

SO YOU THINK YOU
KNOW THE
SILVER STATE?

A Story of
Nevada
Told in
100 Buildings

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CRUDEN BAY BOOKS

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A STORY OF NEVADA TOLD IN 100 BUILDINGS**

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INTRODUCTION

If those walls could talk...this is what they would say. A story about Nevada.

Pony Express... Little Joe Cartwright... ichthyosaurs... iron horses... USO... UFO... mimetic architecture... Bill the Lion and Leo the Lion... the CCC... Pyramid Lake War... square-set timbering... the golden age of motoring... irrigation canals... early aviation... Mark Twain... beehive kilns... fire towers... reclamation projects... cathouses... shrimp cocktail... divorces...weddings... public hangings... bloody handprints... Washoe seeress... Sutro Tunnel... Taj Mahal of Tenpins... the Loneliest Road in America... Googie architecture... This book will have you telling stories like a native in no time.

The photos and stories collected here are a fast and fun way to learn the explanations behind the quirks, the traditions and the secrets that make Nevada uniquely Nevada. What town was known as “The Pittsburgh of the West?” Solved. What was the Silver State’s first national monument? A mystery no more. What Nevada golf course was designed by America’s first woman golf pro? Identified. How did Nevada contribute to the Civil War? Revealed. What goes on in Area 51? No one knows.

Imagine a group of settlers arriving in an undeveloped location. First come shelters in which to live and then structures in which to work and shop. There are buildings for worship and education. As the community grows government buildings are required. With prosperity comes places in which to spend leisure time. And each step along the way builds a story only Nevada can call its own. A story told in 100 buildings. Almost all of the selections within are open to the public, or at least visible from public spaces. So, if you haven’t seen these landmarks in person, fire up your GPS and get out and see the story of the Silver State standing in plain sight on Nevada streets!

Mormon Fort

Las Vegas

1855



It has been a while since travelers came to Las Vegas - Spanish for "the meadows" - for some fresh water and maybe to enjoy the spring wildflower blooms. That little stream put Las Vegas on the map, that map being for the Old Spanish Trail. This was one place the supply caravans and Mexican soldiers and bandaleros could

all count on a reliable source of water between the outposts of Santa Fe and Los Angeles. After the Mexican-American War wrested California from Mexico the frontier road became the province of Mormon traders from Salt Lake City. On June 14, 1855 32 Mormons stopped at Las Vegas and went no further. They planted fruit trees and dug gardens in between preaching to the local Paiute Indians. With the help of their new converts an adobe for enclosing eight two-story houses was constructed. Water was diverted from that precious stream but not enough to support a sustainable settlement. The Mormons were mostly gone by 1857, leaving behind the oldest structure in Nevada. Octavius Decatur Gass obtained the land and built a successful cattle farm, using the adobe buildings as headquarters for his Las Vegas Rancho. But a missed loan payment forfeited the ranch to Archibald Stewart who would die shortly thereafter in a gunfight, said to be protecting his wife Helen's honor. Helen proved adept at running a ranch, expanding her holdings and eventually selling 1,800 acres - including those critical water rights - to the San Pedro, Los Angeles & Salt Lake Railroad for what would become downtown Las Vegas. Helen kept four acres around her husband's hillside grave for a new home, married a ranch hand and was the first postmaster in Las Vegas. When she was buried in 1926 she was hailed as the "First Lady of Las Vegas."

Rose Ditch

Dayton

1857



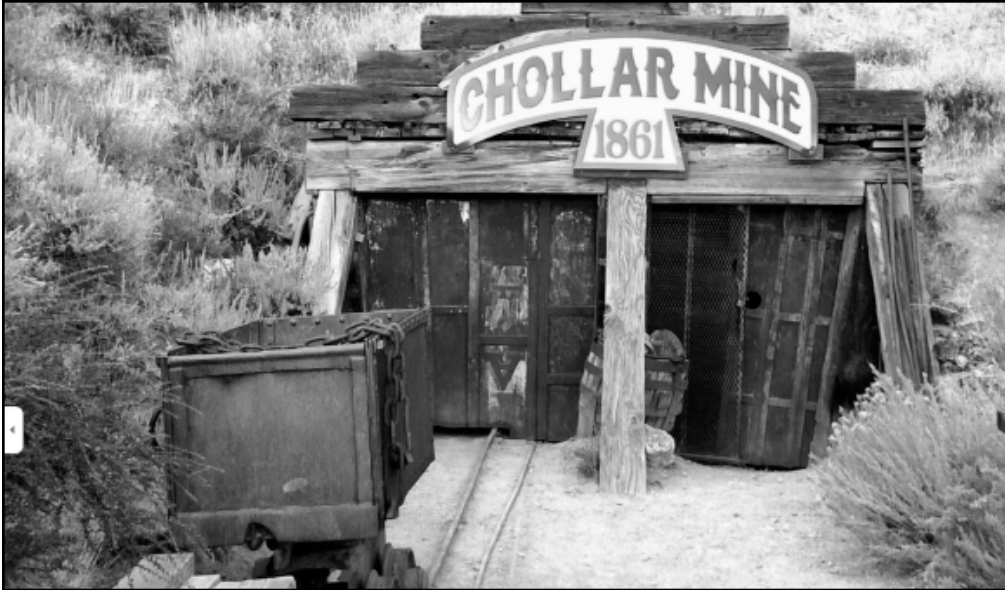
In 19th century Nevada the two main sources of immigrant labor were Ireland and China. Their experiences were vastly different. The Comstock miner's unions prohibited Chinese from working underground and that became the

norm across the Silver State. Chinese workers instead found jobs as cooks and house servants and laundrymen. When the railroads arrived most of the track was laid by Chinese crews. One cause for the disparity of treatment was the assumption that Chinese workers were always expected to take their wages back to their economically depressed homeland, not make a life in America. To help that along the 1875 Page Law was passed to make it difficult for Chinese women to enter the country. Instead, Chinese workers formed their own communities known as "Chinatowns." Nevada's first Chinatown organized in 1857 when Edward Rose hired workers to dig a four-mile trench from the mouth of the Carson River to placer miners working claims in Gold Canyon. That community would become Dayton. By the 1880s much of the big work had been done in Nevada - the Transcontinental Railroad was finished and the Comstock Lode was built out. Most of the Chinese population had indeed moved on but the 1880 census found 5,000 Chinese in Nevada, more than even the Irish. Virginia City and Carson City had established Chinatowns with schools, stores, and doctors. But the national economy was still reeling from the Panic of 1873 and the Chinese were an easy target to single out as competition for jobs. The door slammed on further immigration with the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 that barred any Chinese laborers from entering the country for 10 years. By that time the sour economy was already draining Nevada Chinatowns of residents, many heading to the larger California Chinatowns. By the turn of the 20th century the Chinese population in Nevada was around 1,000 and most of the flimsy wooden Chinatown buildings had gone to firewood.

Chollar Mine

Virginia City

1859



The silver that would become the first and still largest single silver strike in United State history in 1859 had been unearthed accidentally a couple of years earlier by gold miners who were frustrated by heavy blue-black clay that was clogging their gold-mining apparatus. Henry Tompkins Paige Comstock was left in charge of the prospecting cabin while his friends set out for San Francisco with samples to raise investors. They never made it over the Sierra Nevada mountains and Comstock claimed the cabin and land. But being an uneducated man he never really knew what he had. He eventually sold his mining shares for \$11,000 and lost the money in business. In 1870 while prospecting in Montana Comstock put a revolver to his head and killed himself. The dozens of mines in the Comstock Lode are mostly gone today but William Chollar's claim, one of the "Great Six producers of Gold Hill," continued to pay off until the 1920s, eventually producing \$17 million of ore. Uncle Billy also sold out too cheaply, engaged in the biggest lawsuit in Comstock history, filed more mining claims across Nevada and wound up in Connecticut more famous for his mine than rich from it. The 400-foot underground mine is open for tours.

Gold Hill Hotel

Gold Hill

1859



The Gold Hill is Nevada's oldest hotel, opened as the Riesen House when there were somewhere between 15,000 and 30,000 residents - who could keep count - during the height of the silver rush boom-town on the Comstock. Virginia City was the most important town in the West between Denver and San Francisco. As these things go, the boom times ended and the folks wasted no time moving on. The population of Gold Hill and Virginia City dipped into the hundreds and the towns slumbered for the better part of 70 years but never quite vanished from the map. It was, of all things, television that jolted Virginia City back to life with the popularity of the western *Bonanza* in the 1960s. Although the Cartwrights were ranchers and not miners curious viewers began showing up to see that town near the Ponderosa Ranch where Little Joe was always getting in trouble - Virginia City. The restoration cavalry arrived and many of the old buildings, still infused with an authentic Wild West flavor, were revived to greet the visitors - including this historic hotel/restaurant/bar.

Pony Express Station

Cold Springs

1860



No event of less consequence has been more romanticized in America than the Pony Express. Or maybe the image of a lone rider, with nothing to guide him but his guts and guile, racing across 2000 miles of

empty country solely in pursuit of commerce is the ultimate American symbol. Time is always money and in the mid-19th century overland delivery of mail from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean required 24 days minimum. William Russell, Alexander Majors, and William Waddell had wrapped up most of that delivery of freight to U.S. Army outposts but they believed a satchel of mail could make the trip in just 10 days. The men bought a herd of 400 horses and built 184 way stations between St. Joseph, Missouri and Sacramento. They began recruiting lightweight riders, offering \$125 a month in pay when a good day's work elsewhere might bring only a dollar. The first letters went out on April 3, 1860 and indeed reached California 10 days later. In 18 months, however, the Pony Express was kaput, done in by the arrival of the telegraph and financial losses. At a time when U.S. postage was two cents the Pony Express started by charging \$5.00 a letter. The price eventually fell to \$1.00 but the operators could never make the numbers work. Still only one mail pouch was ever lost and only four riders were ever documented to have lost their lives - to Indian attacks - on the job. One was Jose Zowgaltz, ambushed near Cold Springs Station. It was actually more dangerous to have to work alone in one of the remote express stations like Cold Springs than carry the mail. The myth making began almost immediately and the Pony Express has been celebrated in movies and television and the route through eight states has been designated a National Historic Trail. The stone walls of the Cold Springs Station are one of the most tangible souvenirs of the legendary mail service.

Ophir Mine

Virginia City

1860



Nevada produces more gold than any other state, almost any other country. And most of that is the result of hard rock mining. For that the Silver State owes a lasting debt of gratitude to Philipp Deidesheimer. The richest mine on the richest hill on earth in 1860 was the Ophir mine. But the ground was too soft and unstable to permit any known way of timbering a mine to enable extraction. So German mining engineer Deidesheimer, who had made his name in the California gold fields, was summoned to see if he had a solution. He did, a set of wooden cubes assembled like a honeycomb, that could be built out indefinitely in any direction. Square-set timbering revolutionized hard rock mining and could have made Deidesheimer the richest man on the Comstock if he had chosen to patent his invention. He shrugged off any such idea. "If all goes well and these square-sets protect the lives of the miners," said Deidesheimer, "what more could a man ask for?" When the National Mining Hall of Fame organized in 1977 the third person inducted was Philipp Deidesheimer.

Fort Churchill

Silver Springs

1860



Fort Churchill was the first and most heavily fortified military outpost constructed in 19th century Nevada. The proximate cause was the outbreak of the Pyramid Lake War. Settlers had periodically scraped with native Paiutes - often over grazing lands - since beginning ranches in the 1850s. Avenging a suspected kidnapping of Paiute women the Indian attacks intensified and 105 volunteers marched against the Indians. Untrained and undisciplined, the ragtag force was routed with a loss of two-thirds of the men. Pony Express riders carried urgent requests to California for regular U.S. Army troops who scattered the badly outnumbered Paiute warriors. The two battles of the Pyramid Lake War marked the most violent confrontation Nevada would see between Indians and settlers and kickstarted the construction of a military post on the Carson River. For a decade Fort Churchill administered order on the frontier for miners, telegraph operators and wagon trains headed to California. In 1863, with statehood looming, the War Department approved the only Nevada Civil War battalion, the 1st Nevada Cavalry. The 1st Nevada saw no action in the war proper but did engage hostile Indians while protecting the Overland Mail Route. The troops were mustered out of service on November 18, 1865. The soldiers left altogether in 1869 and the adobe buildings were sold off for \$750 apiece. In the 1930s the Civilian Conservation Corps stabilized what was left and Fort Churchill stands in a state of arrested decay as part of the Nevada State Park System.

Techatticup Mine

Nelson

1861



George Hearst left the family farm in Missouri when he was 29 years old to join tens of thousands of other "49ers" heading for the California gold fields. Hearst prospected for the better part of ten years, buying interests in mines when he could. He developed the shrewdest eye for mining property in the West - the Comstock Lode in Nevada (silver); the Anaconda Mine in Montana (copper); the Homestake Mine in South Dakota (gold); the Ontario Mine in Utah (silver). Hearst owned a part of all of them as he built the largest private mining concern in the country. Hearst, whose son William Randolph would use the mining money to famously buy newspapers, bought into the rich gold and silver lodes of the Eldorado Canyon in 1862. He would probably not have listed the purchase on his list of greatest hits. It's not that the Techatticup Mine, Nevada's first major gold strike, could not spew out profitable ore - it would produce into the 1940s. It was just that the canyon was virtually unmanageable, starting with the Civil War deserters from both sides that migrated there. Claim jumping and vigilante justice was the rule of the day, especially after the law refused to have anything to do with the place. That sort of thing slows down productive work like processing ore and building railroads. Things didn't calm down until the U.S. Army constructed a post in Eldorado Canyon. After more than a half-century of non-use the Techatticup Mine is open for tours.

St. Charles Hotel

Carson City

1862



These Italianate brick buildings display hallmarks of the popular Victorian style with brackets at the roof and narrow windows capped with hoods. The St. Charles, taking its name from fancy hotels popular in the East, opened in 1862 and is the second oldest hotel in Nevada. Catering to the legislature meeting across the street, it occupied the three-story section on the corner property. It was quickly followed by the two-story Muller's Hotel which found its clientele in the influx of French Canadian lumbermen streaming into the Comstock. After a 1992 makeover both buildings emerged under the St. Charles Hotel name for awhile.

Territorial Enterprise

Virginia City

1862



W.L. Jernegan and Alfred James ushered Nevada's first newspaper into existence in 1858 in Genoa. Their *Territorial Enterprise* was the first printed Nevada newspaper, anyway. The previous year a few hand-written issues of *The Scorpion* had been distributed. By 1860 the *Enterprise* was located in Virginia City and early in 1862 the paper set up operation here. In August of that year a young writer named Samuel Clemens was hired as a reporter, penning a column known as "Roughing It." His older brother Orien had been appointed Secretary of the Nevada Territory and Sam tagged along.

He tried his hand prospecting for silver in Unionville but was more than happy to move to the "big city" for steady work. By the time he left the *Territorial Enterprise* in 1864 the writer was using the name Mark Twain. The Great Fire of 1875 burned most of the upstairs in the paper's offices but the water-powered press, composing tables and Twain's desk that were in the basement survived unscathed. Twain's columns, however, survive only as undated clippings in his personal scrapbooks and as reprints. Lucius Beebe was a newspaperman who came to Nevada in 1940 to review the premier of the film, *Virginia City*, starring Errol Flynn. The movie got a thumbs down but Beebe gave the town rave reviews, stayed, bought this building and revived the historic *Territorial Enterprise* newspaper in his crusade to kickstart a somnambulant Virginia City into a tourist destination.

Nevada State Prison

Carson City

1862



Crime was an American spectator sport in the 1800s. Hangings were public spectacles and people would make a day of it, toting picnic lunches to the gallows. In the 1820s the Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia was far and away the most expensive prison ever built, created around the principle

of solitary confinement that kept prisoners from seeing each other and, the thinking went, prevent them from sharing their underworld secrets. Thousands of visitors showed up at Eastern State to watch the condemned men at hard labor. Until it closed permanently in 2012 one of the longest operating prisons in United States history, the state penitentiary in Carson City, modelled after Eastern State, was the principle site of incarceration in Nevada. One convicted man who never made it to Carson City was J.W. Rover. Rover was one of three miners working a claim near Rabbit Hole in the spring of 1875. After one went to town for supplies he returned to find the third man missing. When his dismembered body was discovered four days later both partners accused the other of murder. Rover was arrested and stood trial four times for the crime, three times going to the Nevada Supreme Court. When finally he was condemned to die in 1877 he was sent to a freshly erected gallows outside the Washoe County Courthouse in Reno - even though the Nevada Legislature had outlawed public hangings two years before. Rover harangued a rowdy crowd of 200 for 52 minutes before the trap door was opened - it was the last public hanging in Reno. The old prison now conducts popular group tours.

Genoa Bar

Genoa

1863



Mormon traders set up the bones of Nevada's first settlement in 1851. Gold had just been discovered in California and there was soon enough traffic rolling past the trading post to merit a post office. The Mormons were called back to Salt Lake City in 1857, which was probably good news for Al Livingston and his four-year old "thirst parlor." When the Nevada Territory was cleaved from the Utah Territory in 1861 Genoa was tabbed as the provisional capital and the saloon had a few months of hosting backroom politics before it was permanently relocated to Carson City. Livingston moved into this two-year old brick building in 1863; drinks have been poured here for every minute of Nevada statehood, the history of which has ended up on the walls. The brassiere inside belonged to Hollywood siren Racquel Welch. The 1960s sex symbol was filming a movie in the area and paid a visit to the Silver State's oldest saloon. There was an impressive display of bras hanging from the ceiling as one might find an Old West watering hole and she offered to add to the collection - but only if the others were removed. After the lingerie was put away for safekeeping Racquel added a signed photograph.

Bowers Mansion

New Washoe City

1863



Most of the riches of the Comstock Lode ended up in San Francisco, where civilization was in the 1860s. But not all. Eilley Oram came west with the Mormon migration and shed two husbands before winding up in Virginia City in her early thirties running a boarding house

and washing clothes. Sometimes she would take mining claims as payment and she bought others when she had the money. Sandy Bowers came to town as a teamster and also put his extra money into buying small claims. Eilley and Sandy married and merged their claims. One of their pieces of paper just happened to make the Bowers owners of one of the richest and easiest to get at veins of silver in the entire strike. Eilley Bowers was likely the richest woman in American at that moment. It was off to Europe for two years for the Bowers to shop for furniture and artwork and to hire Scottish stone masons who would build their new \$300,000 nest. The happy times in one of the "finest houses in the West" would be short. Sandy Bowers died in 1868 of lung disease when he was only 35. He left behind several losing mining plays as the silver was playing out in the bonanza claim. By 1874 Eilley had lost the house and was next seen in Virginia City practicing the dark arts as the "Washoe Seeress." She moved to San Francisco and was back operating a small boardinghouse before dying in obscurity in 1903 at the age of 77. After Washoe County came into possession of the mansion in the 1960s voters approved money to restore the century-old souvenir of Comstock millionaire life.

Carson Brewing Company

Carson City

1864



One of the first businesses to get going in Carson City in 1860 was a brewery set up by John Wagner to quench the thirsts of Comstock Lode miners. Sales were brisk and by 1865 this two-story brick building was constructed that housed the brewery and taproom on the ground floor and the town's Masonic Lodge upstairs. The brewery filled kegs until 1948 before ending its run as one of Nevada's longest operating enterprises. The *Nevada Appeal*, which put its first edition on Carson City streets on May 16, 1865, moved into the space next. At the time the newspaper was still being printed with type composed by hand. After a half century, including a 1979 fire that gutted the old brewery, Nevada's oldest continuously published newspaper moved on to more modern digs. Today the building trundles on as an arts center.

The Castle

Virginia City

1868



There were far more losers than winners in the rush to the Comstock but the winners won very big at “the richest place on earth.” They built the town’s finest homes along B Street, culminating at the end in “The Castle,” Robert N. Graves’ place. The superintendent of the Empire Mill & Mining Company was realizing a monthly income of \$80,000 from his shares in the Comstock ore fields at their peak of production but he gambled away his fortune in speculative mines and died nearly penniless.

When he was flush in the 1860s he had his home copied from a castle in Normandy, France. The fate of Virginia City mirrored that of Graves. The Comstock Lode was playing out by the end of the 1870s and most mines were closed before the dawn of the 20th century. Disappearing silver was not the only calamity to befall Virginia City in the 1870s. There had been four destructive fires since the town was built in 1859 but a fifth, that began early on the morning of October 26, 1875 when a coal oil lamp was knocked over in a boarding house on A Street, dwarfed them all. When strong winds finished whipping the flames around town 33 blocks of structures were leveled, including most of the town’s business district.

Sutro Tunnel

Dayton

1869



The vein of ore in the Comstock was so enormous it seemed inexhaustible. The deeper you dug the richer you became. But silver ore wasn't the only thing buried deep in the hillsides. Inevitably the mine shafts would strike groundwater and flood. Pumping water 1/3 of a mile straight up is an expensive proposition. Adolph Sutro fled the Prussian Revolution in 1848 and landed in San Francisco

where he became a tobacconist. He headed for the Comstock Lode in 1860, hoping to sell cigars. When he heard about the flooding problem in the mines he had a solution - dig a drainage tunnel from several miles downhill. The tunnel would not only keep mines dry but - not that the mine owners cared - improve ventilation for miners and offer an escape route if necessary. In 1866 the U.S. Congress granted the Sutro Tunnel Company the exclusive rights to tunnel into the Comstock. It would take nine years to blast and dig through 3.88 miles of rock and remarkably the Sutro Tunnel was only 18 inches off its target when it reached the Savage Mine on September 1, 1878. The Sutro Tunnel could drain four million gallons of water a day out of the silver mines and reports were that the owners were paying Sutro \$10,000 a day to use it. After a year Adolph took his money back to San Francisco and began buying up large chunks of the City by the Bay. He built the world's largest indoor swimming complex with pools that were filled and emptied by the tides daily. The Sutro Baths helped launch the old cigar peddler into the mayor's office in 1894. The Sutro Tunnel is being restored with public tours twice a month.

Virginia & Truckee Depot

Gold Hill

1869



As the vast wealth of the Comstock Lode revealed itself in the 1860s it became apparent a railroad was needed to move the vast quantities of ore from the hillsides of Virginia City to the mills along the Carson River. The first 14-mile section of the line was completed in 1869 with a 2.2% grade down a 1,600-foot elevation drop. The Virginia & Truckee Railroad would eventually extend to Reno and connect with the Central Pacific Railroad. The 52-mile railroad was earning a profit of over \$100,000 per month and was one of the most famous short-line railroads in America. The Virginia & Truckee was abandoned in 1950 after years of declining revenue and today operates as a heritage tourist railroad.

U.S. Mint

Carson City

1870



American coins have been minted primarily in three cities: Philadelphia (no mint mark), Denver (mint mark "D") and San Francisco (mint mark "S"). But so much silver was being hauled out of the Comstock Lode that the Carson City Mint was opened in December of 1869. Supervising architect of the U.S. Treasury Alfred Mullett blended classical Greek and Italianate elements to create the mint building that was put together with native sandstone and brick molded at the Adams Brick Works in Genoa, an operation helmed by a grandson of John Quincy Adams. Nearly \$50 million of gold and silver churned out coins bearing the mint mark "CC" here until the mint was de-commissioned in 1899. After that the building did duty as an assay office and since 1941 has been the home of the Nevada State Museum.

Curry House

Carson City

1871



Abraham Van Santvoord Curry founded Carson City in 1858 with three other pioneers, all of whom soon sold or outright gave their land claims to Curry and skedaddled. One of the first things Curry did was to begin quarrying sandstone which would build most of the important early structures in town and this house as well. The sandstone was hacked into blocks with picks and chisels. In addition to the Greek Revival style windows that can still be seen, Curry's house originally sported an octagonal cupola and building-wide porch that were removed in the 1930s. The enterprising Curry constructed a stone hotel that hosted the first Territorial Legislature in October 1861 and when the Nevada territorial prison was established Curry became the first warden. In 1869 he was also appointed the first Superintendent of the United States Mint. Abraham Curry died of a stroke in 1873 at the age of 58, precipitating the largest funeral ever held in Carson City. The house left the family in 1919 but is said to still be presided over by the spirit of Abraham Curry and his funeral procession is reenacted each year as part of Carson City's annual Ghost Walk event.

State Capitol

Carson City

1871



Mark Twain described the Nevada state capitol site in his semi-autobiographical travel book *Roughing It*, as “a large, unfenced, level vacancy, with a liberty pole in it, and very useful as a place for public auctions, horse trades, mass meetings, and likewise for teamsters to camp in.” In 1869 the Nevada Legislature authorized \$100,000 to fill the space. San Francisco architect Joseph Gosling collected a \$250 commission for his plans of a two-story Italian Renaissance Revival structure laid out in a cruciform footprint. His design was topped by an octagonal dome over an open cupola. Sandstone was carted from the Nevada State Prison quarry just outside of town at no charge to construct the capitol. When celebrated Nevada architect Frederic DeLongchamps was called in the early 1900s to build legislative wings the sandstone was used again. Until 1937 all branches of the Nevada government worked here but today just the Executive branch uses the Capitol.

Kitzmeyer Furniture Factory

Carson City

1873



In the mid-19th century downtown American streets were filled with two-story, Italianate-style brick buildings like this one. Carson City was no different and this is the oldest souvenir of the form in town, raised in 1873 by George W. Kitzmeyer. The German-born Kitzmeyer and two brothers made harnesses during the Comstock boom of the 1860s, although George never stopped making furniture, the trade in which he was trained. When he constructed this building he set up a furniture factory on the second floor and used the ground level as a showroom. One of a furni-

ture maker's most reliable money makers in the 1800s was coffins and after George Kitzmeyer died in 1898 at the age of 62 his son, an undertaker, took over the furniture business as well, adding mortuary to the building's roster of uses.

Virginia & Gold Hill Water Company

Virginia City

1873



Early miners in Virginia City obtained the water they needed for free from small streams and canyon springs but when the population exploded to 30,000 overnight fresh water became a scarce and valuable commodity. Two companies, the Virginia Water Company and the Gold Hill Water Company, were formed to collect and distribute water. The two groups merged in 1862, laying water flumes and then iron pipes around town to supply water. In 1871 an audacious plan was launched to bring water

from the Hobart Creek and Marlette Reservoir area 1,500 feet above Lake Tahoe on the west side of Washoe Valley. By 1873 two million gallons of water a day were flowing through seven miles of pipeline; a feat that has earned the Marlette Lake Water System status as a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark.

Storey County Courthouse

Virginia City

1876



Storey County, formed in 1860, carries the name of Captain Edward Farris Storey, a Georgian who relocated to the West after serving in the Mexican War in 1846 when he was 18 years old. As a rancher in Virginia City he organized a militia company against neighboring Indians during the Pyramid Lake War in 1860 where he was killed. This is the second hall of justice to stand on this site; the first was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1875. San Francisco architects Henry Kenitzer and George Raum designed the replacement in the high Italianate style that was the most opulent in Nevada. The price tag, including the adjacent jail, was \$117,000. The venerable government building is one of only two 19th century state courthouses still in service.

Fourth Ward School

Virginia City

1876



The southern entrance to Virginia City is anchored by this treasured souvenir of Virginia City's days as the richest place on earth. The combination grammar and high school was built in the flamboyant Second Empire style at the cost of \$100,000, financed by the town's mining companies and businesses. It was big enough for more than 1,000 students, each with his or her own desk. Attendees could enjoy a central heating system with hot water piped to all four floors and spring-loaded self-flushing toilets. Architect C.M. Bennett designed the eye-catching schoolhouse as a monument to America's Centennial of 1876. After sitting vacant since 1936 the Fourth Ward School is considered the last Second Empire school of such a grand scale in the country.

Ward Charcoal Ovens

Ely
1876



Beehive kilns were common structures in the early Western landscape. There were even Swiss Italian masons roaming the desert who specialized in their construction. The kilns would burn timber into charcoal which was shoveled into smelters at mine sites to heat up and extract valuable metals from raw ore. Piñon pine burned into charcoal became 96% carbon and was the furnace fuel of choice since it burned more slowly than wood, created a much greater heat and sped up the refining process. The six charcoal kilns constructed two miles from the townsite of Ward appear brand new after 150 years because they almost are. Ward was a popping place when the kilns were constructed to fuel two silver smelters. There was enough news kicking around the frontier mining town to fuel two competing newspapers. But by 1879 the fires in the kilns were extinguished. A fire took out a large chunk of town and by 1888 there wasn't enough going on in Ward to warrant a post office. Today the kilns are the best preserved in Nevada, protected in a state park.

Spring Mountain Ranch

Los Angeles

1878



Howard Hughes looms large in the history of Nevada. Howard, Sr. invented a drill bit that revolutionized the oil industry and when he was 18 the orphaned son inherited Hughes Tool Company. The fortune enabled Howard to pursue his passions. He broke speed records as an aviator and when he fancied the movies started his own production studio, RKO Pictures. Wracked by narcotics addiction and inner demons, Hughes became a recluse in the 1950s. He relocated to Las Vegas in 1966, hunkering out of sight on the top floors of the Desert Inn. When told he couldn't go on staying in the hotel Hughes bought the casino. And then the Frontier, and the Sands, and the Castaways... In a single year Hughes spent an average of \$178,000 a day buying Las Vegas property. He owned an airport, a television station and more land than he could ever see from his Desert Inn aerie. Nevada officials encouraged the casino buying spree since the popular Hughes sanded the rough edges off the town's mob-controlled reputation. But enough was enough. As Hughes' take of total revenue on The Strip passed 30% the anti-monopoly folks stepped in. Howard Hughes had always made his biggest headlines as a Hollywood playboy, fond of the grand gesture. When dating Katharine Hepburn the movie mogul would fly his seaplane into the basin in front of her house to pick her up and was known to land on the 9th hole of the nearby golf course if need be. In an attempt to lure his estranged wife Jean Peters to Las Vegas in 1967 Hughes bought the Spring Mountain Ranch, an oasis in the Mojave desert dating back to Old Spanish Trail days. She refused the peace offering and a few years later it was a Nevada state park.

Eureka County Courthouse

Eureka

1879



Eureka was a mining boomtown of a different stripe. Everyone knew there was rich silver and lead ore in the vicinity but it wasn't until new smelting processes were developed in 1869 that the difficult ore could be a moneymaker. So the town was already mostly laid out and established when the real population crush hit. Ten smelters were quickly in operation and Eureka soon had the nickname "Pittsburgh of the West" for the heavy black smoke that hung over the canyon. The heavy processing worked to pump the brakes on ore extraction and forestalled Eureka's decline just enough so this is one of the best preserved of all of Nevada's mining towns. There was always just enough money coming in to keep folks around. The Eureka mines would not play out for 100 years and generate an estimated \$150,000,000 before closing in 1970. The Eureka County Courthouse is the best money could buy in the heady Victorian days of silver wealth, in this case \$38,000 of elegance. The investment still pays dividends as the red brick and sandstone showpiece is still a working courthouse.

Lehman Aqueduct

Baker

1881



When he was 22 years old Absalom Lehman left Ohio to look for California gold. He didn't find any. He boarded a ship to Australia to look for gold. He found some and used the money to start some wool stores. Homesick, he sailed back to California in 1861 to look for more gold. He didn't find any and moved to Nevada's Snake Valley. He still prospected but was more interested in farming and constructed a two-mile aqueduct to bring water two miles from a spring to a fruit orchard, some 100 trees strong. Meanwhile on his property he found something that would bring him fame instead of riches - Nevada's longest cave system adorned with some of nature's most dazzling handiwork. Lehman built a cabin near the cave and began leading tours until his death in 1891. In 1922 Lehman Caves became the Silver State's first National Monument and was elevated as part of the Great Basin National Park in 1986, Nevada's only national park.

Piper's Opera House

Virginia City

1885



In the 19th century most communities boasted an opera house although its function was often for just about everything except opera. Townsfolk would come to enjoy lectures, watch pageants and graduations and patronize live performances. This Italianate structure is the third to house John Piper's stage, constructed in 1885. Virginia City got its first spacious entertainment hall in 1862 when Topcliffe's was built on C Street. Tom Maguire constructed the D Street Theatre the following year which John Piper acquired in 1868. That theater perished in the 1875 city-wide conflagration and Piper's next effort, located on B Street, burned as well, following a masked ball. This Piper's hosted all the nation's most famous actors and lecturers in its day in between bearfights, roller skating and basketball games until it shuttered in 1929. This is one of only three 19th century opera houses remaining in the Silver State along with the Eureka Opera House and the Thompson Opera House in Pioche.

Morrill Hall

Reno
1886



In the midst of the Civil War Justin Morrill, a representative from Vermont, served up one of the most impactful bills ever introduced in Congress. The Morrill Land-Grant College Act of 1862 divided up 11 million acres of Western lands to give to states to sell and use the proceeds to endow "at least one college" for scientific studies. Each state received 30,000 acres for each member of Congress. Nevada was still a couple years from statehood but in 1866

Congress kindly extended Morrill benefits to the new 36th state which meant 90,000 acres for its two senators and one congressman. The Nevada Constitution had already called for the creation of a "state university with instruction in Agriculture, Mechanic Arts and Mining" but even with the funding there was still a ways to go. By 1886 there were only seven high schools in the state. The first stab at that "State university" took place in Elko in 1874 with seven students but truth be told it was more of a prep school than a college. The Board of Regents tried again in Reno and this time it stuck. On a bluff overlooking Truckee Meadows a snappy French Second Empire building welcomed the University of Nevada's first class of 35 bright-eyed and bushy-tailed students. Enrollment wouldn't reach 1,000 for another half-century by which time the Main Building was part of what became known as the Old Quad. Today the university sends some 5,000 graduates into the world each year.

Post Office

Carson City

1891



In 1886 the *American Architect and Building News* polled 75 American architects to determine the nation's ten most admired buildings. Buildings by Henry Hobson Richardson, a New Orleans-born architect working out of Boston, filled five of the ten spots. So 1886 was a good year for Henry. It was also a bad year because he would die prematurely at the age of 47. Afterwards his brawny interpretation of the popular Romanesque style was wildly in vogue for the next decade. In that time nearly every civic structure built in America received the same treatment of rough-hewn stone, broad gables,

a powerful arched entranceway, arch-head windows grouped in sets of three, multiple colors, and perhaps a tower or two based on Richardson's work. Carson City got one and it still stands as the only Richardson-influenced building in the Silver State. The post office lingered until 1970. As one critic once observed - "these buildings looked old as soon as they were built." One of the reasons these hulking masterworks of yesteryear still remain is that it is often more costly to tear them down than to let them stand.

Longstreet Cabin

Ash Meadows

1896



Nothing is known for certain of the first 40 years of Jack Longstreet's life but he still had time to become one of Nevada's true "characters" of the Old West. Cattle rustler, prospector, rancher, hired gun for the Tonopah stage, tent saloon operator, accused murderer, staunch fighter for the rights of the Southern Paiutes among whom he lived. Scratch any chapter from Longstreet's time in the Silver State and you will find a frontier legend. He "homesteaded" by a spring here for a few years in the 1890s and constructed a cleverly designed stone cabin in the side of a hill. Naturally he moved on but during national Prohibition in the 1920s, when well into his 80s, Longstreet was said to be operating a still here. After cutting a wide swath across the wilds of Southern Nevada Jack Longstreet actually died in a hospital in 1928 at the age of 94. Seems he accidentally shot himself in the shoulder. That didn't kill him - he left the hospital against orders after treatment. But he suffered a stroke a short time afterwards and was found and brought back to the hospital to die. A government grant reconstructed the cabin in the 1980s; it is now a highlight of the Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge.

Stokes Castle

Austin

1897



As the 19th century wound to a close Anson Phelps Stokes owned a mansion in New York City, a 100-room "cottage" in the Berkshire Hills of Massachusetts and a great camp in New York's Adirondack Mountains. What the family really needed, he decided, was a summer home in the middle of the Nevada desert. And just to make sure it doesn't look like all its neighbors let's make it resemble an old Italian tower. Stokes had first encountered Austin during its boomtown days when he was tending to his mining and railroad interests. "The Castle" - as the family liked to call its three-story desert getaway - was meticulously crafted by hand

with granite pieces raised into place with a winch and dry stacked. Clay mortar was used sparingly when needed. Stokes family members came for a month in the summer it was constructed and had a fine time. There were a few more quick stays but after Phelps sold his mine and mills in Austin no one ever returned. Stokes Castle stands alone today, a testament to what mining wealth in pioneer Nevada could buy.

Mizpah Mine

Tonopah

1903



Jim Butler's origin story sounds a whole lot like Jed Clampett's in the *Beverly Hillbillies*. Instead of shooting at some food like Jed, Jim was throwing a rock to get his straying burro's attention at Tonopah Springs. The "rocks" turned out to be silver-bearing ore valued at \$200 a ton. It had been decades since the Comstock Lode and the Silver State was back in business. Digging the ore and

shipping it by wagon and rail was expensive so Butler hit upon a novel scheme in mining country - leasing his claim by the foot. Everything was done on a handshake. Miners got rich and the "Queen of the Silver Camps" grew rapidly as a result. Butler sold his claims to Philadelphia investors with the proviso that his lessees could work their claims until midnight on December 31, 1901. After that the Tonopah Mining Company worked Nevada's second largest silver strike until 1948, reviving Butler's leasing system after silver prices cratered in the 1930s. Howard Hughes took a swing at reviving the Mizpah Mine but it never reopened. The original claims were deeded to Nye County and transferred to the Town of Tonopah in the 1990s which has decided to mine tourists and history buffs instead of ore in the historic mining park. Outside the park prospectors are still poking around, hoping to add to the \$150 million mineral haul chalked up around Tonopah.

Train Station

Rhyolite

1904



After the California Gold Rush calmed down in the 1850s there weren't a whole lot of really big strikes. But if just the hint of a possibility of a chance of a maybe existed - look out. Such was the case when prospectors Shorty Harris and E.L. Cross stumbled across gold-bearing quartz on a western Nevada hillside in 1904. There were 2000 claims taken in a 30-mile radius of the hill. One day Old Man Beatty was the only one living in the area for miles in any direction and the next day a school was being built to handle 250 children. Most of the people in the Rhyolite boomtown were in support of the Montgomery Shoshone mine which Bob Montgomery bragged could produce \$10,000 a day in ore. Maybe it was just talk but nearly \$100,000 was spent to build a three-story stone bank and big-time Eastern financier Charles Schwab spent millions to buy the mine in 1906. Rhyolite had its own stock exchange and Board of Trade; electricity came to town in 1907. And just like that it was all over. The nation's financial Panic of 1907 found Rhyolite and the banks failed and businesses closed. In 1911 the Montgomery Shoshone mine and the stamping mill shuttered and five years later the electric power was cut off to any remaining residents. Today's Rhyolite retains its orderly streets and some souvenirs of the good times, including the intact Mission-style train depot from the gone and hopefully not forgotten Las Vegas & Tonopah Railroad.

Derby Dam

Fallon

1904



John Wesley Powell, who sacrificed his right arm for the sake of maintaining the Union in the Civil War, was the first to lead government-backed explorations of the West, including famously leading the first expedition down the Grand Canyon. He returned to Washington

to report that the West was not suitable for agricultural development. The railroad companies, who owned 183,000,000 acres of that arid land, begged to disagree. They lobbied vigorously for the government to provide irrigation for prospective farmers. As Powell gave up the fight in 1893, he said prophetically, "Gentlemen, you are piling up a heritage of conflict and litigation over water rights, for there is not sufficient water to supply the land." Leading the charge for irrigation projects was Nevada's own Senator Francis Newland who introduced the landmark bill that became the Reclamation Act of June 17, 1902 that promised to "reclaim" arid lands for human use. There were 30 irrigation projects unleashed by the federal government in the first five years and it is no surprise the first took place in Senator Newland's backyard - literally. The senator had pioneered the acquisition of land along the Carson River and the Newlands Project was going to divert water from the Truckee River flowing out of Lake Tahoe and send it into tens of thousands of Carson River Basin acres. The 31-foot high concrete Derby Dam, flanked by an earthen embankment, was the first structure built by the Bureau of Reclamation. Overall, there would eventually be 10 million acres "reclaimed" to provide water for one in five western farmers. On the negative side of the ledger the Derby Dam blocked enough of the water that once flowed into Pyramid Lake that the Lahontan cutthroat trout almost went extinct. Pyramid Lake fared better than Winnemucca Lake - it dried up.

Virginia Street Bridge

Reno

1905



Concrete is the most widely used building material in the world, so common it is second only to water as the most utilized substance on the planet. But it required the most costly earthquake in American history to convince folks concrete had a future. English-born architect Ernest L. Ransome was the earliest cheerleader for building with reinforced concrete, patenting a system for twisted iron rods set in ferro-concrete in 1884. He built his first reinforced concrete buildings in San Francisco. No one came knocking on his door to ask to build more and he packed up his shingle and departed for the East Coast. After the 1906 Earthquake destroyed 80% of the city, Ransome's buildings were still standing and reinforced concrete's reputation was made. Celebrated bridge designer John Leonard was an early believer; he erected the first reinforced concrete bridge in Nevada here at the highest spot across the Truckee River. The graceful double arch bridge is the fifth to stand carry traffic across the water at this spot; William Fuller constructed the first, a rickety wooden bridge and charged a small toll for prospectors in the 1850s. This Virginia Street Bridge is sometimes still referred to as the "Wedding Ring Bridge" since newly divorced women would supposedly stop on the bridge after leaving the Washoe County Courthouse and hurl their wedding rings into the quick-flowing Truckee waters below. Marilyn Monroe does just that in her last movie, 1961's *The Misfits* with Clark Gable and Montgomery Clift.