

gracious university campus on the heights. Even main street, Virginia, is seen from the through-routes only as a broad street with its near buildings southward obscured by signboards and a sprawling iron arch proclaiming Reno as the "Biggest Little City in the World." Two blocks south of the railroad Virginia Street becomes a thoroughfare of well-appointed shops offering goods of distinction and quality. Crossing it are side streets with two or three blocks of small shops carrying similar goods. Paralled to Virginia Street, westward, is Sierra Street, where the five-and-ten, branches of large mail-order houses, and other mercantile concerns are found all the way from the railroad to the river.

Close to the river and east and west of Virginia Street are the public buildings and one of the largest hotels—though the chief older hotel, and second largest, is on Center Street, the next east of Virginia. Only the area stretching four blocks east and west and about seven blocks south of the Southern Pacific tracks is largely treeless; elsewhere practically every street is lined with cottonwoods, poplars, and other trees that resist traffic fumes.

The city does not lend itself to easy classifications for it is metropolitan in its diversity.

There are many Renos and the two acres of neon lights, night clubs, gambling houses, and drinking places near the railroad station form only one of them—and though commercially important, not a particularly representative one at that, in spite of feature articles and the news reels. Most Reno citizens visit it only occasionally and then largely with guests from out of town. It is never the Renoites who shout noisily, and boisterously toss balloons and confetti about; they are in fact, somewhat annoyed when the liberty they extend is mistaken for license. A second Reno, also not representative and to some extent overlapping the gambling-drinking Reno, is the divorce circle, composed of newcomers, the divorce lawyers, and also the lawyers' wives, who endeavor to keep their husbands' clients from growing too homesick. The divorce circle has various divisions, economic as well as mental. Women with money—and most of the newcomers are female—live in the smarter hotels, expensive furnished apartments, or on nearby ranches, and the rest live as well as their pocketbooks permit; a few even do housework or clerk in stores to maintain themselves during the necessary period. How these divorce-seekers spend their time depends in part on their means, in part on their up-bringing, and in part on their state of mind. To the majority the breaking up of their homes is a heart-breaking business and they react according to their natures; some grow reckless, gamble and drink wildly, invite attentions from any man they happen to meet, while others live quietly and are rarely seen in the cocktail rooms and night clubs. It is the former who provide a disturbing element greatly resented by Renoites, in spite of their determined tolerance for human frailty and their appreciation of the revenue brought in.

A third Reno is composed of moneyed newcomers who have visited the State for this or that reason and been fascinated by landscape and

skies; they, and the people who have become residents to escape high property and income taxes in other parts of the country, have built large comfortable homes on the edge of town—chiefly on the southwest. A few enter the civic life in time but the majority lead a social life apart.

Another aloof Reno is composed of the F. F. V.'s—their Virginia is the Comstock. Long accustomed to having plenty of money, uninterested in making a show of themselves or their possessions, uninterested in current social rivalries, these cliff-dwellers rarely leave their own quiet circle, though their names are found on subscription lists of the more conservative civic organizations.

The university is almost a town in itself, with two social layers—one composed of students, the other of the faculty families. Part of the students and faculty members take some part in the life of other parts of town but most are too busy to come down from the Olympian heights except at intervals. Part of the faculty families and students support movements to bring in lecturers and musicians—or at least buy tickets when local organizations arrange for the events; faculty members also lecture to the countless fraternal and other clubs that provide the chief diversions of the vast majority of Renoites.

An important Reno is political; the number of office-holders and would-be office-holders is large. But political Reno is gregarious, so its members are found in many layers of the community. Nevadans continue to conduct their public affairs on a personal basis and the man who wants a job, or wants to keep one, must have friends who will back him.

There is also a businessmen's Reno, composed of the owners of stores and other facilities serving not only the city but most of western Nevada. The members of this circle belong to Rotary, Kiwanis, and similar organizations, and also to the Masons, Elks, Odd Fellows, and so on. Their wives form the women's affiliates of the fraternal organization—the Eastern Stars and Rebeccahs.

The Reno of the society page first column stories is composed largely of the wives of professional men—chiefly lawyers—and the professional men themselves. This group handles its visiting cards strictly according to *Emily Post* and keeps its eye on Washington.

Women have been particularly active in the art, musical, dramatic, and cultural clubs that have increased rapidly in number since 1930, though the leaders happen to be professional men. The cultural clubs are of various graduations, from those that have lectures because of an interest in the subjects covered to those inspired by an uneasy yearning for the prestige of cultural activities.

The religious congregations have their own social life but most of their members also participate in other town activities.

With all of its metropolitan aspects and its decidedly mixed population the essential Reno is completely democratic; bell boys and barmen call millionaires by their first names, a reminder that they shared pot luck in earlier times, and may again, and that one man has merely been luckier than the other—the assumption is accepted on both sides. Behind the surface caste system is a genuine fraternity, at its best in bad times.



Few men fail to look out for the widows and orphans of old comrades and more than one political appointment is given for the frankly expressed reason that "George has a wife and children to support," or that "Mary's father helped me out when I hadn't had a grubstake in six months." Though accustomed to entertaining the public, Renoites do not have the overflowing surface hospitality of people in some other parts of the country. But like all real Nevadans they have a deep feeling of brotherhood that comes to the surface for the stranger as well as for their own. Also like other Nevadans, they deeply love their State and nothing stirs them as much as a slur by those who do not appreciate it.

In addition to the permanent residents and the gambling-divorce visitors, there is a transient Reno composed of other Nevadans, for Reno is the metropolis of the State as well as the second largest city in the Great Basin. Nearly every Nevadan outside the Las Vegas area likes to come up to town every few months—and some come oftener. Young people of the State's smallest towns long to live in Reno—its bustle and excitement enchants them. A few Renoites, on the other hand, still have the old Comstock urge for San Francisco; but if they do establish themselves in California they are sure to come back regularly, unable to resist the desire to see their own beautiful mountains and to hear the old familiar talk of mines and cattle.

One set of out-of-state visitors does not come in to visit the slot machines and night clubs; these are the winter sport fans. From the time when the newspapers begin to report snow on Donner summit until the roads over the Sierras are clear at all times, hotel lobbies are filled each Friday and Saturday with energetic young people in sweaters and ski-pants and the streets are lined with cars having special attachments for carrying skis and other sport paraphernalia. These visitors, in sharp contrast with the whooping week-ending oldsters, are regarded locally with particular affection. The town is particularly given over to them during the intercollegiate sport contests. At that time the center of social life is on and near the university campus, as fraternity and sorority houses give house-room to part of the guests.

Reno's diversity of interests is astonishing. In addition to its Roman Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, Protestant Episcopal, Jewish, Congregational, Presbyterian, Christian, Latter-day Saint, Lutheran, Nazarene, and Christian Science congregations, it also has an African Methodist congregation composed of most of the two hundred or so Negroes of the town, an Assembly of God, a Unity Center, and supporters of the Church of the Revelation. Though the town's two newspapers pay particular attention to mining news the editorials of one daily discuss such topics as the beauty of Chinese peachblow vases, the genius of Turgenev, and the customs of the Azerbaijan Turks. A lecture by Eve Curie sells far more than one thousand tickets and the Westminster Choir has even stronger support.

The site of Reno was a very welcome camping place of overland travelers even before the gold-rush. The unfortunate Donner Party

(see *Tour 1*), made its final fatal mistake of lingering in the Truckee Meadows one day too long before attempting to find the pass across the Sierras. The first man to live here was C. W. Fuller, who built a shelter, a half dug-out, half log, on the south bank of the Truckee in 1859, the year of the Comstock rush. The next year he built a toll bridge of logs that lasted until 1862, when it was washed away. Fuller rebuilt his bridge but in 1863 traded his property to M. C. Lake, who set up a trading post and also did some ranching. In time the place became known as Lake's Crossing.

In 1868 the Central Pacific crossed the Sierras and landed its end-of-the-tracks camp across the Truckee from Lake's post. Lake by this time had enough claim on the land that the railroad company had to deal with him before it could establish a town here to handle the great Comstock business, for which the Big Four had fought their winning fight against the Union Pacific backers.

In selecting a name for the town the romantic put forward Argenta in consideration of the most valuable freight the railroad would carry; but Charles Crocker, the Big Four man who took town naming as his favorite chore, selected Reno to honor General Jesse Lee Reno, of West Virginia, a Union officer killed at 39 years of age during the Battle of South Mountain. The name had been suggested by men who had served with him in the Mexican War.

Reno was officially born on May 9, 1868, with a public auction of real estate conducted by an agent of the railroad company. The event aroused the enthusiasm of a gold strike. Buyers had appeared the day before and camped on the ground all night; blankets and food were at a premium. The first lot brought \$600, and 200 lots were sold that day. A hundred houses sprang up within a month and Reno's initial building boom was on its way. By 1871 the town was able to wrest the Washoe County Seat from Washoe City (see *Tour 4*).

A year after the town came into existence Lake's post burned but even though the construction camp had moved on there was enough business to justify his replacing the store with a hotel. Though his bridge was washed away twice more by spring floods, he could well afford to replace it as hundreds of head of cattle were being driven south across the Truckee to supply booming Virginia City and his toll was a dollar a head. But bridges were under charter by this time and when his charter expired in 1872 the county proposed to make the bridge free. Lake indignantly stationed armed guards on the bridge, prepared to defend what he considered his rights, and the case was carried to court; eventually he gave in. Meanwhile, he made an addition to his hotel, which he was later to replace with a yet larger structure, part frame and part brick, with turrets and arches, which he named the Riverside; the largest hotel in Reno today bears the same name and merely replaced Lake's pretentious building, which burned in 1922.

Though Lake's hotel was well-patronized from the beginning, the first business district of squat low frame structures with false fronts developed several blocks away, along the railroad tracks, the center



being what is still called Commercial Row. Houses were largely north of the tracks. The first town was practically destroyed by fire in 1873, and the next in 1879; after that business structures were chiefly of brick. The town was incorporated in April, 1879.

Reno had some of the usual frontier rowdies in the early days but its "601" did not tolerate them long because it was already a family town by December, 1869, with a school that at the end of the first term was employing three teachers. First sessions had been held in the basement of a gristmill but a schoolhouse was soon built—at First and Sierra streets.

The Virginia Truckee Railroad had early replaced the freight teams bringing bullion up the valley and Reno prospered until production began to decline on the Comstock. Between 1880 and 1900 it was largely a placid distribution and shipping center for the ranchers of the valleys to the south and for scattered mining camps of the south and southeast.

The great boom came locally after the strikes at Tonopah in 1900 and at Goldfield in 1902. The nearest main-line railroad approach to these busy new centers was Reno and people as well as freight passed through in quantities. With money circulating freely the town became a city in 1901. For ten years the boom continued and even with the extension of railroads to the great new camps from the south and southeast Reno remained the chief transfer point. The population doubled between 1900 and 1910.

After Tex Rickard's great triumph in staging the lightweight championship fight between Gans and Nelson at Goldfield in 1906, Reno decided to gain national attention for itself by a similar enterprise. In 1910 Reno watched Jack Johnson win from the great Jeffries, who had come from retirement to defend his world championship title. Sport fans and newspaper correspondents from many countries were present for the fight. H. Hamilton Fyfe, an English writer covering the event for the *London Daily Mail*, saw little of an uplifting nature in the fistic battle. He did, however, carry away "pleasant recollections of the little mountain town" and "the gay, impetuous stream which sparkles through it." He wrote of "the delicious morning and evening freshness . . . the snow-topped Sierras dreaming in 'the last long evening yellow' of sunset."

In later years Reno followed up with a fight between Max Baer and Paul Uzcudun, the Basque "woodchopper." Jack Dempsey also fought here and Reno was committed to a course of publicity making its appeal largely to the sporting fraternity. With the establishment of legal gambling in 1931 and discovery of Nevada's easy divorce law, the city went through another boom. It widely publicized these special attractions and for a time the rush of divorce-seekers was so great that people with very simple houses found it very lucrative to move in with relatives and rent their own abodes furnished; many returned to find that lavish tenants had completely redecorated the houses and left new expensive furnishing when they departed.

Bit by bit the permanent population increased with various service