

Gallico Sees Reno As 'He-Man' Town, Run for Women

By PAUL GALLICO

International News Service Staff Correspondent

RENO, Nev., Feb. 7.—The first impression of Reno, Nev., 1938, will curl your hair.

It's the greatest show in America!

It is the city of a thousand contrasts. Wide open, life rides high, wide and handsome here. The red, blue, green and purple neon lights of the clubs and palaces burn their messages of pleasure and excitement into your brain, and blind you to the fainter glow of pathos and tragedy,



RENO'S BRIGHT LIGHTS, 'GREATEST SHOW IN AMERICA'
'Last Stronghold Where Tocsin of Liberty Peals 24 Hours a Day'

the undercurrent of the town. It is the city of the women who have failed.

It is as fresh, salty and naive as a mining camp in the Roaring Forties, and as smart and sophisticated as Fifth avenue or Michigan boulevard.

TOUGH, YET GENTLE

It is tough and crude and hard and yet full of strange gentleness and tenderness and sympathy for the female flotsam of the country washed up onto its shores in search of freedom from marriage, escape from life.

It is almost impossible to break the law in Reno, because there are so few laws to break. You cannot expose the city because there is nothing to expose. All the human and animal passions are legalized. When you come to the line in one of our national anthems, "Let Freedom Ring," you must think of Reno because it is the last stronghold in the United States where the tocsin of liberty peals 24 hours a day.

EVERYTHING GOES

It is a clean, orderly, gentle, wicked, bawdy, joyous, manly, unpretentious, unregenerate little city, that admits frankly and without sham or hypocrisy that it lives on divorce, on the golden grist ground by the best oiled, sweetest moving divorce mill in the world.

Twenty-four-hour drinking, gambling and prostitution are legalized in Reno. But Reno, too, has 16 churches.

The little city of a thousand contrasts!

Reno is known all over the world for its six-week divorces. But Reno annually celebrates three times as many marriages as divorces. If Reno is a divorce mill, it is also a marriage hopper. Reno is the solvent for the inhibitions of other states. The three-day-gin-marriage-law of California sends thousands of couples into neighboring Nevada to be united.

HE-MAN TOWN

The marriage bureau is in the same white marble courthouse that frees the miserables who have tired of their mates.

An airline out of San Francisco runs all-expense wedding trips to Reno, at \$60 and \$75. This includes two round trip fares, marriage license, fee for marrying judge or minister (any sect, any creed included), wedding supper or breakfast, overnight in the bridal suite of the best hotel, and the necessary number of whisky sours the next day to enable the newlyweds to reach the airport.

Reno is a masculine town and conceived and operated by men—for women.

WOMEN ARE SAFE

No woman need be lonely in Reno during the taking of "the cure." And no woman need worry about being annoyed or molested. The divorce colony in Reno is as closely guarded and exclusive as a private club and harder to crash than most. Divorce is the chief industry of Reno. The Renoites are smart enough to protect their racket.

Gigolos are not wanted. Fortune hunters and phonies, most of them cannot get to first base. Some of them are run out of town.

Some of the dark alleys of Reno have a dangerous reputation, but women have no business in dark alleys. The main thoroughfares of the city are brilliantly lighted the night through. A woman who keeps to them is as safe as she would be at home—safer.

Liquor, the divorcee's anodyne, is cheap, good and plentiful, and available at any hour. The bar in the Riverside hotel and most of the other big bars and clubs work on 24-hour shifts.

BARTENDERS HEAR ALL

The hotel also provides a nurse, a big, comfortable woman who is handy when the new arrival begins to come out of it, sober up, and for the first time look herself in the eye.

The secrets of most of the unhappy women who come here are locked beneath the white jackets

of the bartenders of Reno. The sympathetic friend hears one side of the story, the attorney hears another, but the bartender eventually hears it all.

Reno, once a cow and mining town, serves in some six or seven of its restaurants and clubs, some of the best food in the United States—far above anything to be obtained in any other city of similar size (just under 20,000 in population) and equal to the best of the big cities such as New York and Chicago.

POLICEMEN SCARCE

Wealthy spenders who want to gamble and have money to risk can play practically without limit. But the best clubs in town will sell you roulette chips for a dime—20 for 2 dollars—and most of the gambling houses on the main drags will take nickel bets.

The city is full of professional gamblers, ranchers, sheepmen, miners and cowboys. And one rarely sees a policeman. And rarely sees disorder. But don't walk into a gambling house with your hands shoved down into your pockets. You might get hurt.

The thing you are most liable to be arrested for in Reno is walking across a street against a red light.

Gallico Tells How Divorcees-to-Be Greeted in Reno

This is the second of a series of articles by Paul Gallico on the last free country in the western hemisphere, Reno, Nev., where divorce, are quick, painless and tailored to fit the pocketbook.

By PAUL GALICO

International News Service Staff Correspondent

RENO, Nev., Feb. 8.—The big silver DC-3 flies over the hump of snow-capped mountains and begins its long, slow, descending circle over the broad, brown valley that lies like

a doormat on the threshold of the Sierras. Slightly ahead there is a deeper patch of brown, split by a little river and distinguished by little wisps and flecks of smoke.

Mrs. Failure, the divorcee-to-be, crowds her face to the little unfrosted square of window in the plane and looks down. It is her first glimpse of the scene of the

GOOD CRY, THEN DRINKS

The first function is a good cry. The bellboys tell you that. Mrs. Failure is hardly over the threshold of her room when the tears have begun to drop. There is always a comfortable armchair over by the window. Invariably she drops into that and begins to howl.



THE HEART OF RENO, CENTER OF 'DIVORCE INDUSTRY'
Courthouse Just Next Door to City's Most Exclusive Hotel

next great adventure in her life—Reno, Nevada.

The second glimpse is a little more startling.

She arrives by cab from the airport and passes through the portals of the Riverside Hotel. And unless she is too numb with the tragedy of her life, and fear and loneliness, to notice things, this is what she finds:

The keynote is set by the big, ornamental automatic dice game (nickel play) that stands smack in the center of the lobby, a large contraption with a plate glass top and an illuminated disk with the various dice combinations on it.

A soothingly polite gray-haired clerk slides the registry pad over to her and discusses the type room she wants and the price—single rooms, minimum \$110 a month; suite, \$175. What Mrs. Failure does not know is that she is talking to her chief witness. Six weeks from the date of her arrival the same quiet, gray-haired clerk will testify for her in court that she was a resident of the state of Nevada for an uninterrupted period of six weeks. He does it practically every day.

The bellhop has been, among other things, selected for tact. He deposits the luggage, arranges the heat and suggests sending in a drink. He knows the anaesthetic. It is rarely refused.

Some of them, according to a bartender, stay right there and never move for a week or ten days. They get petrified and stay that way. It is purely merciful. Either or chloroform would do as well. Anything to keep from thinking, anything to shut out the picture of those last scenes at home, the parting, the packing to come to Reno.

GOES EXPLORING

The nurse hovers handy, waiting for her to come out of it.

But Mrs. Failure is made of stronger stuff. She has her cry and her drink and her look out of the window. The Truckee river flows by. Across the "Bridge of Sighs" and down the street she sees a sign, "Waldorf Club..." She powders her nose, freshens up and goes downstairs to explore.

The famous Riverside bar—the world will pass through it, if you sit there long enough—is around the corner to the left from the elevators. You go through the soda fountain and news shop.

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The lights are subdued and hidden. The murals, excellently executed, are western scenes in the pastel reds and blues and browns and purples of the country. The glittering bar is semi-circular and the little black cocktail tables have comfortable, springy chairs.

The inevitable "one-armed bandits," the four slot machines are just inside the door. Five cents, ten cents, two bits and four bits. She will see many more of them. They are the hallmark of Reno. Wherever she goes, she will find them handily placed, waiting for her small change. She will form the habit of dropping her nickels and dimes into them regularly. Some women find them an immediate fatal attraction.

There is the story of one woman who arrived here with her daughter and registered at one of the hotels. They came downstairs, were caught by the tempting sight of the machines, and before they knew it had lost \$150. They went to the desk and began to scream. The hotel gave them their money back. But don't count on that.

Opposite the bar are the three gambling tables—craps, blackjack and roulette. The dealers are gentlemen, suave, soft spoken, tactful, pleasant, sympathetic. They get practically the same stories that the bartenders hear. They don't talk. They listen. They deal.

SINGS FOR LOVE

Over in the far corner of the room is a piano with a curious attachment to it that brings a microphone right down almost over the keyboard and directly in front of the face of the player. The singer-player is a man, an old-timer by the name of George Hart, a pleasant chap with sparse hair

and a mellow, soothing voice. Not long ago he married an heiress, a divorcee worth millions. But he still plays and sings every afternoon and evening—the love ballads of the day. A curious place to sing of love, you think. Love and disappointment, and unrequited passion and blues, and "you've-gone-away-and-left-me," and—

"make-me-your-own," and—"that's-why-I-love-you..."

His audience is love's wreckage. Mrs. Failure sits alone at a little table. She buys a drink and pays with a \$10 bill. Her change comes in big silver dollars, another hallmark of Reno. From now on she will handle nothing but silver.

Mrs. Failure won't be alone long. The hotel hostess introduces herself. She is a clever woman of tact and refinement. Always remember that no funny business is tolerated around the divorcees here. This is strictly an industry. The hostess says:

"Won't you come over to our table, and meet Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Brown. They are lovely people. And Mr. White, the rancher..."

Inside of a few hours introductions have snowballed and Mrs. Failure has a pleasant and reliable circle of acquaintances.

'High-De-Ho' Night Life of Reno Helps Divorcees Forget

This is the third of a series of articles, by Paul Gallico, on Reno, Nev., the "city of women who have failed."

By PAUL GALLICO

(International News Service Staff Correspondent)

RENO, Nev., Feb. 9.—The wild saxophones go "Wada-Wada-Wa-da De-o-do!" The drums thump and the fiddles complain. Glasses clink on the bar—the crooner croons—"Thanks...for the Memo-weather stained leather jacket and whirrrrr and then—"Thump—10-gallon hat? That's her husband. Thump—Click!" with rarely the She was formerly the wife of a university professor. She divorced him and married the cowpuncher and stayed on in Reno. She is silver tinkle of the payoff.

Feet scrape on the dance floor. The little white roulette ball makes its dry sound spinning the rim of the wheel. The room is full of smoke and the scrape of feet, and voices and sometimes the high pitched laughter of women. Sometimes the voice of the keno announcer, brittly metallic, breaks through—"number 24...second row..."

"Wada—Wada—wa-da Deedle-do-do!"

SEEING NEW HOME

Mrs. Failure on the second day of the six weeks' cure orders another Scotch and soda, and moves down a little at the bar to make room for the big cow-puncher in the blue overalls, high heeled boots, black shirt and black hat, and picturesque range-rider's jacket of black leather, trimmed with fur. She is getting her first glimpse of her new home for six weeks—Reno, Nev.

That is Reno at night. Drink and forget. Dance and forget. Gamble and forget. Live high, live hearty, for tomorrow we are free, tomorrow we choose a new mate. Unlucky at love, lucky at cards—hit me, dealer, but gently—pay 21...eight's the point, Eighter-from Decatur... 29, black wins...

RENO HAS 66 BARS

Why be lonely? Why be bored? Why sit in the chair by the window and moon over what might have been? Reno has 66 bars and cabarets, 20 gambling casinos, 540 slot machines. But all of the 47 hotels, and the 66 bars and cabarets have their blackjack, roulette and crap tables.

Reno has license, liquor, liberty and love. See that lovely, refined-looking woman over there, sitting at the blackjack table, with the young cowboy in a checkered shirt,

and the other wall are three or four tables with stud poker games running with from five to six men playing with a green eye-shaded, shirt-sleeved dealer. Two faro games are running. You will always see a Chinaman at one of the faro tables. The rest of the room is taken up with roulette, craps and the inevitable blackjack. There is a big wheel of the country fair type that pays from 2-1 to 40-1. In the rear are blackboards with the track results from around the country, and keno and number horse racing games. The players in the Bank Club and the Palace, similar types are nearly all men, natives, ranchers, sheep herders, cowboys, cab drivers, workers. You wonder where they get the money to gamble until you find that nickel bets are accepted. You can play for hours with a couple of dollars. The divorcees are rarely seen here except when they go slumming. Their type of club, and where you will find Mrs. Failure in the afternoon, is the Club Fortune. It is elegantly appointed, with fine paintings, reproductions of the Dutch masters. One room consists of the bar, the three crap, roulette and blackjack tables, the inevitable slot machines, and in the rear a swank restaurant where the food is excellent.

SIX WEEKS AT WHOOPEE

Exciting Reno! Make your expenses for the six weeks in one night at the roulette table—or blow your bankroll, attorney's fee and all, and wire back to husband for more. Six weeks of whoopee, four minutes in court, one more Scotch and soda—the big United Plane touches earth in the airport floodlights, and then wings eastward with the Misses who were Mrs.

"Thanks...for the m-e-mories..."

Walk the streets of Reno, and there they are, one practically next to the other, the bars and gambling places—the Silver Dollar, the Bank Club, the Palace Club, the Waldorf Club, the Swank Fortune Club where the food is as good as "21," or the Stork Club in New York,

the gay Town House, and on the outskirts the intimate and attractive combination roadhouse and where gambling casino, the tavern, where Herman from Vienna presides over wonderful food, oysters and lobsters flown from San Francisco, tropical fruits and vegetables from California.

CLUBS ON MAIN STREET

The clubs and casinos lie on the main streets, next to the clothing shops, drug stores, grocery stores, etc. Colored neon lights advertise them. The Bank Club is typical of one kind of gambling joint. Upon entering, you find yourself in a huge room, jammed, mostly with men in rough, working clothes. A bar runs along the side,

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Along the other wall are three or four tables with stud poker games running with from five to six men playing with a green eye-shaded, shirt-sleeved dealer. Two faro games are running. You will always see a Chinaman at one of the faro tables. The rest of the room is taken up with roulette, craps and the inevitable blackjack. There is a big wheel of the country fair type that pays from 2-1 to 40-1. In the rear are blackboards with the track results from around the country, and keno and number horse racing games.

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KENO POPULAR

The adjoining room, an enormous one, is entirely taken up with the keno game. A long narrow table runs around the outside of the room in the shape of a "U" and the players sit at chairs on the outside. At the far end is a great illuminated board on which the numbers show up. An attendant wheels a large truck up and down the inside. The inside of the truck is divided into little numbered squares from 1 to 100, with slanting wood sides. The trunk is stopped at each player who is given a baseball by the attendant. She throws the ball into the truck. It bounces into one of the numbered squares. The number flashes up on the board as the announcer drones it out, and the keno players cover the corresponding numbers on their cards with little round checks.

It costs but 10 cents to play a game, and here the women taking the cure, sit by the scores, and play, young ones, old ones, mothers with their daughters, newcomers to the Reno Divorce Mill, old timers taking their second or third treatment. The atmosphere is one of quiet and breeding. No one ever seems to get drunk. Reno wants no disorder.

And around and in the city, a few streets back of the play places, are old, quiet homes where live fine people, natives, people who dwell and work there, who live a quiet, normal life, attend church, give parties, visit one another's homes, behave, in short like any other normal Americans.

It is only Mrs. Failure and her sisters who live the sizzling high pressure, hot-spot, high-de-ho ex-

Novel 'Hideaways' in Reno Region Give Divorcees Privacy

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This is the fourth of a series by Paul Gallico on Reno, Nev., the strangest, wildest, happiest, freest city in the whole United States, a tough, wide-open, masculine city run for women.

By PAUL GALLICO

International News Service Staff Correspondent

RENO, Nev., Feb. 10.—Reno calls itself "the biggest little city in the world." Its population is slightly under 20,000. The population of Nevada is 90,000, which is 20,000 less than attended the Dempsey-Tunney fight in Chicago. The area of Nevada is 125,000 square miles. What Nevada has to sell is space. Its state capital, Carson City, has 900 inhabitants.

It makes it fairly simple for the shy divorcee-to-be to hide out until her six weeks are up.

Mrs. Failure who comes to Reno for a divorce ranges from an obscure little nobody who isn't even reported by the big town newspaper staff correspondents, to a million-heiress like Barbara Hutton who arrives, vanishes and does not appear until, six weeks later, she slips into court for a four-minute, closed-door, sealed session, and departs.

There are hotels and boarding houses to fit every pocketbook, offering a life to fit every taste.

Pretty and capable contact girls from real estate offices watch the hotel registers like hawks, or maintain contacts with the attorneys here and snag the women away from hotels and set them up in attractive little apartments, or even rent them whole houses.

CENTER OF CITY

The town really centers around a half a dozen blocks close to the Truckee river, Virginia avenue, East First and Second street, Center street. The Riverside Hotel and the courthouse and city hall are on Virginia avenue. Two blocks to the north is the Western Pacific depot and the railroad tracks. Immediately across the railroad tracks the town peters out and residences begin. But travel a few dozen blocks, north, east, south or west and the desert begins, rolling wastes of sage brush, volcanic hills, age-old lava rock where you can drive for hours without seeing a human being or habitation.

Tucked away in a far corner of the town, down by the river, reached by wise cab drivers through dark, muddy lanes live "the girls."

EXTERIOR VIEW

From the outside it looks like a series of old barns or farm buildings, brown and weather stained and high fenced. You go through a huge wooden door and find yourself in a strange courtyard of doll houses, a neat little street with a walk down the center. On either side, one next to the other, complete, roof and all, are the houses of brick, two rooms to each. The scene is lit bleakly by unshielded electric light bulbs.

Each doll's house has two windows. In one is a placard bearing the name of the doll—Anita, May, Annie, Dot, Charlotte, Henrietta. In the other window, unless it is dark with the shades drawn, sits the painted doll with the fixed smile.

'HIDEAWAYS' IN HILLS

And now, out from Reno are the hills and the deserts, and the mountains in terra-cotta reds and deep blues with the white Sierra rising in the background and hidden away among the hills are the dude ranches and hush-hush hideaways.

Thirty miles out on the desert lies Pyramid Lake, a long, wild strip of water in ever-changing blues with its mysterious cone-shaped pyramids rising from its surface, a wonderful, wind-whipped body of water, now clear and sparkling, now veiled by a fierce dust storm. It is an Indian reservation. On its banks is a dude ranch. The divorcees live in little individual cabins, each containing a bedroom with a stove, and a bathroom or shower.

ANOTHER RETREAT

Five miles up in the hills is the "TH" Dude Ranch, even more typical, where Mrs. Failure can spend her six weeks riding, shooting, fishing, learning how to punch cows on roundup, picnicking on steak roasts and living a life such as she never knew before in the east or south.

Here are rustic ranch buildings, corrals where pinto ponies feed. Attractive gathering rooms feature deer heads, guns, paintings by western artists, cowboy gear, collections of Indian arrowheads found back in the hills where a great Indian battle between two tribes once took place, Indian blankets and bead work.

COWBOY ROMANCES

In places like these, the cowpunchers are young, hard, strapping sixfooters, gay and vital, simple and masculine—the answer to a divorcee's prayer. Many of the women get their divorces and stay on and marry cowboys. Some bring them back east with them. The cowpunchers don't stay east long. They invariably head back for Nevada. And their women follow them.

The ranches make perfect hideouts for women who shy away from publicity. Reporters get as far as the cowpunchers guarding the estates—and no farther. The men are too big and too tough. It is one close-knit community where nature and man are organized to foster and protect the strangest industry that ever fell to a state—the quick divorce. Protect the divorcee. Give her what she wants. All Reno works at it.

Divorce Law Quirks Found by Gallico On Reno Visit

This is the fifth in a series of articles by Paul Gallico about Reno, Nev., the far west city that lives on the industry of granting divorces on six weeks' residence, and manages to make the six weeks an unforgettable experience.

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By PAUL GALLICO

International News Service Staff Correspondent

RENO, Nev., Feb. 11.—This grand, goofy little city never tires of furnishing you with surprises. Today you have a date to come along to the famous courthouse where more than 50,000 divorces have been granted, the greatest divorce mill in the world.

What's that white stuff all over the steps leading up to the portal?

Why, it's rice. Somebody has just been married. The trail of white grains leads right upstairs to the second floor to the lobby of the divorce chambers.

Here, where a young couple is just beginning married life, is the end of the trail for Mrs. Failure. Her six weeks are up. She is about to get a divorce.

The courtroom is large, dignified, done in mahogany. A single American flag stands behind the bench. The room is practically empty. There are no more than six or seven people in it—the bailiff, the court stenographer, a court reporter, the attorney for the plaintiff, the plaintiff and a single witness.

QUICK HEARING

The judge enters and takes his seat and opens the case. The one witness takes the stand and testifies that the plaintiff has resided continuously in the state of Nevada for a period of six weeks. The witness steps down. The plaintiff steps up. She testifies to the cause of action—extreme cruelty. The judge says "Decree granted," in slightly more legal phraseology.

And that is that.

It takes but little longer than it does to read this column of type.

There is no difference between the open and the closed door case. The writer attended both. No dirty linen is washed. For under amended Nevada law, it is no longer necessary to allege cause of action except in the words of the statutes, such as to say, for instance, that the defendant has been guilty of extreme cruelty or desertion, or has failed to provide necessaries for the plaintiff.

NINE GROUNDS

There are nine grounds for divorce in Reno—impotency, adultery, desertion, conviction of a felony or infamous crime, habitual drunkenness, extreme cruelty in either party (this is the pet, and may be either physical or mental), neglect to provide the necessaries of life, insanity, and a five-year separation.

But here are some of the neater tricks and quirks of the law. It isn't necessary for the wife to spend the six weeks' residence in Reno if she can talk her husband into taking a six weeks' vacation hunting and fishing in the Nevada hills. After the husband has served his six weeks, the wife can then sue him from New York or Chicago or Los Angeles and the divorce is granted her.

SHOPPING HOLIDAY

Or at the end of the six weeks' period the husband sues for divorce. The wife files a cross-complaint and either flies out on the day of the trial, or her deposition on the cross-complaint is taken.

On the day of the trial the husband takes the stand and testifies to his six weeks' residence. His attorney then dismisses him before his complaint is entered. The wife's cross-complaint is entered. The decree is granted the wife. It is more gallant that way.

But husband-residences in Reno are rare. Usually he is too busy earning the money to enable his wife to pay for hers.

Can Mrs. Failure ever get away from Reno during her six weeks' cure? But certainly. It was lovable old Judge Bartlett, now a prominent attorney in Reno, who invented the two-day shopping holiday.

Mrs. F. boards a plane in Reno early Monday morning, let us say, and flies to San Francisco in two hours. She returns to Reno by plane Tuesday evening before midnight. Legally and physically, she has been in the state of Nevada both on Monday and on Tuesday.

It was Judge Bartlett who had the closed door session made into a law. At request of the plaintiff the hearing is held behind closed doors, no reporters present, and the records are sealed. Protection is the keynote of Nevada—even from curious eyes.

FEW QUESTIONS

Occasionally during a hearing the bench will ask a question or two of the plaintiff as to the times and durations of the alleged cruelties, or the date that the desertion occurred—but not too many. As one judge admitted frankly—"It isn't wise often to ask too many questions, or to go too deeply into the cases..."

And so they come and go, four or five minutes to a case. The plaintiff, the boarding house keeper or hotel clerk, or dude ranch owner and the attorney. In the silence of the empty courtroom the big clock on the wall loudly goes—"tick-tock...tick-tock."

"And do you intend to continue your residence here?" asks the judge.

"Yes," replies the plaintiff.

And two hours later she is on plane or train for home. A lady can change her mind, can't she?

HUSBAND'S STANDING

The husband may contest the divorce if he wishes. But his contest will do him no good unless he appears in court physically to fight it. "If he wants a break," said an attorney, "he has to be here."

Double fault is no excuse for not granting a divorce in Nevada. The doctrine of comparative rectitude has been made a part of the Nevada divorce laws. In cases where there is recrimination the court is authorized to grant a divorce to the party least at fault...you might be able to tie the Nevada divorce hopper, but you can't beat it—yet.

And so Mrs. Failure is now Miss Lazy again and free to try it all over again. On the way out and downstairs she may stand aside to duck another shower of rice thrown at a happy couple flown in from California for a quick sixty or seventy-five dollar marriage. That's Reno.

Divorcees-Elect at Reno Tell Barmen 'All,' Says Gallico

This is the last of a series of articles on giddy Reno, Nev., the wild, gay little far-western town on the threshold of the snow-topped Sierra Nevadas.

By PAUL GALLICO

International News Service Staff Correspondent

RENO, Nev., Feb. 12.—Residence in Reno for a little while gives you a strange feeling toward the women one encounters in the city. You no longer regard them as just plain, ordinary women and residents of a thriving community—which most of them are. You get into the habit of regarding them all as potential divorcees, as repositories of stories.

You are sitting in a cabaret listening to a floor show. A lady has just finished singing. The applause has not yet died away. She is pretty good—too good. Somebody on the inside nudges you and says: "Taking the cure. She's got three more weeks to go. Picking up a little change while she's at it."

\$800 FOR 20 CENTS

It may be your waitress, or the girl in the hairdressing parlor, or the girl behind the drug store counter. One doesn't have to be wealthy to get a Reno divorce—merely active and able to work. Attorneys will handle cases for as little as \$50 if the client is honestly poor. A lot of them try to do it on the gambling tables. That's a bad way, but sometimes it works. Luck runs in funny streaks.

A roulette dealer told a story about himself. He was down and out, broke and out of a job. He had 30 cents. With 10 of it he bought a cup of coffee for a friend and himself. On the way out he dropped the 20 cents on No. 5 of the inevitable roulette table in the cafe. No. 5 came up. He left the table with \$800.

RENOITES KEEP SECRETS

The women who come to Reno are indefatigable talkers. When it comes to their divorce trials they demand the closed door and the sealed testimony. But by that time they have told their stories dozens and dozens of times. All Reno knows them. And all Reno keeps discreetly silent. It is a city that knows how to keep its mouth shut, and strangers who ask questions are not popular.

But the women talk. They talk to bartenders, to hairdressers, to gamblers, to headwaiters and to bellhops, to the hotel clerks and the landlords.

The little blues singer in one of the cafes says—"Oh, boy, if I could only write. (Incidentally she wasn't there for the cure) the stories those dames tell me. Boy, you can't stop 'em. You stand up at the bar for a few

minutes having a drink, and they start right in."

The bartender at a famous hotel yawns and says—"Gawd! Wimmen. The more I see and hear of them the more I like my dog. I'm on the night shift, right through until morning. Stay in this room for a month and listen to 'em and then see how you feel about women. They chew my ear off at 5 o'clock in the morning. Nuts!"

Talk to enough repositories of these stories and you will find them in agreement on one point. Ninety per cent of the women who come to Reno are not wronged or heart-broken wives, but women who have number two all propped up and waiting for them to get free of number one. They come out and have six weeks of high life and then go back and marry the other fellow.

SPORTSMAN'S PARADISE

The other 10 per cent have a story—and usually pride. They have caught their husbands out at something and force themselves or let their friends talk them into getting a divorce. Or their marriages have turned into genuine tragedies, and the six weeks in Reno is a time of trial and torture, tears and loneliness and the terrible anodyne of liquor.

In fairness to Reno one must report that while today the divorce industry is the chief attraction, it is waking up to its own natural attractions and in the next few years will make a strong bid for recognition as a national playground for play's sake. It is an absolute sportsman's paradise. The hills are full of game and the lakes of fish. Hunters bring down 300-pound bucks and think it not unusual. In Lake Tahoe and Pyramid Lake are 30 and 40 pound trout that fight like marlin, and there are a half dozen stores in the town devoted to ski equipment. Within a short ride of Reno, the slopes of the Sierras offer wonderful skiing. Some of the wilderness in the state has still to be explored. And so the Reno adventure ends.

The ex Mrs. Failure sits at the window of the giant metal bird as it circles and circles the valley roaring up for altitude eight, nine, ten thousands, up and up to 13,000 feet before it will wing away over the mountains.

Below lies Reno.

"Thanks . . . for the memories."

"Wada—wada—wada de-o-do."

The silver thread on which the brown city is beaded is the Truckee river. In it, according to tradition, lies her wedding ring, throw from the bridge next to the Riverside Hotel.

The roaring bird cuts its lazy, climbing circles. Good-by to Reno. There is the strange, vital little city now a darker patch on the brown carpet of the valley.

MEMORIES LINGER

She presses her face close to the tiny window for the last glimpse. Nostalgic memories have already begun to course through her brain. She hears again the brassy cries of the keno dealers, and the whirr of the slot machines, and sees the bright colored lights advertising the casinos and cabarets.

The rides over the dessert, and the 6 foot 3 cowpunchers who lifted her out of the saddle with his two hands, kisses her and then grinned at her. The dance bands and the scrape of dancing feet on the floor, the chime of the cash register behind the bar and the talk and laughter of men and women.

'GOOD-BY RENO'

The strange queasy feeling at the pit of her stomach as she sat in the witness chair and heard the bored voices of the men of law giving her her freedom, and the sudden flash that had gone through her mind—"whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

"Decree granted!"

The awful first day in the hotel room . . . the day she won \$150 at craps and bought three new dresses . . . the new friends left far below—men who loved her . . . women still serving time . . .

The great bird levels off. The motors seem to quiet down. Reno drops back and at last disappears as the ship heads over the mountains.

Good-bye to Reno.

"Wada-de-o de-deedle-o do!"

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