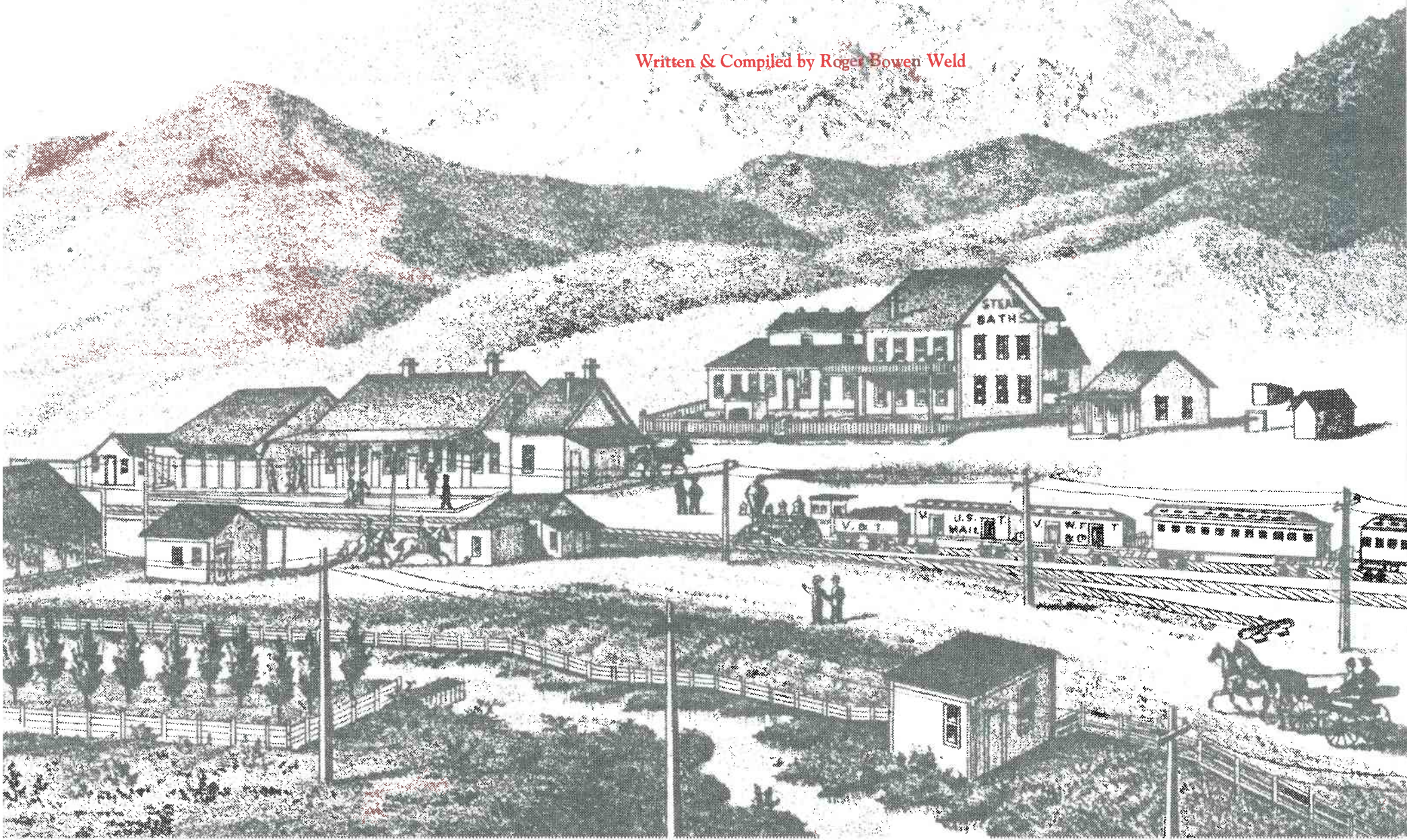


A STEAMBOAT IN THE DESERT

A HISTORY OF STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, NEVADA

Written & Compiled by Roger Bowen Weld



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First Edition
Published by Jamilian University Press

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International Community Guilds
16010 South Virginia Road
Reno, Nevada 89511

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Foreword

I have taken the time to compile this collection of historical references as partial payment for free use of the hot springs spa over the last decade or so. By limiting the amount of personal commentary I hoped to allow the source material to appear in its original color. As such, it is not the work of any one person. These pages contain many voices. An informal style seemed to fit the material.

Writing a history of Steamboat Springs without writing about neighboring places and events would be difficult. Its history is intimately bound up with the surrounding valleys and peoples, especially the Indians whose home it was before the days of the Wild West.

I would like to give thanks to Professor Jerome E Edwards, for his history of Nevada class at the University of Nevada, Reno; to Russell R Elliot for his excellent book, *History of Nevada*; and, posthumously, to Nevadan educator, author, Walter Van Tilburg Clark for his kindred spirit.

I am also indebted to the Washoe County Library's main branch periodical section for access to newspaper articles on microfilm. The Nevada Historical Society's limited collection on Steamboat was also of use, mainly for its newspaper clipping file. The University of Nevada, Reno Special Collections department provided access to otherwise unavailable material.

Last, but not least, I thank my wife, Cynthia, who prodded me into this intellectual exercise. And I must not forget the Pioneers whose intrepid spirits reshaped the continent and gave us our rich history.

A S T E A M B O A T I N T H E D E S E R T

Roger Bowen Weld

May 10th, 1998

Steamboat Springs, Nevada

Before Steamboat Springs Resort

The current archeological model dates the first inhabitants of this area between 11,000-12,000 years ago. North American explorers began entering the Great Basin in the 1820s. A trapper named, Peter Skene Ogden, crossed the Humboldt and Carson basins in 1825. Jedediah Strong Smith explored the Walker River and central Nevada during 1826. In 1841 settlers began crossing Humboldt Valley and the Forty Mile Desert, the route later followed by the Overland Stage Lines. John C Fremont's famous expedition came through in 1843. Settlers began arriving in earnest after the treaty was signed with Mexico in 1848, ceding territories in what is now the American southwest to the United States.¹ That event coupled with the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill in California, marked the beginning of the great westward migrations into the new territories.

J Goldsborough Bruff wrote in his journal of 1849 that he and his men had cooked their meals in Nevada's hot springs. They even went as far as parboiling an entire ox in one. The Indians used the hot springs to cook their pinenuts. Indeed, they call a well at Steamboat, Chicken Soup Springs. The water is supposed to taste like chicken soup. Several wells in Nevada bear that name.²

Winnemucca, war-chief of the Paiute Indian tribe told the "Forty-niners" of California gold rush fame and later the Comstock miners to use the springs.³ The Indians stationed their winter camps along the banks of Steamboat Creek.⁴ Mormon settlers began to inhabit the Carson and Washoe Valley areas in 1849. Mormon Station at present day Genoa dates from that period. A story relates the naming

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of Steamboat Springs by an emigrant train in 1850. As they passed through the Truckee Meadows, they saw large columns of steam rising into the air. Thinking that they had arrived at the Sacramento River they imagined they were seeing steamboats. The illusions soon gave way to a more perplexing vision, steam rising from giant fissures in the earth. The name of Steamboat has been associated with the area ever since.⁵

The Thomas Orr emigrant train passed through the Carson Valley on its way to California in May 1850. William Prouse, a member of the emigrant train, panned a little gold in the Carson Valley along the way.⁶ News of the discovery traveled quickly along the grapevine and was responsible for beginning the Gold Canyon rush which culminated in the discovery of the Comstock lode. The great influx of people into the area upset the Indian's nomadic lifestyle. A conflict was inevitable in what was becoming the Wild West. Yes, some Indians say the west wasn't *wild* until the White man came.

Utah's territorial government did not represent the needs of the people in its far western reaches. A squatter government formed at Genoa and petitioned the US Congress for a separate territorial government apart from Utah in 1851.⁷ In 1853, James B Ellis' claim in Gold Canyon was yielding between \$12 and \$20 a day and monthly mail service began across northern Nevada. The first grist mill was set up in the Carson Valley in 1854.⁸ The first newspaper, *Scorpion*, appeared in manuscript form January 1857 at Genoa.⁹ In 1858, Brown's farm near Steamboat Springs was engaged in dairying though the closest market was Downieville, California.¹⁰

Year by Year at the Resort

1859

A man named James Cameron discovered the springs.¹¹ The sticky, black goo that was hampering placer mining activity on the other side of the hill from Steamboat turned out to be full of silver and gold. A rush to 'Virginia' commenced as the Comstock lode revealed its richness. Area mining operations that year yielded a quarter of a million dollars.¹² Placerville, California, already an established mining center, became the Comstock's supply link.¹³ Soon, they would build the first two resorts to entertain travelers to the area—Lake House at Glenbrook, Lake Tahoe, on the road from Placerville, and Steamboat Springs Resort in Steamboat Valley.¹⁴

1860

An elusive Frenchman named Felix Monet discovered Steamboat Springs.¹⁵ In January, J W Cameron and five friends built a ranch with shed for steam baths and later that summer built a small hotel.¹⁶ P C Rector, Carson County surveyor, surveyed and recorded the property at the springs during March. George F Goodridge sold his Steamboat Springs ranch to C W Cullins, Storey County, Territory of Nevada about this time.¹⁷

In the spring of that year the Indians had a grand pow-wow at Pyramid Lake to discuss the ever increasing encroachments by the White men on their territory. In early May, a group of Bannock Indians, a branch of Paiutes, killed three Whites and burned William's Station. They were apparently seeking retribution for the abduction of two Indian women. Rumors of hostilities ran rampant and a group of volunteers set out from Virginia City to crush the uprising. Instead, the Indians led them into an ambush near Pyramid Lake. Seventy-six out of one hundred and five were killed outright. The Indians wounded many others. The people on the Comstock were panic stricken. A few

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weeks later a second military force was formed consisting of 549 volunteers and 207 regular Army. At the resulting battle near Pyramid Lake, 160 Indians and two Whites perished. A period of Indian retaliatory assaults on rural outposts across Nevada began which lasted more than ten years.¹⁸

Dr Edmund G Bryant, one of three surgeons attached to the volunteer militia company originating from Downieville, California, remained in Nevada. He opened *a sort of health resort at Steamboat Springs*.¹⁹ He was the cousin of celebrated poet William Jennings Bryant. For unknown reasons Bryant soon became an alcoholic. His wife, Marie Louise Antoinette Hungerford, took the children and went to Virginia City to live. Her father had been the captain of the Downieville volunteers and had also moved there. Bryant later returned to California. His wife went to his side to nurse him during the last days of his life in 1866 at LaPorte, California. Within months she married the famous John Mackay of Virginia City.

A grand geyser season began at Steamboat which lasted into 1862. The tallest geyser reached more than 80 feet in the air.²⁰

Revenues generated by custom freight businesses to and from the Comstock totaled \$1,350,000.²¹ It seemed like more money was pouring into the Comstock than was coming out of it.

Nevada mineral production reached one million dollars at year's end. Virginia City population in the 1860 US Census report was 2,345.²² During the next ten years Nevada population would soar from 7,000 to 42,000. Elsewhere, the celebrated Pony Express began its short career as the premier rapid delivery mail system of the time. Rates from Missouri to California were \$5 per ounce.

1861

Dr Joseph Ellis set up shop at the springs.²³ Amos Stowe built a small hotel across the creek.²⁴ Cameron's title to Steamboat Springs

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was not in order. He sold it to Charles W Cullins who then sued for possession of the property.²⁵

An English emigrant wrote about Steamboat Springs in 1861, *the ground trembles here and scalding water sullies forth from cracks in the earth. Jets of steam engulf the land and the air is heavy with the scent of brimstone and sulfur. From the bowels of the earth you can hear the sound of the devil's steam engines at work.*²⁶

They built the Geiger Grade toll road between Steamboat Springs and Virginia City.²⁷ Daily stages traversed the 12-mile route, Wells, Fargo & Company along with Pioneer Stage line were just two of the companies running coaches. Many a prairie schooner traversed that road carrying cargo to and from the Comstock. They hauled several railroad locomotives up it as well.

Nevada became a territory with all the official government trimmings. On July 11th, 1861, James W Nye became territorial governor and Mark Twain's brother, Orion Clemens, became territorial secretary.²⁸ The census for the new territory listed 16,347 residents. The county seat was Washoe City. They conducted all county business there until 1871.

Nevada mineral production reached two and a half million dollars. In the nation, they enacted the first income tax to finance the newly erupted war between the states. In the world, the Russian emperor abolished serfdom.

1862

Dr Ellis built a thirty-four-bed hospital at Steamboat Springs. He also built six or seven bath houses.²⁹ *The First Directory of Nevada Territory, 1862* gave a description of Steamboat Springs, Cameron's hotel, Dr Ellis' hospital, and described the action of the mineral water in the fissures. They also mentioned a water analysis by a Dr Lanszweert.³⁰ On November 22nd, C W Cullins had the Steamboat

Springs property survey recorded again.³¹ Nevada mineral production reached six million dollars.

1863

Amos Stowe reported that they had rebuilt the resort after the recent fire and they will hold a grand ball at Steamboat Springs on January 22nd.³² The *Washoe Times* reported a robbery at Dr Ellis' hospital in February.³³

Sam Clemens, a.k.a. Josh, a.k.a. Mark Twain put in several appearances at Steamboat Springs. It seems life on the Comstock was not an easy affair for reporters. By dueling reporters could gain appreciable stature. *One day Sam's nose was so disrupted that he had to go to Steamboat Springs for repairs, while his potential enemy, on The Union, made merry at his expense.*³⁴ Mark Twain was not fond of these encounters which eventually led to his sudden departure from Virginia City.³⁵ Two of his letters from Steamboat Springs published in the *Territorial Enterprise* follow: *Never mind the date—I haven't known what day of the month it was since the fourth of July. In reality, I am not well enough to write, but am angry now, and like our old Methodist parson at home in Missouri, who started in to produce rain by a season of fervent prayer, "I'll do it or bust." I notice in this morning's ENTERPRISE a lame, impotent abortion of a biography of Marshal Perry, and I cannot understand what you mean by it. You either want to impose upon the public with an incorrect account of that monster's career (compiled from items furnished by himself, I'll warrant), or else you wish to bring into disrepute my own biography of him, which is the only correct and impartial one ever published. Which is it? If you really desired that the people should know the man they were expected to vote for, why did you not republish that history? By referring to it you will see that your own has not a word of truth in it. Jack Perry has made you believe he was born in New York, when in reality he was born in New Jersey; he has told you he was a press-*

man—on the contrary, he is by occupation a shoemaker, by nature a poet, and by instinct a great moral humbug. If I chose, I could enumerate a dozen more instances to prove that, in his own vulgar phraseology, Jack Perry has successfully played you for a Chinaman. I suppose if he had told you the size of his boots was No. 5, you wouldn't have known enough to refrain from publishing the absurdity. Now the next time you want any facts about Jack Perry, perhaps you had better refer to the standard biography compiled by myself, or else let me hash them up for you. You have rushed into these biographies like a crazy man, and I suppose you have found out by this time that you are no more fitted for that sort of thing than I am for a circus rider (which painfully reminds me that my last horseback trip at Lake Bigler, on that razor-bladed beast of Tom Nye's, has lengthened my legs and shortened my body some). If I could devote more time to composition and less to coughing, I would write all those candidates' biographies over again, just to show you how little you know about it.

I must have led a gay life at Lake Bigler, for it seems a month since I flew up there on the Pioneer coach, alongside of Hank Monk, the king of stage drivers. But I couldn't cure my cold. I was too careless. I went to the lake (Lake Bigler I must beg leave to call it still, notwithstanding, if I recollect rightly, it is known among sentimental people as either Tahoe Lake or Yahoo Lake—however, one of the last will do as well as the other, since there is neither sense nor music in either of them), with a voice like a bull frog, and by indulging industriously in reckless imprudence, I succeeded in toning it down to an impalpable whisper in the course of seven days. I left there in the Pioneer coach at half-past one on Monday morning, in company with Mayor Arick, Mr Boruck and young Wilson (a nice party for a Christian to travel with, I admit), and arrived in Carson at five o'clock—three hours and a half out. As nearly as I can estimate it, we came down the grade at the rate of a hundred miles an hour; and if you do not know how

frightfully deep those mountain gorges look, let me recommend that you go, also, and skim along their edges at the dead of night.

I left Carson at two o'clock with Dyer—Dyer, the polite Dyer, the accommodating—Dyer, of the Carson and Steamboat stage line, and reached the Steamboat Springs Hotel at dusk, where all others who are weary and hungry are invited to come, and be handsomely provided for by Messrs Holmes & Stowe. At Washoe we ate a supper of unimpeachable squareness at the Washoe Exchange, where I found Honorable J K Lovejoy, Dr Bowman, and Captain Rawlings—there may have been other old acquaintances present, but the champagne that Lovejoy drank confused my vision so much that I cannot recollect whether there were or not. I learned here that the people who own ranches along Steamboat creek are very indignant at Judge Mott for granting an injunction to the Pleasant Valley Mill Company, whereby they are prohibited from using the water in the stream upon their lands. They say the mill company purchased the old Smith ranch and that portion of the creek which passes through it, and now they assume the right to deprive ranchmen owning property two or three miles above their lines from irrigating their lands with water which the mill company never before pretended to claim.

They further state that the mill men gave bonds in the trivial sum of \$1,000, whereas the damage already done the crops by the withdrawal of the water amounts to more than \$20,000. Again, the idea is that the mill men need the water to wet a new ditch which they have been digging, and after that is accomplished they will pay the amount of the bond and withdraw the injunction. More over—so the story runs—Judge Mott promised a decision in the case three weeks ago, and has not kept his word. The citizens of Galena, in mass meeting assembled, have drawn up a petition praying that the Judge will redress their grievances to-day, with out further delay. If the prayer is unheeded, they will turn the water on their ranches to-morrow in defiance of the order of the court. I believe I have

recounted all these facts just as I got them; but if I haven't, I can't help it, because I have lost my note-book again. I think I could lose a thousand note-books a week if I had them. And, moreover, if you can ferret out the justice of the above proceedings, you are a better lawyer than I am—and here comes Orrick Johnson's Virginia stage again, and I shall have to fling in my benediction before I sing the doxology, as usual. Somehow or other, I can never get through with what I have to say. It is interesting that some things never change, politics for one.

A week later he wrote about a stay at Steamboat Springs: I have overstepped my furlough a full week—but then this is a pleasant place to pass one's time. These springs are ten miles from Virginia, six or seven from Washoe City and twenty from Carson. They are natural—the devil boils the water, and the white steam puffs up out of crevices in the earth, along the summits of a series of low mounds extending in an irregular semi-circle for more than a mile. The water is impregnated with a dozen different minerals, each one of which smells viler than its fellow, and the sides of the springs are embellished with very pretty parti-colored incrustations deposited by the water. From one spring the boiling water is ejected a foot or more by the infernal force at work below, and in the vicinity of all of them one can hear a constant rumbling and surging, somewhat resembling the noises peculiar to a steamboat in motion—hence the name.³⁶

THE HOTEL

The Steamboat Springs Hotel is very pleasantly situated on a grassy flat, a stone's throw from the hospital and the bath houses. It is capable of accommodating a great many guests. The rooms are large, "hard-finished" and handsomely furnished; there is an abundant supply of pure water, which can be carried to every part of the house, in case of fire, by means of hose; the table is furnished with fresh vegetables and meats from the numerous fine ranches in the valley, and lastly, Mr Stowe is a pleasant and accommodating landlord, and is ably seconded by Messrs Haines, Ellsworth and Bingham. These

gentlemen will never allow you to get ill-humored for want of polite attention—as I gratefully remember, now, when I recall the stormy hours of Friday, when that accursed "wake-up-Jake" was in me. But I haven't got to that, yet. God bless us! It is a world of trouble, and we are born to sorrow and tribulation—yet, am I chiefest among sinners, that I should be prematurely damned with "wake-up-Jake," while others not of the elect go free? I am trying to go on with my letter, but this thing bothers me; verily, from having "wake-up-Jake" on the stomach for three days, I have finally got it on the brain. I am grateful for the change. But I digress.

THE HOSPITAL

Dr Ellis, the proprietor of the Springs, has erected a large, tastefully designed, and comfortable and well ventilated hospital, close to the bath-houses, and it is constantly filled with patients afflicted with all manner of diseases. It would be a very profitable institution, but a great many who come to it half dead, and leave it again restored to robust health, forget to pay for the benefits they have received. Others, when they arrive, confess at once that they are penniless, yet few men could look upon the sunken cheeks of these, and upon their attenuated forms and their pleading, faded eyes, and refuse them the shelter and assistance we all may need some day. Without expectation of reward, Dr Ellis gives back life, hope and health to many a despairing, poverty stricken devil; and when I think of this, it seems so strange that he could have had the meanness to give me that "wake-up-Jake." However, I am wandering away from the subject again. They treat all diseases (except confirmed consumption) successfully here. A multitude of invalids have attended these baths during the past three years, yet only an insignificant number of deaths have occurred among them. I want to impress one thing upon you: it is a mistaken notion that these Springs were created solely for the salvation of persons suffering venereal diseases. True, the fame of the baths rests chiefly upon the miracles performed upon such patients, and upon others afflicted with

rheumatism, erysipelas, etc., but then all ordinary ailments can be quickly and pleasantly cured here without a resort to deadly physic. More than two-thirds of the people who come here are afflicted with venereal diseases—fellows who know that if "Steamboat" fails with them they may as well go to trading feet with the undertaker for a box—yet all here agree that these baths are none the less potent where other diseases are concerned. I know lots of poor, feeble wretches in Virginia who could get a new lease of life by soaking their shadows in Steamboat Springs for a week or two. However, I must pass on to
THE BATHS

My friend Jim Miller has charge of these. Within a few days the new bath-house will be finished, and then twelve persons may bathe at once, or if they be sociable and choose to go on the double-bed principle, four times as many can enjoy the luxury at the same time. Persons afflicted with loathsome diseases use bath-rooms which are never entered by the other patients. You get up here about six o'clock in the morning and walk over to the bath-house; you undress in an ante room and take a cold shower-bath—or let it alone, if you choose; then you step into a sort of little dark closet floored with a wooden grating, up through which come puffs and volumes of the hottest steam you ever performed to, (because the awkwardest of us feel a hankering to waltz a little under such circumstances, you know), and then if you are alone, you resolve to have company thenceforward, since to swap comments upon your sensations with a friend, must render the dire heatless binding upon the human constitution. I had company always, and it was the pleasantest thing in the world to see a thin-skinned invalid cavorting around in the vapory obscurity, marveling at the rivers of sweat that coursed down his body, cursing the villainous smell of the steam and its bitter, salty taste—groping around meanwhile, for a cold corner, and backing finally, into the hottest one, and darting out again in a second, only remarking "Outch!"—and repeating it when he sits down, and springs up the same moment off

the hot bench. This was fun of the most comfortable character; but nothing could be more agreeable than to put your eye to the little square hole in the door, and see your boiled and smoking comrade writhing under the cold shower-bath, to see him shrink till his shoulders are level with the top of his head, and then shut his eyes and gasp and catch his breath, while the cruel rain pattered down on his back and sent a ghastly shiver through every fibre of his body. It will always be a comfort to me to recall these little incidents. After the shower-bath, you return to the ante-room and scrub yourself all over with coarse towels until your hide glows like a parlor carpet—after which, you feel as elastic and vigorous as an acrobat. Then if you are sensible, you take no exercise, but just eat your breakfast and go to bed—you will find that an hour's nap will not hurt you any.

THE WAKE-UP-JAKE

A few days ago I fell a victim to my natural curiosity and my solicitude for the public weal. Everybody had something to say about "wake-up-Jake." If a man was low-spirited; if his appetite failed him; if he did not sleep well at night; if he were costive; if he were bilious; or in love; or in any other kind of trouble; or if he doubted the fidelity of his friends or the efficacy of his religion, there was always some one at his elbow to whisper, "Take a 'wake-up,' my boy." I sought to fathom the mystery, but all I could make out of it was that the "wake-up-Jake" was a medicine as powerful as "the servants of the lamp," the secret of whose decoction was hidden away in Dr Ellis' breast. I was not aware that I had any use for the wonderful "wake-up," but then I felt it to be my duty to try it, in order that a suffering public might profit by my experience, and I would cheerfully see that public suffer perdition before I would try it again. I called upon Dr Ellis with the air of a man who would create the impression that he is not so much of an ass as he looks, and demanded a "wake-up-Jake" as unostentatiously as if that species of refreshment were not at all new to me. The Doctor hesitated a moment, and then fixed up as

repulsive a mixture as ever was stirred together in a table-spoon. I swallowed the nauseous mess, and that one meal sufficed me for the space of forty-eight hours. And during all that time, I could not have enjoyed a viler taste in my mouth if I had swallowed a slaughter-house. I lay down with all my clothes on, and with an utter indifference to my fate here or hereafter, and slept like a statue from six o'clock until noon. I got up, then, the sickest man that ever yearned to vomit and couldn't. All the dead and decaying matter in nature seemed buried in my stomach, and I heaved, and retched, and heaved again, but I could not compass a resurrection—my dead would not come forth. Finally, after rumbling, and growling, and producing agony and chaos within me for many hours, the dreadful dose began its work, and for the space of twelve hours it vomited me, and purged me, and likewise caused me to bleed at the nose. I came out of that siege as weak as an infant, and went to the bath with Palmer, of Wells, Fargo & Co, and it was well I had company, for it was about all he could do to keep me from boiling the remnant of my life out in the hot steam. I had reached that stage wherein a man experiences a solemn indifference as to whether school keeps or not. Since then, I have gradually regained my strength and my appetite, and am now animated by a higher degree of vigor than I have felt for many a day. 'Tis well. This result seduces many a man into taking a second, and even a third "wake-up-Jake," but I think I can worry along without any more of them. I am about as thoroughly waked up now as I care to be. My stomach never had such a scouring out since I was born. I feel like a jug. If I could get young Wilson or the Unreliable to take a "wake-up-Jake," I would do it, of course, but I shall never swallow another myself—I would sooner have a locomotive travel through me. And besides, I never intend to experiment in physic any more, just out of idle curiosity. A "wake-up-Jake" will furbish a man's machinery up and give him a fresh start in the world—but I feel I shall never need anything of that sort any more. It would put robust

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health, and life and vim into young Wilson and the Unreliable—but then they always look with suspicion upon any suggestion that I make.
GOOD-BYE

Well, I am going home to Virginia to-day, though I dislike to part from the jolly boys (not to mention iced milk for breakfast, with eggs laid to order, and spiced oysters after midnight with the Reverend Jack Holmes and Bingham) at the Steamboat Springs Hotel. In conclusion, let me recommend to such of my fellow citizens as are in feeble health, or are wearied out with the cares of business, to come down and try the hotel, and the steam baths, and the facetious "wake-up-Jake." These will give them rest, and moving recreation—as it were.³⁷

Nevada mineral production soared to twelve and a half million dollars. In the nation, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation.

1864

On February 2nd Amos W Stowe and wife sold their Steamboat Springs Hotel with one acre land.³⁸ Ervin Crane moved to Steamboat Valley this year. An ink drawing of his ranch appears on the back cover of this book. He was originally from the state of Vermont.³⁹

Statehood arrived on *All Souls Eve*, October 31st. They christened the Silver State, 36th state of the Union, *Battle-Born*. Nevada's passage into the Union would not have occurred but for the Civil War as Nevada did not possess the accepted requirements for statehood. Utah territory, from which Nevada separated, did not become a state until 1896. The reason for statehood was economic. Mineral production statistics for this year reached sixteen million dollars. They used Nevada's mineral wealth to secure loans to finance the Civil War.

1865

Steamboat Springs became Precinct #7 by order of the Washoe County Commissioners.⁴⁰ In August, Amos Stowe appeared as hotel proprietor reporting that the hotel had been fixed up.⁴¹ This seems to have been a pattern at Steamboat Springs, former proprietors cropping up at later dates, that repeats itself into the next century.

Louis Moreau Gottschalk, a notable pianist, composer, played in Virginia City and Dayton during June. His diary gives an interesting view of the area. He wrote: *We have at last arrived. The clerk, an impudently pompous genius, extended on his chair behind the desk, his feet as high as his head, after having made us feel by his peremptory tone the incommensurable distance which separates poor travelers from a 'hotel clerk,' grants us permission to install ourselves at the rate of thirty-five dollars per day in a chamber six feet square. I timidly ask if there is not a larger one, but he answers me angrily, "No!" in such a way as to make me understand that I must not abuse his patience, under pain of being driven out of the little hole he has been willing to give to me. Fortunately, to the hotel a restaurant is attached, kept by a Frenchman, who with all the simplicity of his nation tells me his troubles—always the same—of shares taken in the mines which ought to pay immense dividends and which ruin all who have them.*

The town is ugly—built of wood on rough ground. The streets are steep and irregular. The cafés are numerous. The music store is a shoemaker's shop, two-thirds of which is filled with boots and the rest with drawers and loose sheets of music, which would seem to prove that the population walks more over the rugged soil of the town than on the road florid with art. It is not truly to speak a town, it has rather the appearance of one of those European fairs, which once a year attract for two months merchants and purchasers from the four points of the horizon. The dust blinds when it does not choke you, and vice versa, and both at once. Shut up in the midst of steep mountains, the sight perceives as far as it can extend only the gray tints of the arid

soil, or the sombre masses of the sage, the only vegetable that grows. It is meagre, sad, mean, and monotonous. I have never really known spleen save in Virginia City. It is the most inhospitable and the saddest town that I have ever visited. I have passed eleven days here, during which I have given three concerts. I have not received from the inhabitants one invitation, not one visit, nor any mark of distinction. I fortunately found here a family from New Orleans, whom the vicissitudes of fortune have temporarily banished here, and a young Louisianian, who, by their interest, sometimes contributed to dissipate the ennui of my isolation....

Alf Doten mentions him in his diary entry of June 6th: *Evening I attended the second one of Gottschalk's concerts . . . Miss Lucy Simmons sings with him—He appears to be the greatest pianist in the world—He certainly is the greatest I ever heard.*⁴²

Gottschalk was not a happy camper! After being drenched in his hotel room by a practicing hose company, he traveled to Dayton for a concert. His record of the stage ride is of interest. *I leave for Dayton in the stage. The heat is excessive, fortunately the distance is only six miles. We have four strong horses, in one hour we shall be there. I reckon without the driver. He passes through the principal street of Virginia City, and takes up two other passengers, we are three outside and nine inside. The stage can only comfortably contain eight. We stop before the butcher's, who gives us a basket of meat. "Good day, Jo, very warm today; will you hand this basket of meat to someone near to Silver City?" Hua! Hia! We set out again. "Jo, my wife wishes to go there also, have you any place?" "Any place! But, yes, there is." She gets up. The sun bakes me, the dust blinds me, I begin to lose patience. "Driver, when will you go?" "What, mister, are you in such a hurry?" (This is said with a certain emphasis, suggesting the 'idea' that he is not in a hurry.) Hardly started again, we hear "Driver, I want to go to Gold Hill." "Get up, there is room:" a new passenger who gets inside. After a certain time we find ourselves in the suburbs of Virginia City.*

We have added to our load three baskets, a roll of wall paper, and a trunk, which is between my legs! A fat man, who is sitting on the hood above me, puts, with imperturbable coolness, his boots upon my shoulder; two fat, red faced women, flanked with cabas, with parasols, under pretense of being afraid, allow Jo to gallantly hoist them in the midst of the other unfortunate inside passengers, where they succeed in depositing their corpulent bodies . . .

He goes on, and on, finally arriving not in one hour, but two. At Dayton, he performs in a dimly lighted theater to an audience of several women, a handful of children, with the balance being miners whom he describes as listening: *attentively, and their decent and tranquil demeanour would cause shame to many audiences that pretend to the refinements of civilization....*⁴³

His return trip was a little more pleasant. *This time I am sitting alone near the driver. The weather is superb. The moonlight is splendid. The sky above our head is of a sombre blue, in which, like detached diamonds, the stars shine out. On the horizon, the mountains, bathed in transparent vapours, give to the landscape the appearance of a fairy scene.*

The mountains are brought so near that, seen from the height where we are, through this blue vapour, they seem to be the waves of an ocean, which, by a magical effect, have become petrified in the midst of a tempest. The breeze, which blows softly, brings to us the thousand distant sounds from the deep valleys and high peaks. A bird concealed at the bottom of the precipice makes its monotonous song heard, composed of three notes, which it repeats without interruption.

Upon seeing an Indian his driver describes them to Gottschalk. *They are, said he, very peaceful, and less lazy than the majority of their race. They go to Virginia City every day, and are employed in carrying water, burdens, etc. It must be said that they have no stable occupations. The Indian only lives from day to day, and would never be able to accustom himself to any permanent work. Their wives are*

very chaste. She who is unfaithful is condemned by the tribe and put to death. Last year the people of Gold Hill went to gather, at the proper season, pine-cones in the woods of the neighbouring mountain. A young Indian woman and one of the young men of Gold Hill met. They loved each other. Some time after the two lovers were surprised by an Indian of the tribe coming out of the tunnel of the Ophir Mine. He showed no resentment, and even accepted some money which the young man offered him to secure his silence. The next day the body of the poor Indian girl was found in the tunnel of the Ophir mine.

Gottschalk writes of his departure: *Left Virginia City at three o'clock. Having timidly asked at the stage office why he took fifteen dollars from me, the clerk answered me, looking angrily (probably because I had spoken politely to him), that he had no reason to give. But if I still must know more? "I tell you that you must pay fifteen dollars, and that ends it; and if you are not satisfied, I will make you pay sixty dollars. Are you satisfied? God damn you!" Amiable people! Yes, I am satisfied that my last impression of Virginia City is such that my joy at leaving it can be still more augmented, which at first sight did not appear to me possible. For the same reason that the Turks in the greatest heats take vapour baths for the purpose of afterwards finding those places tolerable where otherwise you would be killed with 'ennui.'*⁴⁴

Mineral production leveled off at sixteen and a half million dollars. In the nation, the Civil War ended, an event marked by unprecedented revelry in Virginia City. John W Booth assassinated Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson became president.

1866

Stowe's hotel burned down.⁴⁵ Alfred Doten tells us something in his diary of Cameron, or an operation performed on his wife anyway. Doten was a newspaperman for the *Virginia Daily Union*, the *Territorial Enterprise*, and *Gold Hill Evening News* over the years. He

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kept a diary from the time he left Massachusetts for California in 1849. The entry of August 29th reads, *Clear & very pleasant—At 7 AM left with Dr Hiller & wife in 2 horse buggy for Steamboat Springs—passed 36 teams on the Geiger Grade, coming into town with freight, merchandise, wood, hay, etc—24 were heavy freight teams of 6, 8, 10 or 12 mules—had left their "back actions" down at foot of grade—no dust—got along finely—arrived at Cameron's Steamboat ranch at 9—fine ranch of 2 or 300 hundred acres—fenced, green grass, willows, animals grazing, etc—After resting, Dr Hiller assisted by me, & Mr Cameron, performed an operation on Mrs Cameron in taking a tumor from the left "labea," measuring 8 inches in length, by 3 in diameter & weighing 2 lbs—took just 10 minutes—fine operation—no blood vessels of any importance were cut & she bled but little—I did the chloroform part, & held her hands—He also had to cut off a small strip of the labea with its hair on, 2 or 3 inches long, & $\frac{3}{4}$ wide—sewed up wound & laid towel wet with cold arnica water on, to be repeated every 15 minutes in order to keep out inflammation—She struggled but little under the operation—We dined there, & at 1 left for Brown's ranch on main road—stopped there short time, & at quarter of 2 PM left for Va—arrived at quarter of 4 PM—localized as usual—Bed at 2, tired—got letter from E W Coldren, Stillwater Station Overland road, giving me item of a suicide at that place—⁴⁶ Presumably Cameron and Dr Ellis were not on speaking terms, or perhaps Dr Hiller was a better surgeon.*

Nevada mineral production approached thirteen and a half million dollars. In the South, the Ku Klux Klan was founded.

1867

The litigation over the ownership of Steamboat Springs between Dr Ellis and Cullins ended with Cullins taking possession of the property. Dr Ellis' buildings suspiciously burned down.⁴⁷

Alfred Doten gives us a journal entry for a day trip he took through Washoe, Pleasant, and Steamboat Valleys on Sunday, July 7th. It reads: *Clear, warm & very pleasant—Rose at 5, got ready, & a cup of coffee, & at 6 started with Mr & Mrs Morton in single buggy & 2 horses for a ride—drove over the Ophir grade—good fair road—rather dusty—met no teams to bother—fine morning air—At 8 AM we arrived at Washoe, 13 miles—Neat little town, prettily located at foot of Washoe lake, lots of green grass, & farms near by—also tall pines on mountain close by—mountains back of town snow capped—drove to Ophir 3 miles south, & to Franktown 1½ miles farther, where at 9 o'clock we hitched horses in beautiful pine grove—crossed on our route lots of beautiful clear cold mountain streams—broad green fields, fenced neatly—residences of Theodore Winters, L S Bowers & other pretty places—most beautiful drive—Left Mrs M with the buggy & horses in the grove for an hour, & Morton & I took a look at Dall's Mill now rebuilding near by—A portion of the mill, for wet crushing, will be completed & go into operation this week—12 wheeler, & 10 Varney pans, 35 stamps—The balance of the mill, for dry crushing & the Frieberg process, will not be complete before September—will have 25 stamps, & 15 Frieberg barrels—motive power furnished by big mountain stream running into Washoe lake—also by 2 big steam engines of 150 horse power each—The water wheel will be 60 ft in diameter, with 12 ft face—thus the entire concern can be run by either the steam or the water power alone, or in conjunction with each other—We stopped into the office near by, & saw & had chat & couple of drinks with T B Schamp, the Superintendent, & then drove back through Ophir & Washoe, stopping short time at latter place—drove on down towards Steamboat Springs—Washoe—Edwards & Co, six practical Welch smelters, are trying to run the concern—Works erected in '61—get ore from big mountain close by—galena ore—works never been successful as yet, by reason of couldn't get any sort of fire brick which would stand for lining to furnaces—they are now preparing a*

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new article of that kind, which they think will do—They have smelted some little ore—gave me big chunk—some 10 lbs—this bullion goes \$250 per ton in silver, & rest in lead—antimony & iron all gets roasted out—drove on, down through Pleasant Valley & Steamboat Valley to the Springs, got there at 12½ PM—very warm—unhitched & fed horses & ourselves—laid off—took look at Springs & the surroundings—pleasant time—at 5 PM we started on our return—very hot going up the Geiger grade—took just an hour to the Summit—stopped in to see Mrs Culbertson on summit—also few minutes at Summit House kept by John Teihet—fine drive home, in shade of hills—got home at 7½ o'clock all right—crops of barley & wheat in the valleys where we went, looked quite well—headed & filling out—will not be big crops—Evening at theater short time with Brier—Bed at 12—⁴⁸ Like most of the old constructions of the times, the mills are gone. Only the building foundations remain.

TH O'Sullivan took a photo of the geyser terrace at Steamboat Springs. He was a photographer on the King Survey 1867-8. He apprenticed under Matthew Brady, the famous Civil War photographer. The photo was of his wagon *in the wastelands northwest of Virginia City.*⁴⁹

Mineral production for the year neared the sixteen million dollar mark.

1868

Statewide mineral production dropped to thirteen million dollars. In the nation, President Johnson was impeached by Congress, then cleared by the Senate.

1869

The Bank Crowd began to solidify their control of the Comstock. They constructed the Virginia & Truckee Railroad between Carson City and Virginia City in less than three months, beginning

construction in September and ending it in November. It cost \$83,333 per mile.⁵⁰ The first transcontinental railroad across northern Nevada was also completed in this year. Mineral production reached thirty-nine million dollars. In the nation, Ulysses S Grant became the 18th president.

1870

Some local news items this year were, beginning in: January, Thos Atridge lost an arm in an accident at the Savage Mill, Washoe Valley; April, Geo Roth gunned down two men in a Reno saloon, and an Indian slipped between flat cars on the railroad and was killed; May, Reno citizens took action to prevent the spread of small pox among the Indians. It had already affected Indians at Verdi; July, Paiutes and Washoes got together for a *fandango* on Virginia road; August, armed gunmen robbed Wells, Fargo & Company and Dyer's stages—Wells, Fargo lost \$1,300; December, popular stageman, Hill Beachy bought out Wells, Fargo & Company's stage operations. They were getting out of the stage business.⁵¹

The fare on the V&T Railroad from Virginia to Carson was \$2.00.⁵² Nevada mineral production dropped to seventeen million dollars. The population rose to 42,491 in the US Census Bureau figures.

1871

On February 4th a slight earthquake was felt in the area.⁵³ February 18th, Governor Bradley signed a bill moving the county seat from Washoe City to Reno.⁵⁴ March 18th, Wells, Fargo & Company reduced their stagecoach fare to \$2.00 on the Reno to Virginia City run. They must have gotten back into stage business since December 1870 when the paper said they were entirely out of it.⁵⁵

They started construction of the Reno to Carson City leg of the Virginia & Truckee Railroad in summer. Steamboat proprietor, Charles

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Cullins, obtained a US Patent, and constructed a depot with guest accommodations.⁵⁶ Virginia & Truckee Railroad progress reports appeared regularly in the paper.

In June, nature treated local residents to a brilliant night time auroral display—*the tongues of fire were of a reddish hue and reached far up toward the zenith.*⁵⁷

In July, Sam Hyatt, George Hunt and a boy came down from Virginia City to hunt. George Hunt nearly drowned rescuing the boy after he fell into one of the hot spring pools.⁵⁸

They completed the V&T's 499 foot railroad bridge over the Truckee river by September 16th. Myron C Lake, who owned the toll bridge over the river, asked for an injunction to prevent the V&T railroad from using their bridge. The judge wasn't amused. He denied the request.⁵⁹

The paper announced on October 28th that the Virginia & Truckee Railroad will begin train service to Steamboat Springs on or about the 5th of next month. The terminal at the springs was teeming with activity. Dave Martin and Charles Cullins were building a fine hotel. They were also building saloons, stores, and barns.⁶⁰ Steamboat Springs remained a bustling terminal for nearly a year until the road was finished to Carson.⁶¹

On November 4th, the paper reported the railroad was finished to Steamboat. The following announcements appeared: *Grand Ball—We learn that Dave Martin will give a grand ball on the opening of his fine hotel at Steamboat. It will be a grand success we are sure. A great number will be on hand from here, and also from Virginia. Hurry up, Dave, we are all anxious to trip the light fantastic at your Winter resort. —Telegraphic—The following dispatch addressed to the editor of the Crescent came over the wires last Tuesday from Steamboat: "The citizens of Sherington, congratulate the editor of the Reno Crescent on the permanent opening of the Steamboat Springs for bathing purposes." Significant to say the least. —Conductor—We learn*

that "Spence" Gregory for the past three years conductor on the Truckee Division of the CP Railroad is to be the passenger conductor of the Virginia & Truckee from this place to Steamboat. Superintendent Yerington evidently means business, when he employs such men as "Spence."—From Steamboat—On and after tomorrow night the stages that formerly left Reno for Virginia and Carson, will leave from Steamboat—that being the present terminus of the railroad. The fare from here to Steamboat, by rail will be \$1.50; and thence by stage to Virginia \$2, and to Carson \$3.50.

The November 11th newspaper read: The excursion to Steamboat last Tuesday in honor of the opening of the first section of the Virginia & Truckee Railroad—from Reno to Steamboat, eleven miles, was quite largely attended by Renoites, also delegations from Virginia, Gold Hill and Carson to the number of four or five hundred. Everybody enjoyed the festivities and a good time was had generally. The officers of the road, especially Superintendent Yerington are deserving of much credit for the liberal and happy manner in which they conducted the excursion.

Winnemucca, war-chief of the Paiutes, died of consumption several days ago. An Indian who was interviewed said, "Heap Big Chief, now balance of power party—all same, Cresent man!"⁶² Presumably the 'Cresent man' was a reporter from the Reno Cresent.

The following appeared in the paper on November 18th, 1871: Announcements—I.E. James—The locomotive of the Virginian and Truckee Railroad bearing the above appellation made her first appearance on the track last Tuesday. She was formerly the passenger engine on the branch between Virginia and Carson, and will probably be the same here. She was taken to pieces at Virginia a short time since, brought to Steamboat, put together but had to be towed in here (Reno) by the Storey in order to get water, etc., This makes two (engines) on the main line now—Storey and IE James —No Transfer—Last Wednesday, the agent of the CP Railroad at this place,

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received orders that from and after that date, freight destined for Carson, Virginia, and that section of country will not be transferred here, but go right on to Steamboat. Luckily our teaming business for the winter has about closed, or this change would have affected us materially—Ball at Steamboat—The long talked of ball to come off at Steamboat in honor of the completion of the railroad to that point will take place next Friday night, an excursion train will leave here about seven o'clock in the evening carrying all who wish to attend at a great deal less than the usual rates. Martin & Cullin, who are giving this ball, have engaged the best of music, and will spread an elegant lunch for the dancists, such as oyster soup, turkey, chicken, ham, and in fact all the delicacies of the market will be on the table. A great many are expected to attend from Virginia and Gold Hill, and the ball promises to be the most recherche of the season. The whole cost, including railroad fare, supper, and dancing, we are told will not exceed five dollars per couple. A select affair can be depended upon, and those fond of dancing cannot fail to be pleased if they attend. We understand about twenty-five couples will attend from this place alone.

Freight piled up at the Steamboat terminal faster than they could haul it away. Not surprising since the Virginia & Truckee Railroad did not build its own facility at Steamboat. They were busy with plans for a roundhouse in Reno and were working fast to finish the line to Carson City. The newspaper carried construction progress reports regularly.

November 25th, the *Nevada State Journal* reported the Grand Ball was a success. It was well attended and well received. They unfortunately were not able to attend. The *Reno Crescent*, formerly the *Eastern Slope* in Washoe City, reported that attendance at the ball was low because of bad weather. December—heavy rains caused flooding which washed out culverts and sections of track on the newly open V&T leg to Steamboat Springs. They restored service before the 23rd.⁶³

Elsewhere in Nevada, Democrat L R Bradley, became state governor. Mineral production exceeded twenty million dollars. In the nation, fire destroyed one third of the city of Chicago. In the world, Stanley found Livingston.

1872

Pyromania was a problem this year. Fire destroyed C W Cullins' house at Steamboat February 24th. Peleg Brown's barn in Steamboat Valley burned down March 2nd. The fire destroyed more than 200 tons of hay. Someone attempted to burn Reno to the ground by setting fire to L Dean's stable and Mrs Peters saloon on March 9th. And on April 27th, fire almost destroyed the bridge of the Virginia & Truckee Railroad across the Truckee River.

Indian drunkenness was a big problem in the early part of the year, so much so, Justice Kelley had to lay a \$100 fine on Geo Peabody for selling liquor to them. He had the option of doing fifty days in jail. Dr Bergman administered 300 vaccinations on the reservations by the end of March.

Several earthquakes were felt on March 30th. After the quakes a 25-foot geyser appeared at the hot-springs near Wadsworth. Another earthquake was felt on April 20th.

In railroading news—they delivered seventy passengers to Steamboat in one day. Three hundred and fifty Chinamen were busily grading the railroad bed between Carson and Steamboat. Work progressed rapidly. They laid down a mile of track on one August day. By the 24th the railroad was complete between Reno and Virginia City. The length of the road was 52.2 miles. Regular service on the Virginia & Truckee Railroad began September 19th. Full passenger service commenced by October 6th ending Steamboat Springs period as a railroad terminal.⁶⁴

Senator Stewart was at Steamboat Springs resort attempting to restore his health during July.⁶⁵ A strange news item appeared on

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August 31st, *Geo Rodgers, alias John Lenz, committed suicide at the Capital Lodging House. On December 7th, a sack of bullion was found under the foundation of a deserted building in Washoe Valley—this no doubt spoiled somebody's Christmas.*⁶⁶

Statewide mineral production neared the twenty-four million dollar mark.

1873

In June, Charles W Cullins perished in a construction accident. William Wright, alias Dan De Quille, the famous Virginia City journalist of the *Territorial Enterprise*, and compatriot of Mark Twain, described the event a few years later in his book, *The Big Bonanza, ... the then proprietor of the Steamboat Springs and hotel lost his life in one of the springs. He was engaged in the erection of a new bath-house over a large pool of boiling water, some five feet in depth, for use in giving steam baths. Timbers for the foundation had been laid across the pool, and the man walked out on one of these to arrange a cross-timber, when he slipped and fell into the scalding water. The water was so deep as to reach nearly to his neck, and so hot that eggs could be cooked in it in two minutes.*

*When he fell into the pool, he was either so much frightened or felt such pain that for a time he seemed in a manner paralyzed and did hardly anything toward trying to make his escape. He was in the spring at least half a minute before he got out, which he at last did principally through his own exertions, though a man who was working near the place ran to his assistance and lent him a helping hand when he had reached the bank of the pool. When his clothes were taken off, the greater part of the skin slipped from his body. He was literally cooked alive, and lived but a short time.*⁶⁷ Early newspaper reports suggested that he would survive—he lived for about a week after the accident. The paper reported on July 12th that L H Torp and J H Quimble were seeking to administer Cullins will.⁶⁸

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D P Pierce, former mill man and mining superintendent, took over operations.⁶⁹ He invited the sportsmen of Virginia City and Gold Hill to come down and shoot doves at the resort in August. The newspaper editor reminded all that dove hunting season did not open until September.⁷⁰

Nevada mineral production for the year approached thirty-three million dollars. It is hard to imagine that economic panic would lead to five years of depression.

1874

This year was a transition year for the resort. Cullins' widow petitioned the courts to retain a home at Steamboat Springs even as the area was becoming a favorite bathing spot. George Jamison took over operations in February.⁷¹

An advertisement appeared in May promoting the springs as a summer resort.⁷² In June, special discount tickets became available to passengers on the Virginia & Truckee Railroad wishing to go to Steamboat.⁷³ Hijackers tried twice to derail the Virginia & Truckee train at Steamboat Springs this month, but failed both times.⁷⁴

The paper reported in August that the medicinal quality of Steamboat Spring's mineral water was becoming widely known. Visitor accommodations were slated for improvement.⁷⁵ They sold the Cullins estate at an auction on the 26th.⁷⁶

Matthew and John Rapp purchased the resort in September.⁷⁷ The Rapps were proprietors of the Philadelphia Brewery in Virginia City.⁷⁸ They were perhaps Steamboat Springs most prosperous owners, reporting daily cash receipts between \$500-\$3,500 for a while.⁷⁹

Statewide mineral production topped thirty million dollars for the year.

1875

Many news reports about Steamboat Springs appeared even as far away as San Francisco.⁸⁰ In January, the Rapps added pumping machinery, trees, shrubs, new paint, and buildings.⁸¹ They constructed a new bathhouse and developed plans for new cottages.⁸² Improvements continued through February. In March the resort was open to the public and half-price Virginia & Truckee Railroad promotional tickets were available. S Watty of Reno conducted hotel operation. The building featured four parlors and sixteen rooms. They were planning to build cottages and a new hotel.⁸³

Many invalids frequented the spa in May. Weekends were especially busy.⁸⁴ The new hotel opened in June with facilities for invalids. Regular meals were available.⁸⁵

Congressman William Woodburn stayed at the resort for a few days.⁸⁶ The notable George Cunningham received treatment at the spa for his rheumatism.⁸⁷

Mining activity began in December as they formed the Steamboat Mining District.⁸⁸ They made a cinnabar discovery near the springs. A week later the paper reported the cinnabar discovery was in fact, sulphur.

In Virginia City the Bank Crowd lost its dominance in 1875. William C Ralston committed suicide by swimming out into San Francisco Bay and drowning himself. This, after a series of bad investments caused the collapse of the Bank of California. D O Mills and William Sharon were the other two major Bank Crowd players. They had maintained control of the Comstock from 1867 to 1875 when they lost control to the Bonanza Firm, Irishmen all. Two were miners, John W Mackay and James G Fair. Two were stockbrokers, James C Flood and William S O'Brien.⁸⁹ Any one of these men would make interesting subjects for biography.

Executive order established the Walker and Pyramid Indian reservations using the boundaries originally proposed by Indian agent

Frederick Dodge back in 1860. Mineral production topped thirty-five million dollars. Elsewhere, Mark Twain published *Tom Sawyer* this year.

1876

Dan De Quille gives us a look at the area in his book, *The Big Bonanza*. About the hot springs he wrote: *At no great distance from Virginia City, there are in several localities hot springs, all of which possess medicinal virtues and are much frequented by persons afflicted with rheumatism and kindred disorders. The most wonderful of all these are the Steamboat Springs, in Steamboat Valley, on the line of the Virginia and Truckee Railroad, about midway between Reno and Carson City. The springs are situated on a low mound, about a mile in length and six hundred feet in width, formed of rocky incrustations deposited by the mineral waters. Running north and south through this low ridge are several large crevices from which rise columns of steam, heated air, and gases.*

Early in the morning, when the air is cool and calm, as many as sixty or seventy columns of steam may be seen rising along the ridge, many of which ascend to the height of over fifty feet. Far down in the crevices, which are over a foot in width, may be heard the surging of billows of boiling water. At the sides and ends of the crevices are a great number of boiling springs, some of which spurt water to the height of two or three feet above the surface. A strong smell of sulphur pervades the atmosphere, and pure sulphur is found in many places along the line of the large crevices.

At times some of these springs spout water to a great height. In 1860 one about the diameter of an ordinary well threw a column of hot water three feet in diameter to the height of over fifty feet. This spring was intermittent. After spouting steadily for an hour, it would suddenly cease with a sound as of a great sigh, as the direction of the internal force changed and the water seemed sucked back into the regions

below. The eruptions of this spring occurred once in about eight hours. After the water was sucked back into the ground, a hole about nine feet in depth was seen, the bottom of which was covered with sand. The withdrawing of the water through this sand appeared to be the cause of the sighing sound heard at the end of each eruption.

When a grand season of spouting was about to begin, a heavy rumbling would be heard below, there was a hissing sound at the bottom of the well, bubbles came up through the sand, and presently boiling water surged in. This water would rush, foaming and hissing, to within two or three feet of the surface, when it would suddenly withdraw with a great sigh. In about a minute the hissing and rumbling would again begin, and again the water would rush almost to the top of the well. When this had been three or four times repeated, the preliminary performance—notes of preparation, as it were—had ended. A rumbling much louder than anything before heard began, the ground for many rods about the spot was violently shaken, and on a sudden, with a great roar, a huge column of water darted into the air. Had this spring continued these eruptions, it would have been one of the lions of the country, but after a season of activity in the spring of 1860, it became closed up and has since been one of the tamest springs along the line. In 1862 a spring for a time spouted water to the height of fifty or sixty feet, through an orifice about three inches in diameter.⁹⁰

In the same book De Quille gives a look at the Virginia & Truckee Railroad: At Steamboat Springs, between Carson City and Reno, the traveler who starts from Virginia has traveled forty miles by rail, yet it is but five and a half miles from the place whence he started, Steamboat Springs being situated just back or west of Mount Davidson, on the eastern face of which Virginia City stands. Between Virginia and Carson the only piece of straight road is one little stretch about five and a half miles in length, but between Carson and Reno are found several miles of road tolerably straight. The road does an immense local carrying business. From 500 to 800 tons of ore are

daily carried over it to the mills on the Carson River, and return trains bring great quantities of wood, lumber, and timber for use at the mines. From thirty to as high as fifty-five trains per day pass over that part of the road lying between Virginia and Carson City.

Notwithstanding the crookedness of the road, trains run over it at a high rate of speed, as the road is kept in perfect order and steel rails are used on the mountains where short curves most abound. So crooked is the road that in places, in going down the mountain with a long train, the locomotive seems to be coming back directly toward the rear car, when directly it gracefully sheers off and heads down the mountain again, the train being thrown into the form of the letter S, reminding one of what the Bible says of the 'way of a serpent on a rock.'

From Reno—over the whole length of the road—come vast amounts of machinery, stores, and supplies of all kinds for the mines and mills, and goods and merchandise for all of the towns along the river and in the mines. Along the road are a great number of side tracks and switches leading to mills and mining works. Some of these are of considerable length, and as more are constantly being constructed, the indications are that the added length of these will possibly exceed that of the main road.

Branch roads, all of a permanent and substantial character, are being built to the shafts of the leading mines, to be used in taking in machinery, wood, timber, lumber, and other supplies and for sending ore out to the mills. Many of these side-tracks are laid in places where it would be almost impossible to construct an ordinary wagon road, and to see trains darting out of tunnels and rushing along the face of almost perpendicular hills, disappearing behind a great tower of rock one moment, and the next coming in sight again and swinging round a second rugged tower, looks somewhat too 'lively.' All the wonderful engineering required in the construction of these sidetracks as well as in the main road was done by Mr I E James, and old resident of the

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country—the man who has done nearly all of the intricate surveying that has been required in the leading mines on the Comstock lode. Although one of the most modest and unassuming men on the Pacific coast, with him nothing in the way of engineering appears to be impossible.

After having seen the Virginia and Truckee Railroad, all will say that there is no region so rugged but that a track for the 'iron horse' may be found over it and through it in all directions. When engineers, conductors, and other railroad men from the Atlantic states first begin running on the Virginia and Truckee road they promise themselves that they will make a very short stay, but in a few months they begin to take pride in their ability to run on such a road; they like the excitement of it and consider that those who only run on roads that are straight and level know but little about the beauties of the business—about railroading as a fine art. Although these men run trains down the mountains from Virginia City to Carson River swinging seventeen times round the circle and going at a fearful rate of speed, yet serious accidents very seldom occur. The train are timed by telegraph and the stations are so numerous that the conductors are always well informed in regard to the trains on the road and their position.⁹¹ This was the most prosperous period of operation for the Virginia & Truckee Railroad.⁹²

News reports from early 1876 talked about the mines at Steamboat. Thomas Wheeler and Louis Dean mined cinnabar and sulphur near the springs.⁹³ Speculations circulated about a vast underground lake that fed the springs.⁹⁴

In May, the Rapp brothers sold the resort to Oscar Mundell. The hotel was full for the most part with invalids from California. In June, a croquet course was set up which became very popular. They reported many visitors and invalids in July, especially on Sundays. Apparently, old Oscar wasn't up to all this activity for he offered the resort for sale or rent in August. The Rapp brothers appeared to have retained

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ownership of the hotel because a news item from this month reported them as the operators.⁹⁵

Statewide mineral production surpassed forty-five million dollars. In the nation, Bell invented the telephone and Colorado became the 38th state. In Europe, Richard Wagner fulfilled a lifetime dream by having his epic "Ring-cycle" of operas sung in the theater built specially for them. The Bayreuth Music Festival was born.

1877

P A Humbert purchased the Steamboat mines from Wheeler & Dean. Nevada Quicksilver Mining Company operated the mines for a time.⁹⁶ Wells Drury commented in his book, *An Editor on the Comstock Lode*, "to my loss I once owned a quicksilver claim in the vicinity (of Steamboat Springs)."⁹⁷ The Comstock lode had reached its peak. Mineral production figures for the state were forty-six and a half million dollars. These figures would continue to decline until the Goldfield strike paid off in 1906.

1878

Construction of the Steamboat Irrigating Canal began. It took two years to complete the thirty-four-mile long ditch. Cost was only \$50,000. It originated four miles above Verdi on the Truckee River to just south of the Steamboat Springs resort where it emptied into Steamboat Creek.⁹⁸

Statewide mineral production was slightly less than thirty-one million dollars. In England, the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company was performing the fabulous run of Gilbert & Sullivan operettas. This year it was *HMS Pinafore*.

1879

President Ulysses S Grant steamed into Virginia City on October 27th. He was on the campaign trail of an unsuccessful bid for

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a third term. The local populace turned out in force: *Politicos, bands, hose companies, Pioneers and Paiutes in war paint paraded—2,000 children watched—From the balcony of the Savage mansion on D street Grant reviewed the procession....*⁹⁹ He stopped by Steamboat Springs resort with his wife, and son, junior, before departing on November 1st.¹⁰⁰

This year marked the beginning of twenty years of depression in Nevada sometimes called *Borrasca*, a Spanish term meaning the mines were played out.¹⁰¹ Mineral production was just less than seventeen million dollars.

1880

They established the Steamboat Post Office on February 12th.¹⁰² John Rapp became the postmaster.¹⁰³ In March, the Rapp brothers reopened Steamboat Springs resort. Severe winds in the valley blew down the barns of Barney Clow and Mrs Brown.¹⁰⁴ The state population began a sharp decline from 62,000 in the 1880 census to 42,000 in 1900. The Nevada mineral production figure was just less than twelve million dollars.

1881

In January the Rapp brothers sold to Charles F Moeller & Company of Virginia City. Actually it was a partnership between Schoenman and Moeller with Moeller buying out Schoenman in May. They reported a booming business and reduced the rates at the resort.

CF Moeller became the postmaster in March. The resort owners put on a dance and social in May. A booster appeared for Steamboat Springs in a July edition of the *Sacramento Bee*. In December, Moeller's Steamboat Springs resort received high praise in the *Carson Tribune*. It seems the new owner was a capable promoter.¹⁰⁵

Thompson and West published Angel's history of Nevada this year. He described Steamboat Springs resort as a hotel of twenty rooms

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and five cottages with like number of rooms. A picture of the resort from this volume appear on the cover of this book. A bathhouse was connected to the hotel with fifteen separate sets of baths. Each bathroom contained a steam enclosure, tub, and freshwater shower. C F Moeller & Company paid \$50,000 for the property and was expecting to invest a greater amount in the coming season. Dr H Rozsas supervised the resort, drugstore, and an electric bath. He was a member of the California state board. He received his training in Europe and his wife was also a nurse.¹⁰⁶ This new operation was a serious concern, marking a transition of the destination resort of Cullins and the Rapp brothers, back to the sanatorium, or hospital of Dr Ellis. The two different types of operation never seemed to coexist simultaneously.

Statewide mineral production was eight and a half million dollars. In the nation, Charles J Guiteau assassinated President James A Garfield. Chester A Arthur succeeded him as 21st president.

1882

In response to the depression, the government blocked Chinese workers from immigration for the next ten years. Nevada mineral production was seven and three-quarter million dollars.

1883

Democrat Jewett W Adams became governor. Mineral production dropped slightly. In the country, Buffalo Bill Cody started his Wild West Show. In Indonesia, volcano Krakatoa erupted killing 36,000 people.

1884

News reports from this year: May—Moeller was to build a large dance hall at Steamboat Springs; July— they scheduled the AOUW

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picnic for the 4th; December—a general report on Steamboat Springs appeared.¹⁰⁷

Mineral production dropped below seven million dollars. In the country, Mark Twain published *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*; Belva Lockwood became the first woman nominee for president.

1885

The following reports appeared in the news this year: March, fire threatened the resort hotel. It would have burned down but for the efforts of C C Atherton; June, former Steamboat Springs operator, Johnny Blair, came through from Hawthorne with his wife on his way to Racine, Wisconsin.

July was picnic time at the springs. The Methodist Sunday School brought in three train carloads. Moeller promised them a good time. They also held the Virginia and Gold Hill Miners Union picnic.¹⁰⁸ Round-trip excursion tickets on the V&T sold for \$1.00.¹⁰⁹

Back in April, Dr Becker inspected the cinnabar deposits at Steamboat followed in June by the US Geological Survey team. Dr Becker was in charge.¹¹⁰ Nevada mineral production was slightly more than seven million dollars.

1886

This year mineral production slipped under seven million dollars. In the country, they unveiled the Statue of Liberty.

1887

Mineral production edged over the seven million dollar mark. Republican C C Stevenson became state governor. In England, Arthur Conan Doyle published the first Sherlock Holmes adventure.

1888

They published geologist George F Becker's report on Steamboat Springs as part of a larger volume on the Pacific slope. He discounted the possibility of any significant deposits of cinnabar and described the differences between the formation of the Comstock ore body with formations of the hot spring deposits in progress at Steamboat.¹¹¹ Nevada mineral production rose to just less than nine million dollars. In the country, the Kodak box camera and National Geographic magazine made their debut. In London, Jack the Ripper was on the loose.

1889

Dan De Quille gave another look at the area in *A History of the Comstock....* Here are a few pages of that book:

Washoe City—this place is situated at the north end of Washoe Valley, sixteen miles south of Reno. It was formerly the county seat of Washoe County, and contained about seven hundred inhabitants. There was in the town a substantial brick courthouse, Masonic and Odd Fellows' Hall, Methodist Church, public school building, good hotels, and many stores, shops, and saloons.

Ophir—this town, three miles south of Washoe City, on the west side of Washoe Lake, at one time contained two or three hundred inhabitants. Here was situated a big seventy-stamp mill erected by the Ophir Mining Company at a cost of over \$500,000. To reach this mill with ores from the Ophir Mine a bridge a mile in length was built across the north end of Washoe Lake, at a cost of \$75,000. The ores were amalgamated by the barrel or Freyburg process, and everything was on a grand scale, the buildings covering over an acre of ground.

Franktown—this town, one mile south of Ophir was originally settled by Mormons (about the same time of the settlement at Genoa). Mormon fashion, it was laid off in four-acre lots, and small streams of

water ran through all the streets. Here John Dall had a thirty-stamp water mill, and there were several other mills on Franktown Creek. The town had over two hundred inhabitants in 1869.

At one time there were in operation in Washoe County ten mills (four or five near Washoe City), having an aggregate of 281 stamps, but the completion of the Virginia and Truckee Railroad to the Carson River was sudden death to all the mills, and killed all the towns. All the ore went to the river.

Wadsworth, on the Central Pacific, thirty-four miles east of Reno, is a bright and growing little town. It is situated at the "Big Bend" of the Truckee River, a place well known to those who toiled across the plains in the early days. The place contains about 600 inhabitants. In it are the machine shops, round-house, and freight depot of the Central Pacific, and many good and substantial buildings, both public and private. Before the Carson and Colorado Railroad was built, Wadsworth was a shipping-point for many mining towns and camps to the southward. It still has a very fair trade.

Verdi, eleven miles west of Reno, on the Central Pacific, is a pleasant little lumbering town on the Truckee River, at the eastern base of the Sierras. It is a town of saw-mills and of manufactories of articles made of wood. In the way of mills and machinery Verdi contains a large amount of valuable property.

Lake Tahoe—all visitors to the Pacific Coast who are lovers of the beautiful and picturesque in natural scenery, will endeavor to spend some time at Lake Tahoe. Taking into consideration the surroundings, there is nowhere in the world a more grandly beautiful mountain lake. The lake lies between the eastern and western summit ridges of the main ridge of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, at an elevation of 6,247 feet above the level of the sea. Its length is a little over twenty-one miles, and its width about twelve miles. Roughly it has the form of a parallelogram, lying nearly north and south, about one-third in Nevada.

Washoe Lake—is situated in Washoe Valley, and is seen in going by rail from Reno to Carson. The lake proper is about four miles long, and from a mile to a mile and a half wide. On the west and north extend large tule marshes, which at times contain a considerable depth of water. The lake is fed by small streams from the Sierras, and it has an outlet into Steamboat Creek. The lake is filled with perch and catfish, planted a few years ago; also contains swarms of native fish of the chub species. It is a favorite resort for anglers from Carson and the towns of the Comstock. At certain seasons the lake is visited by great numbers of ducks, geese, and other water-fowl. It is shallow, and, having a muddy bottom, it is not a suitable sheet of water for either brook or lake trout. Carp, however, would flourish in its muddy depths and tule shallows.

Steamboat Springs—the most noted hot springs in the western part of Nevada are those known as the Steamboat Springs. They were so named by the first White men who visited them, on account of the puffing sound some of them then emitted, and because of the tall columns of steam they sent up. These springs are in Steamboat Valley, ten miles south of Reno. The Virginia and Truckee Railroad passes close alongside of the springs. They are situated at the eastern base of a low range of basaltic hills, and occupy the top of a flat ridge that is over a mile in length and has a north and south course. This ridge is about half a mile in width and is composed of a whitish silicious material evidently deposited by the waters of the many springs.

The temperature of the principal springs is 204 degrees, which is as hot as water can be made at that altitude (5,000 feet above the level of the sea). Some of the springs rise through circular openings from a foot to three feet in diameter and are surrounded by conical mounds of silicious matters deposited by the waters, whereas others flow from fissures, which are evidently rents formed by earthquakes. Out of some of these fissures rush great volumes of hot gases that have a strong odor of sulphur. These fissures are perfectly dry, and the jets

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of hot air are invisible. From other dry crevices issue great clouds of very hot steam. Steam rises in great volumes from all the boiling springs, and of mornings when the air is cool and calm from 60 to 80 tall pillars of steam may be counted, rising to a height of 100 feet or more above the low, bare ridge. The air everywhere about the springs is strongly charged with sulphurous vapors in gases. The crevices have the same course as the great quartz veins of the country, i.e., northeast and southwest. Here is no doubt a huge metallic vein in process of formation; indeed, various minerals are deposited by the gases, notably cinnabar. Some of the fissures may be traced from 1,000 to 3,000 feet, and have a width of from 16 inches to 3 feet. In places where nothing is seen to issue from these fissures at the surface, indications of tremendous subterranean activity are distinctly audible. Far down in under-ground region are heard thunderous surgings and lashings as of huge volumes of water dashed to and from in vast hollow, resounding caverns. In other places are heard fearful (dry) thumpings and poundings, as though at some flaming forge below a band of sweating Cyclops were at work at hammering out thunderbolts for old Jove.

Small springs in places send jets of hot water into the air to the height of two or three feet, with a hissing and sputtering sound, but for some years past none of them have thrown water to any great distance above the surface. In 1860, and for a few years thereafter, two or three of the springs rivaled the geysers of Yellowstone Park, sending columns of water a yard in diameter to a height of sixty or eighty feet once in from six to eight hours. Some springs sent columns of water from three to six inches in diameter to a still greater height. Even now the water is seen to rise and fall in some of the fissures in a threatening manner. At the springs is a fine and commodious hotel, bathing houses for vapor baths, and every desirable accommodation. The springs are very beneficial to persons afflicted with rheumatic complaints and are also useful in some cases of cutaneous diseases.

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*Shaw's Springs—these springs are situated about a mile west of Carson City. They are also much frequented by persons afflicted with rheumatism and kindred complaints, though more well than sick persons use the baths, as connected with them is a large swimming pool, 60 by 24 feet and from 4½ to 5½ feet deep. One of these spring is what is called a chicken-soup spring. By adding pepper and salt to the water it acquires the taste of thin chicken soup.*¹¹²

The 1890s

During this decade Steamboat Springs Resort passed through multiple owners. In 1892, Charles H Stoddard and James T Davis bought the property from Richard Kirman, Sr. It later reverted to the Kirman estate. Great Western Compound and Development Company made extensive improvements.¹¹³

Twentieth Century

Richard Kirman, Jr, later governor of Nevada, sold the property to J W Hopkins in 1900. They made a minor gold discovery when an artesian well was being sunk. It was an insignificant find.¹¹⁴ A Mrs Phenix later obtained rights in the property.¹¹⁵ She was probably the person who sold her paper to Dr Carver in 1909. Let us digress for the moment.

The earthquake on December 10th, 1900 caused the hot springs to dry up. A crew of men the following week drilled and blasted in an attempt to restore the springs. Their effort was useless.¹¹⁶ On April 21st, 1901, a fire burned the hotel and most of the other buildings to the ground. Only the big stable remained. "*Steamboat Springs was probably the best-known resort in the state*" at that time.¹¹⁷

John Hamlin wrote the eulogy for Steamboat Springs resort. Hamlin helped start the public library system in Reno. He embraced the Comstock myth, portraying a romantic's view using colorful

generalizations. The style is hard to resist. A few factual errors exist in the text wh

ich follows in its original form:

Steamboat Springs

What Comstocker does not cherish a soft spot in his heart for that old resort! The mere name of it brings back a flood of reminiscences, gay, perhaps—but attuned to the rollicking times of the greatest and jolliest mining camp of the broad, free West; aye, even more—of the whole world.

And now Virginia City is, and has been for years, a pitiful wreck, that most depressing of all sad sights—a deserted mining town. Its accessory, Steamboat Springs, has gone a-glimmering too, by degrees of prolonged straits, financially and socially.

First: The moneyed miners, whose fat wallets were continually overflowing, either flitted to other climes, or went broke at home, that told on Steamboat's giddy career. Second: The springs slowly lost their fierce vigor, the one gusher played out long ago, and at this date nine tenths of the 30 odd springs are nearly dry.

The culminating blow fell early in this year when an earthquake shook up the country about Steamboat, and immediately afterwards the springs emitted a gurgle, threw up a faint, farewell cloud of vapor, and were things of the past.

A few active springs, and yawning steam fissures at the southern end of the district still give forth signs of the subterranean forces that will go on storming and boiling for years and years to come.

Third: As if in sympathy with the cessation of Nature's wonderful tactics, the old building, whose frames were erected away back in the 1860's have gone up in smoke leaving a low, blackened heap of ashes to mark the site of that fine Nevada sanitarium where roistering old Comstockers used to rollick and lay plans that shook Montgomery St to its depths.

What scenes that place must have known! What things it must have hearkened to! What life and stir was there in its early history.

Now—a locality bereft of its live-giving springs, denuded of its historic edifices—a wreck even such as many of the men who are bought of the stocks that the days and nights of long ago played battledore and shuttlecock with.

These have been a series of mishaps that would level a more ambitious settlement than Steamboat Springs, but Steamboat is not fated to go down to obscurity just yet. Why: What can she look forward to now, since her springs are dry and the buildings, that beckoned more by their storied reputation than their elegance are burned to the ground?

The fact is simple; a fact that has caused towns to spring up in a night, cities in a week; a fact that brought thousands to California and Nevada in the days of '49. The discovery of gold!

As a watering place, Steamboat in all probability will be no more. Surely a repetition of those palmy days when thousands and thousands of newly coined silver dollars jingled in merry transfer for that which cheers and inebriates can never recur.

How It Was Named

How did Steamboat come by its name: clear back in the 1850's an emigrant party, just arrived from the desert, beheld columns of smoke ascending skywards. Members of the party were mystified; at first they surmised that yonder the Sacramento river flowed, and the smoke came from steamboats. When the real origin of the steam clouds became evident, the suitability of the name Steamboat seemed appropriate, and such it has ever since remained.

Not until after Virginia City began to shine as a bonanza camp did Steamboat—the resort—come into existence. A tiny box-like shed with two apartments, one for a tub, the other for a steam bath, constituted the first attempt at a regularly appointed bath-house.

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Amos Stowe, in 1861, played the host's part at this pioneer hostelry. The Rapp brothers (and enterprising Germans they were) bought up the property a few years later, improved it, and netted a fortune by their sagacious undertaking. Daily receipts amounted to anywhere from \$500 to \$3,000 and the popularity of Rapp's Steamboat grew apace with the miners and prospectors.

'Onliest Joint'

According to the byword of that (time) "Steamboat was the onliest joint within a day's journey where a fellow could rinse his silver-coated person."

The buildings that were burned on Sunday, April 21st, 1901, were those built by the Rapp brothers in the year 1863. Proprietors and lessees by the dozen have taken their turn at running the resort, with luck as variable as the stock market.

Oh, the Fourth of July picnics held at Steamboat in those flush days! The gay dances; the riotous jinks of millionaires who could scarce spend their dollars fast enough. Such were the three Germans, with their coterie of cronies, who dined and wined and gambled in vain efforts to squander the thousands made that day in stocks. Ordinary methods failed to drain their purses, and champagne was ordered in quantities sufficient to fill several bath tubs, and the giddy, golden calves actually bathed in, and splashed in wanton mirth the sparkling costly wine.

Then a tale is told of an eccentric Comstock Croesus who became madly infatuated with the roaring bubbling spring—the Queen of the Steamboat geysers—and in the dead of night would stand by the hissing cauldron and drop ten and twenty dollar gold pieces into its unknown depths.

Scandal

A half dozen married men shipped their fond wives to Paris on pleasure trips, and they—martyr like—stayed at home and found surcease at Steamboat Springs. Their names have figured largely in the business and political world—these revelers' names—but we'll not mention them.

The wild orgies sent awinging diversified reports, pretty average bad ones, too—which refused to die out—and the deluded mesdames heard them when they returned. Oh, the stormy scenes that ensued in a few select family circles on Mt Davidson's slope!

Fast, wealthy, open hearted, western are the adjectives that best describe the class of people who gave to Steamboat its Early reputation. Yet an air of historic importance clings to this remarkable spot, as distinct in its way as the fame of Virginia City.

Fair and Mackay, Flood and O'Brien, Sharon and Hobart have frequented this great resort, planned their careers there, and lived to see them prosper and thrive. Other hundreds of gayer parties, then rich, planned less wisely, drank more deeply, and went the pace that can never lead to success.

Steamboat Springs are dry, yawning vents; her historic edifices are blackened ruins—yet her future is brightly colored with the color that can transform the gloomiest vale into a veritable paradise—the yellow color of gold.¹¹⁸

The baths would not be dry for long. By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century a new light was upon Steamboat Springs. Glowing dimly at first, but by 1918 she would manage to take possession of the facilities. That light was Dr Edna J Carver. Born at Salina, Kansas, she grew up at Sheridan, Wyoming. She graduated in 1905 from Colorado College of Osteopathy in Denver. She practiced in Colorado, and New York City for six years before making Nevada her home. By chance of fate she happened upon Steamboat Springs while traveling with some of her patients to the Yukon Fair, at Seattle,

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Washington. A member of the group became ill necessitating an unplanned stay-over in Reno.¹¹⁹

In 1918 she began restoring the baths by drilling wells. They drilled the first to thirty feet using an old rig from the abandoned mining town of Bodie, California. Later wells reached depths of 180 feet. The buildings on the property when she took possession consisted of an old saloon and another small building or two. She rebuilt the hotel and baths. The property title was still involved in litigation, including a previous blackmail suit claim.¹²⁰

By 1921, mining had ceased on the Comstock. A boxing promoter contracted with Dr Carver to use the spa for a training center in 1924. A fire on May 8th, 1925 destroyed the large bathhouse causing damage to the main building and other structures. They rebuilt the bathhouse in 1927.¹²¹

Paolino Uzcudun, a Basque heavyweight fighter, trained at Steamboat in 1931. In 1932, King Levinsky, a Chicago heavyweight, trained with Jack Demsey. Uzcudun and Levinsky were preparing for twenty-round bouts with Max Baer. Ray Impellittere used the ring at Steamboat in 1936 to train for a bout in San Francisco. Other boxing personalities made Steamboat Hot Springs their home for a time: Lloyd Marshall, veteran middleweight, Tony Oliver, bantamweight champ; Johnny Rogers, and Joe Herman, mangers.¹²²

State engineer, Alfred Merritt Smith, translated G F Becker's water analysis from the 1880s into the modern method in 1935. He gives the following water analysis:

Salinity .	2.850 parts per million
Chlorine	35%
Sulphate	5.24%
Carbonate	5.08%
Phosphate	0.03%
Borate	8.88%
Sodium	30.35%

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Potassium	3.79%
<i>adding early history:</i>	
Lithium	0.27%
Calcium	0.25%
Magnesium	0.01%
Iron	trace
Alumina	0.01%
Arsenic	0.10%
Antimony	0.02%
Mercury	trace
Silica	11.41%
total	100%

A paragraph on the geological significance of Steamboat Springs from Smith's article follows: *Geologically, the springs are among the most interesting in the world, for they demonstrate in a striking way how mineral veins and deposits are formed. (1) The hot water is constantly depositing silica, gold, silver, mercury, antimony and other minerals and metals which it holds in solution. The silica is held in solution as a jelly-like colloid, and upon the evaporation of the water is deposited as translucent gelatinous silica, which on the surface is gradually dehydrated to become amorphous white sinter, In cracks and crevices the silica becomes banded chalcedony, or even quartz. The metals are deposited simultaneously with the silica. One of the most beautiful mineral specimens in the well-known Mackay School of Mines museum at Reno is a mass of intermixed dazzling white silica, crimson cinnabar and meta-stibnite from Steamboat Springs.*¹²³

Dr Carver built the Pioneer State Health Hotel in 1925. It burned in June 1937. They valued the building at \$4,000 not including the antiques inside which fire destroyed. Manager John Czykowski discovered the 3:30 AM fire. It spread so rapidly that the occupants, including Dr Carver, were lucky to get out. They saved nothing.¹²⁴ It

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was rebuilt and burned again in April 1942. Dr Carver never rebuilt it again.

Around 1940, they attempted to attract large scale financing to build a world class resort at Steamboat Springs. The prospectus they put together detailed the thermogenic healing uses of the spa, and the use of mineral mud for the treatment of numerous maladies, including: arthritis, sciatica, chronic rheumatism, phlebitis, arteriosclerosis, blood diseases, stomach disturbances, myocitis, lumbago, neuritis, neuralgia, gout, paralysis, Bright's disease, hypertension, arteriosclerosis, cirrhosis of the liver, diseases of the throat and sinuses, nervous disorders, imperfections of the complexion, metallic poisoning, alcoholism, drug addiction, blood diseases such as pernicious anaemia and leukemia, malaria, colds, obesity, constipation, overeating, under exercise, and recuperation following illness.

They noted the centralized location of Steamboat to major metropolitan areas. It was accessible from all parts of the country via air, car, or rail. They promoted the sporting activities which abound near Steamboat Springs, including skiing, hunting, and fishing. They wanted to build a large resort using Spanish-style architecture with restaurant, hotel, and casino. They titled the prospectus *Washoe Valley Spa, Steamboat Springs, Nevada*. It contained an endorsement by then governor, E P Carville.¹²⁵

The last hurrah for 'Old Steamboat Springs' came in May of 1950 along with the final run of the V&T train. Steamboat Springs put on a farewell bash for the V&T Railroad exceeding those of any of the other towns on the line. Company and state officials attended. Students from Brown-Washoe consolidated school district were on hand to sing songs, recite poetry, and say a final good-bye to a Nevada legend. It was a sad day indeed, one they will remember the rest of their lives. The paper published a lengthy pictorial article on the V&T on May 28th.

The new Steamboat Springs Chamber of Commerce formed by Dr Carver published a manuscript newspaper, limited run of 100 copies. She enlisted the assistance of Nevada historian, Effie Mona Mack with the publication and other notables from the Reno Chamber of Commerce and the University of Nevada. Steamboat Chamber of Commerce was apparently as short-lived as was the newspaper which saw only one edition.¹²⁶

Dr Edna J Carver died of a heart attack on June 21st, 1954. She had previously estimated she spent more than \$100,000 developing Steamboat Springs into a nationally known health resort between 1909-1954. Her son, Dural E Towne, and grandson, William J Towne inherited the 400-acre resort. Her will also provided for several Steamboat employees: Maddie McCollom, Ada Morrison, and John Czykowski. Czykowski received three acres of land south of Steamboat Springs besides monies. McCollom and Morrison received Dr Carver's wardrobe besides monies.¹²⁷

Daughter-in-law, Dorothy Towne, later managed the property. A drug rehabilitation group called the Entitas Foundation was connected with the spa for a time during the 1970s. They also conducted a hog farming operation during this period. In 1974, Towne in association with Phillip Earl of the Nevada State Historical Society began inquiries into having Steamboat Springs nominated to the National Historical Register. A state historical marker was placed along US Highway 395.

On December 31st, 1986, spa ownership passed by way of gift deed to a nonprofit organization, the International Community of Christ, Church of the Second Advent. The International Community Guilds, a division of the Church, currently operates the spa. The Church has expended \$500,000 on the property since acquiring it. They remodeled the bath building during 1987-1996. They made the exterior to resemble Dr Carver's projected Spanish-style architecture. On March 1st, 1996, the spa reopened to the public.¹²⁸

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Current operations include a 180-foot artesian well with holding tanks for hot and cooled mineral water. The mineral water courses by gravity to the spa building proper, so no pumps are required. Seven single tub rooms with fresh water showers and one group steam room are currently in operation. Massages are available by certified masseurs. The facility is open six days a week, being closed on Wednesdays. So, relax, and enjoy a hot tub. Plenty of hot mineral water is available for all.

Future building plans include outdoor pools for group bathing available during summer 1999.

Location

Steamboat Villa Hot Springs Spa is found between the two principle population centers in northern Nevada, Carson City and Reno. Taking US Highway 395 south from Reno past the junction of Mount Rose Highway and Geiger Grade, state routes 341 and 431, the traveler will notice the upper geyser terrace on the right side of the highway. For the most part, it is inactive now. The fissures are filled. The area has been posted against trespass. As late as the mid-1980s, 8,000 people per year used to ascend the slope to view the fourth or fifth largest geyser area in the world.¹²⁹ The public bathing facility nearby, called Reno Hot Springs, was closed when the geothermal power installation was built. There was a swimming pool and individual bath houses with hot mineral water tubs. The geothermal power plant is the most noticeable feature of the area. Plumes of steam are normally visible rising from their facility on the distant hillside.

Continuing south about a mile, you will notice steam rising from fissures in the lower terrace and the spa's holding tanks on the left side of the road. A small section of the old Lincoln Highway branches off from the main thoroughfare and passes in front of the spa. Approximate distance from downtown Reno is 12 miles. By making a left onto Rhodes Road and immediately turning back along Steamboat Creek toward Reno you will arrive at the spa. Four main buildings and a few out buildings are currently on the site. Spanish-style adobe arches along its façade distinguish the spa. The south end of the building contains a small chapel.

The spa's address is 16010 South Virginia Road, Reno, Nevada 89511. Phone numbers: (702) 853-6600; fax: 853-0858.

Nevada Statistics

Nevada is the seventh largest state. Its boundaries are mostly within the Great Basin area. Average elevation is 5,000 feet with a range between 470 and 13,143 feet. There are three hundred and eleven geothermal areas in the state, the principal ones being, Beowawe and Steamboat Springs. It is the driest state in the country with annual precipitation of only nine inches, ranging from three inches in the southern portion of the state to twenty-nine inches in the Sierra Nevada. Temperatures can be extremely cold in winter and extremely hot in summer. Daily temperatures occasionally vary up to fifty degrees with a range of thirty-six degrees being typical of valley areas. Most common vegetation is sagebrush, pine, and juniper. The Toiyabe Range contains Bristlecone pines as old as 4,900 years. The US Census Bureau reports a 1990 population of 1,201,833. The economy was built on mining, ranching, railroading, and gambling. Thirty million tourists enjoy the Silver State's attractions each year.

Epilogue

This volume is not complete by any means. It is a work of love and as such it will probably never be finished. It was not written for profit. The proceeds from its sale and distribution have been dedicated towards a greater realization of this work. Any individuals having commentary or photographs to contribute are encouraged to do so.

Resources were used to compile this book without having the necessary time available to verify accuracy against source documents. More investigations are necessary to complete this history. Old newspaper reports and personal accounts exist which were not examined.

The author begs your indulgence for the colorful extraneous items which were included outside the actual scope of this history.

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[http://www.tarleton.edu/activities/...faculty pages/Schmidt/ 18630825t.html](http://www.tarleton.edu/activities/...faculty%20pages/Schmidt/18630825t.html); thanks to Professor? Schmidt for posting all of the known Twain articles from the Territorial Enterprise

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Endnotes:

1. [Elliott, 1973]
2. Having examined the Steamboat well, I wouldn't recommend consuming any water of unknown quality. One oral source stated that the well at Steamboat had been used to soak chickens in before plucking them. I did find chicken bones in its sediment.
3. [WVS,1940] p9
4. [Otto, Chuck]
5. [Townley, 1973] 30:1
6. [Elliott, 1973] p50
7. [Elliott, 1973] p52
8. [Lord, 1881]
9. [Nevada State Journal, 21MAY1950]
10. [Nevada State Journal, 4JAN1873] *Town and Country, Local Resume...1870-72*
11. [Reno Evening Gazette, 22APR1901]; PI Earl of Nevada Historical Society says Cameron's first name is James; see [Earl, 1997] article.
12. [Elliott, 1973] p398; all mineral production figures are from Elliott's *History of Nevada*
13. [http:// www.innercite.com/ ~heritage/ places.html](http://www.innercite.com/~heritage/places.html); *Tahoe — Comstock Heritage Area*; 1998
14. [Mack, Sawyer; 1965] p203
15. [SS—1998] Felix Monet is elusive because except for two minor references no further information on him is found. He gets top billing on the historical marker along US Highway 395 most likely because he was mentioned in [Angel, 1881]. Subsequent authors no doubt repeat the reference in Angel. The second reference is an advertisement in the Nevada State Journal on August 2nd, 1876, page 2, column 4. He appears as agent of Steamboat Springs resort. The owner wanted to sell or lease the resort due to his age and infirmity.
16. [Earl, 1997] It would be interesting to know who the other four parties were.
17. [Nevada State Journal, 21MAY1950] I suspect the sale occurred in 1861 or 1862 after Nevada territory separated from Utah.
18. [Elliott, 1973] pp92-4

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19. [Lewis, 1947] p73; Bryant's middle initial is "G"; Downieville is in Sierra County, California according to [Gracey, 1911]
20. [DeQuille, 1889] p141
21. [Lord, 1881]
22. [Elliott, 1973] p396; Statistics don't include the Indian population until they start paying taxes in 1890. All census data is from this reference.
23. [Angel, 1881] p645; There are conflicting references about Dr Ellis. Phillip I Earl of the NHS has him at Steamboat in 1860 with a first name of James [Earl, 1997]. I am more inclined to believe Angel. Also his first name is omitted by early references. I first thought he was Robert B Ellis, the father of PB Ellis who appears in Wren's history. He was there at the right time, had the right name, and the right profession, but an article appearing in Washoe Times from 1863 called him Joseph which is the supposition I am currently following. Apparently Earl has confused him with James B Ellis the miner from the Gold Canyon era.
24. [Reno Evening Gazette, 22APR1901]
25. [Angel, 1881] p645
26. [Otto, Chuck]
27. [Mack, Sawyer, 1965]
28. [Elliott, 1973] p70
29. [Angel, 1881] p645
30. [Kelly, 1962] p97-8
31. [Nevada State Journal, 21MAY1950]
32. [Washoe Times, 10JAN1863] 2:4; *Washoe Times* printed at Washoe City
33. [Washoe Times, 28FEB1863] 2:2; from this article we get our sole reference to Dr Ellis' first name, Joseph, who is described as resort physician. (NHS card file)
34. [Lyman, 1934] p206
35. [Neider, 1959]
36. There is a popular version of the naming of Steamboat Springs by Mark Twain which has Twain saying upon first seeing the hot springs, "Behold, a steamboat in the desert." I used this for the title of this volume.

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37. [[http://www.tarleton.edu/activities/...faculty pages/Schmidt/ 18630825t.html](http://www.tarleton.edu/activities/...faculty%20pages/Schmidt/18630825t.html)] thanks to Professor? Schmidt for posting all of the known Twain articles from the Territorial Enterprise. These were written from Stowe's hotel. There are other references to Steven's Hotel [Nevada State Journal, 21MAY1950]. It is possible that there were two hotels at this time as Cameron supposedly built one also.
38. [Nevada State Journal, 21MAY1950]
39. [Angel, 1881] p632b ink drawing
40. [Weekly Washoe Times, 22APR1865] *The Weekly Washoe Times*
41. [Weekly Washoe Times, 5AUG1865] 3:2
42. [Doten, 1973] p837
43. I believe the building he performed in is still there. There is a restaurant on the first floor currently operated by a Swiss couple. The hall is on the second floor.
44. [Gottschalk, 1881] pp382-88
45. [Nevada State Journal, 21MAY1950]
46. [Doten, 1973] p895
47. [Angel, 1881] p645
48. [Doten, 1973] p934-5
49. [LCC, 1965] p31; This photo is probably in the Library of Congress archives.
50. [Lord, 1881] He used Dan De Quille's figures
51. [Nevada State Journal, 4JAN1873] *Summary for years 1870-1872*
52. [Nevada State Journal, 10DEC1870]
53. [Nevada State Journal, 30DEC1871]
54. [Nevada State Journal, 4JAN1873]
55. [Nevada State Journal, 18MAR1871]
56. [Angel, 1881] p645
57. [Nevada State Journal, 24JUN1871]
58. [Nevada State Journal, 1JUL1871] 3:2

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59. [Nevada State Journal, 4JAN1873]
60. [Nevada State Journal, 28OCT1871]
61. [Angel, 1881] p645
62. [Nevada State Journal, 11NOV1871]
63. [Nevada State Journal, 23DEC1871]
64. [Nevada State Journal, 4JAN1873]
65. [Nevada State Journal, 27JUL1872] 3:2
66. [Nevada State Journal, 4JAN1873]
67. [DeQuille, 1876] p329
68. [Nevada State Journal, 12JUL1873] 2:4
69. [Nevada State Journal, 23JUL1873] 3:2
70. [Nevada State Journal, 23AUG1873] 3:2
71. [Nevada State Journal, 18FEB1874] 3:1; 3:2
72. [Nevada State Journal, 21MAY1950] 2:4
73. [Nevada State Journal, 12JUN1874] 3:1
74. [Nevada State Journal, 28MAY1950]
75. [Nevada State Journal, 1AUG1874] 3:2
76. [Nevada State Journal, 4AUG1874] 3:2
77. [Angel, 1881] p645; [Nevada State Journal, 29SEP1874] 3:1
78. [Doten, 1973] p1102
79. [Townley, 1973] 30:2
80. [Nevada State Journal, 21DEC1875] 2:3
81. [Nevada State Journal, 22JAN1875] 3:2
82. [Nevada State Journal, 31JAN1875] 3:2
83. [Nevada State Journal, 20, 24APR1875] 3:2; 3:3; respectively

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84. [Nevada State Journal, 1, 6MAY1875] 3:3; 3:2; respectively
85. [Nevada State Journal, 18JUN1875] 3:1
86. [Nevada State Journal, 18, 23, 30MAR1875] 3:2 and 3:3; 3:2; 3:2; respectively
87. [Nevada State Journal, 17SEP1875] 3:2
88. [Carlson, 1985] p223
89. [Elliott, 1973] pp125-132
90. [DeQuille, 1876] pp328-9
91. [DeQuille, 1876] pp166-7
92. [Davis, 1913] p592
93. [Reno Evening Gazette, 7DEC1935] p6
94. [Nevada State Journal, 8MAR1876] 3:3
95. [Nevada State Journal, 20MAY1876] 3:1; [Nevada State Journal, 15JUL1876] 3:4; [Nevada State Journal, 28JUL1876] 3:2; [Nevada State Journal, 2AUG1876] 2:4; [Nevada State Journal, 9AUG1876] 2:2
96. [Reno Evening Gazette, 7DEC1935] p6
97. [Drury, 1936] p284
98. [Angel, 1881] p634
99. [Doten, 1973] p1354
100. [SS—198]
101. [Davis, 1913]
102. [Carlson, 1985] p223. Some preliminary research on file at the Nevada Historical Society indicates that the first application made for a post office here was made under the place name of Stevenbaugh Springs. This is intriguing, as it may lead to a realization that the area originally went by a different name. It might also answer the question about the identity of the Steven's Hotel.
103. [Angel, 1881] p645
104. [Nevada State Journal, 28MAR1880] 3:2; 3:1; respectively

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105. News references for 1881 en masse: [Nevada State Journal, 18JAN1881] 3:1; [Nevada State Journal, 22JAN1881] 3:1; [Nevada State Journal, 8FEB1881]; [Nevada State Journal, 9MAR1881]; [Nevada State Journal, 8APR1881] 3:1; [Nevada State Journal, 8MAY881] 3:1; [Nevada State Journal, 25MAY1881] 2:3; [Nevada State Journal, 29JUL1881] 3:1; [Nevada State Journal, 14DEC1881] 3:1
106. [Angel, 1881] p644
107. [Nevada State Journal, 15MAY1884] 3:1; [Nevada State Journal, 22MAY1884] 3:3 and [Nevada State Journal, 4DEC1884] 3:2
108. [Nevada State Journal, 12MAR1885] 3:1; [Nevada State Journal, 21, 26, 30, 31JUL1885] all 3:1; [Nevada State Journal, 10JUN1885] 3:1
109. [Townley, 4MAR1973] p31
110. [Nevada State Journal, 8APR1885] 3:1; [Nevada State Journal, 12, 26JUN1885] all 3:1
111. [Becker, 1888] pp346-353
112. [DeQuille, 1889] pp113-15, 138-41
113. [Reno Evening Gazette, 7DEC1935] p6
114. [Townley, 4MAR1973] p31
115. [Reno Evening Gazette, 7DEC1935] p6
116. [Townley, 4MAR1973] p31
117. [Reno Evening Gazette, 22APR1901]
118. [Nevada State Journal, 5FEB1950] 6:1-4
119. [Nevada State Journal, 22JUN1954] 2:1
120. [Nevada State Journal, 9APR1950] p7
121. [Earl, 1997]
122. [Nevada State Journal, 17JUN1937] 8:1; [Nevada State Journal, 5FEB1950] 6:1-3
123. [Reno Evening Gazette, 7DEC1935] p6
124. [Nevada State Journal, 17JUN1937]
125. An original copy is on file at the Nevada Historical Society

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126. [Earl, 1997]

127. [Nevada State Journal, 22JUN1954]; [Nevada State Journal, 9APR1950] p7

128. [Nevada State Journal, 20MAY1996] p1; pp1-2E; [Nevada State Journal, 19JAN1987] pp1-2C

129. <http://www2.wku.edu/www/geoweb/geyser/location.html#stemboat>; "It looks like one of the largest and most accessible geyser fields in the world is gone forever."; also, *Steamboat Hot Springs Geyser Basin* by Chuck Otto.

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1881
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Steamboat Springs
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Produced by the
Jamilian University Press
Reno, Nevada

