled on again. After about eight miles of travel, in the night, we caught up with our train at a large spring by a little past midnight The spring is about one mile to the left of the road. This morning Sunday our train all in order rolled out early & eight or ten miles of travel brought us to our present camp. Abou a mile & a half before camping we crossed Weaver or Weber River, the same river we camped on about a week ago. Our present camp is nearer the mountains & farther from the lake than the last one

*Camp Willard City*⁸³ *Monday 20.* Leaving our late camp we traveled three miles to the junction with the mountain road (I forgot to say we had remained at Camp Weaver River untill this morning) This mountain road we left to our right the evening we left Salt Lake City It runs along the foot of the East Mountains It is said to be rockly. The road we came us the nearest & is called the Lake Road It is now good but to muddy to travel on in wet weather. At the juntion of the roads are a number of hot salt springs Some of them are large & deep & boil up in the center. The water is very salty & so hot that I could not bare my hand in it only for a moment. The ground below and around them is red & crusted over with salt. This water spreads over the bottom & finaly runs in to Salt Lake. Above the springs is the wreck of passed earthquakes, fragments of granate & burnt & melted rocks Our road joined the mountain road just beyond the springs. About a mile farther brought us to another large spring damed up untill it formed a pond forty yards wide and fifteen feet deep It was damed to raise the water high enough to eregate a farm not far off. This was fresh water but was not very cool.

About five miles farther brought us to a very fine spring of coald water in a farmers yard down to the left of the road. One mile farther and we found our selves at Willard City a small Mormon village on Willow Creek. Two miles more, twelve miles in all this morning, brought us to our present camp, where we will lay over untill morning. We have large spring of cool water here. Great Salt Lake is in full view again. Thousands of acres of salt, white & dry cover. the shoar of the lake. Fine grass here a little grass at Camp Weaver River & there was a little at the camp at the spring where we caught up with the train. At camp Weaver River we had two mormons to preach for us after night. They gave a history of their religion and told us how their prophets prophisied this present war would end, which was all the same that we have heard from every mormon that we have conversed with, probably. They rather disgusted our wimin. They claimed that the plurality of wives was a much better system that that of having but one wife. For where there was cases of many wives the children were always stout & healthy while men who have only one wife frequently have weakly children; so on, &c. They said after this war was ended, which would end with the destruction of both parties save the few that would fly to Zion, The wives & children of the slain would fall to the care of the Mormons, that is the widows & daughters would become wives of the "saints" as they call them selves. This kind of talk rather disgusted the ladies & they retired before the sermons were over. I was wearied out at last & fell asleep under the influence of the sermons. Several little Mormon towns we missed & left to our right by not going the mountain road all the way from Salt Lake City. From the road yesterday we had a distant view of the passes of Weaver River & Ogden Creek, through which the two rivers run through the East Mountains into Salt Lake Valley & finnally into Salt Lake. The nine last miles of our journey was near & at the foot of the mountains. The mountain cenery was very interesting, presently a front of hundreds of steep cliffs of granate & burnt & melted rocks. We are now about eighteen miles from the ferry & twenty five from the ford on BearRiver & about ninty from Soda Springs

Camp Salt & Fresh Water Springs, Noon Tuesday 21st We left our late camp early; one mile brought us back to the road & five miles from camp brought us to Brigham City,⁸⁴ a small vilage Crossing a small creek beyond it & nine miles more & we camped for noon at this place There are two springs here the first next to the road is fresh water the other a few yards below is salt. They are both fine springs; the water of both is cool. The uper one is damed up untill it is about fourteen or fifteen feet deep to raise the water high enough to eregate a ranch. The roads fork here, the right going by the hot & coald springs, the ford across Bear-River, the left to the ferry. Two miles back about seventy miles from Salt Lake City, is the limit westward of the Mormon settlements, and the last settlement we will see for about six hundred miles untill we get to

Humboldt City.⁸⁵ Our road thus far to day was good, some parts a little rocky. We still follow the East Mountains, which look very much the same as those we saw yesterday; burnt & melted rock & sand, the greater part resembling huge piles of ashes. We passed several springs on this side of Brigham City the first on the left near the road side, next a foaming stream coming down out of a mountain gulch on our right, crossing the road & eregating a farm on the left. The next a large spring on the left, damed up untill it had become a pond to raise the water to eregate a farm.

Camp Bear River No. 2 Wednesday 22. After a short noon yesterday we hitched up & "rolled out" Passing just below a sawmill on a salty creek, we soon found our selves at the ferry on Bear River about three miles. The work of ferrying was amediately commensed carrying over two wagons at a trip. Our wagon was on the first trip; the mules was also ferried with the wagon. The oxen & cows swam the river. It was dark before all was over. We camped for the night in a bottom, in a horse shoe bend of the river close to the ferry Another train camped in the same bend. We liked to have lost a cow out of our train by drownding We rolled out early this morning & going around a bend up the river about a mile, camped Fine bunch grass here. The grass at last nights camp was tolerable good. The roads yesterday were good At camp Weaver River our train was joined by eight or nine wagons & this morning we were joined by the train that camped by us last night fifteen wagons makeing in all about forty wagons & seventy men. We are now in the country of the Shu-shawn'-ees or Shu-shoñ'-ees, having left the Ute country when we crossed the river. The Shu-shoñ'-ees are said to be more barberous & hostile to the whites if any difference than the Utes. We heard of an armed band of them yesterday. The water in Bear River is a little muddy & is not very cool. It is a very different looking stream here to what it is where we first crossed it; it is deep here & runs comparatively slow—there it was shallower & rapid Our train lost two fine oxen at Camp Willard City which I forgot to name earlier.

Thursday 23. We are yet on Bear River & will remain untill Monday. Cap- Petersons train crossed the river this evening & have camped above us. They are mostly from Missouri

Friday 24. Captin Peterson preached in our camp after night.

Saturday 25. Mr. John Duncan of our train preached after night in Cap-Petersons camp. We had an election in our military company of officers. We elected a captin, three lieutenants, four sarjeants, & four corporals M. L. Yager⁸⁶ was elected captin, my self first lieutenant & W Bogges second lieutenant.

Sunday 26. Mr. John Duncan preached in our train in the morning, Mr. Everet of our train in Cap-Petersons camp in the afternoon & Cap-Peterson in our camp at night. We had an occurence in our camp after

night, rare on the plains—a marriage—Mr. Shull of Missouri formally from Ohio by the Rev. John Duncan was married to Miss Ella Hays, daughter of Judge Hays from Missouri.

Camp Mountain Suline Springs Monday 27. We left our late camp on Bear River early this morning leaving the river entirely. We first went to a spring of fresh water up on the mountain side to the right of the road, but found not enough water for our train which now numbered forty three wagons & one carriage. We then turned to the left, going down a rocky hill to the road; crossing the road then going on a short distance to the point of a hill and camped, twelve miles from the ferry on Bear River. After leaving the river about three miles we crossed the Ma-lad, a muddy creek of salt water, on a poor wooden bridge which we had to work on before we could safely cross. The tole across this bridge is one dollar & thirty cents, if you cross Bear River at the ford, but two dollars at the ferry pays for both bridge and ferry. The road going to Boise River & Snake River goes of to the right by the way of the ford. At our camp is one of the finest springs if the water was only fresh, that I have seen on the rout. The water runs from under the foot of a rocky point. It is about one hundred & twenty five yards wide & runs rapidly from under the rocks the whole width. It is a little brackish & a little taste of sulphur also. It is very clear. I drank some of it & it acted on my bowels in four hours. The spring affords plenty of water to run a flouring mill. Below the spring as far as I could see the banks of the creek were covered with a kind of cane, also growing into the edge of the water. It has a softer stem than the cane in Kentucky. It is perfectly green & the cattle like it very much. There is plenty of fine bunch grass up on the side of the mountain. Our train, Petersons train of thirty one wagons & lousies of fifteen, became connected at one time this morning, making a train of eighty nine wagons and a carriage. We will lay over here untill morning. Where we first came to the mountains is a good spring & plenty of grass but our captin over looked the spring in selecting a camp. George Shaw from Ray County Missouri is captin & Allan from somewhere south of the river Missouri is Wagon boss; the latter was elected at our late camp.

Camp Shu-Shoñ-ees Wednesday 29. We are now forty miles from Bear River. We left our camp at the big springs, not as early as usual on account of some stray cattle, on yesterday morning the 28th and also on account of one in our train being sick. Crossing over the rocky point above the spring we found our selves intering a small valley. Here we bid farewell to the mountain bound Salt Lake Valley. As we advanced the valley narrowed untill it became nothing more than a kanyon. Three or four miles brought us to where there was a great abundance of fine bunch grass mixed with wild wheat. This kind of grass though it now looks dry is very nourishing, there being no rain, it retains its strength like

well cured hay. It is almost the only kind of grass we have had for some time. We have seen but little green grass since we left the Platts⁸⁷ though we have seen some on Sweet Water⁸⁸ & other places. About eight miles up the kanyon it became narrow. The peaks on each side were low. Four miles farther & we found our selves on the sumit of the divide, then descending about four miles we came to the juncton of the kanyon with a valley, opposite an isolated mountain that stood in the valley; turning to the right and going about a mile & a half we nooned at two in the evening. After a short noon without water, we started again and after two & a half miles travel we decended to a spring at the uper end of the isolated mountain. The spring afforded plenty of water for the stock if it had been good. It was about the temperature to be pleasant batheing & a little salty. It boils up out of a rocky bed. We watered our stock here it being the first water we had seen since morning. Riseing from the spring, we continued up the valley ascending & decending diagonaly crossing to the left side of the valley here we turned to the left entering the mouth of a narrow kanyon, which we decended several miles, going down one very steep & rocky hill & turning to the left, then following on down—ascending a short steep hill on the right then entering a branch kanyon down which we followed to our present camp. It is twelve miles from the warm springs to this point. Fine bunch grass in all these kanyons. It was midnight when we got here having traveled through all the last kanyons from the warm spring valley to this point after night. The mountains on each side of the kanyons along the whole rout were low; some little scrubby cedar on some of them. We traveled yesterday about thirty two miles. We are camped on the left hand side of the kanyon near a fine spring of cool water, which bursts out from the foot of the left hand mountains & runing down passed camp in to the flatt it spreads out and sinks. Plenty of good grass here. A party of Shu-shoñ-ees made their appearance from out of the mountains on the left and camped on the side of the mountain above the spring. They clame to be friendly and viset our camp beging, They were very cautious about approaching when they first made their appearance this morning, but when they found out we was friendly they came up very freely. A large party of indians are said to be camped on the mountains on the right. We could see smoke riseing from the mountains which we supposed to come from their camp.

Camp Sink of Deep Creek Thursday 30th We left our late camp this morning. A few miles brought us to the Valley of Deep Creek. At the mouth of the kanyon we turned to the left & traveling on the rolling sides of the left had mountain for several miles we decended to a level bottom. This valley appears to be about Twenty miles wide at this point. Continuing on a mile or two more we foud our selves on the banks of Deep Creek. The banks of the creek are short and steep. The creek is a small stream of fresh water. Crossing on a rocky bottom to the right hand side, we followed on down the bottom, it getting wider as we advanced, about

six miles twelve miles in all to the Sink of Deep Creek crossed the creek & camped for noon. Here the water spreads out over a kind of spongy ground which is covered with a thick growth of tall grass, rushes or some kind of water weed, and disappears. We will lay over here untill morning. The grass is green & fine here. The roads to day was tolerable good but very dusty. The roads we traveled, the last days travel (Tuesday) before to day was very dusty & a small part a little rocky. Scrubby cedar on the mountains in places. The mountains not very high & the sides are not steep. No wood on Deep Creek Willow on Bear River & on Weaver River. Where we first traveled on Wever River there were cottonwood of some size, two foot or more across the stump probably. The surface of the earth here has the appearance of the rotten remains of a straw or chaf pile & gives under our feet. There are places that is bare & dry and the cattle in walking over it sink down eight or ten inches. This spongy land is black and rich.

Camp Pilot Springs Friday 31. Leaving our late camp this morning we traveled towards the mountains on the west side of the valley. Soon after starting we came near having a stampeed among our ox teams, four of the teams stampeeded & run a short distance & were stoped. One gentleman had his leg run over but not breaking it. A dog running after a cow started it. Our roads level but dusty Riseing a little hill to a bench, a few miles more twelve in all found us at Pilot Springs—noon camp No grass here but plenty of sage brush & greese wood which is generally the case in the absence of the grass. With the exception of at our last nights camp there is nothing else much but sage brush & gresewood in this valley. The springs here, there being several are quite mirey. At one of them the sod is raised, & standing on it, I could shake it in to waves & after pushing a pot through the top crust, I could with ease push it on down, how far I had no way of ascertaining. The handle of an ox whip did not touch bottom. Wild parsnips grow below the springs. They are poisonous to stock. I have seen a great deal of this weed in places. At our last Wednesdays camp there was a great deal of it in the water below the spring. I stood guard last night on the latter part of the night.

*Camp Cedar Point—Evening—*Making a short noon at Pilot Springs we continued the days journey. The road was level with the exception of riseing from one bench to another for four miles which brought us to the foot of the mountains; and one mile up the side of the mountains and we camped. We had a little thunder shower before getting in to camp. The mountain above us is covered with a thick growth of scrubby cedar. Where we are camped it is open & grassy. Scattering patches of cedar on the side of the maintain, below us. East of us two or three hundred yards is a fine spring of cool water. Far to the eastward we could see the mountains in Salt Lake We have plenty of good grass here for our stock. Cliffs of quartz rock crowned the sumit of the mountain in our rear &

fragment of the same was scattered down the side of the mountain to & beyond our camp. With our faces westward on our right was a large but not very steep mountain; which was on our right at Pilot Springs with our faces turn southward.

Camp Stony Creek Saturday August 1st. We left our late camp about the usual hour, first going through a thick growth of scrubby cedar on the side of the mountain, next crossing a small creek of fresh water about one mile from camp & traveling several miles over the rolling side of the mountain decending obliquely to the foot. We next came to a spring of fresh water on the right of the road. Good grass around the spring & along the branch but not much of it. A mile a half farther, ten in all to day, we came to Stoney Creek and camped. Good grass and water. The bed of the creek & the ground in vicinity is covered with quartz boulders, the bed of the creek especialy mixed with a few granate. After going one mile this morning, we traveled several miles through low bunch grass. The same mountain that was to our right yesterday noon, is to our right now, we having made a right anlge, with yesterday & todays travel, around the mountain, going south yesterday & west to day. Our morning drive was along the left border of a valley branching off from Deep Creek Valley at Cedar Point decending & widening as we advanced. In the center of the valley we could see a green strip indicating water & grass.

Camp DeCaron Creek Sunday 2. Yesterday after two houres noon at Stoney Creek, we rolled out getting farther from the mountains on the left as we advanced. Roads level with the exception of the crossings of the dry beds of some little creeks; also dusty. Nine-miles brought us to a little creek, three more, after crossing, brought us to Decaron Creek & to our evening camp. The most noticable features here is the tall wild wheat, being higher than the cattles back, that our had to grze on; & the piles of small brown rock, that is on the mountain sides on each side of DeCaron Creek, resembling prepared piles of rock to put on a turn-pike. We are in the nouth of a kanyon, that the creek runs through. The banks of the creek are covered with willow brush. A strip of the wild wheat or rye, on each side of the creek, extends down the creek as far as I am able to see. It resembles a field of orchard grass; the stems are dry but the blades are green, makeing very fine feed. The seed resembles that of orchard grass. With the exception of spots, the bottom passed over yesterday evening was covered with nothing but safebrush & greese wood.

Camp Ancient City, Noon. We left as early as we could get our stock out of the high grass at Camp DeCaron Creek. We came very near having a stampede. The stock became frightened at something & made a rush in the direction of camp but they were stoped & quieted. We first crossed the creek & ascending one & a half miles, we recrossed, & found ourselves at the uper end of the kanyon, & on the border of an opening about eight miles wide every way, surrounded by mountains. The wild wheat

was fine all the way through the kanyon. At this we left the creek to the right, it bending around at the foot of the right hand mountains. Our road run nearly through the center of the opening. Six miles more & we crossed DeCaron Creek again. Here watered our stock & filled our kegs. Following up the creek two & a quarter miles more, we turned to the right up a shallow gulch, leaving the creek entirely. On the creek most any where, was fine wild rye; but nothing but sage brush in the six miles stretch, between the last two crossings of the creek. The wheat on the creek was about one hundred yards wide on either side most any where. Two & a quarter miles more, of rocky road, brought us to the mouth of a kanyon. Following up this kanyon over rocky road, we found our selves, at the end of a mile, at the "Acient City"⁸⁹ as it is called, & the junction of Sublets⁹⁰ Cut Off coming in from the right, & at noon camp. Scattering cedar on the mountain sides on each side of the kanyon. What is called the ancient city, is meassive spears of quartz rock, standing up in the kanyon; particulary interesting are two round towers in the shape of sugar loaves, standing close together & of the same kind of rock. All the rock I have seen yesterday & to day, with the exception of the brown stone at Camp Decaron Creek, was mostly quartz & some granate. On the mountains to the right of us, the whitish looking quartz could be seen, as we passed up the valley of DeCaron. I also saw snow in the gulches to the right of the creek. To the left of Camp Stony Creek, I saw snow in the gulches, the first I had since I left Salt Lake Valley; there I saw it in the mountains just below the mouth of Parleys Kanyon, & one other place in the east mountains before getting to Bear River. Sublets⁹¹ Cut Off has been traveled but little this season, as the road indicated. Near this point a whole train, men wimin & children were murdered by the Shu-shoñ-ees. Fine grazeing here of wild wheat & bunch grass mixed but in no great quantity. A spring of water, but not very good, is about two hundred yards below camp, but not sufficient for stock.

Camp Mountain Spring Valley,⁹² Monday 3. We left our noon camp yesterday after one hours rest & feed, crossing over through a kanyon from the Ancient City kanyon, to another kanyon runing nearly paralell with the first, crossing the dry bed of a little creek, with fine grass on each side, then crossing a level bench, we decended in to the head of Mountain Spring Valley, & camped for night. Here we have a coald spring of water, just above camp covered up in willows. Near our camp three kanyons come in to the head of the valley, the middle one coming in opposite our camp. We have fine grass for our stock & plenty of it. It resembles blue grass a little. We are five miles from Camp Ancient City.

Camp Goose Creek, Noon. We left Camp Mountain Spring Valley, early in the morning, crossing several little ravines, along which was narrow strips of bunch grass & other kinds, going one mile & a half to the mouth of the third kanyon, up which we turned. One & a half to the

more found us at Mountain Spring, a fine spring of cool water on the right close to the road. One mile more found us on the summit of Goose Creek Mountains. Next we commenced descending. Our descent was rapid,⁹³ but most of the road was smooth, nevertheless it was a difficult & tiresome job, the descent being so long with occasional up hill. Down one canyon & up a little hill, winding around on the side of another, then down another steep hill, then across the point of a hill, twisting & turning, only a few wagons in sight the front & rear lost in the windings, down steep hill after steep hill, seven miles to Goose Creek. The mountains along the whole descent is dotted with cedar, granite & quartz rock was the principal kind seen from the summit down though there was several other kinds. Points & banks of cream colored rock & sand; also a bluff of honey combed gray rock, to the right of the road; quartz rock as white as snow on the left. Far across Goose Creek Valley to the north west, was massive cliffs of white quartz, capped with dark stone. Our descent was quite interesting. A storm like to have caught us in the mountains, but we got down in time to escape all but a sprinkle. We had three short steep ascents, one very sidling as well as steep, we had several very steep descents, almost perpendicular, though they were short; most of the road smooth. We got down Goose Creek by about two in the afternoon. We found on the creek the finest grass I have seen on this side of the Missouri River. The bottom was only several hundred yards wide, but covered with fine tall headed grass similar to blue grass, a kind I have noticed in small quantities on the mountains & in gulches & canyons occasionally. The grass in Pioneer Hollow, Echo Canyon, & much of the grass in canyons this side of Bear River is the same kind of headed grass. In our descent we came across grass & water. We crossed a little creek & found good grass, wild wheat &c enough for our train to have nooned on before reaching the foot of the mountains. Cap Peterson's train is camped about a mile below us. We will lay over here until tomorrow. The water in Goose Creek is not very cool; in DeCaron & Stony creeks it is good & cool. Some willow on the creek.

Camp Goose Creek No. 2. Tuesday 4th. We left Camp Goose Creek early, following up the creek. About one mile brought us to some entrenchments thrown up by some emigrants to fight the Indians;⁹⁴ about one mile farther we crossed a little creek; four miles farther we crossed another of fine water; about opposite, on the other side of the creek a canyon came down from the west, and from appearances good grass & a little tributary of Goose Creek also. About eight miles from our late camp we crossed another little creek; a little higher up another small creek joined Goose Creek from the west; and about opposite we left the creek ascending a canyon to the left, and about a half mile brought us back to the creek again. We left the creek on account of the mountains closing in on the creek leaving no room for a road. Several miles farther & we camped; ten & a half miles in all to day. At this point

a road turns off to the left going behind a small mountain. We will follow the creek.

Camp Fork of Goose Creek. Evening. We left noon camp after two hours rest and graze. About three miles & we crossed a creek; about one more & we ascended a short steep hill leaving the creek, but soon descended to the creek again. Three miles more, seven miles in all this evening found us at evening camp. The grass is fine here, so it is from our first camp on Goose Creek to this point. Here there is more wild wheat than there is below here but there is an abundance of fine bladed grass. We are camped on the left fork of Goose Creek. We left the main creek a half mile back, it turning to the right, coming down out of a deep canyon through the right hand mountains. On our left, a couple of miles before reaching camp, we passed some cavernish gray cliffs,⁹⁵ being full of holes, having the appearance of a mass of cinder. We passed to day many curiosities, in the way of burnt & melted sand & rocks. We have willow brush for fuel here; there is plenty of it all the way from our first camp on Goose Creek to this point.

Camp On The Mountains, Wednesday 5. We left our late camp on the Left Fork of Goose Creek. One & a half miles found us at the mouth of Goose Creek Canyon then recommenced rough roads, rocky & broken, some steep places. Crossing the creek, the same one we camped on last, in the mouth of the canyon, to begin with, we continued on the right hand side of the creek for about three miles, when we recrossed it leaving it entirely. At this point there is fine grass. Here it was, I am told, at this last crossing a train was attacked & destroyed by indians & every person killed with the exception of one woman & three men. The woman was very badly abused. It was two years ago. Where we saw the earth works on Goose Creek, the emigrants fought the indians for three days. The indians finally gave it up & left carrying off all the stock. This also occurred two years ago. I with eight men was detailed as a rear guard while passing through this canyon. One mile more up a canyon to the left & we ascended, to the right, a steep rocky hill & then descended a more rocky one. The remainder of our road was over hills but mostly smooth, making three miles more, to the top of this hill, when we correlated for noon. No grass here, but a little bunch grass and no water. The rock along our route this morning had the appearance of being burnt & melted. Some of it look like iron ore. They are of a dark color, porous & of every shape. The mountains on each side of Goose Creek Canyon were steep & crowned with this dark burnt & melted rock.

Camp Cedar Grove Springs Thursday 6. After a short noon yesterday we "rolled out". About four & a half miles of fine road over a rolling surface found us descending a cedar point. A mile & a half more over rolling road, over hills & across hollows, found us at the head of a short canyon, with low mountains on each side, covered with thick cedar.

One mile through the kanyon, & we descended to the right in to a valley, the head of one prong of Thousand Spring Valley, near a good spring, the head of a little creek that runs through the valley. After watering our stock from the creek and our selves from the spring as the water was fine & we dry & it being the first water since we left the Goose Creek Kanyon, we crossed the little creek just below the spring, & followed down the right hand side one mile and camped on the banks of the little creek. No grass or but little. Since the 29th of July, the mountains along our rout, have been more or less covered with low cruby cedar, and the most of these mountains were not steep. The mountains on each side of our camp, are covered with cedar by scrubby lik all that I have seen on the trip. There is nothing much but sagebrush & greese wood in the valley in sight. The rock along our rout yesterday evening, which was mostly on the latter end of our evenings drive, was similar in collor & character to those we saw in the morning, only of a lighter collor. This point here is known as Cedar Grove & the spring that we stoped at one mile back as Cedar Grove Springs. Last night was quite cool. We have had cool nights for about a week. Cap- Petersons train camped just above us last night Yesterday evening a little excitement was caused by the sage brush catching fire from Mr. Bronaughs camp fire but it was soon extinguished without any damage This morning while I am writing men are out on the hunt of their cattle that the guards have allowed to stray off from camp.

Camp Thousand Spring Valley. Morning. We left this morning before day, without breakfast, though we did not get off as early as we intended on account of some of the stock being missing; they finally were all found, many of them having got among Cap- Peterson cattle. Cap Peterson became a little angry because our boys went among his cattle without permission from him or giveing him notice. We continued down the right hand side of the valley about four & a half miles to the junction of a small valley comeing down from the right. A road turned off to the right that led to camping ground & grass. Louis' train was camped in this right hand valley We continued on down the valley a half mile & camped for breakfast, near eleven fin fresh water springs. Some of the springs were vere cool water as if off a bed of ice. The spring creek that we camped on last night has disapeared, having sunk in the ground. The land in this valley is rich & richer in DeCaron Creek & Goose Creek Vallys. The grass & wild wheat is very fine at this point. We will remain here untill our stock are well filled as they had had little or no grass since leaving Goose Creek untill we arrived here. Our drive this morning was quite dusty, at times so much that I could not see the wagon just before me or behind me. The dust settled in the valley like a heavy fog. Petersons train passed through our camp after sun rise.

74. In the previous Quarterly installment of the Yager Journal, Yager's party chose to take the Mormon Trail leading southwest from Fort Bridger in southwest Wyoming to Salt Lake City, rather than the older established trail leading to Fort Hall in Idaho. The Mormon Trail was originally part of the Hastings Cutoff until after the Mormon emigration of 1847 when it was more commonly called the Mormon Trail. It will be remembered that the Hastings Cutoff was developed in the summer of 1846 by the Bryant-Russell party in the lead, followed by the Harlon-Young party, and the Reed-Donner party in the rear. Hastings and Hudspeth gave some sketchy directions for their new route and some aid as guides, but the new route was unbroken to wagon travel, and as a result the Reed-Donner party had to perform heroic time-consuming labor, which later led to disaster.

In the following year, 1847, the Mormon emigration had easier going over this section due to the previous trail breaking. When Yager passed over this section in 1863, the trail was, of course, broken and established. Many emigrants took the trail to Salt Lake City in 1849 and later years because this oasis in the desert provided much-needed rest, fresh food, repairs, and supplies. Echo Creek and Canyon lie northwest of Salt Lake City.

75. Uinta Mountains.

76. This is probably Cache Cave, a landmark along the Mormon Trail and later stage route, described as a natural curiosity.

77. G. W. Thissell, 49er, stated that on July 25, 1852, three emigrant wagons were attacked in Echo Canyon by Indians. There were no survivors.

78. Due to misunderstandings and the spreading of false rumors, friction developed between the Mormon Colony in Salt Lake City and the U.S. Government in Washington. In consequence, federal troops under General Albert S. Johnston were dispatched to the west and quartered at Fort Bridger in the winter of 1857-58. No blood was shed, but several Government supply trains were destroyed. In 1858 an amicable agreement was reached and all differences settled.

79. Yager's party had been going south along the Weber River. At the confluence of the Weber River and Silver Creek, the party turned west along Silver Creek and entered Silver Creek Canyon, and thence to Parleys Canyon. Modern U.S. Highway 40 enters Salt Lake City from the east via Parleys Canyon.

80. The divide refers to the Wasatch Range east of Salt Lake City.

81. This should be Weber River. Yager's party chose the Salt Lake Road, which turned north from Salt Lake City, Tremonton, and Snowville; thence northwesterly to the City of Rocks in southern Idaho where it made a junction with the United California Trail from Fort Hall and the Hudspeth Cutoff from the east. The Salt Lake Road was opened by Samuel Hensley in 1848 and carried part of the Gold Rush traffic in 1849. By 1851 Hastings Cutoff leading west from Salt Lake City was no longer used as an emigrant trail.

82. In horse and buggy days a singletree was the pivoted swinging bar to which the harness traces were attached and by means of which the wagon was drawn.

83. Willard is just north of Ogden.

84. Brigham City is 22 miles north of Ogden.

85. Humboldt City, approximately 40 miles south of Winnemucca, Nevada, on the Humboldt River Emigrant Trail to California, is referred to here.

86. As previously stated, Michael L. Yager was a first cousin of James P. Yager the journalist.

87. The Platte River in Wyoming, Nebraska, and Colorado.

88. The Sweetwater River in Wyoming.

89. What Yager calls Camp Ancient City was commonly called the City of Rocks.

It was located a few miles west of the present town of Almo, Idaho, and as previously stated was a very important junction point for the Salt Lake Road, the main California Trail from Fort Hall and Hudspeths Cutoff.

The City of Rocks was a famous landmark on the California Trail. Here was a meadow with good grass and water much used as a camping spot for the emigrant trains. Great monolithic granite rocks in varied fanciful shapes and sizes made this spot an unforgettable natural curiosity, reminding the emigrants of a city in stone. As was customary, many pioneers carved or painted their names, date of passage, and the states from whence they came.

90. This should be Hudspeths or Meyers Cutoff. Sublettes Cutoff cuts off a loop of the main emigrant trail north of Fort Bridger.

91. Should be Hudspeths Cutoff.

92. Mountain Spring Valley is just below the summit of Goose Creek Mountains, a few miles from the City of Rocks. That portion of the California Trail on which Yager's party was now moving was known as the Goose Creek-Thousand Springs Valley Trail. After leaving the City of Rocks the trail entered the State of Nevada at its northeast corner and led southwesterly via Goose and Thousand Springs creeks and valleys to an intersection with the Humboldt River and Valley in eastern Nevada, in the vicinity of Wells, Nevada. Andrew Child, in his *Overland Route to California* listed the distance from the City of Rocks to the Humboldt Valley as 98 miles.

93. The descent to Goose Creek was very steep and dangerous, especially so to the earlier emigrants who passed this way. Wagon wheels were locked and the wagons man-handled to keep from capsizing on the steep declivities and sideling slopes.

94. The Indians in this section and along the following Humboldt River Trail proved dangerous and troublesome to the emigrants. Individuals and small isolated wagons were sometimes attacked. In general, the depredations consisted mainly of stealing and killing stock.

95. Irene D. Paden in her *Wake of the Prairie Schooner* refers to these cliffs as "Record Bluffs" on which the emigrants carved their names.

Annotations by Everett W. Harris

Notes and Documents

A Note for Railroad Historians: Nevada's 1877 Legislature

NEVADA'S POLITICAL LIFE has been alternately Republican and Democratic, liberal and conservative, frenetic and placid, but never uninteresting. The research materials for the study of the state's political history are as varied as the past itself. Recently, a unique item was uncovered at the University of Nevada, Reno. A part of the University Library's Virginia & Truckee Railroad collection is a small, black, leather-covered account book, with "1877 Legislature" hand-lettered on the front.

Historians have asserted, with and without documentation, that Nevada's politicians were often mere lackeys of the railroads. The V & T's book illustrates one way in which the railway might have controlled its political fortunes—and those of others as well. In neat columns in the little journal are written the names of nearly all members of the 1877 Nevada legislature, each followed by a number. The number apparently indicates either a free railroad pass (most likely) or a check. Others who were evidently favored included the governor (#472), the lieutenant governor (#473), a reporter for the *Gold Hill News* (#475), some well-known lobbyists, the wives of a few legislators, and two or three nonelected officials of the legislature. Two state senators from communities served by the V & T, W. R. King of Lyon County and E. A. Schultz of Storey, did not receive gifts from the railroad. Most interesting of all, perhaps, are the notations following names of two other legislators, both assemblymen: C. P. Shakespeare (#462) of Esmeralda County and W. A. Trousdale (#468) of Humboldt are each marked "refused." Speaker of the Assembly Henry R. Mighels and Assemblyman H. G. Parker, both of Ormsby (the state capital) did not receive favors.¹ If the donations were railroad passes, neither Mighels nor Parker would have needed the free transportation offered, since they lived near the legislative hall. It is interesting to know, however, that Mighels failed to survive his next election attempt, reportedly because of "Virginia and Truckee Railroad influence."²

The most important and the most obvious issue of the Nevada legislative session in 1877 was the attempt to reform the mode of taxing the proceeds of mines. The tax problem had been a matter of controversy since Nevada's first legislature in 1865. Levies by both state and county governments had discriminated against other property owners in favor of

mining interests. Laws passed in 1865 and 1867 provided for large deductions for processing expenses before payment of taxes on bullion. In 1871, an act provided for deductions on a percentage basis for extracting, transporting, and processing of ores. Then in 1875, a less discriminatory tax passed almost unnoticed by the "Bonanza firm" of John W. Mackay, James G. Fair, James Flood, and William O'Brien. The Bonanza kings fought the bullion tax in the courts for several years. In 1877, a compromise bill was proposed to ease the burden on the mine owners. The Bonanza company's representatives constantly attended and spoke during the lawmaking session while the bill was discussed. Virginia & Truckee help with the problem in 1877 and at subsequent legislative sessions became very important.³

The Bonanza kings and the V & T had interlocking interests, politically and financially. It is possible to show a relationship in one political case: Jasper Babcock, an assemblyman who received one of the numbered donations (# 426) and who voted for the Bonanza interests, was elected the following year to be secretary of state, defeating George Baker who also received a gift (#401) but who voted against the Bonanza group. However, the tally was close, and with Babcock a Republican and Baker a Democrat in a normally Republican state, the outcome might have been predictable on other grounds. Both Senators King and Schultz, who had not received presents, voted for the Bonanza company, perhaps on another basis. And Governor Bradley, who had also received a favor, vetoed the bill after it passed the assembly 27 to 23 and the senate 14 to 11.⁴ Bradley's veto perhaps reflected a conflict between the miners and the livestock industry, for Bradley was a prominent cattleman. The role of the V & T in promoting or inhibiting other legislation probably deserves further study.

Studies of railroads in Nevada have so far been of the interesting but romantic "picture book" type. Few scholars have attempted to analyze the political and economic impact of the corporations on the state. Certainly, if the West's story is to be told fully and truthfully, the account will include the real role of the "octopus," whether the V & T or the giant and more ubiquitous Central Pacific-Southern Pacific combination. While the V & T's "little black book" is only a fragmentary piece of the railroad story in the West and Nevada, it might well provide some needed clues to a larger study.

1. "1877 Legislature," ms., Virginia & Truckee Collection, University of Nevada Library, Reno.

2. Myron Angel, ed., *History of Nevada* (Berkeley: Howell-North Books, 1958, photo reprint of 1881 edition by Thompson and West), p. 96.

3. *Carson Daily Appeal* (Carson City, Nevada), February 15, 1877, p. 3 c. 2. Evidence from the Yerington papers (Bancroft Library, Berkeley), indicates close cooperation between Henry M. Yerington, the general manager of the V & T, and

representatives of the mining industry. See also, Gilman Ostrander, *Nevada, the Great Rotten Borough, 1859-1964* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), pp. 88-89.

4. Nevada, Secretary of State, *Political History of Nevada, 1965* (Carson City: State Printing Office, 1965), p. 180; Angel, pp. 126 ff. Bradley complained in his veto message of dictator-like tactics by "a couple of non-resident corporations," referring to the Bonanza Firm and the V & T—both owned by persons outside Nevada.

MARY ELLEN GLASS

What's Being Written

FRANCIS G. NEWLANDS stands as one of the giants in Nevada political history and his reputation as a national statesman is steadily growing. Despite the mark Newlands left on Nevada history and his contributions to the national Progressive movement as a senator from 1903 until his death in 1917, he has been neglected as a subject for Western political biography. The extensive Newlands papers covering his public career in Nevada and in the national capital from 1892 to 1917 are deposited in the Yale University library. The first attempted scholarly work on the life of Newlands was by Professor Arthur B. Darling who edited and placed these papers in their proper historical setting under the published title: *The Public Papers of Francis G. Newlands* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1932). More recently, however, work on Newlands's career has produced a small published volume, an unpublished dissertation, and wide coverage in two other works by Mary Ellen Glass and Gilman M. Ostrander.

The most recent published volume dealing entirely with the life of Newlands is by Albert W. Atwood, *Francis G. Newlands: A Builder of The Nation* (The Newlands Company, 1969). This slender volume in eulogistic terms characteristic of early American biographies condenses Newlands's eventful life and career in California, Nevada, and in the nation's capital into sixty-four pages. Newlands was born in Natchez, Mississippi, to parents who had migrated to America from Scotland where his father had studied medicine. Shortly after Newlands's birth in 1848 the family moved to Quincy, Illinois. In 1851 the father died leaving Jessie Newlands with a large family of four sons and one daughter. Mrs. Newlands remarried and managed to direct Francis toward preparation for entrance into Yale and later law school in Washington, D. C. The young Newlands, fresh out of law school, came West in 1870 to seek his fortune in San Francisco. Before long he earned an enviable position in the legal community of San Francisco and in 1874 married the eldest daughter of a former Nevada senator and Comstock lord, William Sharon. Thereafter Newlands's career in California consisted of defending and expanding the Sharon properties until the death of his father-in-law in 1885. In the following year Newlands attempted to move into California politics, but found his way blocked by George Hearst, whose money and prestige were greater than his own. He then began to look for new arenas in which to realize his political ambitions. After a trip abroad and a brief residency in New York, Newlands established himself first in Carson

City and then in Reno in 1889 for the apparent purpose of seeking national political office from Nevada.

In 1890, Newlands declared his desire to serve the state in building water storage, irrigation, and reclamation projects. These facilities would expand agriculture and attract diversified industry. Elected to Congress in 1892, Newlands succeeded ten years later in his efforts to persuade Congress to pass a National Reclamation Act. The scene of the first project under the new act was Churchill County, Nevada. Both as congressman from 1893 to 1903 and as senator from 1903 to 1917, Newlands was a critic of Republican financial policy, and as a Progressive western Democrat, he worked for closer governmental regulation over interstate commerce and the application of scientific reform to the problems of a growing economy. One of the most outstanding achievements of his career in the Senate was the passage of the Federal Trade Commission bill in September, 1914. As chairman of the Senate Committee on Finance, Newlands pushed for this bill with the strong support of President Wilson. By supporting this measure Newlands believed that the Administration and the Democratic party had helped bring stability to the business world. He wrote in the *Review of Reviews* in October, 1914, "The Federal Trade Commission composed as it will be of eminent lawyers, economists, and business men will gradually . . . build up an administrative system of law and establish a code of morals that will bring certainty, peace and security to the business world."

It is on the basis of this high-minded quest for legislation to provide for a more rational society that the Atwood book praises Newlands and extends to him the title: *A Builder of the Nation*. This biography represents a good summary of Newlands's life. But its lack of footnotes, bibliography, and depth of analysis, except for the observation that Newlands was a national figure as well as a local politician, still leaves Newlands without an adequate biography.

The unpublished dissertation on Newlands by William Lilley III entitled "The Early Career of Francis G. Newlands, 1848-1897," was accepted by Yale University in 1965. Lilley is currently expanding this into a full-length biography. Although there are certain questions concerning interpretation in the dissertation and errors regarding state political events and geography in Nevada, the Lilley work promises to be the first scholarly biography of Newlands.

Two other works touching upon Newlands's career are the recently published *Silver and Politics in Nevada: 1892-1902* by Mary Ellen Glass (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1969) and Gilman M. Ostrander's *Nevada: The Great Rotten Borough, 1859-1964* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966). Mrs. Glass's work, which was reviewed in the last issue of the *Historical Society Quarterly*, gives much attention to Newlands's local political role in Nevada during the 1890s and the Newlands-Stewart battles over control of the Silver party. In contrast, the Ostrander book

treats Newlands as a national figure emphasizing that his local Nevada political maneuverings served only as a means to his primary goal—national political office. Ostrander writes: “Despite a politically essential concern for free silver, Newlands was a national statesman from the time he entered the House, and as such, he remains a unique phenomenon in Nevada politics: the man who bought his way into Congress in order to serve the nation” (p. 168). While there are many shortcomings in the Ostrander book with its narrow, critical approach to Nevada’s political history, *The Great Rotten Borough* must be given credit as one of the first works to recognize the national stature of Newlands’s statesmanship.

WILLIAM D. ROWLEY

What's Going On

The Oral History Program

ORAL HISTORY is one of the most ancient classes of material used in historical writing. Herodotus, the "father of history," incorporated reports from eyewitnesses into his histories of the Persian wars, hundreds of years before Christ. Later historians followed his example. But Herodotus and his successors for centuries lacked a basic tool of the modern collector of oral history. Tape recorders now capture verbal accounts of historical events.

Allan Nevins, an American historian, is the "father of *oral* history." Nevins began at Columbia University in 1948 to tape-record reminiscences of famous people, calling his collection "oral history." Since that time, more than a hundred similar operations have been established in the United States and abroad at universities, presidential libraries, and other institutions.

The Oral History Project at the University of Nevada, Reno, is five years old. Founded in 1965 as a part of the DRI Western Studies Center, the Project became a department of the University Library in 1969. The undertaking was considered vital to Nevada because much essential information for historical studies was slipping away with the passing of the state's pioneers. Firsthand accounts of events in Nevada are important in helping to place the Silver State in perspective in Western history. The UNR Oral History Project has thus concentrated on collecting memoirs from persons who have witnessed notable local events.

The focus on recording life histories of Nevadans has produced reports on a variety of topics: politics, economics, social and cultural activities, religion, education, agriculture, and Indian affairs are some of the subjects. Fifty people have given interviews for the Project, resulting in more than five hundred hours of recording time. A committee of scholars (in Agricultural Economics, Engineering, English, History, and Political Science) selects the chroniclers. The committee welcomes suggestions for prospective chroniclers.

The making of an oral history script involves much cooperation between chronicler and interviewer. The interviewer prepares for the recording sessions by reviewing pertinent research materials, and conducts the meetings necessary to complete the history. Both interviewer and chronicler review the transcriptions of the recordings. The finished interview, open for research at the UNR Library Special Collections Department, is a bound, indexed volume, accompanied by a five-minute recorded

sample of the chronicler's voice. A few scripts are closed to research for periods of time at the request of the chroniclers. The Oral History office keeps copies of oral histories and maintains a master index to scripts. Except for voice samples to aid linguistic research, tapes are erased and reused.

For information about the UNR Oral History Project, interested persons may write: Mrs. Mary Ellen Glass, Head, Oral History Project, University of Nevada Library, Reno, Nevada 89507.

The Carson Valley Historical Society

The Carson Valley Historical Society was founded in 1961 partly through the encouragement of Dr. R. Coke Wood, executive secretary of the Conference of California Historical Societies. The idea of a county society was replaced by the "valley" concept. The principal historic and geographic region of Douglas County is the basin, really the upper basin, of the Carson River. To a certain extent the area with which the Carson Valley Historical Society is concerned overlaps the area covered by the Alpine County Historical Society. This has not created a conflict of interest however, but rather a foundation for friendly exchange based on the fact that many of the families and businesses in both Douglas and Alpine counties are related. The state boundary between the two counties is simply an arbitrary straight line drawn for purposes of administrative convenience and bears little or no relation to historical fact or geographical area.

The Society's founders felt that public sympathy would have to be cultivated to give the activities of the organization a broad base. Its first venture in this area was the planning and giving on August 27, 1961, of a pioneer pot-luck picnic on the town square in Minden. About a hundred persons attended. These picnics have become an annual event anticipated with pleasure by a group of pioneers and all other persons interested in local history. Since 1962 the Society has honored a selected group of citizens each year, such as the octogenarians, retired teachers, clergy in the local churches, and the local Basque community.

Simultaneously with the planning for the annual picnics and in response to an interest in the history of Douglas County by the history department of the University of Nevada, the Society began a survey of all emigrants from Europe to Carson Valley. The data assembled in each case showed place and date of birth, date of leaving Europe and of arrival in Carson Valley, name of spouse, date of naturalization, business or trade pursued in Carson Valley, etc. Collating these data with more gathered from the census records brought out the fact that the greater number of German

settlers in Carson Valley came to the country after 1870 from Hanover and Schleswig-Holstein. It also revealed that the immigrants after 1870 more often devoted themselves to the building of the religious and social order, while the earlier settlers coming from Westphalia, largely in the fifties and early sixties, expressed interest in politics and related political activities. These are new and interesting facts not known to residents of the valley before the survey was made.

In 1967, the Society set up a drive for life memberships; it also found itself the possible recipient of larger donations to further its aims. The pressure brought to bear by these two sources of income led to the founding of a non-profit corporation under Sec. 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Exempt status was granted on February 13, 1967.

Also in 1967, Mr. Jack Van Sickle, in order to promote the further study of local history, set up the Van Sickle Library of Materials for the History of Carson Valley. The library was founded in memory of Jack's grandfather, the owner and operator for many years of the well-known station bearing his name at the foot of the Kingsbury Grade. Being brought together in the collection are all the materials found in manuscripts in print, in newspapers, reports, magazines, etc., that pertain to Carson Valley. Mr. Frederick C. Gale of the State Archives is in charge of the project. In order to facilitate the use of the extensive material now available on microfilm, Mr. Van Sickle purchased for the society a late-model 3M reader-printer. The resulting body of original data which is presently shelved in a special case in the Douglas County Public Library in Minden provides students with a convenient and progressively exhaustive collection of materials for the study of the history of Carson Valley. It is gratifying to report that such use has already been made of the library by students preparing papers.

The Society has been able to arrange with the State Park Commission for the lease of the Genoa Court House, built in 1865, as a museum. This project is off to a good start and will, it is believed, become a major attraction in Douglas County.

