

# Where Sex Is Not Topic A



## Unofficial Ambassador

With his socialite wife, the former Esther Auchincloss, as his incentive, Norman Biltz has become Nevada's No. 1 booster.

By WILLIAM BERRY

**R**ENO.—Whether Doris Duke Cromwell ever gets a Reno divorce—or any other kind—she's getting Nevada a million dollars' worth of publicity. Because ever since the richest girl in the world (she hates the title) came to town, the wires have been carrying stories about why it's no wonder a poor tobacco heiress bought a Reno home.

Mrs. Cromwell, fresh from a battle with New Jersey over a \$13,000,000 state tax bill, has brought the special advantages of Nevada to the attention of more tax-burdened people than all the efforts of Norman Biltz, the first real estate operator ever successfully to subdivide a state, and Gov. E. P. Carville, who has been sending out thousands of postcards to tell the world that Nevada has "no gift tax—no inheritance tax—no income tax—no sales tax—no corporation tax—no securities tax."

Eight decades ago poor prospectors came to Nevada. They filled their moneybags on the Comstock lode, then headed out of the State immediately to invest in post-Civil War reconstruction. Now money is pouring into Nevada.

### Handled Developments In Other States.

In 1927, Biltz, son of a one-time director of public works of Bridgeport, Conn., arrived at Lake Tahoe. He had been active in flag-decorated realty developments in Florida, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. His first wife, Grace Meade, granddaughter of Gen. George Gordon Meade, Civil War hero, obtained her divorce from him in San Francisco after suing Betty G. Beall, niece of the late Secretary of the Treasury Andrew Mellon, for \$100,000, charging alienation of affections.

Biltz went over the mountains from Tahoe to Reno for the opening of the Riverside Hotel. He took one look at the millionaires flocking in to take advantage of the state's new 3-month residence requirements for divorce. Then he took a look at the Washoe Valley home of Ralph Elsmann, Brooklyn utilities magnate, who had settled in Nevada with a third wife in an effort to be rid of her two predecessors.

It didn't take long for a fellow who'd sold tidelands in Florida to get an idea. Biltz talked to Reno lawyers. He talked to experts about taxes. He had an opinion on legal residence requirements written by the Attorney General. The then governor, Fred B. Balzar, gave him diplomatic papers making him an "unofficial ambassador of Nevada."

Biltz went to work—and he's never stopped. Although not all of the 200 to 300 wealthy families who have moved into Nevada in the past decade have come to take advantage of the tax laws, the total wealth they have brought into the State is estimated between \$750,000,000 and a billion dollars.

One of Biltz's first clients was James Langford Stack, a Chicago advertising man who made his

pile promoting a nationally known cereal. Biltz moved Stack to Nevada and Lake Tahoe. Stack died but his millions were safely in Nevada—and still are.

Stack's widow and two sons, James Jr. and Bobby, the movie actor, still maintain their Tahoe residence.

**B**ILTZ' second wife, the former Esther Auchincloss Nash, brought him invaluable social contacts in the East. He met her across the gaming tables of the Cal-Neva Lodge at Tahoe in 1929 when she was establishing residence prior to divorcing Edmund W. Nash, New York broker. After their marriage in Fairfield, Conn., in 1930, Biltz and his wife hurried back to Nevada. He built her two palatial mansions—one in Reno and one on the Nevada shore of Lake Tahoe.

In 1931 the Nevada residence requirement for divorce was lowered to six weeks—and the

millionaires streamed in to get their marriages dissolved. The natives knew a good thing when they saw it, and acted accordingly. There was rough and ready life for the few who wanted it and there were "dude ranches" for the many. Cocktail lounges and gambling dens blossomed. The Lake Tahoe shore road became a "gold coast."

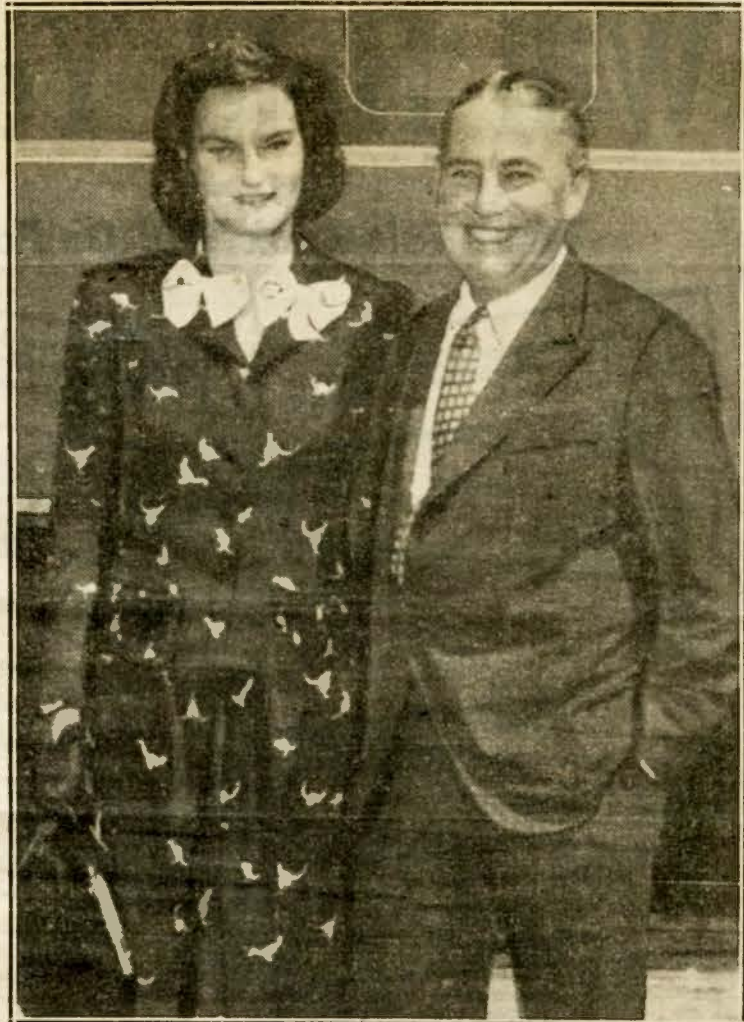
Chief of the realtors was, of course, Biltz.

So that he would get not only realty commissions, but building profits as well, Biltz formed his own construction company and hired his own architects. He built everything from gambling casinos to palatial mountain castles. Just before the war he had been planning an aerial tramway to the summit of Mount Rose, 10,800 foot peak near Reno.

Now Biltz says that he has never set up the tax situation as an attraction to outsiders.

"However, the welcome mat is out for anyone who wishes to take advantage of it," says the realtor.

Gov. Carville is not quite so shy. He's been boasting about Reno's freedom from taxes ever since he



## On His Recommendation

If Doris Duke Cromwell, now in Nevada, elects to make the state her permanent legal residence, its boosters can thank her half-brother, Walker Inman (shown with her). He's been a Nevadan, technically, since 1929. Doris has bought a house in Reno.

took office. He's made it Topic A at Nevada tables.

**A**NOTHER wealthy prospect for citizenship is Mrs. David Milton, the former Abby Rockefeller, who is occupying Biltz's Lake Tahoe home while she awaits a divorce from her New York husband.

Undoubtedly she, like Doris, has heard that all one has to do to become a legal resident of Nevada, and therefore escape the heavy taxes of other states is to:

"Buy some property in the State, and pay a property tax. The tax rate is \$4.09 per \$100 valuation.

"Register as a Nevada voter, and make your income tax returns 'from Nevada.'

"Declare in your will that Nevada is your residence and trans-

act some business from your Nevada property.

"Establish a bank account in Nevada and belong to some Nevada society, club, church or lodge. Register at hotels as 'from Nevada.'

Walker Inman, who is the half-brother of Doris Duke, has usually been registering as "from Nevada" ever since he got a divorce here in 1929 from the former Helene Patton.

### Called Woman Without a Home.

He has done as much as anyone to promote Nevada as a future home for Doris, who according to her lawyers, has been a "woman without a home." She doesn't want to return to her estate at Somerville, N. J., as long as the New Jersey state tax collectors are sitting on her doorstep. She has an estate at Chapel Hill, N. C., on which she pays \$40,000 a year taxes, but she doesn't care to remain there permanently. Her favorite home is a mansion, Hale Kapu, at Honolulu, which, she insists, is her legal residence. She had plane passage there for Dec. 8, 1941. Transportation stopped on Dec. 7. Since then the State Department hasn't given her permission to return. The grounds of the Honolulu estate are now being used as a recreation center for service men.

The U. S. Government declined her offer of the mansion. Too expensive to run, said Uncle Sam.

When the war is over Mrs. Cromwell probably will want to return to Hawaii.

"That's all right," say the Nevada boosters. "You can still be a legal resident of Nevada. We don't demand that you live here continuously and exclusively. We don't even wish to tax your bonds, mortgages, notes, bank deposits, book accounts, credits or securities which have already been assessed and taxed in other states. They're exempt."

This system seems to have worked wonderfully well, principally because the State Department operates on a definite plan.

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Capt. George Whittell thinks Nevada's tax advantages are exaggerated.



## They Came—and Stayed

William Bassett and his daughters, Peggy and Betty, have "gone Western" since their arrival in Nevada from New York. Bassett raises blooded cattle on his \$300,000 ranch.