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NEVADA

THE MAGAZINE OF THE REAL WEST NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1980 • \$1.50

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LAKE TAHOE**
When, Where,
How much



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 Nov. 20 thru Dec. 3
Natalie Cole
 Dec. 4 thru 10
The Dirt Band
 Dec. 11 thru 19
Debbie Reynolds
 Dec. 27 thru Jan. 7



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LAKE TAHOE: SKIING THE HIGH SIERRA

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THE GHOSTS OF WINTERS PAST, by Buddy Frank

A former ski bunny says these days the sport is more like a Marin County fad.

TIME IN A BOTTLE, by Fred Holabird

For collectors Nevada embossed bottles mean color, value and history.

HUNTERS & TRADERS

Tips from collectors John Tibbetts, Connie Schilling and William Wright.

DESERT BOTTLE HOUSE, by Jason Rubinstein

Rhyolite's house of 50,000 bottles is a ghost town's living history.

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Signs of winter.

MUENCH'S GALLERY, Photos by David Muench

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EDITORIAL

The year 1980 has meant more to me than any other.
Now I know Harry.

Nevada Magazine has no cash in the bank but it is rich indeed because of you the reader; because of Muench, Shipler, Menzies and Mandel, our most stalwart contributors; but mostly because of Harry.

Harry Webb is a real Nevadan. Even though he was born in Colorado in 1888 the son of a coal miner. Even though he moved to Wyoming to become a bronc rider and began traveling the country in 1909 with Buffalo Bill and his Wild West Show. Even though he lives in California.

Harry lived in Nevada from the spring of 1915 until November 1942. He worked as a mustanger for the Hat Ranch (breaking horses for the Army during World War I) and as a government trapper (catching 48 bobcats and coyotes the first four weeks, earning \$125 a month for seven years). In 1916 he bought a ranch near Palisade where he raised cattle, some sheep, horses and hay. He drank whiskey with politicians and cowboys, played fiddle for dances and parties.

Except for the fact that his wife Kitty's health forced them to move to a lower elevation, Harry would still be in Nevada. He had met Kitty in New York when he was with the Buffalo Bill Show, and they were married in Philadelphia in 1911. Kitty died in Hollywood in 1947 Harry married Jane in 1950 at the Little Church of the West in Las Vegas and cherished her until her death last July.



PHOTO COURTESY HARRY E. WEBB

Harry Webb was a government trapper from 1916 to 1923. In the first month he caught 48 bobcats and coyotes and was paid \$125 for his time.



Webb's book "Nuthin'" was made into a movie by Walt Disney. It starred Forrest Tucker and Ronnie Howard and was renamed "A Boy Called Nuthin'"

© MCMLXVII Walt Disney Productions

Harry Webb has done everything a cowboy could ever dream of doing, but he's most famous for his true tales of Nevada and the real West. With more than 150 short stories to his credit and a novel call *Nuthin'* that Walt Disney turned into a movie in 1962, he was awarded the Gold Spur of Western Literature in 1972 for his tale, "Call of the Cow Country."

Were you bored when you moved from Nevada, Harry? "Well, hell yes," he says, "but I had to get used to it."

Why did you like Nevada, Harry? "I don't know, by God," he says with a laugh. "It was probably because we didn't have all those damn laws up there. We never locked the doors, we never locked our cars. You could leave your car set a week and leave the damn key in it. Nobody ever bothered it."

Hollywood hasn't changed Webb's down-home cowboy ways. He's still warm, straight and honest, and continues spinning yarns of the West as he lived and knew them.

It's been a long time since Harry busted broncs with Buffalo Bill, or saddled up a mustang and headed out across Nevada's brush-covered range, but his western tales (which hopefully will be in book form soon) continue to touch the hearts of all who read them.

After 92 years spent all over the American West, Harry Webb still prefers the Sagebrush State. "Nevada is like home to me," he says. "I wouldn't trade a foot of Nevada for the whole state anyplace else."

—Caroline J. Hadley

LETTERS

NEVADA, WE SALUTE YOU!

As a long time resident of Elko County before moving to California, I have watched "Nevada" evolve into the most colorful, eye-catching magazine published today and feel it deserves a 21-gun salute!

Due to the ever-soaring costs of all the elements that go into producing the present Nevada Magazine, I wonder how this magazine can survive when others have fallen by the wayside unless it is through skilled management and giving the public more for its money.

So, Nevada as a state, with its rich historical background, should be so proud of its name-sake publication it will never, through lack of funding, let "Nevada Magazine" become another "vital statistic."

Harry E. Webb
Tujunga, CA.

Thanks, Harry. —Ed.

RAG IS WRONG

If Walt Thayer can have his say (Letters, July/Aug '80 saying Nevada Magazine is a "flop and a rag"), we feel that we should too.

Being from the West myself and my husband from Reno, we very much enjoy receiving a piece of "the Real West" every other month in your magazine. Your "rag" is really worth our while.

Jay & Andre Heppner
East Tawas, MI.

Hooray for the "Old Rag!" You're doing a real service for the state of Nevada. My neighbor says it's the best publication I take and insists on reading every issue.

Your magazine presents fine historical outlines and also brings some of Harry Webb's great humor, and humor is surely needed these days. Keep it up; I'm boosting!

Rex Gill
Gateway, CO.

Thanks for having a great magazine. Each issue brings back all the memories of the nine years I called Nevada home, and makes me wish that once again soon home will be Nevada.

Gail Contreras
Ketchikan, Alaska

My family and I visit and spent our holidays 1977 and 1979 in the beautiful west of the United States of America and in special California and Silver-State Nevada.

We enjoyed the wonderful climate of your nice country, and also we enjoy the Nevada Magazine, so we remember the beautiful time.

Rolf Ziener
Thedinghausen, Germany

I pass my magazine along to persons who have never seen Nevada, much less seen the magazine. They might have a few surplus "frogskins" to invest in a subscription. They could do worse things I'm sure.

Walt Thayer
Wenatchee, WA.

CONTROVERSY LASTS

In the May/June issue the letter from Dr. E. W. Harris concerning the fact that the Streamliner "City of San Francisco" had crossed the summit was of interest to me as I, too, recalled the location. However, I believe he intended to say Emigrant Gap instead of Yuba Gap.

Gordon Sterud
Yuba City, CA.

Your magazine has been geared to northern Nevada more about southern Nevada.

Bill Ciliax
Las Vegas, NV.

As an old Goldfield native I enjoyed Phillip Earl's "Gold Camp Grifters" (July/Aug '80) and still have several pieces of that high grade ore.

However, I must take exception to the statement made in "Letters" by D. Fontaine White, concerning the first wooden house in town. According to my mother's diary entry of Saturday, June 15, 1907, they "slept in the new house" of wood. And their neighbors were already living in frame houses on either side of their lot. I also have a picture taken of the town in 1906 that shows many frame houses. It just isn't right to let the world think that it took four years for the very progressive people of Goldfield to get around to construct houses of lumber.

Donald M. Oakley
Whittier, CA.

LOOKIN' FOR GOLD: NEEDS HELP

In the "Weekend Prospector" story (July/Aug '80), reference was made to the Nevada Miners and Prospectors Association which I cannot find in the telephone directory. Could you please forward their address to me as I'm considering prospecting as a hobby and need all the help I can get.

Donald R. Cleland, Jr.
Las Vegas, NV.

For information, write the association at Box 283, Mina, NV. 89422, or call Frank Lewis in Reno at 826-2404. You can join as a member (\$15 a year) or subscribe to the NMPA magazine, which appears the interests of the state's small miners and has active chapters in Washoe, Mineral, Pershing and

(Continued on next page)

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LETTERS

(Continued from previous page)

active chapters in Washoe, Mineral, Pershing and White Pine counties. Lewis says the NMPA would be happy to charter chapters in other areas if the interest is there. —Ed.

HELP FOR HUNTERS

Baird Davies' "How to Dress Wild Game" in your Sept/Oct issue was outstanding. An excellent refresher for all hunters.

Dan Ward
Incline Village, NV.

ERRATA

Eagerly, I opened the Sept/Oct issue to luxuriate in my story of Genoa's Candy Dance. I'd known its 1,080 words would be trimmed drastically to fit your calendar pages, but in such mutilated and fragmented form it's barely recognizable. Also, to my surprise, I share the byline with Roberta McConnell, with whom I did not work. Not the least cruel blow is the misspelling of my name. There is an "h" in Shelby.

Doris Shelby
Carson City, NV.

We received two stories about the Candy Dance. We liked your prose, and McConnell's facts, so used parts of both and credited you both. The misspelling of your name was an awful mistake, and we apologize. —Ed.

DISINTEGRATION COUNTS ME OUT

Years ago, when the magazine was very interesting, I was a subscriber. Then the quality disintegrated, as you know. Three or four years ago, there was a reorganization, with a promise of improvement. I am not impressed with the current production of the magazine. No more subscription please

Norm Evans
Carson City, NV.

I abhor your increasing tendency to cater to entertainment. Photos are few. Why? I have been in all 48 states and Nevada is my favorite as to scenery. But pictures, when given, are often of owls or closeups and rarely capture the grand vistas or the "tone" of the towns as they are now, e.g. Gabbs, Goldfield, Manhattan, Overton, etc.

Norman A. King
San Rafael, CA.

KEEN NEW SUBSCRIBER

My good friend Harry Webb recently sent me a copy of your fine magazine and I was so impressed with your style and your purpose I wanted to subscribe to it. However, I let others read it, and it wasn't returned, so I had to call Rex Bundy in Victor, Montana, to give it to me!

Dewey Tidwell
Las Cruces, N.M.

Share your magazine at the office. Everyone is more interested in the list of shows at Reno, Las Vegas and Lake Tahoe but I love the stories of old West.

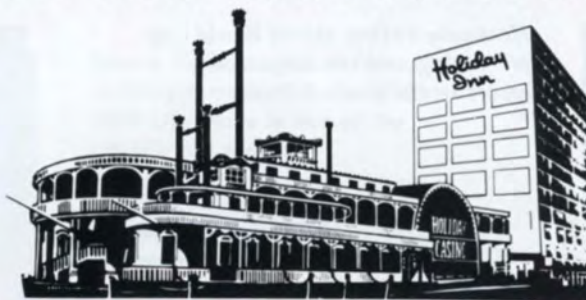
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LAKE TAHOE:

Skiing the High Sierra

People, powder, and 20 resorts make Tahoe the best ski scene in the West.



VANCE FOX

NorthStar: a self-contained resort five miles south of Truckee with condos and excellent intermediate skiing.

Tahoe Donner: designed for beginners and intermediates and a good area for kids taking their first snowplows.



TOM LIPPETT



JOHN CURTIS

Heavenly Valley: site of World Cup pro racing and the largest ski resort in the United States.

Kirkwood: the basin's southernmost retreat is known for its snowfall, intermediate slopes and busy social schedule.





TOM LIPPERT



JOHN CURTIS

Ski Incline: a family-oriented area with discounts for senior citizens, plus good cross-country skiing nearby.

Alpine Meadows: excellent conditions for beginner-intermediate and advanced skiers and a popular area with locals.



LARRY PROSOR



TOM LIPPERT

Squaw Valley: with 24 lifts and exciting terrain, the site of the 1960 Olympics is one of the world's top resorts.

Soda Springs: good slopes for beginners and intermediates this winter.



Winters are usually kind to Lake Tahoe. Not that the weather is benign; Sierra winters can be long, contrary and plagued by chain requirements. But at more than 6,000 feet up and in the path of Pacific storms, Tahoe attracts winter's finest present, snow, and with it great sports and sporting types.

Like a set of crown jewels, 20 ski resorts rim Tahoe's forested slopes on both the Nevada and California sides of the border. The choices for skiers and other snow lovers are endless, and the ski scene's most enduring charm lies in the diversity of its faces. It can be rugged, chic, pampering or challenging. While rosy-cheeked children test the bunny slope at Incline, blood-shot jet jockeys barrel down the harrowing chutes of Squaw. Tahoe is the one place in the world where you can ski into a red sunset rippling across an alpine lake, and then watch the sun rise again over the shoulder of your blackjack dealer.

You could, for instance, decide to visit a different resort each weekend and take from Thanksgiving to Easter to complete the circuit. In such a marathon you could ride up more than 150 lifts and ski down an even larger number of runs. The total winter's cost for Saturday lift tickets would be about \$250, not a small sum, certainly, but far less than coach fare to Honolulu. And then there's the snow, at times deep enough to stop powerful locomotives, but more often a sparkling white mantle on slopes and trails that bodes well for the winter sporting life.

The lake's 20 resorts are a mixed lot, and to help gain some insights regarding thrills, strategy and where to take the kids, Nevada racing consultant Mike Starrett of Reno offered some suggestions. He has skied for 15 years as a beginner, ski instructor and pro racer in the Sierra.

Starrett, who has also climbed and skied down several of Nevada's major peaks (Winter 1979 issue), began skiing at Mt. Rose and Slide Mountain in the mid-sixties, and the Reno-area resorts are still among his favorites. "From Reno you can't find a better operation and economical way of skiing than Mt. Rose and Slide," he says. "There you can ski Alta-light powder, just like at Alta in Utah. The storms come from the northwest over the Sierra, and a lot of moisture will drop around Donner Pass to the lake. By the time it hits the east side, it's dry. You can drive up to Slide and Rose on

a really good powder day in midweek and find hardly any people."

On the Nevada side, Mt. Rose and Slide are excellent for families and intermediate and advanced skiers, while Tannenbaum and Ski Incline are good for kids and rookie skiers. "The junior

"If you take a ski vacation, maximize it. You'd better get up at 5:30, eat and be there at six or seven."

ski program that is probably one of the best in the world is at Sky Tavern, which is owned by the City of Reno. That program is amazing. They have volunteers, use school buses, and the place is loaded with kids all the time."

Resorts on the California side that

are particularly well suited for kids and families are Soda Springs, Tahoe Donner and Squaw Valley's Papoose area, which is designed for children up to 12 years of age.

The higher, uncrowded slopes are where Starrett, a freestyle racer, likes to be, and the more challenging the better. "To me Squaw Valley is the best place in the world for accessibility to the top of the hill, for bump runs, for snow conditions. At Squaw you have any one of four ways to get to the top of the mountain, and the west face of KT is comparable to any bump run there is in the world.

"Heavenly Valley is also good, though you get a lot of people because it's South Shore. The back side of Heavenly is really good for views of the desert, down into Carson Valley towards Genoa. There are some nice



trails up there."

Unless you're skiing Mt. Rose or Slide, or have a NorthStar condo and lift privileges, it's best to rise early. "If you take a ski vacation, you should maximize it," he says. "You'd better get up at 5:30, eat and be there at six or seven. If you have kids, be there no later than 8 o'clock."

If you're staying at the lake, you can minimize hassles and driving by skiing in the immediate area. "If you're staying at the Hyatt, then Incline is the best. If you're at South Shore, Heavenly or Kirkwood is best. On the west shore, Tahoe Ski Bowl, Homewood, Alpine Meadows. Staying in Truckee, go to Squaw, Alpine or NorthStar, which is a really good intermediate area. They have just so many tickets to sell, so it's not like driving into Squaw Valley on a Saturday morning at 11 and you're

"At Squaw you have any one of four ways to get to the top, and the west face of KT is comparable to any bump run in the world."



TOM LIPPETT

lucky if you get parked by 1 o'clock." Time allowing, the best skiing is midweek, when most skiers have gone home and back to work.

For a beginner or a mogul runner, Starrett says, Tahoe is terrific. "The vertical footage we have within an hour's drive is just unmatched by any other place in the U.S. and Canada," he says. "That's one thing about Reno that's always been puzzling. Reno's always tried to promote skiing because it's such a viable product, but it doesn't work. It's a dead ski town. People will go to South Shore. They don't realize that Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows are no more than an hour's drive from Reno. If a person were to stay in one area, Reno would be the only place to stay." In the wintertime Reno has few crowds, many rooms and good prices. Tahoe has the snow. —David Moore

TAHOE SKI RESORTS: WHEN, WHERE & HOW MUCH

Area	Location	Phone	Vertical	Rating Beg-Inter-Adv	Rentals Adult/Child	Lift Prices Adult/Child	Lifts	Night
Alpine Meadows	Hwy 89	916-583-6914	1667	25-35-40	\$12.50/\$9	\$17/\$8	13	no
Boreal Ridge	I-80	916-426-3666	600	20-65-15	\$10/\$6	\$12/\$6 we \$9.50/\$6 mw	8	yes
Granlibakken	Tahoe City	916-583-4242	250	50-50-0	mbr/guest	mbr/guest	2	no
Heavenly Valley	S. Lake Tahoe Calif./Nev.	916-541-1330 916-541-7544	4017	25-50-25	\$11/\$8	\$18/\$12	26	no
Homewood	Hwy 89	916-525-7256	1650	30-50-20	\$9/\$8	\$13/\$9	9	no
Kirkwood	Hwy 88	209-258-6000	2000	25-50-25	\$12/\$8	\$17/\$8	9	no
Mt. Rose	Hwy 431	702-849-0704	1450	30-40-30	\$10/\$10	\$14/\$6	5	no
NorthStar	Hwy 267	916-562-1111	2200	33-50-17	\$12/\$7	\$16.50/\$9	8	no
Papoose	Squaw Valley	(up to age 12)	250	100-0-0	n/a	n/a	2	no
Powder Bowl	Hwy 89	916-583-4373	850	40-50-10	n/a	n/a	3	no
Sierra Ski Ranch	Hwy 50	916-659-7475	1600	42-45-13	\$10/\$10	\$12.50/\$8.50	8	no
Ski Echo Tahoe	Hwy 50	916-659-7177	1450	35-50-15	\$8/\$5**	\$8.50/\$5.50**	3	no
Ski Incline	Hwy 28	702-831-1821	900	30-50-20	\$11.50/\$7.50	\$16/\$9	7	no
Slide Mountain	Hwy 27	702-849-3030	1450	30-30-40	\$10/\$6	\$12/\$6*	3	no
Soda Springs	I-80	916-426-3801	750	40-50-10	\$9/\$6*	\$11/\$6	3	no
Squaw Valley	Hwy 89	916-583-0121	2500	23-50-27	\$12/\$8	\$18/under 12 & over 65, \$5	24	no
Sugar Bowl	I-80	916-426-3651	1500	20-30-50	\$11/\$8	\$17/\$12 we \$15/\$10 mw	9	yes
Tahoe Donner	I-80	916-587-6046	600	50-50-0	\$10/\$6.50	\$10/\$7	3	no
Tahoe Ski Bowl	Hwy 89	916-525-5224	600	33-50-17	\$7.50/\$5.50	\$12/\$8 we \$10/\$7 mw	5	no
Tannenbaum	Hwy 27	702-849-9925	400	50-50-0	\$7/\$7**	\$6/\$3.50**	3	yes
. . . AND ON MT. CHARLESTON								
Lee Canyon	Hwy 52	702-872-5462	1000	15-70-15	\$8*	\$10/\$6*	3	no

*—tentative **—1979 rates we—weekend mw—midweek

It was 1961 when the last of the big Southern Pacific locomotives made its way out of the roundhouse and onto the oily turntable in Sparks. The locomotive revolved slowly until the tracks lined up west toward Truckee. Ahead was the hill and one last glorious effort. Snorting out of the big snowshed near Norden, the train would look magnificent and powerful, but its days would be over. The Age of Steam was making its last run. Diesels would now do the job, not with the same glamour and excitement as the 350-tonners, but with stylish efficiency. It was the last time the old engine's thunderous roar would echo through the Sierra canyons and the steam clouds would linger on the winter cliffs above Donner Lake.

I recalled that image as I gazed out the rear window of the Squaw Valley Lodge last season. It was brought to mind by the warm mist rising from the rental hot tubs on the rear deck. I was saddened as the young couple from Rancho Cordova soaked. For them the moment was a celebration of a perfect afternoon spent on the machine-groomed slopes of Gold Coast. They were toasting their good fortune in a cloud of bubbles rising from the Jacuzzi and their Perrier cocktails.

The noise from a nearby Space Invaders game snapped me out of the daydream, and it was then that I realized the days of the skier are numbered. Certainly there will be more people than ever, descending more runs than ever before; but the *real skier* won't be there. He'll be another relic of the past, of a sport devised by iron men on wooden skis.

The end has been coming for years, and it's hard to pinpoint when the change began. Maybe it was the damnable short skis. Of course the process was in full stride before the first set of ParaBlocks were screwed onto a single ski tip. But it could have begun from a simple overdose of too many Warren Miller movies.

For whatever reason, the sport has changed and the challenge that attracted rugged individualists is gone. Skiing is more like a Marin County fad than a serious athletic endeavor. There are those today who presume that a Roffe jump suit and one or two Mid-week Specials are all it takes. Some members of this new breed even have talent, dancing through the tight mogul fields faster than an old timer could thread a longthong. But there's no style, and character is lacking. Character comes from years of suffering.

The Ghosts of Winters Past

A former ski bunny says the challenge has left the sport in this age of jumpsuits and slope-side Jacuzzis.

By Buddy Frank

There's little of that left as well. Today, even beginning is effortless. You sign up for ski school in the morning, and before lunch the instructor has you running slalom on the NASTAR circuit. In my day it was different. The first two years were an initiation to see if you were worthy of joining the club. Using the same principle that produces soldiers from a boot camp, the rites began with humiliation. You were dubbed a "ski bunny," confined to a "bunny hill" and forced to wear a sweater with either snowflakes or reindeer knitted on the chest.

As part of a giant inside joke, novices were condemned to the rope tow, banned from using chair lifts. It was a vicious mountain gag, since it is impossible for anyone to ride a rope tow and maintain his or her composure. Many skiers left the sport early, shaken or discouraged by grinding through

three pairs of new gloves in an afternoon.

The experts would chuckle as they rode comfortably up the mountain knowing that only the hardy would survive. When you saw the little kid lose his grip near the top of the tow and slide down the line, taking out two dozen others in domino fashion, it gave you real satisfaction to have reached the intermediate stage.

However, it wasn't any easier when you finally reached the upper slopes. Remember, this was before the age of Thikol grooming machines and all-night sessions of mogul cutting. The only relief from deep bumps or breakable crust was a new storm. Grooming was something done by waves of sacrificial skiers packing down wind-blown crud and ice balls one track at a time. The experienced knew enough to stay in the lodge until the process was complete.

Advancing to expert status had its special pitfalls. Once you learned the rhythmic side-to-side turns known as Wedelen, they'd change the technique. First it was shortswing, then avalement. The ski school at Alpine Meadows was Austrian and it used counter-rotation. But at Heavenly Valley the French were rotating. And Sugar Bowl was using some variation out of San Francisco. Bump skiing is now just a matter of letting it all hang out. Back then it was disguised in a mass of terms ranging from up-unweighting to ruade. No one ever figured it out expect Stein Erickson.

At least the equipment was simple. Skis were black, boots were black and pants were black. Brown or dark blue were acceptable in a parka, but black was better. Despite crude materials like leather and wood, things seemed to last longer. Boots would make it through four or five seasons before the toes began to curl up further than boot trees would allow. Nowadays, using subtle color changes, modern manufacturers have rendered the new, indestructible fiberglass boots worthless after a single season. Status-conscious hot doggers would never be seen wearing 1979 blue once the new red and white models were released in '80. It just isn't done.

In terms of accessories, we used to rough it. There were no Ski Totes, Combi Grips or LeLassos. Skis had to be carried from your car to the slope by hand! There was only one model of pole. It was a crude device with a straight shaft, round basket and leather



Sometimes it seems more like a Marin County fad than a serious endeavor

strap—nothing like today's strapless shock absorber with 14 optional baskets. The ski security industry was nonexistent, but then so were ski thefts. However, in the age before ski brakes, there was the possibility of losing a ski as it rocketed off from the end of a broken safety strap. For everyone below it was a potentially fatal game of human darts with skiers scattering in all directions to avoid the misguided missile.

Après-ski also was a rather Spartan affair, limited to a fire, hot buttered

rum and an occasional singalong with friends. Today, after watching the video tape replay of your afternoon lesson, it's off to the wet T-shirt contest or the foos ball tourney. Condominiums and charter buses have given a whole new meaning to the term "mountain retreat." The only isolation you might find is the tanning room.

But every once in a while there's a small sign that some people are willing to return to those better days. As I rode up the chair at Boreal last spring, the fellow next to me pulled off the

earphones of his Astraltune to change cassettes. It was just long enough for me to tell him what it was like before night skiing and snowmaking machines. I explained that there were no lift lines, tickets were under ten dollars and you could park within a half mile of the lodge. Just before side two of Boz Skaggs began blaring out from the plastic tube around his neck, he seemed to appreciate what I was saying. And for a brief moment, in his eyes, I was a real skier, instead of just being old. □



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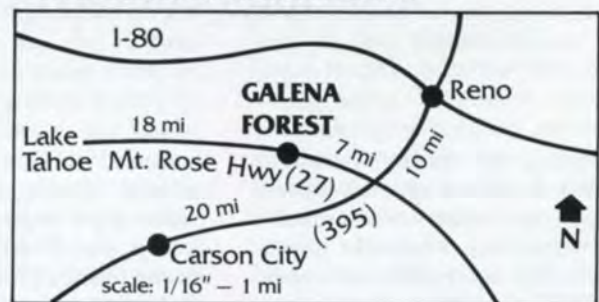
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By Fred Holabird

TIME IN A BOTTLE

Old time bottles that say Nevada are treasured by collectors and outhouse prospectors for their color, value and history.

There was a time when Nevadans always wanted their bottles full, especially in the case of the miner whose only after-work reward might be a few relaxing gulps of whiskey in the privacy of his privy.

One hundred years later, that person would be shocked to see a crowd of prospectors digging up his outhouse in search of that empty bottle. Today his old glass flask might be worth as much as the gold and silver samples he looked for in the mines.

Ranging in value from 10 cents to \$1,000 or more, Nevada's historic "embossed" bottles are increasingly popular among collectors who appreciate the glass for its design, color and history. Some enjoy the special challenge of collecting Nevada specimens. Nevada bottles are rare because the state's population traditionally has been sparse and scattered. Towns boomed, then disappeared, adding to the bottles' rarity and history's attractions.

Embossed bottles have raised lettering and designs that give the glass special meaning and value. Every bottle tells a story, of merchants who advertised their liquor, medicine or soda pop, and of ghost towns where buildings have since been destroyed by vandals and time. One such town was the Pershing County camp of Seven Troughs, where from 1907 to 1912 the Owl Pharmacy produced a bottle whose symbol was an embossed owl. Today that bottle could bring its owner between \$35 and \$100.



DALE SMITH

Soda bottle at left is a "maverick" for not telling its origin—Virginia City.

Or how about that "Stephens and Jose, Virginia City" soda bottle you might have found in the Virginia City dump? With a big "SJ" monogram on the back, it's worth up to \$100 or more.

Then there's a tall, amber, beautifully whittled whiskey bottle that is the prize of Nevada collectors—"Thomas Taylor & Co., Importers, Virginia N." In top condition it's worth \$600 to \$1,200 and for the rare green version, up to \$2,000.

But there is more to bottle collecting than money. Part of the lure is in the search, the pure fun of desert trips or combing old dumps for hidden treasures. There's the satisfaction of beating

the bulldozers to a bottle cache as a construction project begins, or wheeling and dealing at the local bottle shows. Then, of course, there's the color and history beaming from your windowsill.

Generally, the colors in old bottles are original. Only purple bottles, and some amber ones, have acquired their striking hues from years of lying forgotten in the sun.

The purple shading is the result of old time bottle makers' efforts to make their glass perfectly clear. The most transparent glass traditionally had an aqua color caused by iron oxide in the sand used in glass making. Bottle makers in 1880 began using manganese to counteract the iron. Originally clear, a bottle with manganese turns purple in the sun.

From 1914, when World War I cut off manganese supplies from Germany, to 1930, selenium was the most popular anti-iron agent. Those bottles take on an amber, straw-colored hue when exposed to the elements.

However, most bottle colors—aqua, brown, amber, olive-amber and olive-green—are original. Special tints were made by adding cobalt for blue glass, chromium or sulphur for yellow and green, nickel for purple or brown, copper for gold or red. These brightly colored containers were expensive to make and are relatively rare today.

You can tell where an old-time bottle was made by the markings on its base. For instance, the label "PCGW" signifies Pacific Coast Glass Works, while "WT&CO" denotes the Whitall-



DALE SMITH PHOTOS

Three styles used by Comstock druggist A.M. Cole between 1861 and 1908.

Tatum Company, the two San Francisco bottle makers responsible for about 90 percent of Nevada's embossed bottles. A few bottles were made in Ohio, others in the midwest, but none in Nevada itself.

Where and How to Find Them

Bottle hunting requires ingenuity, luck and a good understanding of your sources. You can prowl flea markets, antique stores and bottle shows, all potentially good places to buy or trade. You can watch for new freeway projects and get permission to dig before the blacktop goes down. Look for places where bottles were used, especially in towns. Ranches and isolated cabins are rarely productive.

Ghost towns that have produced good bottles include Eureka, Belleville, Candelaria and Hamilton, while current, larger towns like Virginia City, Carson City, and Reno also have good prospects.

Town dumps were heavily hit by bottle diggers in the hobby's heyday of

Soda bottles from Stephens & Jose of Virginia City (c.1865), Sparks Bottling Co. (c.1910), Tonopah Soda Works (c.1903), and H. Mau of Eureka (1880s).



Like the Owl Pharmacy on the right, druggist bottles are much prized.

1950 to 1965. Undaunted, the hardcore diggers have since turned to outhouses, which have produced the best finds of all. Old time residents found their outdoor stalls made excellent trashcans, not to mention secret drinking holes. Because of the old timers' backyard habits, the finest Nevada bottles have been found in old outhouses. The tossed-out bottles didn't get cracked or dinged as much as the ones thrown in dumps, where they were exposed to years of abuse and fire that spelled turmoil for glass.

Old dumps are generally public, but outhouses are most often on private property, so be sure to obtain permission before investigating. After receiving the property owner's O.K., check for sunken or soft spots in the yard. Using a four- to eight-foot steel rod as a probe, push down into the ground and feel and listen for glass or other debris.

If a probe feels promising, carefully remove the dirt with a shovel or small

(Continued on page 18)

HUNTERS & TRADERS

Three Leading Nevada Collectors.

JOHN TIBBETTS

Nevada bottles can turn up anywhere. In the ghost town of Delamar. Or in a dump in Dillsburg, Pennsylvania. Caliente's John Tibbetts, an avid collector, has a Nevada bottle from each place.

The much-traveled pride of his collection is a half-pint whiskey flask from the Gem Saloon in Elko that was found in a construction dump in Pennsylvania. Tibbetts found his prize when an eastern collector advertised to see if anyone was interested in buying a bottle from a small Nevada town.

"He didn't know what he was selling and until I started checking with other collectors, I didn't know what I was buying," says Tibbetts. So far, it's the only one known to exist.

Tibbetts says collectors are attracted to Nevada bottles because they are so rare. "Being a sparsely populated state, there just weren't many bottles around that said 'Nevada,'" he says. "Bottle collectors keep looking for an embossed bottle from Pioche because it was the right period of time, but no one's found one. I don't think they made one, but we keep hoping."

Except for the embossed bottle from Delamar, Tibbetts has gathered his 65 rare Nevada bottles by trading with other collectors. Oh, he digs for bottles all right. Days off from his job at the Nevada Girls Training Center in Caliente, you'll find Tibbetts and his family poking around dumps and walking old wagon roads in Lincoln County. Anything collectible Tibbetts finds will be swapped or sold and the money used to buy Nevada bottles.

For the Tibbetts, collecting runs in the family. Eleven-year-old Kerrie is collecting a drugstore bottle from each of the 50 states; she has only five more to go. And ten-year-old Tracey is \$50 richer because a footstool she found in



LENARD SMITH

John Tibbetts

the city dump was made of old-fashioned coffee cans—and a collector paid \$7.50 apiece for them.

Tibbetts says his basement is jammed with collectibles. But he knows that somewhere there's another collector anxious to add a milk can or fruit jar to his collection. And maybe that collector wants to get rid of a funny little Nevada bottle found in a Pennsylvania dump.

—Ann Henderson

CONNIE SCHILLING

Connie Schilling is a bottle collector who would rather trade than dig. "We've been out digging a couple of times, but we didn't turn up anything except busted glass. I'm just not that keen on it," she says, laughing.

Schilling comes from a family of collectors. Her husband John, director of the Nevada Bureau of Mines, collects old tokens. Her 17-year-old daughter Lisa collects dog tags. Connie, librarian at Elmcrest Elementary in Reno, is a respected collector of embossed Nevada bottles.

"When we first moved West, I'd pick up every purple bottle I saw, not really knowing anything about them," says Schilling, who is originally from Maine. When the bottles began to pile up, John encouraged her to specialize. "He suggested that there were a lot of embossed Nevada bottles, and that's all I collect now."

Like a true Yankee trader, Schilling gathers bottles by barter and buys. She favors bottle shows, eschews most antique stores ("they're pretty well wiped out") and declines to knock on doors. She came upon one of her best finds, an Owl Pharmacy bottle from Seven Troughs, at a Reno flea market.



DAVID MOORE

Connie Schilling

Her colorful collection of 150 bottles displayed in windows and cupboards includes a score of milk bottles from old businesses like the Bonnie Dairy in Fallon and the Wheelerville Dairy near Reno. Two of her favorite whiskey bottles come from the Kane Cafe and the Waldorf Tavern in Reno. She picked up each for \$2.50 in 1968; today each is worth about \$50. There's a flask from the Washington Bar in Tonopah and a Delaware Punch soda bottle from Las Vegas among many others.

Often her best sources are local diggers. "If I've got one with a ding on the lip or a crack on the bottom, I'll buy a new one and use the beat-up one for a trader," Schilling says. "Most collectors don't like to sell. They would rather trade and upgrade their collections."

—David Moore

WILLIAM WRIGHT

When William Wright has a few days free from his job as general manager of Nevada's largest newspaper, the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, he puts on his old clothes and wanders out to the ghost towns.

Wright is a Nevada history buff. He collects old bottles, and has one of the state's finest collections. He also collects newspapers, hotel keys, stock certificates, trade tokens and anything else that contains a gem of the Silver State's past. He even collects the stir sticks used in drinks of hotels that have faded into history.

"My problem is I like too many different things. I've got a backyard full of stuff most people can't even identify," Wright says.

His interest in history has led to



WAYNE KODEY

William Wright

Wright's appointment to the boards of the Nevada State Museum, the Lost City Museum and the Department of Museums and History. He also lobbied successfully during the 1979 Legislature for the construction of a state museum in Southern Nevada.

Yet Wright, 63, had no interest in history at all when he moved to Nevada in 1941 to accept a job as an advertising salesman with the R-J. It was only after a few hunting trips into Nevada's vast wilderness that Wright began to pick up "pretty bottles." Eventually he began to scour through ghost towns, once even taking a 3,000-mile vacation without ever leaving Nevada.

"They say people who move to Nevada become more Nevadan than native Nevadans," he says with a grin.

Wright is famous among his collecting colleagues for his range and persistence. Says Connie Schilling of Reno, "Sometimes I'll ask in some small place if they have any tokens or bottles, and they'll say, 'Well, I save everything I get for Bill Wright.'"

Wright likes nothing better than getting out by himself in the middle of a decaying ghost town. There he can imagine what the town looked like during its thriving days. From his knowledge of history, he sometimes can stand in the midst of rubble and describe what the old buildings looked like.

"Everyone should have a vocation and an avocation," Wright says. "You should do things entirely different from what you do at work. You'll be happier."

What are people going to be collecting in the future?

"Hotel credit cards are going to be of real value," Wright concludes.

—Ed Vogel

(Continued from page 16)

digging tool. Should a bottle turn up, dig around it and take it out by hand. Don't smash your shovel into solid objects; dig around them.

In deep holes, dig a shelf to stand on. You can use a canvas to capture dirt at the top to make cleanup easy. When you're done, refill the hole; be sure not to leave open holes or damage the nearby landscape.

Every Bottle Tells A Story

Whether you enjoy rumaging around antique outhouses or visiting shows or bottle shops, you can enjoy the overview of Nevada history—the most exciting element for most collectors—that comes with each piece of glass.

For instance, a bottle with the name of F. H. Phelps, Carson City, reflects the erratic nature of the state's early business world. Phelps was an employee of the Carson City Mint in 1877 when he decided to enter the drugstore business. But he had at least three competitors, and even though Carson had a population of about 9,000, Phelps found it tough going. His business lasted only two years, so a bottle embossed with his name brings joy (and \$10 to \$20) to a collector.

Other Nevada druggists were more successful. S. J. Hodgkinson came to Nevada from Missouri in 1860 and opened a Reno drugstore in 1884. In four years he and his backers recouped their investment, and Hodgkinson enjoyed 30 years in the drug business and local affairs. He was a founder of the University of Nevada and the Reno Fire Department. He served as fire chief, procuring the city's first horse drawn hose wagon. In the meantime he produced plenty of bottles, and his "S. J. Hodgkinson" models are quite common.

Druggists in the early mining towns of Ruby Hill, Tuscarora, Delamar, Tonopah, Eureka, Ely and Goldfield also embossed their bottles, as did those in the railroad towns of Winnemucca, Elko and Yerington.

Many companies bottled their own soda water. Mineral water and sparkling sodas and ciders were popular in the 1870s, '80s and '90s and are now returning to popularity with such brands as Perrier.

Soda water was probably bottled as early as 1860 in Nevada, but the first merchant to emboss bottles with his name was W. S. Wright in Virginia City. Wright ran a soda works there from

(Continued on page 58)

Desert Bottle House

Located anywhere else, this island of memorabilia would be called a junkyard, but in Rhyolite it's living history.

By Jason Rubinstein

Evan Thompson III sits with his family on the front step of his 73-year-old bottle house in the ghost town of Rhyolite.

"You probably think I have a lot of time to sit around and do nothing," Thompson says. "I don't. It's a full blown job just to stay alive here. Only a handful of people in town, miles to the nearest water source, and having to do everything yourself.

"But I wouldn't have it any other way. I love this old bottle house and ghost town and the free life it represents."

Across the road is one of those enormous desert views that won't quit. Nothing moves; nothing grabs the eye. Up the road are the stark remnants of Rhyolite, the "Magic City," once a major southern Nevada boom town. Today the city's era of plenty, which lasted less than a decade, is represented by a house made of 50,000 bottles.

The bottle house is a monument to the ingenuity of one Tom Kelly, an itinerant miner and bartender who drifted into Rhyolite during its heyday. He decided to stay for a while, and since construction materials were expensive, he opted in 1907 to build his own house out of the beer and champagne bottles that littered the town site. He lived in his bottled home until 1912 or 1913, when he abandoned it and disappeared into history, like the town itself.

The bottle house probably would have disappeared too, but the improvement association of the nearby town of Beatty recognized its historical value

and bought it for \$2.45 back taxes and \$5.35 paperwork. Around 1925, 20th Century Fox used the house for a Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., movie and slightly restored it.

For the next 29 years the house remained vacant except for the occasional overnight desert rat until Evan "Tommy" Thompson arrived in September 1954.

Thompson was born March 13, 1887, in the coal fields in Wales. His parents brought him to Stillicom, Washington, at the age of five. His father prospered, becoming a millionaire in the sand and gravel business, but Tommy preferred the life of an adventurer.

At age 16 he left home to become a musician. He joined the Merchant Marines and circled the world on the *Flyer*, then the fastest ship in the world. During Prohibition he joined the infamous Howard Street Gang so he could play in the San Francisco speakeasies. He traveled the country, played for Al Capone and vaudeville with Amos and Andy.

In the process Thompson collected a wife and family. He did the family tent show circuit, performing for eggs, bacon and beans. ("Free to get in, 5 cents to get out," was his line.) He traveled by horse and buggy and in Model T's that had to be pushed up the hills.

Thompson gained a measure of fame in the early 1940s when he wore a tuxedo, monocle and top hat playing *the Dr. Pepper* for California. The highlight of his career was when he

promoted the soft drink by walking an elephant from the Midwest to Los Angeles.

He was again playing music in the 1950s when he took a stint in Beatty. His wife Mary was having breathing problems, and the dry Nevada air put new life in her. When he discovered the bottle house, Tommy, Mary and his grandson, Evan, moved in permanently, and the old bottle house had a new lease on life.

Thompson observed the few tourists who drifted by from Death Valley to look at Rhyolite, and his old tent show instincts lit up. He started playing his accordion to attract people and telling stories about "Tommy's Bottle House" for a few coins. He soon was selling rocks. Then he collected antiques from the countryside and turned the house into a museum, charging 25-cent donations. He even constructed a broken bottle village next to the house and swamped the building with curios. Located anywhere else, this island of memorabilia would be called a junkyard; in Rhyolite, it's living history.

By the time Thompson died in 1976 at age 89, the future of the bottle house was assured at least for another generation.

Evan Thompson III knew the bottle house as his home. He had traveled around the world with the Navy and sampled the high life of the big city, but he still found the magic best in Rhyolite.

At age 42 his routine is well established. Evan, his wife and two children tend the 40,000 to 50,000 tourists who now wander through each year, admiring the house's collection of antiques and bottled walls. The bottle house remains desert-worn, but in good repair. Evan greets the visitors and spins yarns handed down from his Grandpa and the Rhyolite ghosts that still whisper in the winds drifting across the desert.

"I'm my own boss, I work right out of my house with my family," says Thompson. "No one looks down my neck, and I never worry about being laid off. I've got plenty of people to talk to—from all over the world—and plenty of privacy. No stop signs, no noise, no telephones.

"I'm up at the crack of dawn every morning and jog along that highway. When you see that morning sun light up the mountains orange and red and smell that good desert air, you know you're alive and living." □

NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY; INSET: JASON RUBINSTEIN



That may be builder Tom Kelly in the doorway in 1907. Inset: current residents Evan and Kathleen Thompson and daughter Eirianedd relax on the steps.

RHYOLITE, THE MAGIC CITY

The old camp of Rhyolite, known nowadays for Evan Thompson's bottle house and a colorful mission-style railroad depot, was once a desert city raging with gold fever where stock speculation usually was more profitable than mine production.

Rhyolite was a product of the Death Valley and southern Nevada gold rushes of the early 1900s. Several "canvas towns" sprang up in the district around 1904, but alert traders concluded that one major city would be better for business. So in 1905 free lots were distributed to merchants from the surrounding camps, and Rhyolite became a bustling, ostentatious town.

In 1905 masons were paid a dollar an hour to construct a three-story, \$50,000 office building of stone; a bank spent \$60,000 for another three-story building; and a fine railroad station was built from stone hauled all the way from Las Vegas, 120 miles to the south.

Three railroads descended on the town. There was a stock exchange with 75 members, a bottling works, modern telephone exchange, ice

plants, newspapers, a symphony orchestra, an opera house, and, of course, enough saloons to keep the town's nearly 10,000 souls happy.

The red light district featured girls "clean from the Barbary Coast." The district burst its seams until the Western Federation of Miners protested to the local government that prostitution was being practiced in the decent residential neighborhoods of Rhyolite, and declared it was the duty of every miner to uphold absolutely clean moral conditions in his immediate surroundings.

Local officials set new boundaries, but they needn't have bothered. The 1906 San Francisco earthquake and the national financial panic of 1907 dried up the outside capital that kept Rhyolite hopping. By 1910 there were no street lights, the water company and banks had closed and the population dropped to under 1,000. By 1920 Rhyolite had only 14 inhabitants. The rows of fine wood structures have vanished, and the skeletons of once handsome stone and concrete buildings now mar the tranquil horizon. —JR

The Donner Party

Be glad you weren't invited.



An excerpt from George R. Stewart's **Ordeal By Hunger**.

In the summer of 1846 the Donner Party left Springfield, Illinois, for the promised land of California. The next April, when its last members stumbled into Sutter's Fort, only 42 of the original 87 emigrants had survived their ordeal in the snowbound Sierra.

The story of the Donner Party was presented in 1936 by George R. Stewart in his great book, Ordeal by Hunger. The following excerpt traces the party's journey from the Truckee Meadows to Donner Lake.

Near the present site of Wells, Charles Stanton rode ahead to Sutter's, where he enlisted two Indian vaqueros and procured mules and supplies. On his return Stanton came upon the party as it arrived at the meadows, casting his lot with the straggling band of pioneers.

To the plucky little rescuer the condition of the company which he had come to save must have been a shock. He himself in the noblest spirit of self-sacrifice and social duty had ridden back across the fateful pass, to save—what? It was no longer even the fairly unified party which he had left. Now under the stress of circumstance almost too great to be borne, the cruel individualism of the westerner had gained the upper hand, at least with many of the emigrants. These, more and more, fought wolfishly for their own families alone. An old man had been allowed to die on the trail; babies with tongues thick from thirst had been refused water. To rescue these people Stanton had come riding like a knight upon a quest. Having once delivered his provisions, he would have been justified, any one would think, in

taking Indians and mules, and spurring for the pass. Three days would have taken him to safety in Bear Valley. Instead, he took up Virginia Reed behind him on the mule, and thus they came into the broad-stretching Truckee Meadows.

Here the company reassembled, and the emigrants encamped in the fine grassland which reached along the river for several miles. They were really leaving the arid country behind now; on the mountains round about the meadows pine trees were growing. This was the best place to recruit cattle before attempting the passage of the mountains, and so the emigrants faced another dilemma. It had come to October 20. The weather was cloudy and threatening, and some snow had fallen on the higher mountains around them. Prudence bade them press on with all haste. But prudence also bade them stay, and let the oxen rest and build up their strength. To attempt the passage of the mountains with worn-out teams was only to invite catastrophe. Above Truckee (Donner) Lake, as Stanton could tell them, the trail went right up over broken domes of granite. It was steep, worse even than the Wahsatch, much worse. Even with the strongest oxen it was a struggle. Every one had to double or triple teams, and many used windlasses and all sorts of devices with ropes.

And more strongly than even the threat of snow, what had happened in the last few days must be considered. On the Humboldt they had gained four days on Hastings, but coming up the canyon of the Truckee he had made it in three days and they had taken four, some of them even five. The teams had

been pressed too hard and were at the breaking point. Then, too, Stanton, who of all the company had the best right to make the decision, spoke out for their taking the chance of waiting a few days. At Sutter's the people said that the pass would really not be closed till the middle of November. Hastings, every one knew, had got through on horseback the year before, toward the end of December. This season his company crossing the summit about October 7 had met a heavy snowstorm, but had got through all right. At this time of year the snow would melt between storms. So they took Stanton's advice, although some of them had misgivings, and they let their cattle pasture upon the rich grass of Truckee Meadows.

Then death struck again. The two brothers-in-law, Pike and Foster, sat by their camp-fire as Pike cleaned a pepperbox pistol. Some one called for wood to replenish the fire, and Pike rose to get it. He handed the pistol to Foster, but as he did so, it exploded, and he himself got the bullet in the back. In an hour he was dead.

They buried Pike, and his burial showed the progressing rout of the company. Halloran had been laid to rest in a made coffin; Snyder had been wrapped in a shroud with a board above and a board beneath; but Pike was merely laid into the ground. Sorrow fell on the company with his death. Halloran, Snyder, and Hardkoop had been unmarried; Wolfinger had been childless; but Pike left a widow and two babies. Foster, the accidental slayer, was now the only grown man left among the twelve members of the Murphy family.

Snow fell as they buried Pike. Still



NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

they stayed in Truckee Meadows, restless, their eyes shifting from the clouded wintry sky to the gaunt, rib-lined flanks of the oxen. To go or to stay? Stanton's reasoning still held them, but after about five days they began to get under way. They did not leave in a body, but the more nervous and those with the better cattle got off first. No one thought much any more of having the company act as a whole.

First of all went the Breens. The luck of the Irish had been with them; they had lost fewest cattle from the Indians and being in the best condition to move had fretted most at having to halt. With them went their friend Dolan, the Kesebergs, and the wagonless Eddys. Stanton, the Reeds, the Graveses, and the Murphys made a second section. The Donners, solid people and not to be stampeded, took their time, and brought up the rear.

For the first time, from Stanton's story, they had some detail of the road ahead. A day's journey above the meadows it crossed the river for the forty-ninth time in the eighty miles, then swung sharply to the right, left the river to avoid another canyon, and crossed a fairly easy range of mountains. Next it descended into a beautiful little valley, crossed a divide, and went on southwards over rolling, heavily forested country with the main range of the Sierra looming up on the right. Then it came to a cabin built two years before by winter-bound emigrants. A quarter of a mile above the cabin was Truckee Lake, and from the lake you could look up at the great wall of the pass. The whole distance from the meadows to the pass was close to fifty miles.

At the first camp which the leading section made after finally leaving the river, an Indian crept up to the cattle and began shooting arrows. He struck nineteen oxen, but failed to kill any of them. Eddy caught him in the act, and drew a bead. At the crack of the rifle the Indian leaped high into the air and with a horrible shriek fell down a bank into some willows. The score was evened a little for so many cattle.

"The snow fell steadily and fast, mixing with cutting sleet. No one needed to say anything; all knew what had happened. By morning a foot of new snow had fallen."

But in the game which the emigrants were playing against Time, the score could not be evened by a rifle bullet, and it stood heavily against them. During those last days of October snow fell as they moved along. The cattle had to nose through it for grass. On the distant mountains it lay white upon the pine branches. Winter was in the air; it was bitter cold, and the sky was bleak.

On a steep downward pitch a front axle broke on George Donner's family wagon. They hauled little Georgia out through the back of the wagon-sheets, and then dug madly into the heaped-up mass of household goods, calling to

baby Eliza, who did not answer. At last they pulled her out, limp, smothered, and unconscious for the moment, but not really hurt.

Abandon the broken wagon! Abandon all the wagons! Let the cattle fend for themselves. Take the children and the horses and push on for life. Get across the pass at any cost—the only chance! Perhaps such thoughts of panic ran through their minds. But the German farmer is not the man lightly to surrender his household goods. Hastily the two brothers cut timber for an axle. Just as they were finishing its shaping a chisel slipped, and the blood spurted from a long gash across the back of George Donner's hand. It was bound up, and he made light of it; there were other things, he said, more to be worried about than a cut hand. There were!

By the time of this accident the Breens far ahead must have been approaching the lake which lay beneath the pass. As they marched, clouds rested upon the high mountains to their right, but occasionally the clouds lifted displaying solid masses of snow. On the night of October 31 they made camp shortly before reaching the cabin. Snow lay on the ground, an inch or more deep. The cattle could not find grass, and made a poor meal of boughs which the men and boys cut for them.

The morning was very cold, and the clouds still hung over the mountains ahead. The Breens and Dolan, the Eddys and the Kesebergs, pushed on. Then the clouds, as if in mockery, rolled away and revealed towering peaks and the pass itself solidly covered with snow. This sight almost sank the emigrants into despair, but still

they went on. They passed the deserted cabin, and followed along the north shore of the lake, where the road ran so close that at times the wagons almost seemed to be toppling into the water. They worked on beyond the head of the lake, but the snow was soft and deep, and deepened still as the road rose toward the pass. They reached a point which they thought to be only three miles from the summit, but the snow was five feet deep, and they had no way of telling where the trail was. They could go no further. They turned about and got back to the cabin, which was only a mile in advance of where they had camped the night before. It seemed the end.

The Breens took possession of the cabin. The others camped as best they could. The day had been clear, and in the evening the sky was bright with a nearly full moon. But around it was a ring, and by that sign every one knew that they should expect a storm. Their folklore was right, and the Breens soon found that the cabin roof of pine boughs merely impeded the rain slightly. They took refuge in their wagons. The rain fell in torrents. All the next day they remained in camp, saying hopefully,

like the plains-dwellers that they were, that the rain would wash away the snow and melt it down so that they could cross. At dark those of the second section came up, Stanton with them. The Donners did not arrive.

On the next morning the weather was better. Some of the emigrants were in despair and made no further effort, but with Stanton and the Indians as guides those who had previously made the trial and some of the others turned their faces toward the pass. They yoked up the teams, and started with the wagons. But even near the lake the snow was three feet deep by this time, and the oxen after three days of browsing upon branches were weaker than ever. As the men laboriously broke out a way for the wagons, the snow seemed to grow deeper with every yard of advance toward the pass. Soon even the mules were floundering, up to their sides in snow. The emigrants saw now how foolish their hope had been that the rain would beat down the snow, and they realized, what mountaineers would have known before, that at this time of year rain in the valleys meant snow on the heights. As soon as this knowledge had been

forced upon them, every one saw that they must abandon the wagons, pack what goods they could upon the oxen, and press on afoot.

Already it was getting late in the day, and the indecision over what should be taken along and what left behind caused still further delay. One spoke for a box of tobacco, and another argued for a bale of calico. The packing of the oxen took more time, for the animals were unused to such procedure and objected by bucking off the unskillfully slung packs, or by lying down in the snow and wallowing. Children were so numerous that almost every adult was burdened by carrying one of them. Keseberg had to have a horse, for he had hurt his foot and could not walk. They hoisted him up, and tied his leg up to the saddle in a sort of sling.

At last they got under way again. Clear ahead was the gap at the summit, and it seemed no great distance as one looked at it. Carrying children, driving unruly oxen, and floundering through snow waist-deep, they got ahead but slowly. The road, if here on the pass it could be called a road at all, was buried deep under the snow, so that Stanton and the Indians could follow only its general route. A certain mule proved to be the best trail-breaker; so with little Patty Reed clinging on behind him one of the Indians went ahead, the mule plunging into drifts but making progress. The emigrants advanced on foot for a distance which they thought to be two or three miles; they must by this time have been well beyond and above the lake; the summit as they guessed from looking ahead was anywhere from one to three miles farther. But the labor of the advance was killing, and it came near evening. The leading mule began to plunge headlong into snow-filled gullies, and the Indian could no longer keep to any sort of road. So everyone halted while this Indian and Stanton went ahead to find a route. The two pushed on, located the road, and actually reached the summit. For the second time Stanton came back in the face of death to rescue the company.

In the meantime the halted emigrants had become somewhat demoralized. They were all so worn out with carrying children, that resting seemed best of all. Then some one found a dead pine full of pitch, and set fire to it. The flame leaped up into the higher branches, and the poor, half-frozen women and children gathered about its

(Continued on page 62)

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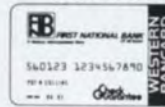
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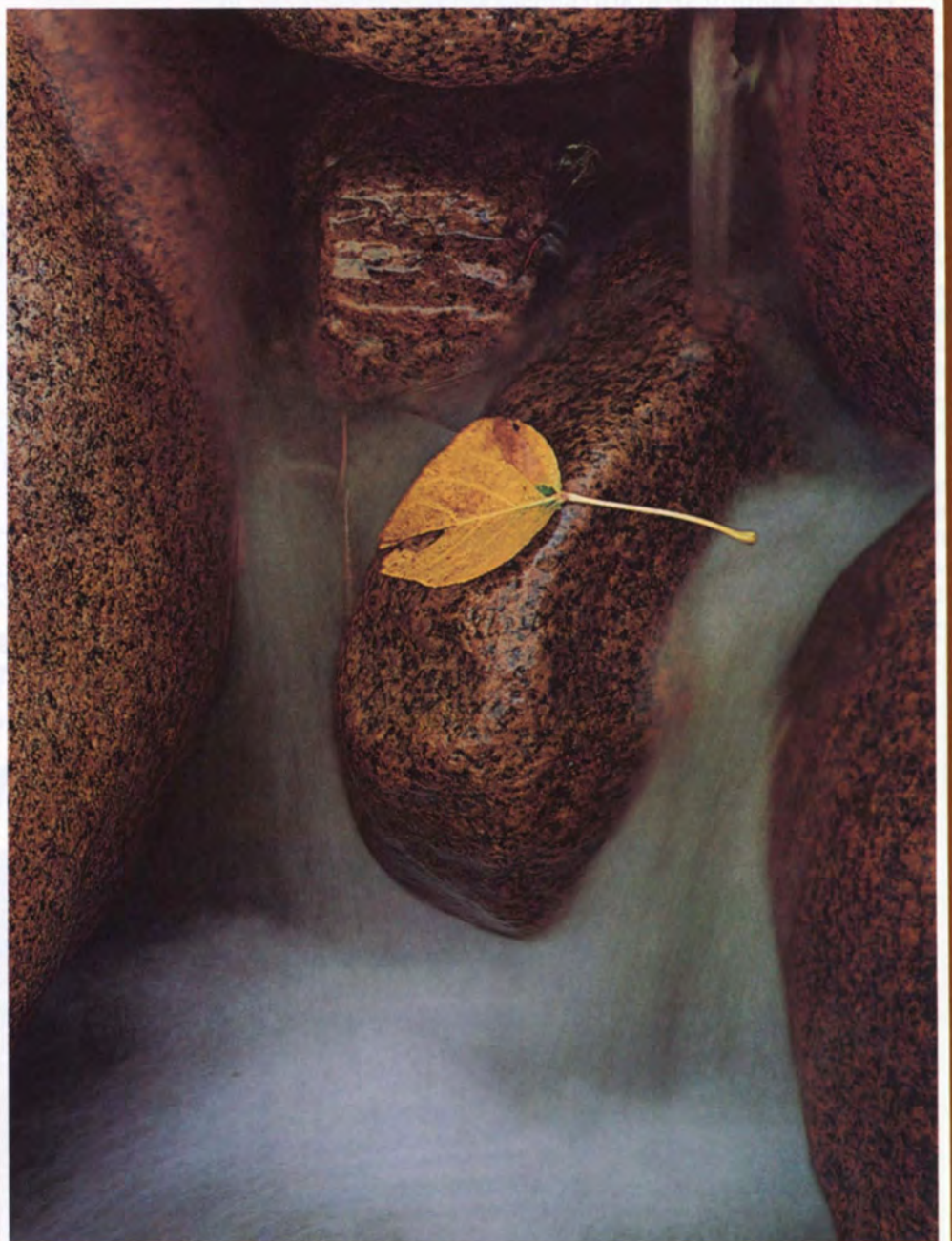
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Misty fingers creep down the ridges of the Ruby Mountains to announce the beginning of winter in Elko County.
By Joe Royer



Aspen leaf finds a cool spot in Galena Creek after a hot Sierra summer. By Harry Upson

HORSE SENSE & NONSENSE

The case of the lively corpse. By Harry E. Webb

It was my misfortune not to have been one of the group during the following incident but I will vouch for its veracity.

Seems an old prospector, known only as "Hardtack," was found dead way up in a mountain in midwinter, and being that the bushy whiskered old fellow's body was found sitting lifelike at his table (his untouched breakfast frozen as solid as was the corpse) it was presumed Hardtack had suffered a heart failure several days before.

It took some time for the undertaker in Pomeroy to find anyone who would tackle the job of getting the body to him for burial. At last a couple fellows were found who reluctantly took the chore, so hiring a wide Cutter Sleigh,

with plenty of snow clearance, and a strong team at a livery barn the men set out through the deep snow for the distant mountain.

By mid-afternoon they were on their way back but since having an icy, lifelike corpse sitting between them under their laprobe wasn't exactly to their liking, they stopped at a wayside saloon for a much needed drink. Tying the team to the hitch pole they hurried away from the gloomy atmosphere of the sleigh.

As one hot whiskey followed another the pair regaled their eager listeners with an account of their rigorous as well as spooky trip, which gave a couple pranksters an idea. Slipping out they hid the corpse behind the saloon

then one, being bushy whiskered, took Hardtack's place and pulled the bear-skin robe up to his chest just as it had been with the corpse. The other stayed peeking from behind the saloon's corner to see if the undertaker's helpers noticed the switch when they got in the sleigh.

Trouble was, nothing happened. The men came out with a bottle to keep them bolstered until they were rid of their unwelcome passenger, and without a glance at the corpse hurried on their way.

They hadn't gone a mile when the biting frost reminded the driver he needed a drink. After a hefty slug he passed the bottle to his partner. The partner was lowering the contents a bit too fast when the driver said, "Hey! Not so fast, that's gotta last us a while! Pass 'er back."

The partner had been put in a jocular mood by the liquid spirits so when passing back the bottle he wanted to exercise his hospitality by offering the corpse a drink. Shoving the bottle among the hedge of whiskers he said, "Here old man, have a drink on the house."

"Damn good idea," replied the "corpse" as a hand came from under the laprobe and grasped the bottle. From that moment on all hands were a bit confused as to just what happened but the "corpse" seemed the clearest on events. He remembered hearing horrible twin yells and glimpsing a shadowy pair diving out of the sleigh. Worse, the fearful yells had spooked the team which was running like crazy towards home.

It took several hundred yards for the prankster to get untangled from the robe, climb out over the high, curved dash and work his way down on the doubletree and recover the trailing lines. Once he had the runaway team under control he looked for the badly-needed bottle. But that nerve-settling item was no doubt somewhere in the snow along the erratic route.

For a moment he thought the safest thing to do was keep going but finally turned back and picked up the boiling-mad pair who were trudging their way back to the saloon. Before bothering to get the real corpse loaded back in its place of honor the trio headed directly for the bar. As the pseudo corpse said later, "I'll tell the cockeyed world we all three sure needed some drinks to quiet our jumping nerves and I don't mean maybe!" □

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by Fred Nathaniel Fletcher
with foreword by Everett W. Harris

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Early Nevada discusses the brief visit of Spanish missionary Fray Francisco de Escalante, and the arrival of fur trappers and traders such as Jedediah Smith, Peter Skene Ogden, and Joseph Walker.

Fletcher also relates the experiences of the Bartleson-Bidwell party of 1841, the first group of California-bound emigrants to cross the Nevada desert, and devotes two chapters to John C. Frémont, "the first scientific explorer to map the country and to record its characteristics" during his government surveys of 1843-44 and 1845.

The author quotes extensively from journals and diaries kept by the explorers and emigrants.

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Frank Sinatra, 11/6-12

Ann-Margret, 11/13-26

Paul Anka, 11/27-12/10

Showroom dark, 12/11-25

Paul Anka, 12/26-31

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Engelbert, 11/6-19

Mac Davis-Lonnie Shore, 11/20-12/3

Johnny Mathis, 12/4-10

Dean Martin, 12/11-17

RIVIERA

734-5110

Neil Sedaka-Bernadette Peters, thru 11/12

Anne Murray-Larry Gatlin, 11/13-26

Buddy Hackett-Pia Zadora, 11/27-12/3

Liza Minnelli, 12/4-13

Tony Orlando, 12/26-1/7

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SAHARA

735-4242

Jerry Lewis-Buddy Greco, dinner, thru 11/5

Buddy Hackett-Joey Heatherton, midnight,
thru 11/5

Jack Jones, dinner, 11/6-13

Flip Wilson-Mel Torme, midnight, 11/6-13

Johnny Carson & The Sahara Girls, 11/14-16

George Carlin & The Sahara Girls, 11/17-26

Helen Reddy-Fred Travlena, 11/27-12/4

Johnny Carson & The Sahara Girls, 12/5-6

Flip Wilson-Joey Heatherton, 12/7-17

Jerry Lewis-Jack Jones, 12/18-24

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12/27-31

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735-4111

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Roger Miller, 11/19-12/2

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831-1511

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Frankie Fanelli, 11/11-30
Magic If, 12/2-21

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Neil Sedaka, 11/26-12/4
Sammy Davis Jr.-Rita Moreno, 12/5-9
Dave Mason, 12/10-11
Sammy Davis Jr.-Rita Moreno, 12/12-18
Kenny Rogers, 12/26-1/1

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588-2411

Esquires, thru 11/2
Ed Diamond & Company, 11/3-1/4

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831-1111

Dotson, Lee & Middleton, thru 11/10
The Motifs, 11/4-23
Steel Wheels, 11/12-24
Young Country, 11/25-12/14
Triple Play, 11/26-12/15
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SAHARA TAHOE

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RENO, SPARKS, CARSON CITY

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9th Creation, 12/2-1/11

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786-3663

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Four Tunes, 12/9-1/4
Smash, 12/15-1/4
CC Jones, 12/24-1/12

HAROLDS CLUB

329-0881

Honky Tonk, thru 11/2

HARRAH'S RENO

329-4422

Loretta Lynn, thru 11/5
Merle Haggard, 11/6-12
Dionne Warwick, 11/13-19
Tony Orlando, 11/20-12/3
Natalie Cole, 12/4-10
The Dirt Band, 12/11-19
Debbie Reynolds, 12/27-1/7

MAPES

323-1611

The Good Life, thru 11/10
David Proud, 11/11-30

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Hello Hollywood Hello

Lion's Den:

Liz Damon's Orient Express-Shazam, thru 11/11

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Zaras, 12/3-23

Gary & Sandy's Common Ground, 12/3-1/13

Spun Gold, 12/24-1/13

JOHN ASCUAGA'S NUGGET, SPARKS

358-2233

The Lelands, thru 11/4
Judy Lynn, 11/5-15

ONSLow

786-7310

Myles Sherman, thru 11/2
Two of Clubs, 11/4-30
JoAnn Jordan, 12/2-1/4

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882-1890

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Clyde Amsler, 11/3-16
Garfin Gathering, 11/17-30
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322-1111

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Winnemucca: Winners Inn, 623-2511

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Nevada's area code is 702.

THE FIRST PIANO IN CAMP

Sam Davis, once the state's best known author and newspaperman, wrote this Christmas classic in the early 1900s.



ILLUSTRATION BY AXELLE FORTIER

In 1859—it might have been five years earlier or later; this is not history for the public schools—there was a little camp about ten miles from Pioche, occupied by upwards of three hundred miners, every one of whom might have packed his prospecting implements and left for more inviting fields any time before sunset. When the day was over, these men did not rest from their labors, like the honest New England agriculturist, but sang, danced, gambled, and shot each other, as the mood seized them.

One evening the report spread along Main Street (which was the only street) that three men had been killed at Silver Reef and that the bodies were coming in. Presently a lumbering old conveyance labored up the hill, drawn by a couple of horses, well worn out with their pull. The cart contained a good-sized box, and no sooner did its outlines become visible through the glimmer of a stray light here and there, than it began to affect the idlers. Death always enforces respect, and even though no one had caught sight of the remains, the crowd gradually became subdued, and when the horses came to a standstill, the cart was immediately surrounded. The driver, however, was not in the least impressed with the solemnity of his commission.

"All there?" asked one.

"Haven't examined. Guess so."

The driver filled his pipe and lit it as he continued.

"Wish the bones and load had gone

over the grade."

A man who had been looking on stepped up to the man at once.

"I don't know who you have in that box, but if they happen to be any friends of mine, I'll lay you alongside."

"We can mighty soon see," said the teamster, coolly. "Just bust the lid off, and if they happen to be the men you want, I'm here."

The two looked at each other for a moment, and the crowd gathered a little closer, anticipating trouble.

"I believe that dead men are entitled to good treatment, and when you talk about hoping to see corpses go over a bank, all I have to say is, that it will be better for you if the late lamented ain't my friends."

"We'll open the box. I don't take back what I've said, and if my language don't suit your ways of thinking, I guess I can stand it."

With these words the teamster began to pry up the lid. He got a board off, and then pulled out some old rags. A strip of something dark, like rosewood, presented itself.

"Eastern coffins, by thunder!" said several, and the crowd looked quite astonished.

Some more boards flew up, and the man who was ready to defend his friend's memory shifted his weapon a little. The cool manner of the teamster had so irritated him that he made up his mind to pull his weapon at the first sight of the dead, even if the deceased was his worst and oldest enemy.

Presently the whole of the box cover was off, and the teamster, clearing away the packing, revealed to the astonished group the top of something which puzzled all alike.

"Boys," said he, "this is a pianner."

A general shout of laughter went up, and the man who had been so anxious to enforce respect for the dead muttered something about feeling dry, and the keeper of the nearest bar was several ounces better off by the time the boys had given the joke all the attention it called for.

Had a dozen dead men been in the box, their presence in the camp could not have occasioned half the excitement that the arrival of that lonely piano caused. By the next morning it was known that the instrument was to grace a hurdy-gurdy saloon, owned by Tom Goskin, the leading gambler in the place. It took nearly a week to get this wonder on its legs, and the owner was the proudest individual in the State. It rose gradually from a recumbent to an upright position, amid a confusion of tongues, after the manner of the tower of Babel.

Of course everybody knew just how such an instrument should be put up. One knew where the "off hind leg" should go, and another was posted on the "front piece."

Scores of men came to the place every day to assist.

"I'll put the bones in good order."

"If you want the wires tuned up, I'm the boy."

"I've got music to feed it for a month."

Another brought a pair of blankets for a cover, and all took the liveliest interest in it. It was at last in a condition for business.

"It's been showin' its teeth all the week. We'd like to have it spit out something."

Alas! there wasn't a man to be found who could play upon the instrument. Goskin began to realize that he had a losing speculation on his hands. He had a fiddler and a Mexican who thrummed a guitar. A pianist would have made his orchestra complete. One day a three-card monte player told a friend confidentially that he could "knock any amount of music out of the piano if he only had it alone a few hours to get his hand in." This report spread about the camp, but on being questioned he vowed that he didn't know a note of music. It was noted, however, as a suspicious circumstance that he often hung about the instrument and looked upon it longingly, like a hungry man gloating over a beefsteak in a restaurant window. There was no doubt but that this man had music in his soul, perhaps in his fingers'-ends, but did not dare to make a trial of his strength after the rules of harmony had suffered so many years of neglect. So the fiddler kept on with his jigs, and the Mexican pawed his discordant guitar, but no man had the nerve to touch that piano. There were, doubtless, scores of men in the camp who would have given ten ounces of gold-dust to have been half an hour alone with it, but every man's nerve shrank from the jeers which the crowd would shower upon him should his first attempt prove a failure. It got to be generally understood that the hand which first essayed to draw music from the keys must not slouch its work.

* * *

It was Christmas Eve, and Goskin, according to his custom, had decorated his gambling hall with sprays of mountain cedar and a shrub whose crimson berries did not seem a bad imitation of English holly. The piano was covered with evergreens, and all that was wanting to completely fill the cup of Goskin's contentment was a man to play the instrument.

"Christmas night, and no piano-pounder," he said. "This is a nice country for a Christian to live in."

Getting a piece of paper, he scrawled the words:

\$20 Reward

To a Compitant Pianer Player.

This he stuck up on the music rack, and, though the inscription glared at the frequenters of the room until midnight, it failed to draw any musician from his shell.

So the merry-making went on; the hilarity grew apace. Men danced and sang to the music of the squeaky fiddle and worn-out guitar, as the jolly crowd within tried to drown the howling of the storm without. Suddenly, they became aware of the presence of a white-haired man, crouching near the fire-place. His garments—such as were left—were wet with melting snow, and he had a half-starved, half-crazed expression. He held his thin, trembling hands toward the fire, and the light of the blazing wood made them almost transparent. He looked about him once in awhile, as if in search of something, and his presence cast such a chill over the place that gradually the sound of the revelry was hushed, and it seemed that this waif of the storm had brought in with it all of the gloom and coldness of the warring elements. Goskin, mixing up a cup of hot egg-nogg, advanced and remarked cheerily:

"Here, stranger, brace up! This is the real stuff."

The man drained the cup, smacked his lips, and seemed more at home.

"Been prospecting, eh? Out in the mountains—caught in the storm? Lively night, this!"

"Pretty bad," said the man.

"Must feel pretty dry?"

The man looked at his steaming clothes and laughed, as if Goskin's remark was a sarcasm.

"How long out?"

"Four days."

"Hungry?"

The man rose up, and walking over to the lunch counter, fell to work upon some roast bear, devouring it as any wild animal would have done. As meat and drink and warmth began to permeate the stranger, he seemed to expand and lighten up. His features lost their pallor, and he grew more and more content with the idea that he was not in the grave. As he underwent these changes, the people about him got merrier and happier, and threw off the temporary feeling of depression which he had laid upon them.

"Do you always have your place decorated like this?" he finally asked of Goskin.

"This is Christmas Eve," was the reply.

The stranger was startled.

"December twenty-fourth, sure enough."

"That's the way I put it up, pard."

"When I was in England I always kept Christmas. But I had forgotten that this was the night. I've been wandering about in the mountains until I've lost track of the feasts of the church."

Presently his eye fell upon the piano.

"Where's the player?" he asked.

"Never had any," said Goskin, blushing at the expression.

"I used to play when I was young."

Goskin almost fainted at the admission.

"Stranger, do tackle it, and give us a tune! Nary man in this camp ever had the nerve to wrestle with that music-box." His pulse beat faster, for he feared that the man would refuse.

"I'll do the best I can," he said.

There was no stool, but seizing a candle-box he drew it up and seated himself before the instrument. It only required a few seconds for a hush to come over the room.

"That old coon is going to give the thing a rattle."

The sight of a man at the piano was something so unusual that even the faro-dealer, who was about to take in a fifty-dollar bet on the tray, paused and did not reach for the money. Men stopped drinking, with the glasses at their lips. Conversation appeared to have been struck with a sort of paralysis, and cards were no longer shuffled.

The old man brushed back his long, white locks, looked up to the ceiling, half closed his eyes, and in a mystic sort of reverie passed his fingers over the keys. He touched but a single note yet the sound thrilled the room. It was the key to his improvisation, and as he wove his chords together the music laid its spell upon every ear and heart. He felt his way along the keys, like a man treading uncertain paths; but he gained confidence as he progressed, and presently bent to his work like a master. The instrument was not in exact tune, but the ears of his audience, through long disuse, did not detect anything radically wrong. They heard a succession of grand chords, a suggestion of paradise, melodies here and there, and it was enough.

"See him counter with his left!" said an old rough, enraptured.

(Continued on page 54)



A photograph of yucca plants in a desert landscape. The plants are in the foreground, silhouetted against a bright, hazy sky. In the background, there are mountains and a valley. The overall tone is warm and atmospheric.

MUENCH'S GALLERY

Storm clouds carry the welcome gift of moisture to the hardy yucca near Red Rock Canyon west of Las Vegas. The winter moisture is all the more appreciated in March and April when huge clusters of cream colored flowers nest in the bayonet-shaped leaves of the desert soapweed. —AH

"They're all here, the brawlers and the builders,

The early mayors and lawmen, the outlaws, miners, railroaders, storekeepers, schoolteachers, and the incomparable women, who went forth to plant trees, establish a library, musical societies and clubs such as Mesquite. They aided the poor and the sick and nurtured healthy families amid heat, dust and primitive conditions.

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120 THINGS TO DO WITHOUT GOING BROKE

By Ann Henderson and Betty Govorchin

BAJA NEVADA

New Zealander Rod Millen has a healthy respect for Southern Nevada's desert. He's raced all over the world, and as defending champion of the Nevada Rally, a 1,200-mile race on rough backcountry roads, he's experienced the Silver State's ruts, washboards and sudden dips at speeds up to 100 miles per hour. And he's ready to do it again December 19-21 when the world's best pro rally drivers compete in the Las Vegas-based Frontier Nevada Rally.

A veteran auto racer, Millen says he prefers rally racing to other forms he's tried. Not only is it a race against the clock, road conditions and other drivers, but each race is a surprise. "In rally, you're not allowed to practice the course beforehand. In fact, you're seeing it for the first time ever during the race. You must anticipate what's ahead; there's no second chance.

"Last year, my first rally in the desert, it was hard to get used to those sudden dips; most of the time we felt like we were airborne," he says.

Rally cars are not your usual jeeps, pickups and dune buggies. Most are prototypes of the compacts found in your neighborhood driveways. Millen drives for the Mazda factory; last year he drove a Ford Escort.

This year Millen is in a tight three-way bid for the world rally championship with John Buffam and John Woolfe. He says the Nevada Rally could be the decider.



Nevada Rally drivers race against the clock and across unexpected dips in desert roads.

BORDER TO BORDER

- WILDERNESS RODEO
- 1200-MILE AUTO RACE
- CHRISTMAS FAIRS & PARADES
- BALLET
- MOTORCYCLE RACES
- UNLV & UNR BASKETBALL
- COOKING CHILI IN VEGAS
- WELCOME 1981!
- THE SWEETEST MUSIC
- OUTSTANDING DRAMA

The start-finish line for the race will be the Frontier Hotel on the Strip. The actual route will be announced shortly before the noon start Friday, December 19, but approximate boundaries are north to Goldfield (which is an official pit stop), south to Laughlin, west to the Death Valley area and east to the banks of the Colorado River. Starting time on Saturday and Sunday is 9 a.m.

Each day about 100 drivers will cover 400 miles of varying terrain, usually finishing about 10 p.m.

The staging area for spectators will be announced during race week, race officials say, and there will be plenty of action at the Frontier each morning.

—Ann Henderson



LAS VEGAS NEWS BUREAU

Circus Circus Cookoff Cookoff

If you want to judge some of the spicy brews for yourself during the Nevada Championship Chili Cookoff Dec. 13-14 in Las Vegas, just ask. Most cooks are happy to give out tasting cups. Spectators must furnish their own Roloids. Look for the cooking pots at the Circusland RV parking lot near Circus Circus on the Strip.

SOUTH

ONGOING EVENTS

Las Vegas Mormon Fort Tours, Tues.-Sun.

Historic and Cultural Focus Tours, Las Vegas, 382-7198

Historic artifacts on display, Southern Nevada Museum, Henderson, and UNLV Museum of Natural History, Las Vegas

NOVEMBER

Radio-Controlled Aerobatic Aircraft Championship, 1, Circus Circus, Las Vegas

Art Exhibit, 1-15, oil paintings by Lee Ervast, 8:30-4:30, Visitor Ctr., Valley of Fire State Park

Two Women Art Exhibit, 1-15, mixed media drawings, Flamingo Library, Las Vegas

"Same Time Next Year," 1-22, comedy, The Meadows Playhouse, Las Vegas

Home Tour, 1, Boulder City, 1pm

Nevada String Quartet Concert, 2, Flamingo Library, 2pm, Las Vegas

Desert Motorcycle Race, 2, near Las Vegas, call Casey Folks 457-0343 for info.

NY City Orchestra & NY City Ballet, 3, Ham Hall, UNLV, Las Vegas

"La Traviata," 3, NY City Opera, Ham Hall, UNLV, 8pm, Las Vegas

Irish Light Orchestra Community Concert, 4, Ham Hall, UNLV, 8pm, Las Vegas

Gamble-Aires Pancake Bash, 8, Charleston Plaza Mall, 7-4, Las Vegas

Doll Club Show & Sale, 8-9, Convention Ctr., Las Vegas

Festival Chamber Players, 9, Flamingo Library, 2pm, Las Vegas

Las Vegas Civic Symphony in Concert, 9, Charleston Heights Arts Ctr., 2pm, Las Vegas

Nevada's area code is 702.



Nevada's events, shows and celebrations are listed by region as a speedy reference for weekend trips and vacations.



LAS VEGAS NEWS BUREAU

The Biggest Night Of The Year

Las Vegas and Reno create their own versions of Times Square for the final countdown on New Year's Eve. Here on Fremont Street in Las Vegas the Union Plaza's fireworks display signals it's midnight and a new year. (Last year's street party in downtown Reno turned into a brawl when things got out of hand, but plans are to allow Virginia Street to be closed again this year.) If you like to be entertained and pampered, there are special parties at the big hotels. Make your show and room reservations early. And don't overlook the small casinos and saloons that cater to the overflow of customers from the large hotels. They've been responsible for some of the most memorable parties and hangovers in history. Parking is always at a premium on New Year's, so treat yourself to a taxi ride.



BRIAN McMAHON

Racing from Searchlight to Winnemucca

'Tis the season for motorcycle racing in the desert. They'll be on course Nov. 2 in Winnemucca and Las Vegas, Nov. 16 in Boulder City, Dec. 7 near Searchlight, and Dec. 21 in Las Vegas. For particulars see daily listing.

Sports Stars Swing

Your camera is basic gear for the \$100,000 Hall-of-Fame Golf Tournament in Las Vegas. You might not see the world's greatest golf, but you'll catch the greatest athletes from pro sports.

Jim Brown, Joe DiMaggio, Stan the Man, Ray Nitschke, Bob Feller, Willie Mays, Dick Butkus, Whitey Ford and other stars will tee off Nov. 26-29. You can watch, free, at the Desert Inn Country Club.

"Nite of Stars," 14, benefit for St. Junes Ranch for Children, 6:30pm, Caesars Palace, Las Vegas, info. 739-9167

Cat Show, 15-16, Convention Ctr., Las Vegas

"Red River," 15-17, film, Clark County Libraries, Las Vegas, info. 733-7810

"A Half Century of Images," 15-30, traveling exhibit, 8:30-4:30, Visitor Ctr., Valley of Fire State Park

Motocross Race, 16, Boulder City, info. 457-0343

Nevada Watercolor Society, 16, exhibit of traditional watercolors, 1pm, Flamingo Library, Las Vegas

Billy Graham Crusade, 19-23, Convention Ctr., Las Vegas

Slovenian Symphony Orchestra, 19, Ham Hall, UNLV, 8pm, Las Vegas

"A Calico Christmas," 21, arts and crafts, stuffed toys, quilts, afghans, pot holders, bread boards, homemade baked goods, Mesquite Club, 1:30pm, Las Vegas

Flower Show, 22-23, Convention Ctr., Las Vegas

\$100,000 Hall of Fame Golf Tournament, 26-29,

Desert Inn Country Club, Las Vegas

World Wide Flea Market, 29, Convention Ctr., Las Vegas

Gin Rummy Tournament, 30-12/3, Union Plaza Hotel, Las Vegas

DECEMBER

Nevada Watercolor Exhibit, 1-13, Flamingo Library, Las Vegas

Choirs in the Mall, 1-24, Meadows Mall, Las Vegas

Christmas Bazaar, 2, St. Junes Women's Auxiliary, Riviera Hotel, 10-3, Las Vegas

"The Tin Drum," 3, German film, Red Rock Theatre, 7:30pm, Las Vegas

Las Vegas Symphony Christmas Concert, 2, Meadows Mall, Las Vegas

"The Robber Bridegroom," 4-14, musical, Judy Bayley Theatre, UNLV, Las Vegas

No Mechanical Bulls Here

The stakes are high when the best professional cowboys from Nevada, Utah and Idaho compete Nov. 14-16 at the Spring Creek Horse Palace. The PRCA Wilderness Circuit rodeo will determine the champion for the tri-state area in each of seven rodeo events. The indoor arena is located at Spring Creek, 17 miles southeast of Elko. Performance times are 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 1 p.m. Sunday.

"An Old Fashion Christmas," 6, lighted Christmas parade, 5pm, East Lake Mead Blvd., Las Vegas

USC Symphony Orchestra, 6, Ham Hall, UNLV, Las Vegas

Christmas Parade, 6, Nevada Hwy, 10am, Boulder City

"Sleeping Beauty," 6 and 8, film classic, Clark County Libraries, Las Vegas

Nevada String Quartet Concert, 7, Flamingo Library, 2pm, Las Vegas

Festival Chamber Players, 7, Charleston Heights Art Ctr., 2pm, Las Vegas

Camel Chase, 7, desert motorcycle championship race, near Searchlight, info. 457-0343

"A Christmas Carol," 9, The Meadows Playhouse, Las Vegas

World Championship of Blackjack, 11-4, Sahara Hotel, Las Vegas

Craft Fair, 13, Flamingo Library, 10-5, Las Vegas

European Style Flea Market, 13-14, Convention Ctr., Las Vegas

Nevada Championship Chili Cookoff, 13-14, Circus Circus, Las Vegas

Big Band Christmas Concert, 14, Bob Barclay conductor, 2pm, Blvd. Mall, Las Vegas

"The Messiah," 14, Charleston Heights Arts Ctr., 3pm, Las Vegas

"The Gold Show," 14, fiber art, 1pm, Flamingo Library, Las Vegas

\$40,000 Frontier Nevada Rally, 19-21, auto races, Frontier Hotel, Las Vegas

Nevada Dance Theatre, 19-21, Christmas ballet, Judy Bayley Theatre, Las Vegas

Christmas Dance and Party, 20, Herb's Recreation Tavern, 9pm, free, Boulder City

"The Canterville Ghost," 20-21, comedy, Clark County Libraries, Las Vegas
European Scrambles, 21, desert motorcycle race, Las Vegas, info. 457-0343
Town & Country Flea Market, 21, Convention Ctr., Las Vegas
New Year's Eve Fireworks Display, 31, Union Plaza Hotel, Las Vegas

CENTRAL

DECEMBER

Christmas Holiday Celebration, TBA, parade, Ely
Elk's Charity Ball, 6, Convention Ctr., Tonopah
Elk's Christmas Party, 21, Convention Ctr., Tonopah

NORTH

ONGOING EVENTS

Northeastern Nevada Museum, 9-7 Mon.-Sat., 1-7 Sun., historical and natural history exhibits, 1515 Idaho St., Elko, 738-3418

NOVEMBER

Art exhibit, 1-2, litho prints by Robert Auth, Convention Ctr., Jackpot
"The West Today," 1-13, photography by Linda Dufurrena, Northeastern Nevada Museum, Elko
Motocross Race, 2, Calder Cycle Park, Winnemucca, info. 623-5085
"Hunting With A Lens," 11/15-12/15, photographs of Nevada animals, birds and flowers by Merlin McColm, Northeastern Nevada Museum, Elko
PRCA Wilderness Circuit Finals, 14-16, rodeo, Spring Creek Horse Palace, Elko

DECEMBER

Crafts & Arts Sale, 5-6, handmade turquoise and silver jewelry; embroidery, knitted and crocheted articles; leather wallets and key chains; Christmas ornaments, door bells, baby quilts and afghans; homemade bread, cookies and candy, Nixon Hall, Winnemucca
Children's Christmas Party, 24, Convention Ctr., 2-3pm, Jackpot

WEST

ONGOING EVENTS

Nevada Artists Assn. Gallery, 1-4 Mon.-Sat., 12-4 Sun., 449 W. King St., Carson City
Art exhibitions, 2-6 Wed.-Mon., 599 D St., St. Phillip's Center Gallery, Hawthorne
Atmospherium-Planetarium, open daily, UNR, Reno, show info. 784-4811
Photographs & Memories, Mon.-Sat. 9-5, Sun. noon-5, Churchill County Museum, Fallon

NOVEMBER

Opera Ball, 1, sponsored by the Nevada Opera Assn., Mapes Hotel, Reno
UNR vs. Idaho State, 1, football, Mackay Stadium, 1pm, Reno
"Political Cartoons in Art and History," 1-16, exhibit of European and American cartoons 1750-1890, Sierra Nevada Museum, Reno
Sekulich Antique Show, 1-2, V&T Room, Coliseum, Reno
Home Builders Show, 1-2, Coliseum, 11-6, Reno
"Cartooning in American History," 4, lecture by Dr. Michael Brodhead on development of political cartoons, Sierra Nevada Museum of Art, Reno
"Here Is Israel," 4, musical, Pioneer Theatre, 7:30pm, Reno
Concord String Quartet, 5, Pine Auditorium, UNR, 8pm, Reno
"An Almost Perfect Person," 7-9, comedy, Reno Little Theater
Antique Show & Sale, 7-9, Forsythe Production, Old Town Mall, Reno
\$30,000 Backgammon Classic Regional Tournament, 7-9, Cloud's Cal-Neva, Crystal Bay, all day, info. 831-4506
Annual Barber Shop Quartet Show, 8, Community Ctr., 8pm, Carson City
Christmas Bazaar, 8, arts and crafts, ceramics, pillows, shawls, knitted and crocheted articles, cow bells, baked goods and food booths, 10-4, St. John's Catholic Hall, Lovelock

Tables Extraordinaire, 8-9, displays of table settings, proceeds benefit senior center program, 11-5, admission \$2.50, Senior Citizen Ctr., 9th and Sutro, Reno
World Wide Flea Market, 9, V&T Room, Coliseum, 9-6, Reno
Reno-Sparks Interfaith Gospel Concert, 9, Pioneer Theatre, 3pm, Reno
Chamber Music Concert, 11, Brewery Auditorium, 8pm, Carson City
Washoe Co. Schools Concert, 13, honor band, orchestra and chorus, 7:30pm, free, Pioneer Theatre, Reno
"An Almost Perfect Person," 13-15, comedy, Reno Little Theater
Billy Graham Crusade, 13-16, Coliseum, 6:30-9, Reno
Homemakers Bazaar, 14, fairgrounds, 9-5, Reno
Western Art Exhibit, 14-16, Western Artists of America. 14: preview party, 6pm; 15: banquet, 6pm; separate tickets available, both events \$25, MGM Grand, Bijou Room, Reno
UNR vs. Montana, 15, football, Mackay Stadium, 1pm, Reno
Promociones America Dance, 15, exhibit hall, fairgrounds, 8pm, Reno
"A Night in Madrid," 15, Flamenco dancers, singers and guitarists, Reno Chamber Orchestra benefit, Eldorado Hotel, 7pm, Reno
Reno Chamber Orchestra Opening Concert, 16, Eldorado Hotel, 3pm, Reno
Dick Barrymore Ski Film, 18, Pioneer Theatre, 8pm, Reno



Oil Paint

This portrait of a mountain man painted by California artist Dave DeMatteo was selected Best of Show during last year's Western Artists of America exhibit. DeMatteo will be back Nov. 14-16 at the MGM Reno with 24 other outstanding western artists. You can buy a \$10 ticket and mingle with the artists at the no-host cocktail party at 6 p.m. Friday (and get first chance to buy) and again at the 6 p.m. banquet Saturday (\$15). There's no charge to see the paintings during the day, Saturday or Sunday.

World Wide Ski Sales, 20-23, V&T Room, 9-9pm, Coliseum, Reno

UNR vs. Idaho, 22, football, Mackay Stadium, 1pm, Reno

Christmas Fair, 22-23, local merchants display Christmas merchandise; food, refreshments and entertainment, Community Ctr., Carson City

Reno Philharmonic Orchestra Concert, 25, Pioneer Theatre, 8:15pm, Reno

"Artists In The American Desert," 29-1/11, exhibits, Sierra Nevada Museum of Art, Reno

Pacific Coast Novice Boxing Tournament, 28-29, Community Ctr., Carson City

DECEMBER

Winter Holiday Concert, 2, Washoe Co. Schools Youth Symphony & Jr. Orchestra, 7:30pm, Pioneer Theatre, Reno

Sierra Nevada Chorale Christmas Concert, 4-5, Pioneer Theatre, 8pm, Reno

Genoa Christmas Fair, 6, arts and crafts, baked goods, handmade quilts, knitted and crocheted articles, Christmas ornaments and food booths, 10-5, Town Hall

World Wide Flea Market, 7, V&T Room, Coliseum, 9-6, Reno

"Christmas Gift to the City," 7, free concert, 3pm, Eldorado Hotel, Reno

"Bach's Mass in B Minor," Reno Chamber Orchestra and UNR Concert and Symphonic Choirs, 3pm, Eldorado Hotel, Reno

Community Crusade Against Drugs, 8, guest speaker David Toma, 7:30pm, Coliseum, Reno

Holiday on Ice, 10-14, Coliseum. 10-12 at 7:30pm; 13 at 11am, 3pm, 8pm; 14 at 2pm, 6pm, Reno

"Christmas Ball," 12, Elks Lodge, 8pm, Reno

"Never Too Late," 12-13, comedy, Carson Valley Theatre Company, 8pm, C.V.I.C. Hall, Minden

Christmas Fair, 13, Santa arrives in helicopter at noon in Minden Park; bazaar with arts and crafts, Christmas ornaments, crochet and knitted articles, macrame and bake goods, prices 25¢ to \$10, C.V.I.C. Hall, Minden

Chamber Music Concert, 16, Brewery Auditorium, 8pm, Carson City

"Never Too Late," 19-20, comedy, Carson Valley Theatre Company, 8pm, C.V.I.C. Hall, Minden

"Nutcracker," 20-21, ballet, Pioneer Theatre, 2:15pm, Reno

"A Christmas Musical," 21, choir, sponsored by North Lake Tahoe Symphony Assoc., 5-7pm, The Chateau, Incline Village

Promociones America Dance, 27, exhibit hall, fairgrounds, 8pm, Reno

Cheap Trick, 20, rock concert, 8pm, Coliseum, Reno

Centro de Informacion Latino Americano Dance, 31, exhibit hall, fairgrounds, 8pm, Reno

Note: Nevada's area code is 702.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Basketball has become big stuff in Nevada. That description has nothing to do with the slam dunk, which is probably the most crowd-pleasing aspect of the game.

Both the University of Nevada, Las



Reno and Vegas Double Feature

If you've a yen for "Nutcracker" this Christmas, your wish is granted. The Nevada Opera Association presents the traditional holiday ballet Dec. 20-21 in Reno, while the Nevada Dance Theatre offers the Nutcracker Suite as part of its Christmas Special, Dec. 19-21 in Las Vegas. For details see daily events listing.



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David P. Bilger
Owner

Vegas and the University of Nevada, Reno will play highly competitive national schedules this year, although they are not scheduled to meet one another. UNLV is a unofficial member of the Western Athletic Conference, while UNR has an entirely different group of adversaries in the Big Sky Conference.

Highlights of the home schedules:

UNLV will open on November 25 in an exhibition game against a group of Russian Nationals who finished third to Yugoslavia and Italy in the 1980 Olympic Games. Subsequently, the Rebels will host tournaments against worthy intersectional opponents such as West Texas State, Oklahoma City, and Portland.

Home games also are scheduled against New Mexico, Utah and Brigham Young, all contenders for national ratings. Another added bonus comes on January 31 when the Rebels play host to Georgetown in a nationally-televised game. Georgetown was among the nation's top-rated teams last season.

UNR, meanwhile, has an early date on November 29 against the University of Kansas, which has the all-time record for most victories in collegiate basketball. Other attractions are the December 23 game with the University of Houston and a January 22 engagement with Weber State, the defending Big Sky champion.

UNLV coach Jerry Tarkanian has the all-time national collegiate record for success with 288 wins and 61 losses in 12 seasons. UNR has a new coach, Sonny Allen, who is optimistic, as all coaches are. —Chris Schaller

UNLV Home Games, 8 p.m., Las Vegas Convention Center:

Nov. 25, Russian Nationals; Nov. 28, Pan American; Dec. 6, UC Irvine; Dec. 8, UT El Paso; Dec. 22-23, Rebel Round-up: UNLV, West Texas State, Texas Christian & Oklahoma City; Dec. 26, New Mexico; Dec. 29-30, Las Vegas Holiday Classic: UNLV, Portland, Holy Cross and Mississippi State; Jan. 2, Utah; Jan. 3, BYU; Jan. 31, Georgetown; Feb. 14, Air Force Academy; Feb. 20, San Diego State; Feb. 21, Hawaii; Mar. 6, Colorado State; Mar. 7, Wyoming.

UNR Home Games, 8 p.m., Centennial Coliseum, Reno:

Nov. 29, Kansas; Dec. 1, Mankato State; Dec. 2, Humboldt State; Dec. 17-18, Wolf Pack Classic: UNR, McNeese State, Portland, and Arkansas State; Dec. 23, Houston; Jan. 2, Chico State; Jan. 3, San Jose State; Jan. 15, Idaho; Jan. 17, Northern Arizona; Jan. 22, Weber State; Jan. 24, Idaho State; Feb. 5, Montana State; Feb. 7; Montana; Feb. 23, Boise State. □

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GOODSPRINGS & THE SCOTTY



PHOTOS: ROBERT H. LAMOTT COLLECTION

Dad said the mine was a sure thing, but my mother knew prospecting fever when she saw it.

By Robert H. Lamott

Fire!" The cry resounded from the bottom of the 60-foot glory hole. That bellow meant that my father had lit the fuse and would be scrambling up the old wooden ladder to join me in the tunnel nearby. A few minutes earlier he had shepherded all five years of me up the same ladder and then scuttled back down to light the charge.

Those moments that it took Dad to reach ground level were among the most fearful in my visits to The Scotty, a once-abandoned mine in the ghost-gray sagebrush Nevada foothills southeast of Death Valley. I held my breath as I watched for Dad's head to pop up at the head of the shaft. Usually we did not have to wait long for the roar of the blast that brought rock and ore shooting out of the hole, peppering down on top of our haven. Dad would allow the dust to settle and go down to inspect results, often shouting up to me, "That sure brought it out," or, "Well, Bobby, that vein must go another direction."

Worse than the suspense of waiting for the blast were the times when no blast came. "Bum fuse," Dad would mutter as he started back down to check the trouble. Then my heart would crawl up my throat, for I could

not forget the accounts of miners who had gone back to check a fuse and were halfway down when the blast fired. I knew widows who had that word brought to them about husbands who never came home.

By the yellow light of home-made tallow candles, Dad and I spent many hours together at the bottom of The Scotty. He did all his drilling by hand—with star drill and double jack hammer. Often he would put his big gloves on my hands and take mighty, full-armed swings at the drill while I held it. I never thought to question his accuracy, and he never missed. When a charge was fired and shiny galena ore and rock covered the bottom of the shaft, Dad would fill the battered old ore bucket and boost me up the ladder. Then he would wind the ore to the top with an equally decrepit wooden windlass. I looked forward to this with real anticipation because I always got a ride back down into the mine in the empty ore bucket—it was great adventure.

They say that you never recover from prospecting fever, an axiom that described my father well. By 1916, when he was a successful plumber on Hollywood Boulevard, Dad already

had pulled up stakes on two occasions and made his way to the mines. With World War I the price of lead skyrocketed, causing long abandoned mines in the Mojave Desert to be worked again. Dad had leased The Scotty as a sure thing, but Mother had been through that routine before. She refused to budge the family from Hollywood until Dad had established a beachhead and at least some credibility on the "sure thing."

"Lumby, pack up the boys and join me," Dad wrote to Mother, who suffered with that awful nickname for her beautiful name of Columbia. The school term had ended and Mother had run out of excuses.

Dad met us at the whistle stop of Jean, Nevada, about 30 miles southwest of Las Vegas. As we stepped off the train, a grizzled old man with a beard grabbed me up and kissed me. Mother assured me that it was, in truth, my father, but not before I blurted out, "I don't like your shave."

Summer's desert heat was taking over as a plume of dust chased us into Goodsprings, eight miles east. Dad's introduction of the family to its new home must have convinced my mother

of one thing—things just had to get better. I doubt that he had told her she would have no house in the little boom town. She must have had some second thoughts as our 1907 Maxwell breezed through Goodsprings past houses that looked quite livable, past some not so livable and on beyond all habitation—six miles into the desert hills on the edge of a great dry wash. There stood a tent mounted on a 12 by 16 foot platform of rough boards. A stovepipe poked through the canvas and craned upward as if to see over the tent.

After a look at the outside, the inside was no disappointment. More rough boards served for table, cupboards and vanity. An old shepherd stove doubled for cooking and heating.

"Water?" Dad echoed our question. "We bring it from town in five-gallon cans."

"Sanitation?" Our plumber could not dodge that one. "It's in that canvas enclosure out back."

How my mother put up with this barren land of sagebrush, sand and horribly primitive conditions, one could only understand by knowing the depth of her love and patience. The ties of matrimony must have been fiddle-string tight during those days of adjustment to our desert home.

After a few months we moved to a house in town with a board outhouse and (only 50 feet from the house) a well. I'm sure the contrast was a pleasant one for my mother, despite an occasional rattlesnake under the porch or in the woodpile. We were taught to respect these dangerous denizens of the desert and to avoid, but not to fear.

One day fear got the better of respect when I took a solo hike to the Red Cave, an old iron-stained glory hole up a steep hill behind our house. Even we small children were allowed to go to the cave on our own for it was a cool haven on torrid days. That day Mother heard me screaming bloody murder and rushed out of the house to see me flying down the hill toward home through sagebrush and rocks, clawing and scratching at bushes to keep from falling—ignoring entirely the well-worn trail.

As usual, I had climbed the hill and was about to descend the little gully that ran down past the cave. It was great fun to take that last 20 yards by running full tilt down the steep slope allowing our momentum to carry us up the other side of the ravine into the coolness of the cave. I shifted—as usual—into high gear and ran as fast as

"With star drill and double jack hammer, Dad would put his big gloves on my hands and take mighty, full-armed swings at the drill while I held it. I never thought to question his accuracy."

gravity and my short legs would carry me. As I reached the bottom of the ravine, I saw that it was occupied by the biggest rattler I had ever laid eyes on. Had it been the brink of a volcano, I could not have stopped. My momentum carried me in one great leap right over Mr. Snake and up the hill into the cave. I turned around, shifted back into high gear, ran down the ravine, leaped over the snake again and, screaming like a banshee, ran for home.

The desert was not only filled with danger, but to youngsters it also offered barrels of fun. Our wild friends were legion. There were horny toads, many kinds of brightly colored lizards, rabbits, owls and hawks. But above all we loved the burros. Herds of them ran wild around Goodsprings and were used in season to pack ore down from the mines.

We kids were encouraged to adopt the burros because it kept them in town and in better shape than if they foraged for themselves. Deprived indeed was the poor desert kid whose folks would not allow him or her to keep a burro or two.

The family's desert sojourn also wouldn't have been the same without "Maude," Dad's 1907 Maxwell. She was equipped with carbide gas lamps, and her gas tank was a 10-gallon ice cream can that Dad had mounted between the bucket seats. Her superstructure was highly customized, too, with little to protect the passenger from the desert wind and dust. Maude was truly a desert rat's automobile. Her underbelly was exposed, with gear shafts completely unhoused. This exposure led to a weird voyage across the desert's sandy waste.

Dad and I were headed back to town from the mine when a sudden sharp clank shook the little car as it lurched from the desert track. I could see alarm on Dad's face as he tried to move the gear shift lever. High-centering on a rock, Maude had been knocked into an

all too permanent high gear. Thus the eight-mile cruise began with the skipper having to keep the craft under full power; too little gas would have invited a stall and a long walk for help with night approaching.

So, as the sun began to shade the sky with those tinges of lavender and gray that the desert alone can paint, we began our wild ride. Joshua trees, greasewood, sagebrush and rocks blurred past us. Braced for the demands of the occasion, Dad took each crest and unpredictable trough with high spirits. Dad never entered anything, for good or bad, without enthusiasm.

Hanging precariously to Maude's old rigging, I lowered my head to avoid the flying sand. I recall not quite understanding the full extent of the emergency but my fears were quieted by faith in this man whose star drills I held down in the mine. We took those eight miles together in mutual trust, Dad and Maude and I. Dad would exhale as Maude struggled for power up the steeper hills and would jiggle forward and back as if to increase momentum. He urged me to help him, and I'm sure he invented the idea to help take my mind off our situation.

Finally, we could see the streets of Goodsprings from the top of the last long hill. With throttle wide open we flew down past the jail, past Quinn's confectionary, past Fayle's Hotel, around the World War I monument in the middle of dusty Main Street, up the hill past the schoolhouse and past Scott Robbins' home where Dad was faced with making a right hand turn as our speed dwindled. With her last ounce of momentum, Maude managed the turn, crept up a last steep pitch, rolled into her normal parking place in our backyard—and expired. Dad didn't even need to cut the switch.

Our desert interlude ended on Christmas Eve, 1920. The price of lead had hit bottom following the war, and though Dad would have gladly stayed to chase vanadium, uranium or anything else in the earth, Mother had insisted that fall that my brother John be out of the desert in time to start high school. So holiday season found us in Van Nuys, California, with Dad still holding out for the big strike back in the desert.

But about eight o'clock on that dark Christmas Eve, Maude's old klaxon horn squawked up Oxnard Street and echoed through the pepper trees. It took nothing more to assure his family that the prospector was home from the hills. □

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GOOD READIN'

Tales of Borax Smith, Sarah Olds and the ancients.



Twenty Miles From a Match
by Sarah E. Olds
University of Nevada Press, Reno
182 pages, \$5.95, paperback

Sarah Olds had five children and an ailing husband when she decided her dream of a ranch of her own could be a reality—through homesteading. Oh, there would be problems: her husband A.J. "Daddy" Olds had never ranched and he had little strength from years in the mines; her children must be educated, and there were no schools near Tule Mountain where land was available for homesteading; money was

scarce, for a chicken farm on the outskirts of Reno was their home after Daddy was forced by "miner's lungs" to quit the mines. But Mom Olds had faith that her dream would come true.

Twenty Miles From A Match is her story of their homesteading days, told with humor and pride. Somehow the schooling seemed most important, and through finagling and persistence Sarah got her own school district and eventually educated all six children (the baby was born during the homestead years).

Money came initially through the sale of seasonal game and furs to people in Reno 35 miles away, then cattle and more ranchlike produce. The prosperity of the ranch seems secondary, however, when sandwiched between

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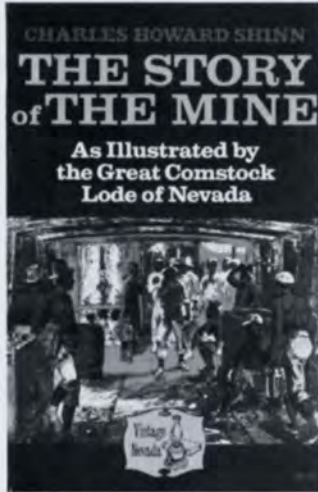


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anecdotes and close calls with the elements, and Mom's good natured manipulation of Daddy.

The story actually covers only about 20 of Sarah Olds' 88 long and active years. With Leslie Zurfluh (Sarah Olds' daughter who wrote the foreword) filling us in on Sarah's complete story, we can only stand in awe of Mom Olds who packed so many lifetimes into one.

—Olivia Mandel



The Story of the Mine
by Charles Howard Shinn
University of Nevada Press, Reno
277 pages, \$6.50, paperback

I would never have said that Nevada needed still another history of the Comstock until I read Charles Howard Shinn's *The Story of the Mine*. But then, it's not just another history of the Comstock. It's one of the first and most curious.

The book originally appeared in 1910 as part of D. Appleton's Story of the West Series. The University of Nevada Press has reprinted it as the first volume in its Vintage Nevada Series, with which series editor Mary Ellen Glass hopes "to revive the literature and the history of Nevada's early years to the end that the days, and the books, will be readily available to all."

Shinn's history represents vintage Nevada well, filled as it is with fascinating quirks and extravagances. Readers may lose their way at times in Shinn's leisurely, purpling prose, but the book will reward persistence.

Its first (and ironic) appeal grows out of Shinn's attempt to wring myth out of the Comstock. Almost to the point of silliness, he portrays the

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GOOD READIN'

(Continued from previous page)

mining there as an heroic struggle with the elements, a struggle which succeeded (and will again) despite the block-headedness of early prospectors and the rapacity of speculators.

Most of the book reworks earlier writings, but Shinn improves them by adding interviews with survivors of Comstock days—"ancients," he calls them. The snatches of idiomatic dialog culled thereby—the anecdotes and vivid, first-hand descriptions—carry the book, even if not all the ancients' contributions are precisely reliable. They slip in genuine wit and pathos enough to temper Shinn's flights of imagination and figure-flourishing. Everything else—the historical narrative, statistics, science, political reports—is standard treatment.

A product of the times, *The Story of the Mine* cannot help fusing the 19th century West's hyperbolic imagination and rough practicality to produce an atmosphere that seems truer and fresher than any modern, authoritative history. Readers new to Comstock lore would do well to start with Shinn's book—but not to stop there. —Roger Smith

The Story of Candelaria and Its Neighbors

by Hugh A. Shamberger
Nevada Historical Press
Paperback, \$10, plus 50¢ each for handling.

A good storyteller is always welcome around the campfire, and it is a pleasure to see Hugh Shamberger in print once more, this time with his entertaining tales of Candelaria and her neighboring towns.

The former state water engineer has researched a period, the 1880s and 1890s, when the Columbus Mining District was the liveliest going between the decline of the Comstock and Jim Butler's explosion of 1900. He has interviewed survivors and descendents, poured over historic maps and old newspapers. He has explored old tracks and forgotten ruins by jeep and shank's mare and airplane, and reconstructed the "how" as well as the "why" of several gargantuan enterprises.

One example was procurement of water. Candelaria, central camp of the

district, was bone-dry. So its intrepid planners rammed a pipeline ditch 19 miles cross-country from Pickhandle Gulch to the White Mountains, tapping canyon springs for Candelaria's water supply.

The water alleviated many of the parched camp's problems, among them the choking dust from dry batteries in the Princess Mill at the head of the main street. Ingenuity and plain hard labor had won that battle.

Clustered near the present Mineral-Esmeralda county line, this group of mining towns—Candelaria, Columbus, Belleville, Marietta, Coaldale, Metallic City, Sodaville—all were interrelated and people moved freely between them for a variety of reasons. F.M. "Borax" Smith began at Teel's Marsh, in Marietta, and he and others later harvested the cottonball mineral at Columbus and Rhodes March below Sodaville. The Northern Belle's ore was crushed and refined first at Columbus, then in the Belleville Mills seven miles from Candelaria. Mt. Diablo ore, after a few tons were run through the mill at Columbus, was then transported to the company's new mill at Soda (later Sodaville), bypassing the Belleville operations. The Princess Mill erected in Candelaria not only took care of that mine's ore but also entered the water business, administering the long pipeline and reservoir from the White Mountains.

An impressive series of photographs illustrate why so many surrounding slopes are treeless—uncounted cords were sacrificed to keep the mills of Belleville going. Lavish use of rare and unpublished photographs carry the reader directly into the old towns and their dwellers.

Shamberger's easy style and evident enthusiasm also bring to life the folk who people the places—promoters, miners, saloonkeepers, editors; hotel and restaurant proprietors, musicians, bankers, prospectors. Bad men spill over from Bodie, but come to grief in Candelaria. Blue Dick Hartman, late of Lida, plays a classic joke on Shagnasty Joe in McKissick's Saloon.

Chris Zabriskie's taut mustache flirts from the page, while Borax Smith stares wonderingly from the past. Steam tractors and trim locomotives confront lowly mule and burro trains. One wonders at the sheer effort men spent in the search for silver and gold. But energy and determination were never in short supply in Nevada.

—Nanelia S. Doughty

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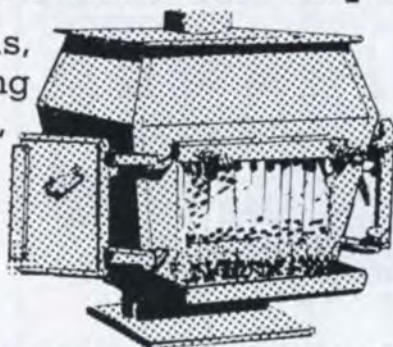
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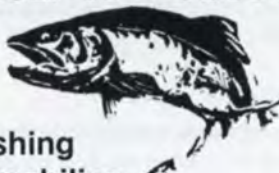
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FIRST PIANO IN CAMP

(Continued from page 31)

"He calls the turn every time on the upper end of the board," responded a man with a stack of chips in his hand.

The player wandered off into the old ballads they had heard at home. All the sad and melancholy, and touching songs that came up like dreams of childhood, this unknown player drew from the keys. His hands kneaded their hearts like dough, and squeezed out the tears as from a wet sponge. As the strains flowed one upon the other, they saw their homes of long ago reared again; they were playing once more where the apple blossoms sank through the soft air to join the violets on the green turf of the old New England States; they saw the glories of the Wisconsin maples and the haze of the Indian summer, blending their hues together; they recalled the heather of Scottish hills, the white cliffs of Britain, and heard the sullen roar of the sea as it beat upon their memories, vaguely. Then came all the old Christmas carols, such as they had sung in church thirty years before; the subtle music that brings up the glimmer of wax tapers, the solemn shrines, the evergreens, holly, mistletoe, and surpliced choirs. Then the remorseless performer planted his final stab in every heart with "Home, Sweet Home."

When the player ceased, the crowd slunk away from him. There was no more revelry and devilment left in his audience. Each man wanted to sneak off to his cabin and write the old folks a letter. The day was breaking as the last man left the place, and the player, laying his head down on the piano, fell asleep.

"I say, pard," said Goskin, "don't you want a little rest?"

"I feel tired," the old man said. "Perhaps you'll let me rest here for the

matter of a day or so."

He walked behind the bar where some old blankets were lying, and stretched himself upon them.

"I feel pretty sick. I guess I won't last long. I've got a brother down in the ravine—his name's Driscoll. He don't know I'm here. Can you get him before morning? I'd like to see his face once before I die."

Goskin started up at the mention of the name. He knew Driscoll well.

"He your brother? I'll have him here in half an hour."

As he dashed out into the storm the musician pressed his hand to his side and groaned, Goskin heard the word "Hurry!" and sped down the ravine to Driscoll's cabin. It was quite light in the room when the two men returned. Driscoll was pale as death.

"My God! I hope he's alive! I wronged him when we lived in England twenty years ago."

They saw the old man had drawn the blankets over his face. The two stood a moment, awed by the thought that he might be dead. Goskin lifted the blanket and pulled it down astonished. There was no one there!

"Gone!" cried Driscoll, wildly.

"Gone!" echoed Goskin, pulling out his cash drawer. "Ten thousand dollars in the sack, and the Lord knows how much loose change in the drawer!"

The next day the boys got out, followed a horse's tracks through the snow, and lost them in the trail leading toward Pioche.

There was a man missing from the camp. It was the three-card monte man, who used to deny point-blank that he could play the scale. One day they found a wig of white hair, and called to mind that the "stranger" had pushed those locks back when he looked toward the ceiling for inspiration, on that cold December night. □

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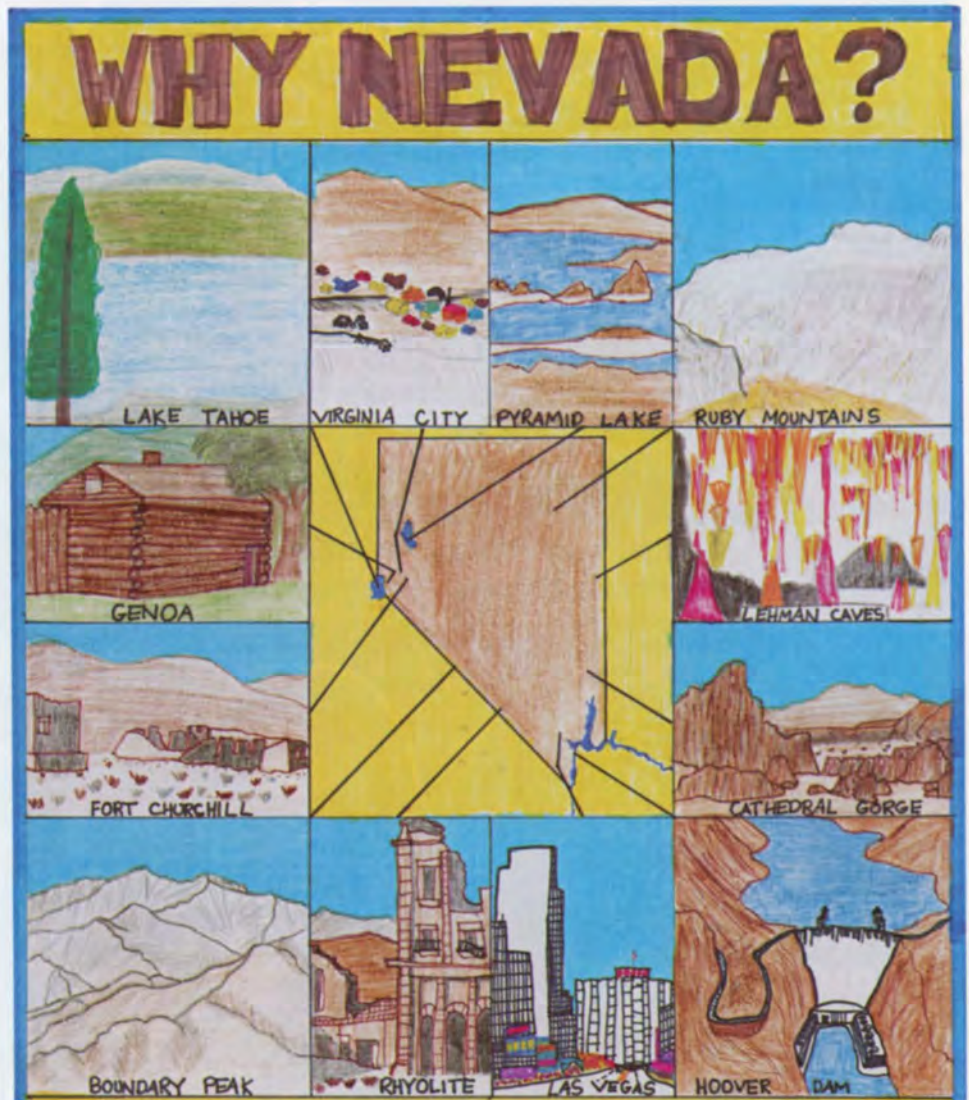
Several months ago the Nevada Department of Economic Development asked the question "Why Nevada?" of the state's elementary and junior high school students. More than 700 youngsters from throughout the state responded with their own versions of a "Why Nevada?" poster.

As Nevada schools closed last Spring, a battery of judges reached the conclusion that the poster offering which most interestingly answered the question was that of Chris Roundtree, a seventh grade student at Sparks Middle School. Accordingly, Gov. Robert List presented Chris with his award before cheering classmates at the Sparks school.

As the illustrations show, young Nevadans showed imagination almost without bounds in expressing interest in their state. Posters from various counties are now being used by local organizations to promote their own areas and popular features.

The contributions of these youngsters are a welcome addition to the Nevada perspective.

—Walter E. MacKenzie



youngsters offer 700 reasons.



The winning "Why Nevada?" poster (far left) by 7th grader Chris Roundtree of Sparks Middle School, and Governor Robert List presenting Chris his award. Also on hand, from left to right, were principal Louis Mendive and Chris' parents, Diana and David Roundtree.



Excellence awards were won by other Nevada youngsters for their striking posters. Clockwise from upper left:

A marvelous trio of mountain peaks by 2nd grader Tracy Seamons of the Beowawe School in Eureka County.

Yellow-leaved trees by Princess McCoy of the George E. Harris 1st grade in Las Vegas.

The state's industry and wildlife are the subjects of Jacob Schmitt, 2nd grader at the Duckwater School in Nye County.

The sun and entertainers star in poster by 5th grader Kyle Wright, also of the George E. Harris School in Las Vegas.



Bottle digging brings rewards like bottles, coins and other treasures. Most hunters probe with long steel rods before breaking ground.

NEVADA BOTTLES

(Continued from page 18)

1861 to 1869 and advertised delivery to all parts of the country by wagon or stage. Although his blob-top bottle does not say "Virginia City," it is still highly prized because of the beautiful bluegreens of the glass.

Boom towns of the early 1900s bottled sodas in the newer crown-top style, similar to the metal caps used

today. Among them are sodas from Las Vegas, Goldfield, Winnemucca, Yerington and Sparks. Some turn dark purple and are considered real finds by collectors.

Among the rarest are sodas from Las Vegas. M. Pollard and J. J. Tuckfield bottled soda in their own bottles, accounting for two of the three bottles embossed with the name Las Vegas. Tuckfield probably ran the first bottling

works in Las Vegas, opening the Lincoln County Bottle Works in 1905 on Wilson Avenue. Tuckfield changed the business name several times, finally settling on Las Vegas Bottling Works. This soda bottle is extremely rare.

The Best By A Dam Site

The only other embossed bottle from Las Vegas caused some controversy in its time. When Boulder Dam was being built in the early 1930s, Boulder Products, the local Coca-Cola representative, decided to make a commemorative bottle. The soda read, "The Best By A Dam Site, Boulder Products, Las Vegas, Nev., Coca Cola Bottling Co." According to one source, the main Coca-Cola office in Atlanta, Georgia, officially disapproved of the slogan but continued to let the company bottle fruit-flavored soda for a short time. The bottle is fairly common but highly sought by Coke collectors.

However, the most desired Nevada bottles seem to be embossed whiskey flasks and fifths, which are extremely rare, from the towns of Eureka, Elko, Tonopah, Virginia City, Reno and Carson City. Like the Thomas Taylor & Co. bottle, they often command high prices.

At the present, there are known to be 147 different Nevada merchant names embossed on whiskey, soda, drugstore, milk and other bottles from 24 Nevada towns. Most appeared between 1861 and 1915, with the milk bottles generally dating from 1920 to 1930. There are only one or two known specimens of some bottles, and a complete collection in any one of the categories of whiskey (14), sodas (30), drugstores (54) or milk bottles (38) has yet to be assembled.

So look again at that pretty bottle in your windowsill, or pull out that box of old bottles you stashed away years ago. You may be holding a valuable piece of Nevada heritage in your hand. □



Fred Holabird of Reno is a minerals exploration geologist and leading Nevada bottle collector. With Jack Haddock he is co-author of "The Nevada Bottle Book," 1979. His embossed Nevada collection, including variants, numbers more than 300 bottles.



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THE DONNER PARTY

(Continued from page 22)

comfort. The oxen, untended, were rubbing off their packs against the tree-trunks. By the time Stanton returned, the emigrants were half encamped, and only the strongest pressure could make them move. Twilight was already at hand. And Stanton's report was not the most encouraging; they could get through, he thought, if it did not snow any more. Sensing the crisis, some of the emigrants urged a bold push forward, but most of them were too exhausted to make a further effort.

So they prepared to spend the night as best they could upon the snow. They gathered about the fire, and had something to eat. Then they laid blankets and buffalo-ropes on the snow, put the children to bed bundled up as well as possible. The men and women huddled about, some making themselves beds, and some sitting crouched by the fire. They were too weary now; they would cross in the morning.

Then it began to snow.

The children slept as the snow covered their blankets warmly. The men and women also slept, or else drew close about the fire. One of the

Indians stoically wrapped himself in his blanket, and all night stood leaning against a tree. Now and then a mother shook off the snow from the children's beds as it grew too deep. The night was freezing cold. The wind hissed through the pine trees. The snow fell steadily and fast, mixed with cutting sleet. No one needed to say anything; all knew what had happened. By morning a foot of new snow had fallen. The drifts around them were ten feet deep.

They turned back, and even working down-hill they had consumed the morning and the afternoon until four when they finally reached the cabin. The Donners had not yet come up. Back across the lake, as they looked through the darkening atmosphere of the short winter afternoon, they could see the solid rampart of the pass, a mass of snow unbroken except where bare precipices stood darkly out. It was November 4. The trap which had clicked behind them at Fort Bridger had closed in front. □

From the book "Ordeal By Hunger" by George R. Stewart, published by Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston. Copyright © 1936, 1960 by George R. Stewart. Available in paperback (\$2.50) at many Nevada newsstands.

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