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NEVADA

Winter 1974

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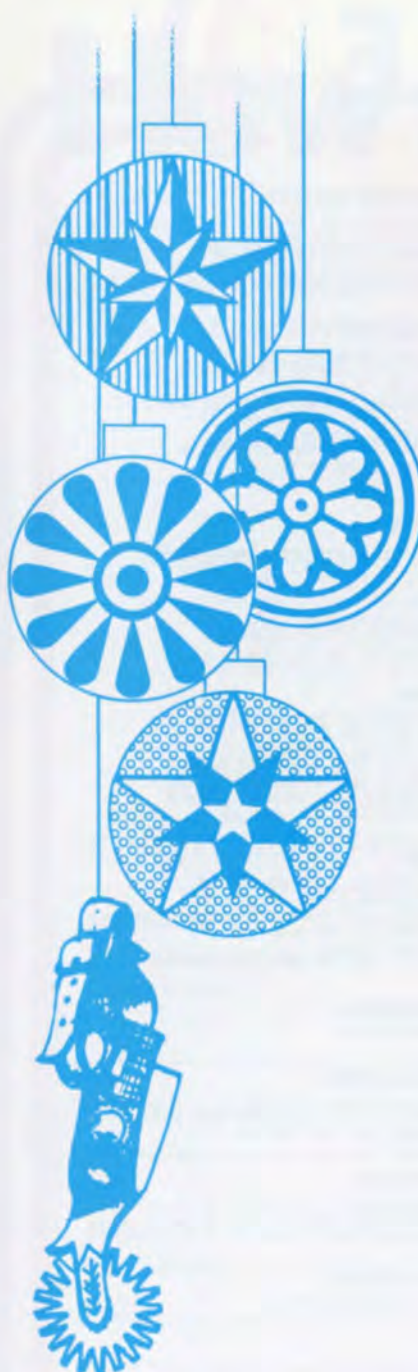
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Minsky's 74

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Robert Goulet, Carol Lawrence,
Nov. 21 - Dec. 11

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The Fifth Dimension, Nov. 6-21
Petula Clark, Nov. 22 - Dec. 5
Liza Minnelli, Dec. 6-12
Don Rickles, Dec. 13 - Jan. 8

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Oct. 5-18; Nov. 5-11; Dec. 3-14
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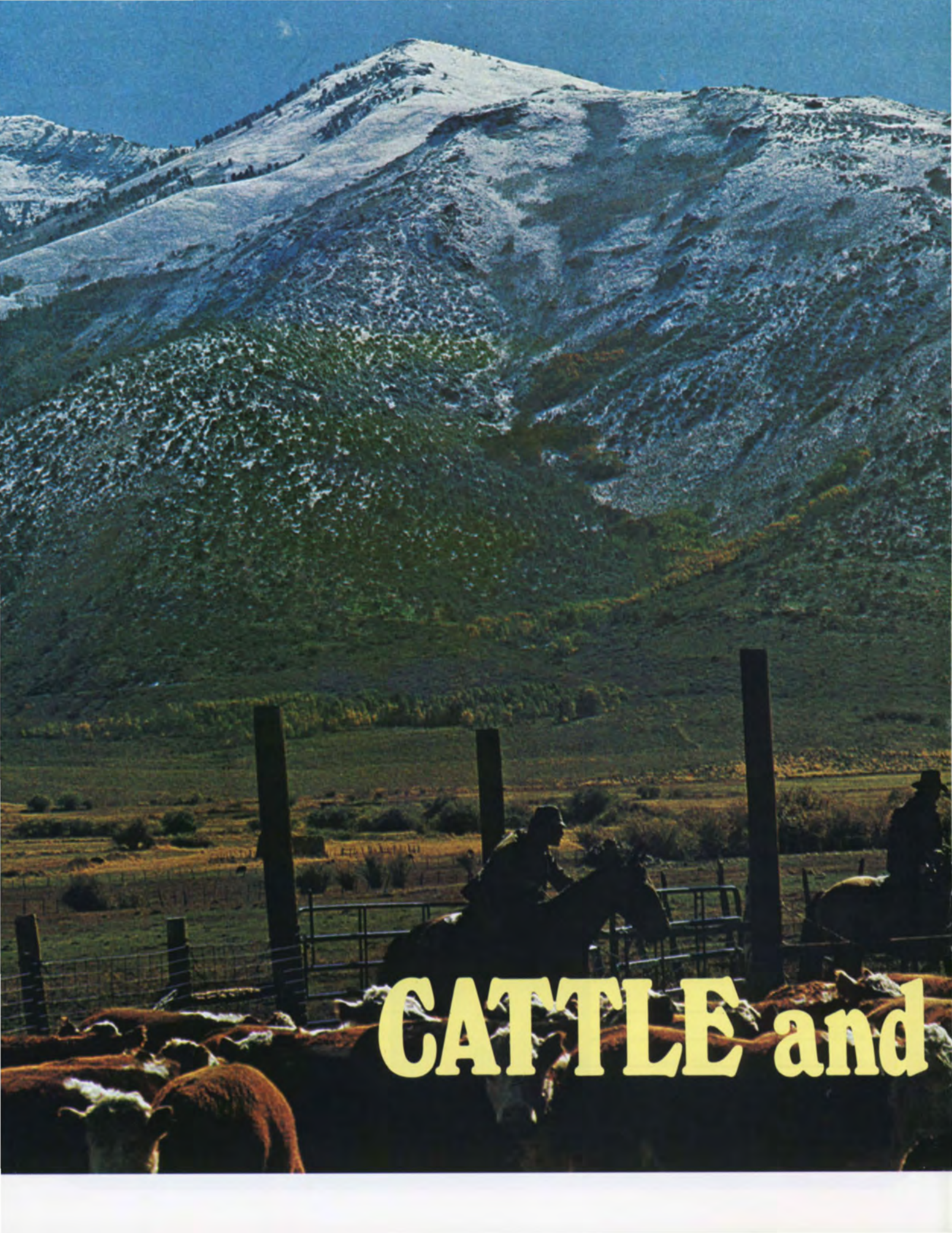
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CATTLE and



by Claire Morrow
edited for Nevada Magazine
by Guy Shipler



Young Johnny Sustacha pulled on the reins and stood up in the stirrups. He held his skittish sorrel colt in check so he could more easily survey the vast Elko County rangeland. Just ahead of him along the Lamoille highway trailed scores of purebred hereford cows and newly branded calves. Beyond the cloud of dust the cattle created he could see the green crested wheat grass shooting through the earth wherever the sagebrush had been cleared away. Patches of wildflowers blazed on the sides of the Ruby Mountains and the creek banks, in colorful harmony with the brilliant blue of the sky.

It was spring, at last. Johnny felt its excitement and expectancy; his whole being revelled in this new softness. The winter had been long and hard for him. Through blizzards or cold sunshine on frosted snow, he had shivered in the pre-dawn darkness to feed the cattle. Always, it seemed, in the toughest weather there had been a young heifer to help with her first calf, or a sick cow to doctor. There were fences that had to be mended, or machinery to be repaired and readied for a summer that seemed so far away—but which, inevitably, would come with its own fierce demands on men of the land.

Johnny Sustacha's enjoyment of this comforting spring day was briefly shadowed by the thought of that approaching summer. It would mean working the equipment all day and into the night so that all the lush wild hay could be cut and baled. And there would be little respite in the fall: cattle then have to be gathered and cut into like groups, loaded into big semi-trailer trucks to be hauled hundreds of miles to feed lots for fattening.

continued

PEOPLE

Johnny Sustacha, a third generation rancher sees big changes in the once remote Lamoille Valley.



As he scanned the broad landscape, Johnny began to think about the traditional family pattern he was following. His grandfather had come from Spain to Elko County in the early 1900's, and settled in the spectacular Lamoille Valley in 1911. He had survived financial difficulties, gruelling winters and cattle diseases; he had fought the wily coyote and the mountain lion, who loved to tear at the throat and feast on a newborn calf or lamb—these were easier meals for the predators than the more elusive wild animals in the mountains. There were the dry years when bands of wild horses, then much more numerous than now, competed with the domestic cattle and sheep for the precious grass.

The sudden roar of an approaching car jerked Johnny out of his reverie. He moved quickly to herd the cattle out of its path. The car slowed and carefully made its way through the herd as the animals scattered. Then, after the car had passed and he began regrouping the cattle, Johnny reflected again on the family pattern of the life he was leading. Here he was, punching cattle, even though he had a bachelor of science

degree from the University of Nevada, and could be teaching school. Why was he doing this when the financial return from ranching was so far below that in other fields, where income had at least partially kept pace with inflation?

Johnny knew the answer. The sweeping, sometimes awesome vastness of the great outdoors was a much greater lure than money. Here he was able to fill his lungs with fresh, untainted air, to have the freedom to do as he wished with his own land—and the challenge to wrestle with the hardships it so often imposed. There seemed to be a sureness, a built-in security about the land; a feeling that somehow it was insurance against the troubles that chronically beset city people.

But now others were beginning to feel the same way. And because of that, there was the threat that all the openness which made it worthwhile to Johnny Sustacha might slowly disappear. As more people yearned to share what Johnny loved, they had begun to flock into the area. Although Elko County sprawls across 17,181 square miles and is the biggest county in Nevada, develop-



ers and subdividers had become so active that the very face of the land was changing. No longer can you see only sagebrush for miles in the area around Elko. Already lights sprinkle the once pure darkness of the nighttime hills, and little cities seem to have sprung up around Spring Creek and Pleasant Valley.

The trend is hardly unique. All over the country the breakdown and decay of urban living has motivated a growing number of people to flee the trials and terrors of the city — to fulfill that yearning for the kind of country Johnny Sustacha knows and loves.

But the trouble is that the influx of people even into an area as big as Elko County can quickly destroy the very thing these people seek. And that raises an ominous question for Johnny Sustacha and other ranchers. "Will they be able to keep raising cattle as they have been?"

At the rate things are going, the answer doesn't look too hopeful. "The developers say they have big plans in the Spring Creek area," says Johnny. "If they carry them out within the next 10 years, there will be only 20 per cent of the number of cattle here that there were in 1964. Lots of people who come in here haven't been around cattle. It's new to them, and they just don't care."

Whether or not it's a matter of caring, the people who have already come in have brought new and often harsh problems for the cattle growers. Johnny recently lost a purebred when someone left a gate open and a steer got out on the highway and was killed by a car. Sometimes it's worse. One night when Johnny was passing one of his pastures he noticed that the gate was not only left open — it had completely disappeared. It was 9:30, he hadn't had supper and was dead tired from haying all day, but Johnny had no choice but to build a temporary gate before going home.

The tenor and tone of hospitality is changing, too. Ranchers used to welcome infrequent visitors. Now, more than likely, the visitor will get no invitation to supper and will see a "No Trespassing" sign out front.

continued



James, John and father, Joe Sustacha Jr. spend long, hard but rewarding days tending their cattle. Modern methods have streamlined many aspects of ranching but many chores still require a good cutting horse and personal care.

Spring Creek's new golf course (left) offers the spectacular Ruby Mountains as a backdrop.

Water is the lifeblood of Elko County (left). These fields are flood irrigated in the summer.

The reason is that ranchers are plagued as never before with cattle rustling, looting of cabins and storage buildings, stolen equipment, and newcomers using cattle and sheep for target practice.

Ranching is tough enough without such added problems. And both the increasing cost of operation and the takeover of subdivisions are making it so much harder that even the existence of some ranches is threatened.

Roy Young, a Nevada assemblyman and rancher, is concerned about the subdivision trend destroying needed feed, such as crested wheat. He says that population growth may be a good thing for a community, but it doesn't help the rancher or his livestock. In fact, he adds, many ranchers may find that their only

feasible move, economically, is to sell out to subdividers.

That's already started to happen on a fairly large scale, according to John Carpenter, Elko County commissioner and rancher. "It is my opinion that the Lamoille area in general someday is going to be mostly subdivisions. The biggest questions for the average man in the street are: (1) What is this going to do to the tax base? and (2) What will it do to hunting and fishing? These are questions which the subdividers are going to have to answer with planned developments. They are going to have to provide for recreation."

An important factor in this whole situation is the federal government. The Elko District of the Bureau of Land Management has charge of 7.4

Eugene A. Moore (right), manager of the Elko BLM District, is in charge of administering 7.4 million acres of public lands. Future changes in the area's development will largely depend on the disposition of these vast Federal holdings.

The Sustachas gather cattle for inspection in the shadow of the Ruby Mountains (below).







The future of lush mountain meadows such as this (above) are of great interest to local ranchers and land developers alike.

"I look to see development in Elko of strip type resorts on a limited scale like Las Vegas . . ." So says Nevada State Senator Snowy Monroe (below).



million acres of public land in Elko, Eureka and Lander counties. Pressure is growing for the sale of large segments of it for private use. The buyer then must get a variance for zoning the land if he plans to develop it in any way.

But whether BLM sells (or exchanges) the land is determined by whether or not it will be more valuable in private instead of federal control. In livestock areas, ranchers improve public lands on which they lease grazing rights with fencing, water wells, spring developments, and cattle guards. Often the rancher may not be able to get back the unused portion of that value if the lands are sold for private use. Moreover, grazing fees are rising lately (they may be tripled by 1980), and so ranchers are inclined to forget turning their cattle out into public grazing lands.

Studies of the feasibility of selling or exchanging BLM land in the Elko area have been going on for some time, since an involved planning process is involved. According to Eugene Moore, BLM District Manager, "We must first inventory the system to get basic information on lands, minerals, livestock forage, outdoor

recreation, forestry, wildlife habitat, watershed, wild horses and burros." After collecting this mass of information, objectives on how to manage these different resources are set. The public is then presented with these objectives for approval. And finally, the manager has to make the decision on how to handle the different resources, or whether to exchange or sell the land involved.

All of that would seem to strike an ominous note for the ranching business. However, it's pretty firmly entrenched, and the experts feel that it won't be driven from the Elko County scene for years, if ever.

"Generally, we feel the cattle industry is here to stay," says Vern Thompson, supervisor of the Humboldt National Forest at Elko. "We intend to permit grazing on the National Forest as long as there is forage available."

"After all, grazing is of benefit to the land if it is managed properly; it provides a certain stress on the plants and strengthens them. Grazing provides a better balance between domestic livestock and wildlife."

More than even a benefit to the land, the livestock industry is a ben-



Looking east over the city of Elko toward the Ruby Mountains.

Dr. William Berg (left) of the Northern Nevada Community College plans and administers higher education for the residents of Elko County and surrounding areas.



The downtown business district of Elko (above) provides services to most of Northeastern Nevada. Traditionally a rural community, Elko is gearing up for increasing growth.

Mel Steninger (right), Editor of the Elko Daily Free Press, feels that West Elko "holds great potential" for light industry.

Oren Probert (below) General Manager of Elko Enterprises, is optimistic about the area's new growth.



efit to mankind. Cattle and sheep populations have increased steadily over the past 100 years, and are still on the upswing — because consumption of beef and lamb continues to climb. Official estimates indicate that by 1980—or sooner—per-capita consumption of beef alone will reach 130 or 140 pounds a year.

As an example of that rising demand, note that in 1867 Elko County had 360,000 head of cattle and 24,000 sheep. But by January 1, 1973, that figure had risen to 650,000 cattle and 171,000 sheep. That is about 55 times the human population of the county. Since about 45 per cent of the total feed for Nevada livestock comes from federal lands (and since about 85 per cent of the state is owned by the federal government), the chances of the whole rural aspect of the county changing to any serious degree are remote.

Irving Hackett, Elko County Extension agent, sums up the over-all attitude on this point: "Elko County will remain a cow-calf producing



Howard Hickson, Curator of the Northeastern Nevada Historical Museum works to preserve the rich Western heritage of Elko and surrounding counties.

area, and cattle numbers will continue to increase, although sheep will decline as they are everywhere. Modern practices will be used to increase forage production to keep this area competitive with other cow-calf producing areas." He feels that any loss of production due to subdivisions "will be more than offset by intensified forage production on private ground and possible increase in production on federal ground through water development and range management."

What all this adds up to is the optimistic hope and belief that there will be room enough for the increasing population in both cattle and people. And yet the pressures of those new people will continue to build.

What effect is that pressure going to have on Elko County?

"I look to see development in Elko of strip-type resorts like Las Vegas, but on a limited scale. Elko is going to be the queen city of the Humboldt Valley."

Such is the prediction of State Senator Warren L. ("Snowy") Monroe. His reasoning is that "water is the key to development and this county has more water than any other in the state."

Even some major physical and natural characteristics of the city are already being changed. "Project Lifesaver," developed to relocate the Western Pacific and Southern Pacific railroad tracks from their traditional route through the center of town, is underway with funds for right-of-way acquisition and design already appropriated. The Humboldt River channel will be changed through Elko, and a large park area will be developed.

Tangible evidence that the city's growth has long since accelerated is plentiful. Air traffic has more than doubled within the past 10 years—with 77,728 incoming and outgoing flights being clocked at the Elko Airport in fiscal 1973. The Holiday Inn, Roseway Inn and Red Lion Inn are all new additions to the Elko skyline

with a fourth — a high-rise hotel — also in the works.

Although Elko County's water situation is superior to that in other parts of the state, water anywhere in Nevada always must be regarded as precious, and water waste here is therefore sinful. Elko Water Commissioner Bud Danner last year fretted over the fact that 366,400 acre feet of river water had been wasted in the past three years.

All in all, in spite of water and space problems, Nevada is more fortunate than many other states to be thinking and working on the challenges. □

The Little Church of the Crossroads is a landmark in Lamoille and serves various denominations in the community.





the Last car over the mountain



by Joan Wells

The mountain seemed to have no summit, and the afternoon shadows began to lengthen across valleys a perdition below. It was past time to make camp, and sodden clouds were crowding our summer sky. At every climbing curve, we looked for a space we could pull our bus onto with just a foot or two to spare for the cooking grill. But the narrow dirt road mounted, the pines tapering a tunnel at either side.



Mike stopped and ran his finger down the map. "Jarbidge should be about 12 miles ahead," he said. "And it's at about 6000 feet so this road has *got* to go back down soon." He prodded the breathless bus back to life, and we climbed what seemed a millionth hill. But there, around the next curve, in answer to our prayers, was a widened area. Just big enough for a bus, with a foot or two to spare.

We had been traveling the length and breadth of Nevada's scarped, windscrubbed desert for almost two weeks. We'd told our editors it was to be a research trip for a book on the West's lost history. To ease our consciences, we had taken a prodigious number of photographs, even scribbled a few notes — but only when we weren't too busy exploring wracked ghost town sites, or listening for the spirits of bygone trains along remnant tracks, or tracing the ruts of wagon trains along the screening sage. For us, the trip was sheer pleasure, and now toward its end, we looked forward to probing Jarbidge: this tiny dot on the map at Nevada's northernmost border. Would it still be inhabited? We half hoped not. Our favorite places were those

the Last car over the mountain

continued

storied townsites where the only sound was of a creaking door and the wind souging through decaying, empty rooms.

But the mystery of Jarbidge was still hours away. Supper and a good night's sleep on our homemade bus-bed would renew us for its adventure.

Mike fired up the charcoal and laid the steaks on the grill while I explored our backyard woods. The supper smells soon brought me out of their deeps, to find it had begun to sprinkle. We dished our steaks fast and crawled into the bus' protection. It was a cozy dinner, with good shepherders bread to sop the juices, and the last of a bottle of wine, the tap-tap of rain music on the tin roof.

"Maybe it'll snow," I hoped aloud.

"No chance," Mike declared. "It's not cold enough to snow."

We set the dishes out to get rain washed and bedded down early. The light rain began heavier rain, and I lay for long hours, listening. Sometime during the night, I reached numbly for another blanket, surprised in half-sleep at the sudden chill after days of weighted heat.

The brightness woke us, and the silence. A deeper silence than even yesterday's vacant desert's. I rubbed the misted window, and peered outside to a world of white; soft flakes sifted down past the viewing space I'd made. "Snow!" I gasped. "Oh, Mike, look! Snow!" Untangling from the covers, I crawled over, pushed the door open and tumbled outside. A biting cold struck my bare flesh, but I was too excited to care. Dancing around in the neighbor drift, I shouted, "It's beautiful, oh beautiful!" Mike watched from the doorway, a frown and a smile vying for his face.

"Enjoy it while you can," he said. "Because soon we're going to have to figure how we can get out." I stopped in my tracks and looked at the bus, half swallowed in the white heap, its tires barely visible. "And we didn't pack the chains!" Mike muttered, and slammed his fist on the bus' floor. I shivered, suddenly aware of the deepening cold, and climbed back in beside him. He grabbed a blanket and wrapped it around both our drooping shoulders. Outside of a jacket each, we'd brought no warm

clothes. It was September, and everyone knew September in Nevada was an oven.

"There's no way to heat the coffee, huh?" I asked.

"Not unless we set fire to the bus." Mike tried to smile. "Maybe we should have a nip of scotch," he added.

"For breakfast? Ugh."

"We'd probably better save it, anyhow," he said. It sounded ominous. We watched the snow sheet down and pulled the blanket closer. Suddenly, Mike unfolded from under it and rummaged for his jacket. He found it and handed me mine, along with a pair of his socks. "Put these on," he said. "We can't just sit here and mourn."

"What are we going to do?"

"Try to move this hunk of tin," he said, piling on every piece of clothing he could unearth. "You get out and push from behind when I yell." I squeezed my tennis shoes on over his giant socks and jumped out, glad to be doing something.

After three lame tries, the motor ground to life. Mike revved it to a roar and yelled, "Push!" With all my might, my feet slipping and mucking in the snow, I heaved forward against the icy steel. The bus budged an inch, maybe two, its tires spinning crazily. "Get in the front!" Mike shouted. "We'll try it backwards." Again the grinding roar, and I shoved mightily against the front. The bus sighed and settled into the muddy groove it had carved in the deepening snow. Mike motioned me to come inside.

I could tell he was trying hard not to look worried. He extricated me from my damp jacket and wrapped me in the blanket's possessive fold. "Time for your medicine," he said, handing me the scotch. The gulp burned my throat and tasted awful, but it did kindle a spark of warmth, and I stopped shivering. I huddled closer to him and stared out the window. "Will we freeze to death?" I whispered, trying to feel brave. He hugged my shoulder.

"Naw," he assured, too heartily. "This'll probably turn back to rain by mid-morning." He studied the window thermometer - 22°. "We'd better get back into the sleeping bag

until it warms up, though." I found a sweater to put on, and we snuggled deep into the worn bag's folds.

"Maybe somebody will come by," I murmured.

"Maybe," Mike said, without conviction.

We dozed a little, waking to look out the frosted windows and groan at the eternal fall. I nibbled on a chocolate bar, but it stuck in the middle of my throat. After what seemed hours... though time was hard to measure in the immutable, white silence... Mike crawled forward and pondered the thermometer again. It said 16°.

"It's not exactly warming up," he said with a gruff chuckle. "I'd better get some help." I sat bolt up.

"Help! Where?" He had already begun to pull socks over his socks.

"I'm going to hike to town," he announced matter-of-factly.

"But you don't even know if there's anybody there!" He hefted into his jacket.

"I won't find out sitting here." I disentangled myself from the sleeping bag and reached for my wet tennies.

"I'm going with you," I announced. He gave me a very level look, a look that stopped-dead my shoe-string fumbling.

"Not in those shoes, you're not," he said firmly.

"But if you go out into that snow alone, I may never see you again," I wailed. He reached over and squeezed my shoulder hard.

"I promise I'll come back for you." He winked and smiled. "I'll even try to bring you a chocolate donut." I blinked back the welling tears and tried to return his smile. He'd never yet broken a promise.

He stood at the car door, the snow smattering the hood of his jacket. "I want you to move around as much as possible." He poured some scotch into the thermos. "Sip this to keep warm, and nibble the chocolate if you begin to feel sleepy. But keep moving." He slipped the half-full scotch flask into his pocket and patted it as though it were his only friend. I reached and hugged him around his dampening bulk.

continued on page 42

selections out of

LETTERS FROM THE NEVADA TERRITORY



EXCERPTS BY PAULINE DE WITT

Conclusion of the series

TWENTY-SIXTH LETTER

Dec. 9, 1862.

The rumors of Indian troubles which have reached Carson today are not believed to portend anything serious. It appears that the owners of some wood ranches down about Dayton, twenty or thirty miles east of this point, have been warned by the Pah Utahs not to cut down their pine-nut trees, upon which, in a great measure, they depend for sustenance; and the presence of a number of Indians to defend their pine-nut "orchards" has badly scared some of the wood choppers, who sent a message to Governor Nye on the subject. . . . The matter was referred to in the Council today, and made an argument in support of an absurd and impracticable proposition to disarm all the Indians in the Territory.

THE TWENTY-SEVENTH LETTER

Dec. 10, 1862.

We have no later rumors from the Pah Utahs today, except that the Governor has notified the military authorities at Fort Churchill to have a force in readiness for any emergency, which may or may not be true, probably not. . . . Troops have been sent from Fort Churchill in search of the renegade band of Indians who have committed recent outrages and murders in Honey Lake Valley. . . . Meantime the bill to disarm the Indians, in other words, to declare war against them, by implication, hangs fire between the two houses of the Legislature. . . .

THE TWENTY-NINTH LETTER

Dec. 12, 1862.

The legislative proceedings since my last epistle related to two topics of more than ordinary interest on the western side of the Sierras — first, the Corporation Bill, which has been reported in the Council, and is on the high road to success — or defeat;

second, the taxation of the mines, which is very nearly a fact accomplished, so far as the House is concerned. . . .

In the House, all of last evening's session and most of the sessions of this morning and evening were devoted to the "perfecting" in Committee of the Whole, of the Revenue Bill, the great bone of contention being section ninety-nine, which imposes a tax of fifty per cent on the gross proceeds of the mines. Mills, who is a miner, moved to strike out "gross" and insert "net," and thereupon arose an exceedingly fierce and fiery discussion, becoming at times richly personal in its character. (Amendment defeated.) . . .

Ultimately an amendment by Howard fixing the tax at thirty cents on the hundred dollars was carried.

THE THIRTIETH LETTER

Dec. 13, 1862.

Both branches of the Territorial Legislature have been "objects of interest" to Californians today—the Council because it again staved off the Winters Corporation Bill, which is supposed to be inimical to the capital of California invested in the mines, and the House because it passed the Revenue Bill, which is alleged by some to be still more inimical because it levies a tax on the proceeds of the mines.

THIRTY-SECOND LETTER

Dec. 16, 1862.

The First, Second and Third Houses of the Legislature were all in session at once last evening, the Council and House in their usual chambers, lit up with candles, and the "Third House," over which Hal. Clayton usually presides, in the street in front, lit up with a bonfire of old boxes and barrels. . . .

THE COUNCIL

Today, the deed is done. The Council has passed the Corporation bill just as it came from the House, and it will become the law, if the Governor signs it. The other business of the Council was of little consequence. . . .

THIRTY-SIXTH LETTER

Dec. 19, 1862.

In the House a message was received from the Governor, announcing that he has approved: Act chartering a toll road in Lyon and Storey counties; Act to incorporate the town of Gold Hill; Act to prohibit the sale of ardent spirits, firearms and ammunition to Indians . . . (and various other Acts).

THIRTY-SEVENTH LETTER

Dec. 21, 1862.

In the Council . . . A message was received from the Governor, announcing his approval of twenty-three bills.

Hall offered a resolution highly complimentary to your correspondent, which was adopted unanimously. Hereby "Tule" returns his grateful acknowledgment.

On motion of Roop, a Committee was appointed to wait on the Governor and inform him that the Council is about to adjourn sine die, and ask him if he has any further communications to make. . . .

Sturtevant reported that the Committee had waited on the Governor, who stated that he would return a few more bills submitted for his approval in a few minutes. . . .

On motion of Hannah, the clock was set back several minutes, ostensibly to make it correspond with the House clock, but in reality to give as much time as possible for the Governor to send in his approval of bills. . . .

Another and last message was received from the Governor, giving notice of his approval to certain bills. . . .

THE HOUSE

Council bill, an Act to frame a Constitution and State Government for the State of Washoe, came in and was put on its third reading, under suspension of the rules. Upon the reading it was found that the Act was made up mainly of a collection of blanks. Brumfield and several others suggested the blanks be filled, but the Speaker (who doesn't like the bill) said it was too late. The bill was passed—ayes 7, noes 6.

. . . A message was received from the Governor announcing his approval of thirty-nine more bills. . . .

At ten o'clock the Speaker again called the House to order, and a message from the Governor was read announcing his approval of one resolution and twelve bills, among which were the Revenue Law and an Act to provide for the formation of corporations for certain purposes.

On the announcement of the approval of the Corporation Bill, the wildest cheers and shouting broke out among the members and spectators, who had crowded the lobby in anticipation of the announcement. . . .

The Speaker invited the House to take a recess of fifteen minutes to help him drink a basket of champagne, and the invitation was instantly accepted, *nem. con.* (*nemine contradicente*—unanimously). Meanwhile, a brilliant bonfire blazed in the street, and the whole town proposed to go on a grand and universal bender. The brass band speedily took up a position in the vicinity of the bonfire, and played a few pieces. . . .

After the adjournment a procession was formed, headed by the band and the presiding officers, which marched to Governor Nye's house and called the Governor out.

THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

Gentlemen: I think you had better all come in and take a drink. (Enthusiastic cheers.)

As I close, the town is still on a jolly rampage, everybody apparently engaged in making speeches or singing "John Brown," "Dixie" or "Yankee Doodle"—it is impossible to say which. □

The proper contemporary attitude toward the Spanish-American War of 1898 is a curious mixture of amusement, condescension and contempt, *opéra bouffe* at best, a minor skirmish blown up by politicians and the press at worst. To those young Americans who marched off to fight and die that long-ago summer, the war was serious business, however, and they did their duty with as much fervor and love of country as any who would follow in their footsteps in later conflicts.

Among the tens of thousands of men who answered the call were some 614 young Nevadans who formed two volunteer cavalry units and a battalion of volunteer infantry. One of the units, Troop M, 2nd U.S. Volunteer Cavalry Regiment, served five months in Wyoming and in the swamps of northern Florida and the second, Troop A, 1st Nevada Volunteer Cavalry Regiment, saw a year of rough duty against native guerillas in the Philippines. The third unit, the 1st Battalion, Nevada Volunteer Infantry, spent a fruitless and frustrating summer camped in Carson City and saw no action of any kind.

Nevadans had taken a hawkish stand against Spain for some time before the sinking of the battleship *Maine* on February 15 and were even more avid in beating the drums of war thereafter. Long before war was officially declared in late April, Nevadans were preparing themselves for the conflict. Those few native Spaniards in the state were threatened and cowed into silence and efforts were being made to raise an all-volunteer "cowboy cavalry" unit. Reno's Company C was put on a war footing in late February and Elko's Company E was formed in March. Other Nevada militia units were recruiting themselves up to authorized strength. Nevada's Indians were also becoming caught up and a Virginia City militia company had an offer of a contingent of braves. As Nevada ed-

itors thundered for revenge, young girls were writing Governor Sadler in Carson City, offering to go along as nurses should the units from their respective towns be called. On the day after war was declared, April 20, an effigy placard of the Spanish king, Alvonso XIII, went up on Winnemucca's Bridge Street and that evening the Spanish foreign minister, Sagasta, was hanged in effigy by high school and university students on the Reno campus.

As merchants all over the state were laying in stocks of stars and stripes bunting, ribbons, ties, belts and garters, a controversy was raging in Carson City over the new canopy for the town's bandstand which happened to be red and yellow in color, the hues of the Spanish flag. Editor Sam Davis

Summer

The story of the First Battalion,
Nevada Volunteer Infantry
in the Spanish-
American War.



COMPANY B, 1st. BATTALION, NEVADA INFANTRY

of the *Morning Appeal* demanded that it be torn down, but he was put in his place by the editor of the *Carson News* who called such sentiments "Idiot Patriotism" and pointed out that red and yellow were also the colors of the rainbow and of the Knights of Pythias. Davis was adamant, however, maintaining that what was proper in the Knight's Hall had no place in a public square during a war with Spain. Carson's churches also became infected and their ministers lectured from the pulpit on such subjects as "The War Cry," "The Man With a Drawn Sword" and "War Rather Than Peace At Any Cost."

The men who signed on for the two cavalry troops in May came from existing militia units and for a time it looked as if Nevada would not be called upon

for additional men. Governor Sadler had been writing the Secretary of War regularly since April about an authorization for an infantry unit and Senator Stewart and Congressman Newlands had been using their own contacts within the War Department. The call did not come until June 20, however, by which time the war spirit in Nevada had abated somewhat and several prominent editors had come out in opposition to the state's sending another contingent of men. The members of the militia companies themselves were expressing some reluctance to leave their homes and jobs and the militia captains thus were going about recruiting new men.

The Emmet Guard of Virginia City sent recruiters to Dayton, Mason Valley and Hawthorne and the Reno

Guards recruited in Wadsworth and Lovelock. Winnemucca's Company D scoured the small mining camps in Humboldt County and Elko's Company E took in men from as far south as Delamar in Lincoln County. Carson's Company F covered Douglas County and Lake Tahoe and one of their officers ranged as far afield as Bridgeport, California.

The Carson unit also received an offer from one Ali Sing Bo, a Chinese cook. "Me fine cook," he reportedly told the captain, "me fight like hell too, bet your life. I hit one goose two hundred fifty yard every time. Me cook plenty and fight between meals. Maybe I get two man's pay, eh?" His offer was politely refused, but Governor Sadler did accept a twenty-man contingent from Woodland, California, that had pulled out of a California regiment because their own choice for their commander had not been confirmed by the governor.

One Emmet recruit, Forest Richardson of Dayton, backed out at the last minute and the next morning found himself hanging in effigy on the town's main street, a crudely lettered sign reading "Cold Feet or The Man Who

Soldiers

by Phillip I. Earl

Photos from the Nevada State Historical Society



COMPANY C, 1st. BATTALION, NEVADA INFANTRY



Summer Soldiers

Likes To Sign His Name" dangling from the dummy's feet.

When the militia captains turned in their muster rolls on July 5, only about a fourth of the men listed were regular members of the militia. This poor showing infuriated Colonel Lord, the commander of the National Guard, and he recommended to the Adjutant General that the units be dissolved. The Board of Military Auditors considered it later in July and concurred with his recommendation.

The companies began to report in on July 7. The Carson Guard spent the first day getting the camp ready and at 3:30 that afternoon the Reno Guards arrived. The Carson troopers and the Carson Drum and Bugle Corps met their train and provided an escort out to the camp at the race track. The Winnemucca boys and the Nationals, Virginia City's Company A, got in on July 9 and the Emmets pulled into Carson's depot aboard the V & T next morning, armed, uniformed and complete with a brass band. That afternoon Company E arrived from the East and was welcomed by the Comstockers' band and a squad from each of the units that had preceded them. One of the members of the company brought along a full-grown American eagle that he had cap-

tured near Tuscarora the week before he enlisted.

Many of the men had apparently derived their notions of army life from dime novels and found it something of a shock to be confronted with tents, straw ticks and barren ground. The first few days were hard ones and a few men deserted. The Reno Guards had also taken in four recruits who were underage, but they were not discovered until they had been in camp three weeks.

In many ways the Battalion was ill-starred from the beginning. Shortly after the men reported in, the governor consolidated the Elko unit with the Emmets, forcing one officer down into the ranks and another to quit. Neither unit was happy with the arrangement and many men threatened to take their leave on the spot. Harmony once again reigned only when Major William C. Morrison of the Emmets was elevated to Battalion Commander and Elko's Garry Sanders took over as company commander. The various captains were also trying to recruit each other's men and only ceased their disputations when the governor threatened them with court-martials.

On July 22, the day the Battalion was to be mustered into service, sev-

eral men deserted just before the ceremony and several others showed up drunk. There were also rumors that several men had made moves to step out of line when their turn came to take the oath. Others were reported to have purposely failed their physicals, or at least tried.

Camp Sadler, as the encampment at the race track came to be called, was considerably less than ideal for a prolonged stay. The southeast section of Carson where it was located was the lowest, hottest area of the town. The track had no trees to provide shade and the stables shut out the westerly breezes which helped cool the rest of the town. A prevailing stench of manure hung over the camp day and night and made matters even worse.

The camp's sewers were inadequate for the numbers of men stationed there and the water was unfit to drink. A number of men came down with dysentery and medical authorities feared an outbreak of typhoid before the summer was out. In addition, there was no place at the camp for the men to train and drill and they were forced to conduct skirmish drills on Carson's streets, much to the delight of the city's young ladies.

There was also the matter of food.



The citizens of Carson City often came out in holiday spirit to watch the soldiers of Camp Clark in dress parade (left).

The ladies of Carson City's Red Cross (below) pose on the steps of the Capitol.

For the first two weeks they were in camp the men boarded at local hotels and inns, but rations arrived on July 19 and they were thereafter condemned to subsist upon canned salmon, embalmed beef, army beans and coffee so bad that many men swore it must have been left over from the Civil War. An additional source of discontent was the fact the men received no pay all summer long and were forced to secure their liquor and tobacco on credit. Carson merchants donated some tobacco, as did the governor and other state officials, but the understandable bitterness felt by the men affected everything they did, or were told to do.

All was not drill and drudgery, however. The ladies of Carson's Red Cross baked cakes, cookies and gingerbread for them and put on musical and dramatic entertainments. Jim Wiggins of Empire sponsored free dances every weekend and there were also baseball games and outdoor concerts on the Capitol Mall. Carson's Episcopal Choir sang at the camp and on several occasions brought along their organist and a small portable pump organ. The ladies of the Presbyterian Church also staged discreet musical programs and poetry readings and on several Sundays the pastor came out to deliver



These members of the Emmet Guard (left) of Virginia City were anxious for a fight with the Spanish but the fiercest action they would see would be in the local saloons.



Summer Soldiers

a few words of moral uplift to the assembled men.

A detachment marched out to the prison every day to bathe in the hot springs and some men were able to take an occasional tub bath in the hay mow of one or another of the local hotels. Water fights on the Capitol lawn were also a popular diversion and some men made the acquaintance of Carson's young ladies. A few of the latter took to sneaking into camp after dark, however, and it finally became necessary to put the area off-limits to all unescorted females.

Entertainment was not what they had enlisted for and as the summer wore on and no further orders came down from Washington, reports of drunkenness and insubordination began to surface. Some men took out their frustrations on their comrades and ended up in the stockade, but others took to drinking in nearby saloons and hanging about the streets insulting passing civilians. Sheriff Kinney, at his wit's end over drunken soldiers, at one point threatened to round them up in wholesale lots and put them on chain gangs but an occasional arrest was as far as his threats went in practice. Military authorities were coping as best they could but several men were court-martialed, fined \$10 and sent to ten days' hard labor digging ditches.

Carson's Chinatown was not far from Camp Sadler and many of the troopers spent their leisure hours in its dark, dank saloons. Bootleg liquor and women were available at bargain prices and the inhabitants provided a ready market for blankets, clothing, shoes and other items stolen from the camp. Drunken soldiers also attacked the denizens of the quarter on occasion or were themselves beaten and robbed.

As a part of the general crackdown on the enlisted men, Battalion officers conceived and carried out a raid on the area on August 6. At 7:00 A.M. 190 men assembled under the command of Major Morrison and a line was extended completely around the compound. Bayonets were fixed and at a signal shouts and whoops went up all along the line as the troops moved forward. Doors were kicked in, windows broken with rifle butts and slumbering Orientals rudely roused from their beds. A few tried to escape and one attempted to run up a Chinese flag on the joss house. The soldiers had the element of surprise working for them and they ransacked every house in search of stolen items. When an inventory was taken following the raid, it was found that only one bar of soap stamped "U.S." and two used army candles had been turned up. Battalion officers were somewhat red-faced



Forest Richardson was hanged in effigy at Dayton for deserting the Emmet Guard even before the unit reported to Carson City for muster.

about the whole matter and took a good deal of ribbing from editors around the state.

In early August the owners of the race track told Major Morrison that they wanted their property back so they could start training horses for the fall racing season. He and his officers looked over several possible sites and decided upon a field west of town belonging to A. D. Treadway. On August 13 a detachment was sent out to dig sanitary trenches and lay off the various areas where the companies were to set up their tents and the move was made four days later. Several men were ill at the time of the move, but they soon recovered in the more healthful environment. The new encampment, christened Camp Clark in honor of the commander of the battleship *Oregon*, was much to the liking of the men. Cool breezes blowing out of King's Canyon were a welcome relief and there was plenty of room for drill. Dress parade began to be held in the evenings and the people of Carson City turned out en masse to watch the soldiers go through their maneuvers and thrill to the prancing steeds of the officers.

Rumors about impending orders and assignments to combat areas were rife the entire summer, but as peace negotiations between the United States and Spain continued, the word soon began to circulate that they would be mustered out, a prospect that a good many men welcomed. On August 11 the word came that all units which entered the service under the President's second call would be mustered out forthwith. Senator Stewart was still working on an active assignment for the unit however and on August 20 informed the men through the columns of the *Morning Appeal* that they would be going to Arizona Territory to do garrison duty. Most of the men at Camp Clark wanted no part of such an assignment and a few told their officers in no uncertain terms that an assignment to either Cuba, Puerto Rico or the Philippines would be the least they

would accept. Others talked it over and decided that they simply wanted out. They got a petition to the War Department in circulation and it garnered over 100 names before Battalion officers seized it, an act that was harshly criticized by those who originated it.

Some of the men were already nursing hatreds against their superiors and it was reported that a "day of reckoning" was in the offing as soon as they doffed their uniforms. Other men were diplomatically trying to break off engagements that had been hastily contracted in the spirit of war.

The War Department did not confirm Stewart's telegram and orders soon came down to the effect that the Nevada Volunteer Infantry was to be among the units mustered out. When Governor Sadler received specific instructions on August 31, he immediately informed the men at Camp Clark. Cheers were heard from all quarters as the brass band oomped out its approval, but the officers showed little enthusiasm and had nothing to say to newsmen.

The Mustering Officer from San Francisco arrived on September 7, but the paymaster did not get in for another ten days. Some seventy-five men were paid off and discharged within the next few days and most of the remainder sent off on a month's leave before final processing. Most left for home right away, but a few could not resist a final fling in Chinatown, and this time came off second best in a lively fracas with a gang of Chinese toughs which had been brought in from San Francisco.

The only casualty suffered by the Nevada Volunteer Infantry was the eagle brought in by the Elko boys. It had been tamed and had become the unit's mascot. On October 19, the day the leaves were up, a Carson ice man, Fred Wilder, spotted it in a field and killed it with a shotgun, having mistaken it for a predator. The word got out that he had slain an eagle and one of those who came out was a member of the Emmets. He returned to town

and informed his comrades who then hied out to Wilder's farm to demand an explanation. There was little that could be done however. Wilder offered to pay damages, but the men accepted only a token \$5 and carried the bird away, saying that they intended to have it stuffed and mounted.

Camp Clark had meanwhile been abandoned, the men staying in hotels while they awaited their discharges. Unsightly debris and partially-filled sanitary trenches marked the spot where neat rows of white tents once stood and blue-coated boys once delighted their admirers with the military precision of their drills. "They will soon disappear from our midst," wrote a newsman of the men, "and the war alarm will seem like the remembrance of a dream."

On October 26, three days before the men were scheduled to be paid off and released, there was a threatened outbreak of Indian trouble in northern Nye County. It stemmed from the arrest of an Indian who had knifed a white man in a dispute over a bottle of whiskey and panicky residents of the area had telegraphed the Governor for help. Battalion officers halted all proceedings in anticipation of a call for troops, but the trouble soon blew over. Newspapers in the area later reported that the gravity of the situation had been much exaggerated.

Two days later the men were mustered out. As before, a few remained in town for a final revel and several of them found themselves in Sheriff Kinney's jail next morning. He released them as soon as they were sober enough to walk out the door. About forty men liked their small taste of army life and signed on for a stretch in the regulars at a recruiting office set up by the mustering officer the day after he had finished processing out the Nevada Volunteer Infantry. Most had had enough and were content to return to their interrupted private pursuits, saddened perhaps that their dreams of glory had been so fleeting, but glad once again to be free. □

The Long Drive North.

by Linda DuFurrena



Perhaps Nevada's greatest calling card in a world of computers, machines, and overpopulation is her vast, silently beautiful lands. Such lands exist abundantly in the northwestern part of Nevada, Humboldt County. Very few people live in these lonely deserts and hills. Jose Narbaiza, Sabino Gorotola, and Augustin Pas Maz are three men who do. They are living the life that their fathers and grandfathers did before them, and that perhaps their sons will do in the generation to come. These men, who live with Nevada's beauty and hardships, may never see another human being for weeks on end. They work as shepherders for the Rosebud Livestock Company owned

by Pete Etchart. In their native Basque country of Vizcaya, Spain, they had occupations such as bricklayers, bartenders, and carpenters. They have come to the United States and Nevada because they wish to provide a better life for their families in Spain. They contract out to California Range Association to herd sheep for three year periods to increase their earning power and their families' financial status.

While working as shepherders in this country, they live in tents, cook over wood stoves, care and tend their flock of up to one thousand ewes and lambs for each herder, act as midwives during lambing, and protect their flock

continued



The Long Drive North.

continued



against predators. The Basque men begin their labors in early April with lambing, then shear the wool later in May. The herders then move into the high country on the Bilk Creek Mountain Range. The summer months could be called the easiest for Jose, Sabino, and Augustin, because until the selling and shipping of lambs in August the sheep are contained in a smaller mountain area. In late fall, the shepherders gradually begin their long drive to the low desert country near Jungo and Sulphur, Nevada, a distance of some eighty miles.

Each day on the trail is busy and hard. The men pack all their belongings on the backs of burros, then trail a distance of approximately seven miles to the next campsite where they set up camp for the night. By the middle of March, the drive is made back over the same trail to the low summer range.

Supplies and mail are brought by Pete Etchart on a regular basis and his visits are eagerly anticipated. Days are long and sometimes lonely for these men who truly live by the sun. Augustin and Jose have wives in Spain, and reading mail from them is their only contact with home. Once a herder has completed his three year contract period, he is eligible to stay in this country and even bring his wife and family. Perhaps these three men will join the growing trend of Basque shepherders who are deciding to live the rest of their lives in the United States. There are few men who will live the lonely, difficult life of the shepherd. The Basque love and knowledge of tending sheep is yet another tradition which adds to the diverse heritage of our state. □





Mercer

Fort Churchill

Fort Churchill, just about halfway between Carson City and Fallon on US 50, is one of the best-known landmarks in the state. Much has been written about the fort and today, fortunately, it is part of the State Park System with picnic facilities and a museum. The fort was hurriedly built by the government in the sixties when Indian outbreaks threatened. Its buildings were made of adobe and over the years many literally melted under the infrequent but damaging rain storms. Park officials have stabilized the remains, using coatings on the walls. To wander through the area is to take a nostalgic trip back to Comstock days.

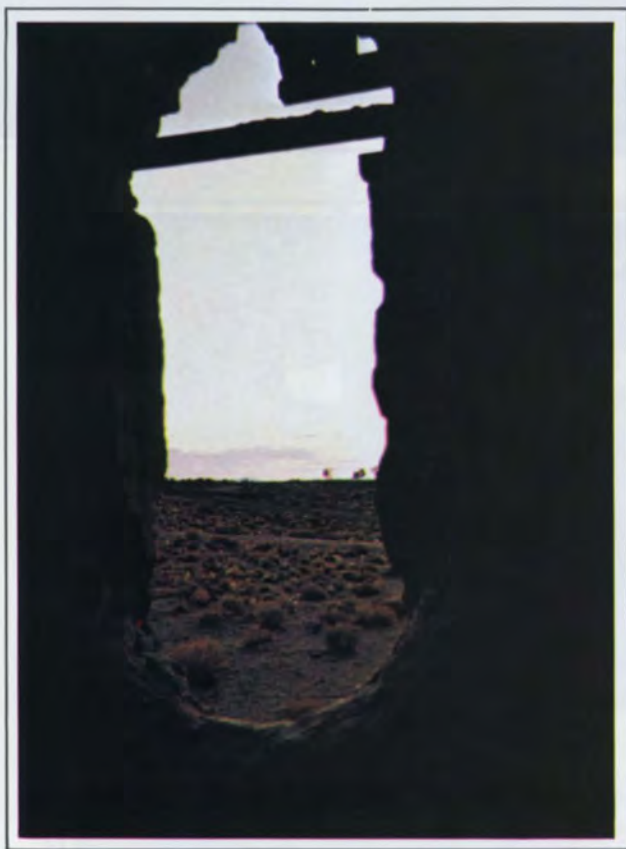
PHOTOS BY
GARY MERCER AND
JAMES W. POWER



Power



Mercer



Fort Churchill



Power



**\$1,000.00
BONUS JACKPOT
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THE TALE OF 37 HARES

By Walter DeBrouwer



I had been enjoying the old mining town of Berlin, Nevada, which is quite a few miles from the nearest supermarket when I suddenly realized that if I were to make it to the Big Creek campground near Tonopah before dark I had better get started. Leaving Berlin I took Highway 21, not paved but a pretty good dirt and gravel road, and headed northeast through the Reese River Valley. I had expected to find a sign showing where to turn off for the campground but I either missed it or it didn't exist.

Close to Austin I turned around and started back hoping to find a turnoff in the direction I thought would be the right way. I was also thinking of the many side roads in the desert that branch off which have no signs to tell a stranger where he is going. I have, in the past, taken many roads of this kind and generally found the trip was worth the time.

It was about seven thirty on this particular evening and a large bank of dark clouds was about to cover the sun and I thought it would bring on darkness a little earlier than usual so I was driving like a native rancher, leaving a dust trail about a half mile long. The dirt road narrowed but it was smooth and there were quite a few straight spots where my Ford truck and Alaskan camper could really scoot along. I guess the larger size tires I have on it make quite a noise on the road and as I approached a rabbit community I must have startled them and aroused their curiosity.

In less than five seconds four sets of big ears appeared in the roadway one after another. They took a quick look and went on across the road. The sagebrush on either side of the road was quite tall and thick enough to prevent me from seeing the rabbits until they were in the roadway. Immediately after the first four had crossed five more appeared, all at once, at different distances within the next three hundred feet. That made nine in less than nine seconds. I decided I would count just to see how many were going to cross.

About a year earlier near 5 a.m. I had passed through Garrison, Utah (which is even further from the supermarket) and had seen so many rabbits in such a short distance but I hadn't thought about counting them until it was all over. This time I thought it's a good time to start counting.

After the first nine rabbits came out so quickly I decided to slow down to about fifteen MPH so that I wouldn't run over any of them.

I prefer not to kill any animal if it can be avoided or unless there is a valid reason.

For the next one-quarter mile they continued to pop out, take a quick look, and cross over the road. Ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen and so on until I had reached seventeen. Then it suddenly dawned on me that all seventeen had crossed the road from left to right. While I was thinking of a logical reason they should do that number eighteen did likewise. I again glanced at the sagebrush. It looked equally good for rabbits living on either side of the road...but then I'm no expert when it comes to deciding which side of the road is best for a rabbit to live!

Number nineteen surprised me by going back the other way and then I knew it was bound to happen sooner or later. Within thirty seconds the next thirteen followed the same way as number nineteen...making eighteen consecutive ones to the right then fourteen con-

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THE TALE OF 37 HARES

continued



secutive to the left. By now it was turning into an exciting game. I wondered, could it possibly end up to be a tie game? When number thirty-three appeared he was far down the road and not in any hurry but...he had come from the wrong side! Well, there goes the old rabbit game I thought. Instead, he just sat on his edge of the road and looked. I slowed down even more so as not to frighten him or influence his decision. After all, the game I was playing was with myself and I didn't want to cheat. He was still there, just sitting and looking when suddenly numbers 34, 35, 36, and 37 crossed from right to left.

By now I was getting closer to number 33 and he would have to make up his mind soon. He finally turned and went back the same way he had come. He hadn't crossed so I couldn't legally count him as a rabbit who had crossed. He was also the last one I saw before turning into the campground.

My final tally was: eighteen to the right and eighteen to the left, making thirty-six to cross plus one that hadn't crossed. All in less than two miles.

Could the first eighteen have crossed the road, run on up ahead then the same eighteen run back across the road? I guess it is possible but I doubt that they did...but then, I don't have any other explanation either.

Immediately after reaching the campground and preparing my supper I jotted down all the notes to this story so I wouldn't forget a part of it. I know it sounds fantastic and probably a lot of people won't believe it but it really did happen just that way.

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the Last car continued

"Hurry back," I whispered. "And say hello to all those folks in Jarbidge." He kissed me quickly, then turned and strode off from the front of the buried bus. I watched until my eyes hurt, but soon there was nothing to see but the blinding, swirling snow.

I surveyed my small environs, looking desperately for something I could take comfort in. But every mote of the bus' interior only reminded me of the journeys we'd taken together in its familiar cubicle. Suddenly I wanted nothing more than to crawl into the sleeping bag and cry my heart out. But the notion seemed disloyal, with Mike out there in the uncharted snows, sure, I knew, of my hardness and courage.

"Keep busy," I muttered to the silence. The bus was a tumbled botch inside. "O.K., you're due for a house-cleaning," I told it. Humming a breathless tune to fend off the silence, I set to work putting its mess to rights. No Dutch housewife ever worked more vigorously at her chores. Each piece of clothing not already bulked about my body was stacked and folded neatly, each dish and cup was arranged and rearranged in the homemade cupboard. Every crumb was whisk-broomed to the door; then, when the bed was smooth and the pillows plumped, I tore into the tissues and polished each window-pane with a frantic flourish.

The windows' outsides were, by now, thickly sheeted. The icy curtain made the bus dim inside, and worse, made me feel completely prisoned. I grabbed a knife from the camp kit and pushed the door open. It felt heavy and made an icy crack, for the snow was beginning to pile above its hinges. "I can't have that," I muttered, and reached down to dig a clearing around the door. Then, rubbing my numbed hands together, I started my tour through the drifts around the windows, scraping the ice away until the glass screeched protest.

The bus, when I crawled back inside, was home: a familiar refuge, a solace to the aching cold and the emptiness of the alien world outside. I huddled under my blanket and sipped at the scotch. "Cheers," I toasted the enemy snow, wondering if a person's brain gets addled in the throes of frozen death. The windows

I'd just scraped were covered again with the intimidating ice.

I don't know how long it was that I rocked back and forth on the bus bed, trying to feel my blood course, pinching my flesh to make sure I could still feel; nor just how many times I dashed outside to scrape the windows, dancing on the drifts to keep my feet alive. I tried not to think about Mike, but I found myself hugging his bunched undershirt to me, trying to squeeze a bit of his presence from it for sustenance. Tears pricked my eyes, and I pushed it away from me. But, "Be safe," I whispered to it. "Oh please be safe."

The windows were again piled with ice. I picked up the knife and pushed wearily at the door. It didn't budge. I sat back and kicked it, hard. It was frozen immobile. Strangely, I didn't much care. It was too cold anyhow, and I was awfully tired. "I'm sorry, Mike," I whispered, and crawled into the sleeping bag.

I'm sure I didn't sleep, but I remember dreaming. In my dream, it was spring, and two hikers were tramping a mountain road. Rounding a curve, they came across the rusty skeleton of a bus, and inside, spied a scatter of bones. Beneath the lorn remains lay a notebook. "That's it!" I said aloud. "My notebook! I'll write my last letter to the world."

It was into the sixth page, I think, that I heard the motor. The sound was so muffled at first, so unlikely, that I thought it was a private noise, the sound of eternity perhaps. I scribbled another word or two, then dropped the tablet. "A motor," I whispered, half afraid to hear. "It is a motor!" I threw myself against the frozen door, and didn't even wonder that it burst right open. There in the drifts, beside the bus-shaped mound a car weighted with snow but breathing life had halted. I rubbed my eyes and wondered if this were heaven. A window rolled halfway down and a bundled earmuffed face emerged. "You need a lift?" it drawled.

I began to laugh, and the laugh grew 'til I had to stem the surge. I wanted to smother the face in kisses, to hug the world. Instead, my words rushed out and I yanked the car door open. "We have to find my husband," I said.

In the car's amazing warmth, I told my story to the nonchalant two men. I asked them how they had gotten through. "Oh, we're used to these early snows," the driver said. "We just chain up the snow tires, and git

on where we were goin'." They told me Jarbidge had 20 residents, and I breathed relief. Yet there were miles of snow ahead, and I watched warily from the window, wondering if this white hummock or that drift might hold Mike's frozen form. We reached the summit and a sign that said 9115 feet. The two men got out and looked around. Climbing back in, one muttered, "No tracks," and my heart plummeted.

The car crept on around the mountain's infinite, drifted curves and finally picked up speed as a tiny village came in sight below us. "Jarbidge," the driver pointed. He wasn't extravagant with words.

The first habitation in the snow drowned town was a small garage. A jeep sat in front of its gas pump, its motor billowing in the frosty air. Behind the steamed windows a crusty face appeared. "Have you seen a man hike in?" I yelled, my words tumbling. The steamed window descended a crack.

"You that feller's wife?"

"He's here?"

"Yup, down 't the bar-grill right now, gettin' a rescue party." A thumb jerked down-street and the window rolled back up.

"Hurry," I whispered to the driver, "please hurry."

A second jeep sat in front of the icicle-weighted Bar-Grill. Its motor was running, but there was no one in sight. Before the car crunched to a halt, I shoved the door open and rushed, slipping and stumbling inside. Two men hunkered on bar stools near the door, and there at the far end, pouring steaming coffee into a thermos, stood Mike, his cheeks rosy and a smothering jacket wrapped around his shoulders. He was the most beautiful vision I'd ever seen. I ran toward him and was swallowed up in a flash within damp wool smells and a bear hug that I wanted never to let go. "Damn!" he uttered, grinning. "You spoiled the beautiful rescue I was about to make."

After five days of Jarbidge's warming, human hospitality, a thaw set in. The bus was brought down from its mountain isolation, and we wended a lower northern route toward home. The following year a letter came from our Jarbidge hosts. In it, they told us we were the last folks on that mountain until the following June. "Good thing you made it," they added matter-of-factly. "It would have been a long, cold wait."

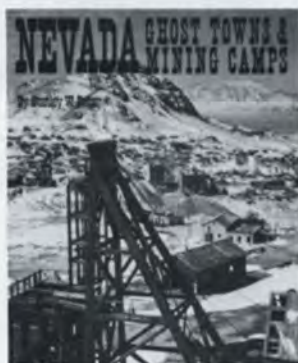
In all the dubious weathers since, Mike has never again dared to declare, "It's not cold enough to snow!"



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