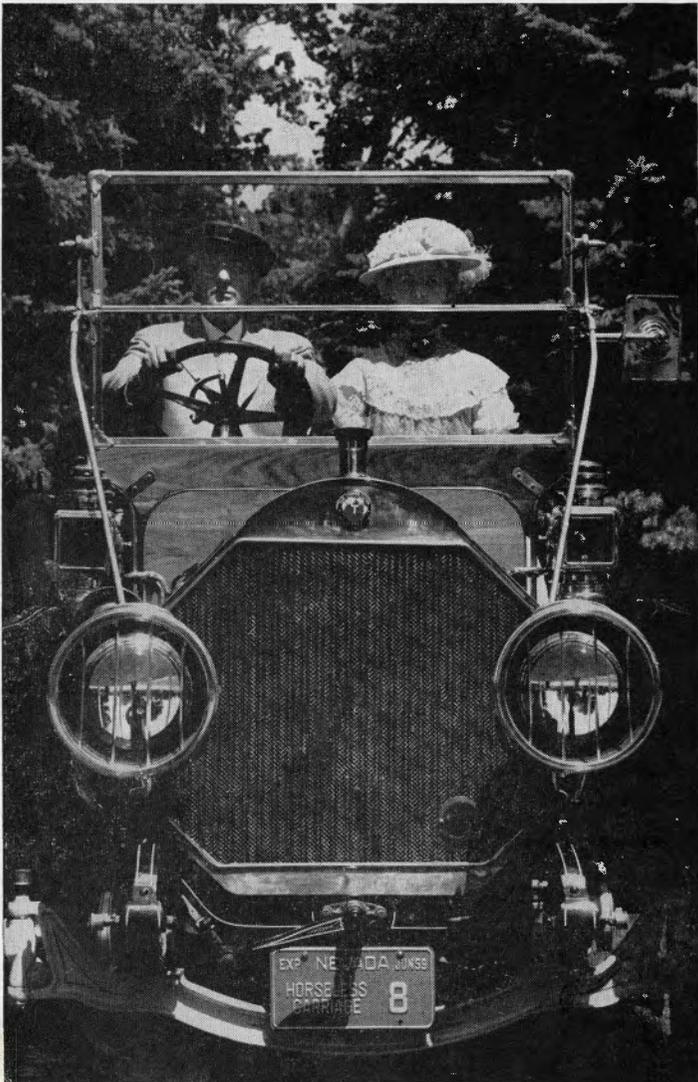


Guy Michaels, restaurateur. Patrons admire his mahogany-broiled steaks and lion cub.

*Reno, Nevada, where the silver dollars never cease to clink, where some casino doors are never locked, is a town of character—and of characters*



Raymond I. Smith, ex-Vermont farmer, is general manager of Harolds Club, Reno's biggest casino. His lady dealers and croupiers are furnished \$20 Stetson hats, on the house.

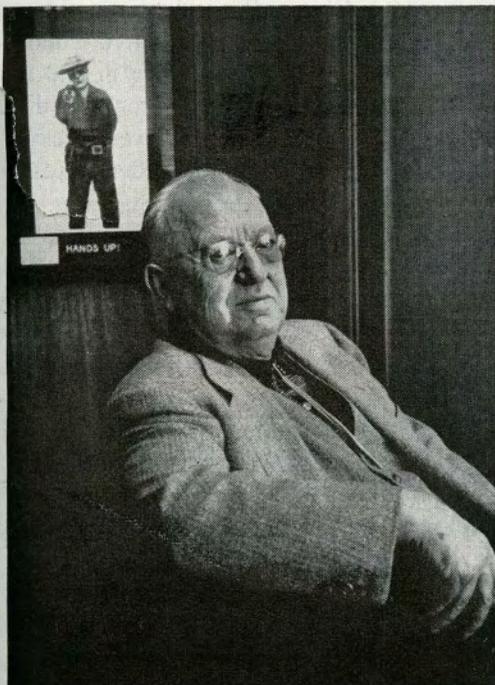


William Harrah, another big club operator, is a passionate collector of antique automobiles. Here he is with his wife, Sherry, at the wheel of a Thomas Flyer.



Mrs. Robert Z. Hawkins is the great lady of Reno. The silver service (*foreground*) was made by Tiffany of ore taken from the Comstock Lode by her grandfather, John Mackay; her sister is Mrs. Irving Berlin.

Edward J. Questa, president of the gigantic First National Bank of Nevada, sits in his vault up to his chin in silver dollars.



George Wingfield is Nevada's best-loved citizen. Despite his wealth he never forgets a friend—or a friend's first name.

# RENO

by Lucius Beebe

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ELLIOTT ERWITT

• In Reno, Nevada, a community variously celebrated as one of the last outposts of the Old West (which it is) and as the divorce capital of the universe (which it isn't), there is an element known as the see-our-schools-and-churches group. These worthy folk deplore Reno's fame for its glittering night life and social nip-ups and make a practice of button-holing visiting firemen, especially writers, with entreaties to depict Reno as a normal, wholesome American community.

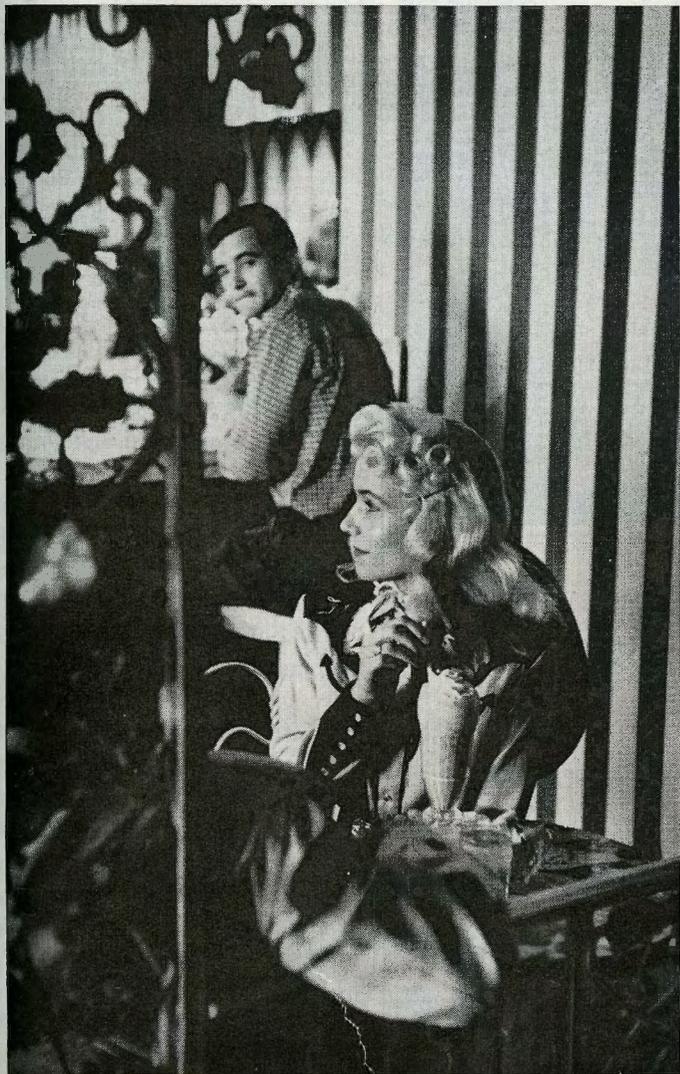
Tell the world about the University of Nevada's ever-growing enrollment, they implore, or the swelling deposits in the swaggering quarter-of-a-billion-dollar First National Bank, but forget Harolds Club and the nocturnal traps that flourish, raw and neon-lit, in town and for miles on U. S. 395 and South Virginia Road.

What the schools-and-churches group fails to understand is that these conventional, conservative qualities are a commonplace elsewhere in the land and that people don't come to Nevada to see more of the same. They visit Reno to get away from precisely these things and to find a relaxed, uninhibited way of life.

Largely, they find it, too, which is just as well, for without the tourist trade Nevada would soon be bankrupt.

The classic example of what visitors want of Reno—and one that causes head shaking among the schools-and-churches contingent—is the spanking-new Holiday Hotel which glitters decorously beside the Truckee River.

The Holiday was opened two years ago by Norman Biltz, Reno moneybags and real-estate operator who has been called the Duke of Nevada. In what his associates considered a moment of whimsy, Mr. Biltz opened with no gambling



Eve Lyn 21, is the mother of two children, the daughter of a local attorney, and hostess on Harolds Club TV programs. She is shown in one of Reno's rare soda fountains.

on the premises except the ubiquitous slot machines which no one in Nevada considers games of chance anyway. Gambling or no gambling, people noticed, however, that although the Holiday was conspicuously devoid of craps and roulette, it was laid out so that it could open a full-time casino at a moment's notice should the management change its mind.

The hotel was advertised as a place where visitors who disapproved of gambling wouldn't have to encounter it. As a result, patrons stayed away in droves. Even visitors who didn't gamble, it soon appeared, wanted the cheerful twenty-four-hour-a-day tumult of a casino around them. A Nevada hotel without gambling depressed the customers beyond all endurance.

Having proved his point to the satisfaction of everybody save the schools-and-churches element, Mr. Biltz then leased the property with option to buy to Newt Crumley, a hotel man of long experience, retaining a prudent and substantial interest for himself, and the hotel promptly reopened with games past all counting. Overnight the Holiday achieved what the French call a success

foolish and now you can't fight your way through the customers happily rolling snake-eyes and pushing chips onto green in the Holiday casino.

The whole episode had a profoundly depressing effect on the schools-and-churches partisans.

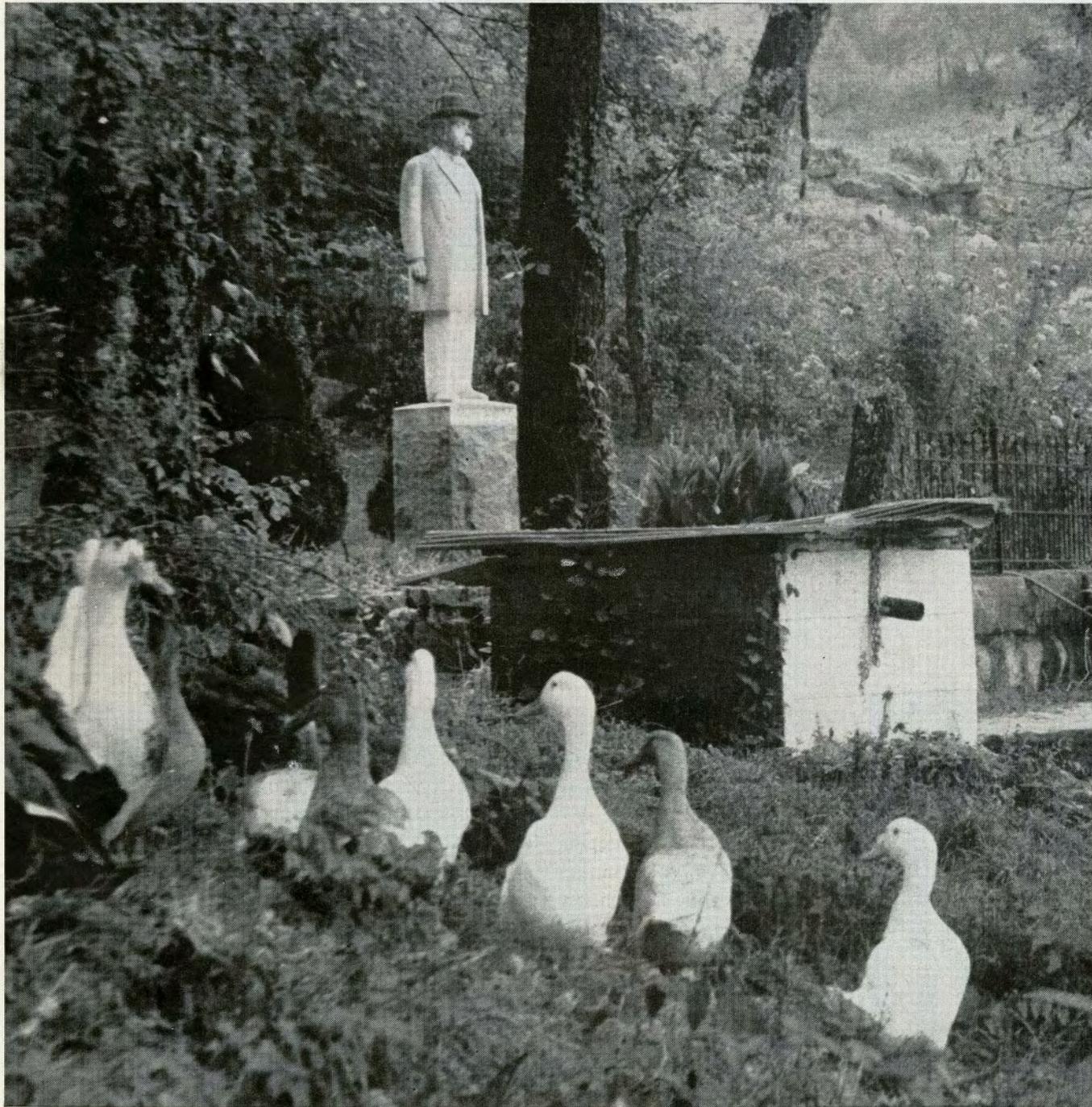
Reno's population of 52,000 wouldn't rate passing mention in Ohio or Pennsylvania, and Nevada's estimated one hundred millionaires, most of whom live in and around Reno, would be considered laughable in Texas. Nevertheless, the average Reno resident finds life in the One Sound State, as Nevada likes to call itself because of its absence of any trace of public debt, eminently satisfactory. The average income in Nevada in recent years has been either the highest or second highest in the United States. Life is easy and good in Reno.

Some residents might be hard put to find expression of the fact, but everyone takes satisfaction in being heirs—only slightly removed—to the traditions and spacious way of life of the Old West. Less than half a century ago the last great gold rushes in the continental United States at Goldfield and Tonopah saw Reno swaggering in bonanza. Look from the picture windows of the Sky Room at the Mapes, and on three sides you see the seemingly limitless reaches of the Great American Desert, a perpetual reminder of the elsewhere-vanished frontier; on the fourth the snow-topped Sierra Nevada rears a last continental barrier between the rest of the United States and California the Golden. There are Stetsons and the broad-plain man's hats known locally as Mormons in the hat racks of the city's hotels. It is difficult to escape a consciousness of the West of only yesterday wherever you go in Reno. Being West as hell is easily the city's greatest asset. It dwarfs all other aspects of the community to insignificance.

Oddly enough, Reno businessmen, save those involved in tourism, display a curious lack of enthusiasm for the state's largest and, indeed, almost only industry of considerable dimensions. And residents of the city never tire of telling the rest of the world that Renoites themselves seldom frequent the town's pleasure palaces. Yet they can hardly wait for a visiting fireman who must be taken on the grand tour. This permits the native to insist at length that he is proof against the blandishments of sin while experiencing them to the fullest.

Visitor and native, on such a tour, will find that the old-fashioned gambling games of the West—faro,

*Continued on Page 166*



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Continued from Page 163

There was one picture, though, detailing a plumed helmet lying next to a stubbed-out cigarette on a much worn wardrobe trunk, which by sheer juxtaposition breathed out a whiff of melancholy.

"Oh, that's an old one," Fonda said. "I did that in Italy. On the set of *War and Peace*." Almost angrily he turned his back on the helmet. "God, I had to fight that movie every inch of the way. Remember, I played Pierre, who's kind of a chubby, ungainly fellow? When I arrived, I found they'd already made a complete wardrobe for me, everything cut as slimly and elegantly as possible. Just so I'd look like a movie star and the hell with Tolstoi. And they had a hairpiece ready for me copied from Robert Taylor. But that I fought them out of. And wearing spectacles, that I had to fight for too. But as soon as the producer appeared I had to take them off again. Every time you see me suddenly with no glasses in that movie, you know the boss just showed up."

"Which would you call your favorite picture here?" I asked, looking around as Fonda rummaged through the canvases.

"Mr. Roberts, *Twelve Angry Men*," said Fonda, misunderstanding. "I'm not mad at them all. *The Grapes of Wrath*." He let go the canvases. "*The Grapes of Wrath*. That must be eighteen years ago. I've got a real favorite scene in that."

"Which one?"

"The good-by scene between Jane Darwell—she played my mother—and me. We did it in a single take; John Ford likes to shoot that way. One technical rehearsal for lighting and so on, but no dialogue so the emotions wouldn't go stale. And then we went through with it. Me tiptoeing into the tent at dawn..." Suddenly Fonda enacted the scene, drawing his fatigues-covered bones together into lean heaps of loneliness. "... and tapping Mom on the shoulder..." There was a gentle touch on my arm. "... saying 'Mom, Mom...' And Mom coming out after me, all sleepy and sighing... out of the tent... like that... and me telling her I have to go, I have to go away... And she understands. She knows what it's all about even though she's still half asleep. And me almost wishing she wouldn't understand that fast..."

His voice had melted into a very young masculinity; the gray on his temples began to look paradoxical; he really was, that moment, a farm boy lost in an uncanny world, groping through the attic of a strange star-millionaire—until suddenly the telephone rang.

Some servant answered it. But the sound had propelled Fonda out of Tom Joad into his town-house self. He straightened up with a tart little sigh. "Guess I better find that painting for the celebrity show," he said.

THE END

## RENO

Continued from Page 92

rondo coolo, chuck-a-luck and fantan—have largely disappeared from the Reno casinos. Occasionally a wheel of fortune is encountered but it's mostly for atmosphere since the house percentage is notoriously the highest of all legal operations. Nor does the elaborate Monte Carlo game of *chemin de fer* have any appeal in Reno although there are several roulette tables with only a single zero in the continental manner.

Draw poker, the cutthroat game of all time, is still encountered at the Bank-Golden, a casino patronized by old-timers and out-of-town ranchers, and at a few of the less opulent resorts in the vicinity of the railroad tracks and Commercial Row. Tourists want none of it although, until his death a few years ago, Harold Ross, then editor of *The New Yorker*, made an annual visit to Reno just to play poker at the Bank-Golden. He usually arrived with Nunnally Johnson and Dave Chasen from Hollywood as

bodyguards, and while his companions pursued some less strenuous relaxation, Ross would hole up in a back room with a group of old-timers for days on end. Ross boasted of his winnings at these sessions, but reliable witnesses have seen him emerging on occasion from Western Union in Center Street, a sure indication of membership in the I-Was-Robbed Club.

Aside from its spurious reputation as a divorce center, the most celebrated thing about Reno is Harolds Club, a monstrous perpetual-motion department store of chance that has been made a national institution by some 2300 highway signs in such distant places as U.S. Route 1 in Florida or on the same route outside Bangor, Maine. Harolds is the first thing visitors want to see. It's the largest casino in the state, a philanthropic agency of formidable dimensions and a tourist trap through whose gaudy portals 20,000 visitors pass to pay tribute each summer day.

Occupying a seven-story building in North Virginia Street, Harolds

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employs more than 1000 specialists, including roulette spinners, dice throwers, barmen, engineers, repairmen, decorators and custodians of one of the most sumptuous collections of firearms and other artifacts of Western America in the world. Silver dollars are supplied daily from the Federal Reserve Bank by the ton; there is a silver-dollar bar with 3000 cart wheels in its make-up, and a whisky waterfall—Harolds sells enough hard liquor annually to fill swimming pools.

Over the years it has given millions of dollars in scholarships at the University of Nevada, one of the provisions being that no Harolds scholar may enter Harolds Club; at improbable times it doubles all payoffs on winning bets—and almost singlehandedly it finances every important civic project in the Reno community, including the Reno Chamber of Commerce. Sponsors of philanthropies, legitimate or suspect, turn to Harolds with such regularity that a full-time staff of lawyers and investigators is maintained to screen requests.

Harolds is a family corporation dominated by the founder, Raymond I. Smith, and owned by his sons—Harold, for whom the project was named, and Raymond A. Smith. The patriarchal Smith, one of the ast men in the West still to wear congress boots, believes firmly in the power of advertising. In the formative days of Harolds he is reported to have gone without food in order to invest additional dollars in the promotion of fun and games and Reno generally. Although his family does not figure prominently in Reno's modest social sarabands, realistic Nevadans without hesitation describe the senior Smith as Mr. Reno.

The reverse of the general concept of a big-time gambler is William Harrah, whose Harrah's Club up the street a spell from Harolds and its allied establishments at Lake Tahoe have a joint payroll of \$6,000,000 a year. Bill Harrah is a quiet, shy, graying former U.C.L.A. student who left college to come to Reno and run his father's bingo game in 1938. In manner and appearance he resembles a conservative, extremely unchatty professional man. Harrah's is run on strictly business lines. Business consultants are always studying its operations, Stanford University Research makes a survey of its affairs and Harrah's maintains its own school for croupiers, dealers and other functionaries of chance.

Harrah's promotional gimmick is antique motorcars and he has more

than ninety venerable Whites, Oldsmobiles, Locomobiles and Stanley Steamers, restored or being restored to impeccable operating condition. He is a big wheel, if the expression may be excused, in the affairs of the Horseless Carriage Club of America and biennially stages a monster cavalcade which starts in Reno and takes in Virginia City, Carson City and Lake Tahoe, with mechanics and tow cars in attendance in case a breakdown should occur.

With Harrah's and Harolds' palaces of chance surrounded by the less vast Nevada Club, the Palace, and innumerable slot-machine parlors, these half dozen city blocks probably constitute the gambling center of the known universe whose only rivals are elsewhere in Nevada—at Stateline, at Lake Tahoe and Las Vegas.

In the normal run of events the overwhelming bulk of revenue at Harrah's and Harolds, as in other popular resorts in downtown Reno, derives from slot machines and relatively small-time players in such unsophisticated games as craps and blackjack, but now and then reports of big-time play in North Virginia Street bug the eyes of citizenry.

Formal society does not exist in Reno, except on an almost microscopic scale, and is limited to a few old established families who entertain with something approaching the urban grand manner. The unquestioned great lady of the town is Mrs. Robert Hawkins, a daughter of Clarence Mackay and sister of Ellin Mackay Berlin and a direct descendant of John Mackay, richest of all the bonanza nabobs of Comstock times. Mrs. Hawkins is a woman of charm and sophistication and her Reno town house is furnished with paintings, keepsakes and furniture that her grandmother used in Paris where she reigned as queen of American expatriates in the General Grant era. Mrs. Hawkins serves guests dinner on the Mackay service of Comstock silver whose 1000 pieces took 200 silversmiths at Tiffany's a full year to fashion. The Hawkins ménage boasts the best chef in private service anywhere in Nevada and it is to its chatelaine that visiting celebrities from New York, London and Rome present their credentials.

Another grande dame with Comstock background is Mrs. William B. Johnston, whose California Avenue mansion was built for Senator George Nixon during the Goldfield boom in 1907 and was the first decorative assignment of Elsie De Wolfe, who later became Lady Mendl. Mrs. Johnston's grandfather

was Senator William Sharon, viceroy of the Bank of California in Virginia City; she is related by marriage to a formidable array of Sharons, Tevises, Newlands and Breckenridges in San Francisco, and the Fermor-Hesketh clan in England. Only a few years ago she disposed of a minor property, the Palace Hotel in San Francisco, to the Sheraton group for \$6,000,000.

Another social notable is Mrs. Charles Mapes, mother of the owner of the town's towering Mapes Hotel, widow of a Nevada cattle baron and a woman of unflagging energy in local charities and civic matters.

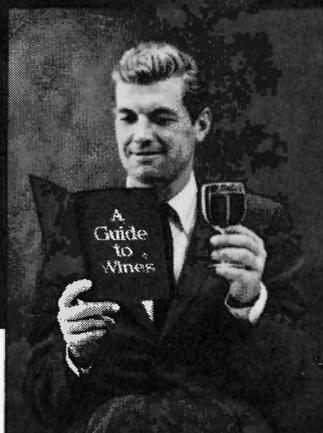
New York's café society is occasionally represented by temporary residents at the dude ranches of the Valley. Renites still recall the hilarious interlude

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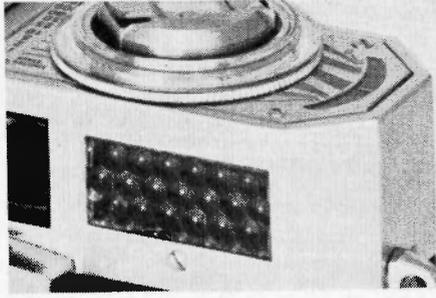
when Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr. and Peter Arno, who were taking the cure on adjacent premises back in 1931, came to fisticuffs over the favors of a third New Yorker who was also taking the cure. One night Vanderbilt emptied a revolver in the direction of Arno's quarters and then dramatically gave himself up. The fact that the creator of the Whoops Sisters was elsewhere at

the time, that the weapon was a .22 caliber pistol and the distance more than 500 yards, gave Reno something to laugh about for weeks.

Oldest and most institutional of Reno's hotels is the Riverside. There has been a Riverside of sorts on the present site beside the Truckee for ninety years and the hotel was given international prominence in 1908 when



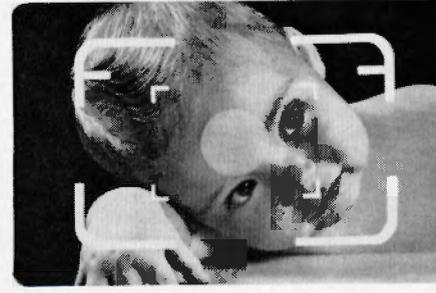
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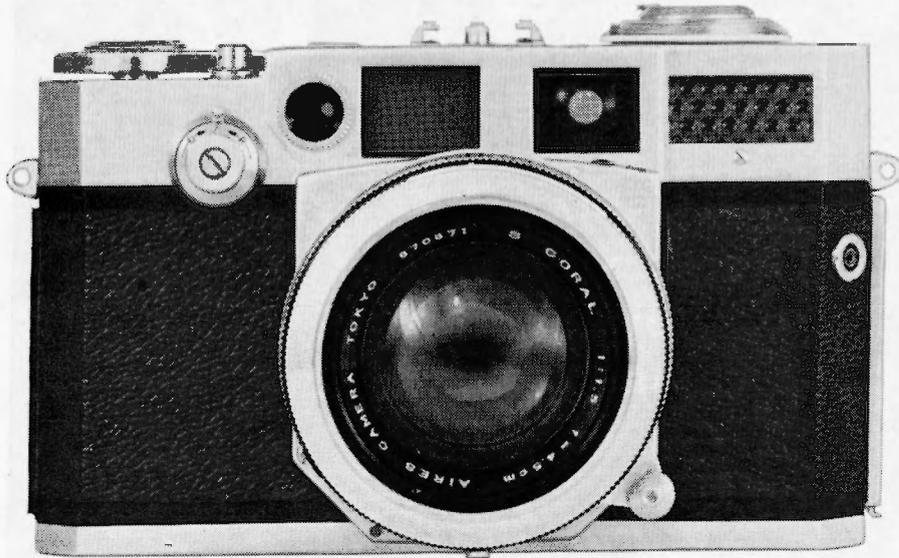
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Elinor Glyn, then basking in the profitable notoriety of her daring novel, *Three Weeks*, made it briefly the literary capital of North America. The hotel has been entirely rebuilt since those vanished times and today is the center of Reno's public moments of entertainment, relaxation or civic rejoicing. The death within a year of each other of its two most recent owners, Lou and Mert Wertheimer, was widely regarded as a public calamity and they were mourned editorially as gamblers in the grand manner who established continuity with the great days of the Old West.

Within the Riverside, too, are conducted the affairs of the Prospector's Club, the town's most choosy confraternity of business and professional men with a membership limited to 300 and waiting list reportedly twice that long. Here at lunch or cocktails can be discovered such local notables as Edward Questa, president of the First National Bank, Norman Biltz, the aforementioned Duke of Nevada, Noble Getchell of the Getchell Mine, Judge Milton Badt, the highly respected Supreme Court Justice and attorneys William Woodburn and William Cashill.

Reno's most durable link with the legendary past is George Wingfield, a retired mine operator in the grand manner of the old frontier and, at eighty-two, still as rugged as one of the twelve by twelve timbers that supported stopes in his mines.

In 1901 Wingfield was just a smart young cowboy who rode into Nevada from Oregon on hearing of strikes in the Southern Desert. He turned out to be the coolest-headed poker player in camp, a handsome loser and an even handsomer spender amongst the champagne bottles and cigars when he won. His first twenty-two hundred dollars came over the poker table from Frank Golden, later proprietor of the Golden Hotel in Reno, and in a few years Wingfield had parlayed this into a fortune that for a time was the greatest in Nevada.

"I remember George Wingfield," recalled Bernard Baruch, who had been in Nevada during the Tonopah excitements, more than half a century later. "Wingfield was a man with a gun. . . . The first time I ever saw him was when I went to Goldfield. . . . He was carrying five revolvers. He also had four Pinkertons with him. Wingfield told me he had been having labor trouble with some of the I.W.W. boys in his mine. . . . They had beaten up his superintendent and some of his foremen and left them out in the desert. Wingfield rode out himself and

brought the men back through a mob of strikers right in front of his bank. He was afraid of nothing. When the strikers tried to knock out a newspaper he was publishing by frightening the newsboys off the streets, he peddled the papers himself. One of the strikers waylaid him, but Wingfield knocked him down with the butt of a gun. George Wingfield was the best shot I ever saw. You could throw a bottle up—behind him—and he'd wheel and draw in a single motion and shatter the bottle."

A familiar figure in the lobby of the Riverside Hotel, which he owned for many years and finally sold to Lou and Mert Wertheimer, Wingfield today is an authentic giant out of the heroic Nevada past. Only last year he complained to his San Francisco tailor that the cutter wasn't making his waistcoats properly. "He doesn't cut the armpits low enough to accommodate shoulder holsters," he explained.

Although the dude ranches in The Valley south of Reno such as Washoe Pines and the celebrated Flying M-E conducted by Mrs. Emily Wood rank so large in the general imagination that Washoe Pines was immortalized as the setting for an act in Claire Booth Brokaw Luce's play, *The Women*, divorce is actually fairly small punkins in the overall Reno economy. Divorces granted in Reno courts in 1957 numbered only 4468 while 19,450 marriage licenses were issued. A king's size slice—about \$25,000—of the Reno wedding trade goes to Justice of the Peace William R. Beemer, a magistrate of such charm that Nevadans say paying traffic fines in his court is actually a pleasure.

Legend, folklore and New York columnists to the contrary, the hotel lobbies and cocktail bars around Reno are not populated with slinky divorcées in diaphanous garments, and the adventuress trade on the banks of the Truckee is approximately on a par with that in Brookline, Massachusetts, or Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Not so long ago Nevada aptly could have been described as the poor farm of American gastronomy. Few native Nevadans dined in public and those who did ordered fried shrimp and overcooked cow with French fries. But the tremendous upsurge of tourism has changed all that and today Reno's standards of dining and wining are well above the level of mere respectability.

Basically Reno's gastronomy is that of cow, but cow of such mag-

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nificance as to be comparable to the legendary beef restaurants of Chicago and Kansas City. The only HOLIDAY culinary award in Nevada is given to Eugene's in South Virginia Road, a premise at which the author has never in a decade of rather constant patronage been disappointed. Such has been the prosperity of its owners, Joe Pa-

trucco and Gilbert Vasserot, that a new restaurant doubling the former capacity has blossomed with a sommelier, the first seen in full regalia of office in the Silver State, a formidable cellar of château bottlings and vintage years and a menu boasting such exalted fare as breast of capon Kiev, pompano marginière, broiled langoustine and, of course, the conventional châteaubriand

Béarnaise, double *entrecôte* and tenderloin of beef, *marchand de vin*.

There is also in downtown Reno an entirely satisfactory restaurant called Bundox at River House where the grand manner of *presentation* with flaming desserts and liveried attendants is all very like New York's Colony and where patrons are handed the soft-sell menu invented by Ernie Byfield at the Pump Room, on which the lowliest hamburger is invested with transcendental overtones of rapture.

Suburban Reno along South Virginia Street and Mount Rose Road is the setting for what many amateurs agree are three superlative steak houses: Vario's, the Christmas Tree and the Mesa, the last two of which are owned by an engaging personality named Guy Michaels who takes on all comers in his own bars and is usually found in company with a tame lion cub and a huge St. Bernard named Clancey. In winter when the skiers from around Lake Tahoe are out in force a big evening at the Christmas Tree resembles nothing so much as a synthesis of the Swiss Alps and the Central Park Zoo.

At all three of these restaurants the rite of steer meat takes on overtones of the supernal. San Fran-

ciscans surfeited with French cuisine motor up for weekends among the filets and porterhouse cuts, and Nevadans themselves consume cow in the best tradition of the departed buffalo hunters who consumed eight pounds of red meat a day. The dinner hour at Vario's or the Mesa, with the waiters tottering in under trays resembling nothing so much as Belshazzar's Feast in a Cecil de Mille epic, and even the kiddies having at a pound or two of rare sirloin, is a spectacle to warm the heart of a Chicago packer or sadden a vegetarian, as the case might be.

In the realm of culture Reno rises little above a rating of flat zero. Walter Van Tilburg Clark, author of *The Ox Bow Incident*, is the only Nevadan who has achieved national celebrity in the field of belles-lettres and he no longer resides within the state. No Nevada-born novelist, historian, painter, actor or musician, in half a century, has impinged on the national consciousness or achieved recognition in *Who's Who*.

Nor does Reno often witness legitimate stage productions or musical organizations of consequence, although eight years ago a ballet troupe danced briefly and to the apparent bafflement of audiences at the municipal auditorium, and

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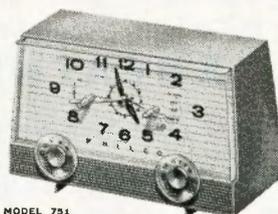


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occasional musicians perform at the home of the artistically inclined Mrs. Hawkins. Though the cultural life cannot be said to flourish abundantly in Reno, neither do its less enviable by-products, art colonies, or little nests of bohemians or the rancid and self-conscious impostors of the "beat generation" who hold forth on San Francisco's North Beach. Reno is a normal, extrovert American community, taking its pleasures in the simple tradition of the West.

The city abounds in millionaires of varying degrees of picturesque-ness. Many are refugees from taxes in more avaricious commonwealths. Yet all subscribe to the Nevada tradition of shunning ostentation. Visitors to the Comstock Lode in the bonanza years commented on the democracy of speech, attire and social conduct which made John Mackay and George Hearst indistinguishable, at least superficially, from the hard-rock miners who stood beside them in the town's saloons. A staple of folklore concerns the wealthy woman visitor who, having taken the conducted tour of the lower level of Con-Virginia, handed her shabby guide a silver dollar only to encounter him resplendent in evening dress at the opera that night in the person of James G. Fair, one of the co-owners of everything in sight.

Similarly a visitor to Reno today might be excused for mistaking some of the town's most solvent citizens for well-spoken cow hands on their day off. No one encountering Laverne Redfield playing the quarter machine in the Riverside would imagine that a few years back burglars robbed his modest home of more than \$2,000,000 in currency that he had absent-mindedly stashed among the shirts in a bureau drawer. On being informed of the theft, Redfield's principal concern was for a pet dog that had been at home. When he learned that the dog had been fed an entire ham from the family icebox while the house was being pillaged, Redfield was all for dropping the whole thing—the \$2,000,000 and all.

A hilarious sequel was the arrival of Federal-income-tax agents who theorized that the presence of so much cash indicated possible tax evasion. Nevadans were delighted to hear that, far from evading taxes, Redfield had overpaid his obligations to Washington and was in line for a refund.

Norman Biltz, the Duke of Nevada, who started as a Reno taxi driver and today owns most of the real estate around Donner Lake, a sizable chunk of Tahoe and pon-

derous slices of numerous other enterprises, has an aversion to neckties and favors flannel shirts open at the neck. Affluence in Reno seldom manifests itself in rich attire, Harvard accents or imported motorcars.

Although Carson City is Nevada's state capital, Reno is in fact the focus of most of its business and professional life, and a familiar figure in the River-

side or North Virginia Street is Governor Charles Russell, a handsome and urbane chief executive whom most Nevadans regard as a fine advertisement for the One Sound State both at home and abroad. It was upon one of his periodic visits to Reno that the governor's chauffeur, a trusty from the state prison, decided to take it on the lam and headed down U.S. 40 in the

direction of California in the governor's car, a slightly outmoded vehicle of extremely modest façade. For a time all went well and the defecting flunky returned the salutes of respectful state troopers who, not unnaturally, imagined Nevada car No. 1 contained the governor in an informal mood. At length, however, the alarm went out

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over the wires and the culprit was apprehended and returned to the jailhouse.

"I'd have made a clean getaway," he told reporters bitterly, "but for that beat-up old heap. Why, you couldn't get forty out of that antique jalopy!"

The affront to the dignity of the One Sound State was rectified almost at once. The legislature was in session and voted Governor Russell a fine up-to-the-minute Lincoln.

For all its indifference to the formal façade of living, Reno spends fantastic sums on hunting, fishing and riding. It has a high concentration of gun and tackle shops and saddleries, and Newt Crumley of the Holiday Hotel has made a vast success of a sports department. If a guest wishes to fish in the nearby Truckee or try for black marlin off the coast of Peru or lion or water

buffalo in Africa, the Holiday will speed him there by its own plane service, arm him with lure or gun-powder, obtain his license and have guides, white hunters or beaters ready at his command.

Something of this spaciousness also characterizes Reno's catastrophes. When the normally well-mannered Truckee River overflows, it does so on an uninhibited scale. Caught without sandbags or levees during one spring inundation, the casino operators rushed in hundreds of pairs of rubber boots for distribution among their customers as the water rose about the craps and roulette tables. "We will continue until the tables float," was the edict of Mert Wertheimer at the Riverside—and they did. The regular midnight collation was floated through the casino as the play verged on the sensational.

On another occasion when Reno was hit by explosions of illuminating gas, downtown blocks caught fire in the twinkling of an eye and distant newspapers had the entire community in ruins with a huge estimate of dead. When the smoke cleared, property damage ran to millions, but only two fatalities were recorded. Although fire raged just across the street from the Mapes Sky Room, hardly a player left the craps tables for the hotel's huge picture windows, and the police emergency squads were able to clear the premises only by circulating the report, happily unfounded, that the Mapes, too, would burst into flames any minute.

As Reno faces the dawn of the jet age, it still bows to the days of the pioneers, six guns and wood-burning locomotives. The Old West still lives in the twenty-four-hour-a-day saloon life that flourishes so robustly, in the legal gaming on every side, in the Western clothes and the Western philosophy of anything goes. It survives in the bar-keep's cry of "Fire in the heading," which dates from mining times and means the drinks are on the house, and it is evident in the Western saddles seen on the edges of town. It maintains continuity with the past when the Southern Pacific's *Overland*, one of the oldest name trains, hisses to a stop in Reno. Silver cart-wheel dollars are still the standard of Nevada currency, and not until the last one disappears from circulation will the Old West be truly a thing of the past.

Against this final, unhappy contingency it is cheerful to know that there are 5,000,000 silver dollars in storage and still awaiting release in the United States Mint at San Francisco.

THE END

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