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Contents

Front Cover: Chinese-American man in Dayton, Nevada, ca. 1905. Photographer unknown. *(Nevada Historical Society)*

Book Reviews

Editor's Note

We are glad to be back, and we hope that you are glad to have us back.

This issue is an amalgam of different approaches and different topics of importance to Nevada's history and, we hope, to you as readers. Wendy Jorae, the author of a new book on the Chinese in the late nineteenth century, shares some of her research on the interconnectedness of the depictions of Chinese-American childhood on postcards and how these related to the image of Chinatowns. Her work shows the possibilities for enhancing our understanding of the immigrant experience in a variety of places, including Nevada, through sources that might not strike us at first glance.

Image and reality also are at the heart of Carole Cosgrove Terry's contribution on the Morelli House in Las Vegas. Mentioning "Las Vegas" and "architecture" together or closely almost invariably brings to mind the Strip. However, Las Vegas also offers evidence of the importance of the Midcentury Modern architecture movement. Terry's article combines this subject with the issue of preserving historic buildings, delineating the partnerships that saved a valuable piece of Las Vegas history.

The "Notes and Documents" section returns with an analysis by Ron James, Nevada's longtime state historic preservation officer, of the 1860 census. Those familiar with James's magnificent work on Nevada history generally, and the Comstock Lode in particular, will hardly be surprised at the wealth of information that he has dug up and his analysis of it. We hope to increase the number of "N and D" entries in the *Quarterly*. These are generally shorter than the usual scholarly articles that we publish, and focus on a little-known or less-known aspect of Nevada history. Or, as the name suggests, they shed light on a document or documents, or the documents open some new historical vistas for us to consider.

Rather than the usual half a dozen or so book reviews, in this issue we are publishing a review essay. David Schwartz, director of the Center for Gaming Research at UNLV and the author of several books on the history of gaming and of Las Vegas, analyzes several recent books on Las Vegas, comparing them with one another and offering a broader perspective on what historians have been saying about that city. This kind of review essay gives the scholar the chance to say more about more issues than a regular book review, and we hope it gives the reader more to think about as well.

We have a variety of informative and interesting articles in the pipeline, too, so we hope that future issues will provide as much variety and food for thought as this one does. Budget and staffing cuts have delayed the appearance of this issue, and we apologize for that. We hope that you were unhappy about that, because we certainly have been. However, the *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* was a little bit down, but not too far, and definitely not out. Now, the issue is out—in your hands. If you have comments, questions, or possible submissions, please feel free to get in touch with me at michael.green@csn.edu

Michael Green
Editor-in-Chief

Postcard Images of Chinese: American Childhood and the Construction of a New Chinatown

WENDY ROUSE JORAE

The rapid urbanization and industrialization of the United States in the mid nineteenth century created a demand for cheap labor, especially in the newly incorporated West. Thousands of Chinese immigrated to California, hoping to take advantage of the new economic opportunities. White laborers increasingly viewed Chinese workers as a threat to American jobs and families. The emergence of a powerful anti-Chinese coalition of white working men, labor leaders, and politicians on the West Coast in the mid-nineteenth century fueled a national movement to restrict the immigration of all Chinese laborers. Anti-Chinese rhetoric depicted the Chinatowns in major cities such as San Francisco, New York, Los Angeles, Oakland, and Sacramento as havens for opium smokers, gamblers, and prostitutes and used this image to fan the flames of hatred toward the Chinese laborer.

However, just as it seemed that the anti-Chinese movement had succeeded in creating the dominant image of dirty, diseased, and vice-ridden bachelor Chinatowns, an exotic, Orientalized, and ultimately more favorable vision of Chinese America emerged to counter these earlier claims. This article will examine constructions of San Francisco's Chinatown: the largest Chinese-American community in the United States in the early twentieth century.

Wendy Rouse Jorae is a lecturer in history at California State University, Sacramento. This article is based in part on research from her recent book, *The Children of Chinatown: Growing up Chinese American in San Francisco, 1850-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), from which this article is abstracted. (Used by permission of the publisher: www.uncpress.unc.edu.)

Although tourists still flocked to American Chinatowns on slumming expeditions hoping to catch a glimpse of the dark underside, a more family-friendly image of the Chinese in America was gaining popularity. White artists, photographers, and writers created prolific images, especially of San Francisco's Chinatown, and marketed them to tourists. Chinese-American community leaders promoted this more favorable image, and Chinese-American businessmen recognized the profit potential in catering to tourists. Images of Chinese children, in the form of postcards, proved especially popular. This article considers how images of Chinese-American childhood as depicted in postcards countered the negative connotation of a bachelor society while simultaneously reinforcing an image of Chinese Americans as exotic and foreign "Others." While some Chinese merchants profited from white Americans' fascination with an Orientalized Chinatown, not all residents appreciated the influx of tourists into their community, and some openly resented the exoticized images that only further distanced their children from American society.

THE ANTI-CHINESE STEREOTYPE OF CHINESE AMERICA

Anti-Chinese writers created the enduring image of San Francisco's Chinatown as a place plagued by vice and disease. Nineteenth-century tourists hired tour guides to show them the lurid sites of the Chinese underworld. White Americans living in industrialized, urban America saw ethnic slumming as a recreational release from the demanding constraints of civilization while seemingly confirming their superior place in the hierarchy of the races. Weaving through dark alleys and basement cellars, tourists embarked on these expeditions expecting to catch glimpses of "Oriental depravity." Visitors did not go home disappointed as the guides provided views of Chinatown's seamier side, both genuine and simulated. Guides sometimes hired Chinese men and women to play the part of highbinders, prostitutes, gamblers, and opium addicts.[1] One old opium addict in San Francisco made a living by smoking for tourists. Tour guides would bring visitors to his living quarters and announce, "If we are fortunate you will see a rare sight — a Chinaman smoking opium." After observing the old man lying on a pile of rags and puffing away on his pipe, the visitors would depart satisfied that they had observed an actual scene of vice, and the guides would pay him a few nickels for his effort.[2] This image of the Chinese in America dominated all others until the early twentieth century.

Central to the anti-Chinese construction of Chinese America was the idea of the bachelor community. Anti-Chinese politicians and labor leaders justified Chinese exclusion by arguing that Chinese immigrants contributed little to the local community in large part because of their failure to establish permanent homes and families in America. In 1893, Congressman Thomas J. Geary, a Democrat from California, made the following statement about Chinese-

American family life in an effort to garner support for a strict registration law that targeted Chinese immigrant laborers:

> The Chinese immigrants are actuated by different purposes from those of other aliens. . . . They bring no families with them, and do not become permanent residents, but are mere birds of passage, whose labor earnings represent no increase of wealth in the State. They establish no domestic relations here, found no homes and in no wise increase or promote the growth of the community in which they reside.[3]

Anti-Chinese politicians, like Geary, perpetuated a popular conception of Chinese immigrants as sojourners. This image of a transitory and family-less community proved especially useful in the efforts of anti-Chinese politicians to demonstrate that Chinese immigrants were not willing to fully assimilate into American society and were therefore not worthy inheritors of American citizenship and rights.[4] The passage of anti-Chinese immigration laws delayed the formation of families in San Francisco's Chinatown. However, by the early twentieth century more women and children were visible in Chinatown. The ratio of Chinese men to women in San Francisco fell dramatically, from approximately six-to-one in 1900 to three-to-one by 1930. By 1920, there were 1,671 Chinese children (age sixteen and younger) in San Francisco representing 22 percent of the city's Chinese-American population.[5] While most Chinese immigrants were men who maintained strong social, economic, and political bonds to China, the persistence of the bachelor/sojourner image has negated the significant presence of women and children in early Chinatown up until the present day.

Chinese-American community leaders resented the continued emphasis on Oriental depravity and sought to counter this stereotype by promoting an alternative image of their community. Chinese-American entrepreneurs saw the value in redirecting tourist interest into a new ideal of Chinese America in an effort to counter earlier anti-Chinese images. As early as 1904, the Chinese Six Companies, the Chinese Native Sons, the Chinese Students' Alliance, the Chinese Military Cadets, and the Chinese Consul-General petitioned the San Francisco police to stop tour guides from promoting or manufacturing scenes of Chinese depravity for the benefit of tourists. Specifically, Chinese-American community leaders objected to tour guides who entertained visitors by touring brothels and opium dens, thereby perpetuating misconceptions of Chinese-American life. These community leaders requested that police shut down the brothels and opium dens and admonish the tour guides.[6] The Chinese Students' Alliance, Native Sons, and Cadet Corps further took matters into their own hands by raiding the house of a noted opium smoker. The mob demolished his windows and insisted that he avoid smoking opium in the presence of visitors. The *San Francisco Chronicle* explained the situation: "Incensed at

having the vices and not the virtues of the Celestials exposed to the public, there is a determined effort being made by the better class of Chinese to stop this kind of sightseeing in Chinatown."[7] In response to the demands of the Chinese-American community, the Board of Police Commissioners adopted a resolution that promised to revoke the license of any guide caught escorting tourists to places where "lewd, immoral and indecent practices are exhibited or to any place where opium is smoked for exhibition purposes."[8] Although such exhibitions no doubt continued, the Chinese-American community in San Francisco increasingly sought to eliminate vice and improve public perception of Chinatown.

POSTCARDS AND IMAGES OF CHINESE AMERICAN CHILDHOOD

At the same time that Chinese-American community leaders were attempting to improve Chinatown's image, numerous white photographers, artists, and writers "discovered" in the Chinese people an endearing subject, and especially in the numerous Chinese children who lived in early twentieth-century San Francisco. Arnold Genthe was perhaps the best known and definitely the most prolific photographer of early Chinatown. Genthe traveled to the United States in 1895 as a tutor to the son of a wealthy German family and lived with the family in their home in San Francisco. Entranced by the city, and especially by the children of Chinatown, Genthe attempted to photograph the scenes that he witnessed. Of the more than two hundred photographs he took of San Francisco's Chinatown, a large majority feature Chinese children out on the streets on festival days when families emerged from the privacy of their homes to celebrate in public. Genthe believed that the large crowd in the streets helped to conceal his presence. Although Genthe liked to perpetuate an image of himself as covertly capturing photographs of real Chinese family life, the children and their parents often seemed very aware of his presence. Some stared defiantly back at his camera, others stopped and posed for the camera, but most turned away to avoid the photographer.[9]

Genthe marketed images of exotic Chinese children to a public captivated by an Orientalized vision of San Francisco's Chinatown. Despite their abundance, these images represented a far-from-accurate portrayal of Chinese-American childhood. Preferring the extraordinary to the ordinary, Genthe tended to photograph his subjects only on festival days in special holiday attire and then marketed the images as scenes of everyday life in Chinatown. Genthe found renewed interest in his photographs following the earthquake and spent some time reworking the pre-earthquake photographs in order to market them as images of "old Chinatown." John Tchen analyzed more than a hundred Genthe photographs and discovered that many of these images had endured extensive touch-ups in the hands of the photographer. Genthe apparently converted

English signs into Chinese and removed evidence of white people in an attempt to make the subject appear more exotic. Tchen concludes that "Genthe tried to portray a mythical, purely Chinese 'Canton of the West'" and sold these photos to his upper-class white patrons as authentic images of an irretrievable past, a Chinatown lost.[10] Genthe's photos were to inspire many imitators as photographers flocked to the area to capitalize on the fascination with the exotic.

Genthe demonstrated that images of San Francisco's Chinatown, and especially of Chinese-American childhood, proved popular commodities. Publishers began to commission their own photographs for printing on postcards for tourists. The souvenir picture postcard became popular in Europe after the Paris Exposition, in 1889. Following the 1893 Chicago Exposition, private publishers began to produce postcards in the United States. Postcard collecting became widespread in Europe by the early twentieth century, and the postcard craze had hit America by 1905. The picture postcard remained a popular collectible until World War I. At the peak of the postcard frenzy, in 1913, Americans sent 968,000,000 postcards in a single year. Prior to the passage of the 1909 Payne Aldrich Tariff, the vast majority of postcards were imported from Germany. Several San Francisco postcard publishers that specialized in images of Chinatown manufactured their cards in Germany. Goeggel and Weidner, Richard Behrendt, and the Pacific Novelty Company all advertised their cards as made in Germany. Britton and Rey were among the earliest San Francisco postcard publishers to begin printing views of Chinatown, and they printed their images exclusively in the United States. Edward H. Mitchell, another early San Francisco postcard publisher, also manufactured his cards in America and attempted to capitalize on American patriotism by advertising his cards as "Made in the United States." Mitchell published a wide variety of postcard views of the West Coast, Hawaii, Japan, and the Philippines, and eventually dominated the industry in San Francisco, buying out many of his competitors. Mitchell's views of San Francisco, and especially of Chinatown, remain highly collectible today.[11]

Images of the ethnic Other became a very popular genre of postcards. Photographs and caricatures of Indians, blacks, Japanese, and Chinese proliferated as publishing companies manufactured more cards to meet the demand. The racist nature of these cards illustrates the widespread acceptance of attitudes of Anglo-American cultural superiority in early twentieth-century American society. American Indians appeared as legendary and romantic images of a noble and vanishing race. Postcards often portrayed stereotypes of lazy, ignorant, violent, and savage blacks. Cartoon postcards exaggerated and distorted the facial features of black Americans through large lips, unkempt hair, elongated limbs, and big white teeth. Japanese and Chinese Americans appeared as exotic and foreign. These stereotypical depictions of the Other helped to dehumanize ethnic Americans by turning them from subjects to objects. The creation and distribution of postcards featuring Orientalized Chinese-American children turned the children into commodities to be collected by predominately white middle-class Americans.[12]

"Chinese Boy at Play, San Francisco, California." Postmarked 1910. Published by Pacific Novelty Company. (*Wendy Rouse Jorae*)

"Group of Chinese Children." Postmarked 1912. Published by Edward H. Mitchell, San Francisco. (*Wendy Rouse Jorae*)

Whereas some whites saw the Orientalization and commodification of images of Chinatown as a means of reinforcing the racial hierarchy, others sought to prove the equality of the races and express a common sense of humanity through visions of middle-class domesticity. Collectors highly prized postcards featuring children, and ethnic children proved especially popular.[13] Childhood, as defined by white middle-class American society in the late nineteenth century, was a period of innocence. Both mother and father played a role in nurturing, protecting, disciplining, and guiding their children through these delicate years. With the pressures of urbanization and industrialization, middle-class parents increasingly viewed the home as a haven from the dangers of the outside world. The two-parent family unit was integral to the effort of creating model Christian citizens. Parents sought to shield their children from the crowding, disease, crime, and immorality of the outside world while preserving their childhood innocence for as long as possible. However, this middle-class family ideal did not reflect the reality for most children growing up in America at the time. Differences in class, race, ethnicity, and geographical location contributed to a diversity of child-rearing models. Yet, the middle-class model of domesticity dominated mainstream popular culture and was widely disseminated in magazines and postcards.[14] Postcard photographers carefully posed children in an effort to create an idealized view of youthful innocence. Some photographers preferred action shots that featured children at work, at play, or at school. The smiling faces of Chinese children proved endearing and irresistible. One writer penned the question: "Who can smile like this?" on a postcard featuring a group of playful Chinese children. Images of Chinese childhood reflected a white middle-class image of the innocence and purity of childhood. The production and distribution of these postcards helped to promote a more positive image of Chinese Americans that sharply contrasted with dominant anti-Chinese stereotypes which continued to deny the existence of these children. Still these Orientalized images constructed Chinese children as foreign and as distinct from white American children in clothing and customs.

Although produced by a wide array of photographers and manufacturers, the postcards featuring Chinese children seem remarkably similar in appearance. They all generally include groups of Chinese children under the age of ten. In most cases, the artists deliberately posed the children, lining them up against a wall, fence, or other appropriate backdrop. In some cases the photographer carefully arranged the children by height. In others, the children are lined up in no apparent order. The children in these posed shots often appear bewildered and perhaps confused by the varied instructions of the photographer. More candid shots, especially of children at play, captured the children laughing. However, even in these rare instances of spontaneity the photographer has disrupted the play and asked the children to look at the camera for enough time to capture the image. In one Britton and Rey postcard postmarked in 1905, five Chinese children play in and around a wicker basket. Although obviously actively engaged, the children all appear in a state of suspended animation as the photographer clearly distracted them long enough to take the picture.

"Chinese Children in Holiday Attire," ca. 1907. Published by Britton and Rey, San Francisco. (*Wendy Rouse Jorae*)

"Street Scene in Chinatown," ca. 1910. Published by Richard Behrendt, San Francisco. (*Wendy Rouse Jorae*)

Some postcard photographers chose not to pose the shots at all but simply attempted to capture men, women, and children walking about the streets. These images are similar in style to Genthe's early photographs. The subjects ignore the camera and simply continue about their business. In one postcard, a woman walks down the street flanked by two young girls. They seem unaware of the photographer directly in front of them. It is possible that the woman already spotted the photographer and is attempting to hurry the girls past his camera. It is also possible that the failure of the three to meet the gaze of the photographer is a deliberate act of resistance, a refusal to consent to have their photograph taken. This style of postcard is rare and usually occurs only with the presence of adult men and women. This fact suggests that Chinese men and women were less willing to have their pictures taken or that the photographs of children were taken without their parents' knowledge and consent. An autobiographical account of the life of Elmer Wok Wai seems to confirm the latter. Elmer Wok Wai grew up in San Francisco's early Chinatown and remembered that photographers would ask him and his friends to pose "in doorways, on balconies, before the joss house, and they would stand us up and snap, snap with cameras — and my God! Those pictures were put on postcards and went all over the world."[15] Although Wai was extremely pleased with the appearance of his photograph at the newsstand of the St. Francis Hotel, his godmother objected to the distribution of the boy's photograph as embarrassing to the family. In rare cases, families apparently posed willingly for the camera. The artist Esther Hunt, whose numerous paintings of Chinese children later appeared on postcards, successfully convinced several Chinese mothers to let their children pose for her as models.[16]

In a vast majority of postcards the children are elaborately dressed in brightly colored, decorative, and distinctively Chinese holiday attire. Children in western clothes or more common Chinese clothing rarely appear in the postcards, and when they do the photographer often tries to subtly blend them into the picture. The children appear as quaint and foreign, similar to the Chinese-made objects that adorn their persons. The viewer's eye is drawn toward the children's elaborate Chinese headdresses, hats, bracelets, embroidered shoes, and handkerchiefs. The children often carry fans, flowers, dolls, and balloons. The photographers and artists also sought to add to the Oriental character of the cards by carefully posing the children in front of storefronts with Chinese decor, signs, or bulletins. When unavailable, the publisher simply added these embellishments to the final image. A holiday card produced by Richard Behrendt poses two Chinese children in between two New Year's narcissus plants. The plants appear to have been retroactively added to the image. Chinese accessories and props help to further exoticize the children by constructing them as the Other and denying them their status as United States citizens.[17]

"Greetings From San Francisco." ca. 1910. Published by Richard Behrendt, San Francisco. (*Wendy Rouse Jorae*)

"Chinese Mother and Child, Chinatown, San Francisco, California," ca. 1910. Photograph by Mervyn Silberstein for Scenic View Card Company. (*Wendy Rouse Jorae*)

"Chinese," ca. 1901. Photograph by William Henry Jackson, *(Detroit Publishing Company Collection, Library of Congress. Prints and Photographs Division.)*

Some postcard publishers went to great lengths to embellish the original images. The photographer Mervyn Silberstein, working in San Francisco's Chinatown beginning in the 1920s, "adjusted" his photographs and advertised them as "Chinee-Graphs! Distinctively Oriental-Colorful-Attractive, The Ideal Gift for Every Occasion." Silberstein's Chinee-Graphs exclusively featured Chinese children. The photographer captured his subjects on the street during the Chinese New Year festival. Silberstein retouched the images in his studio, erasing English words, adding Chinese characters, and highlighting the Chinese designs of the children's clothing. A postcard featuring a baby playing with a ball includes Chinese characters carefully added to the fruit stand above the baby's head. Silberstein postcards continued in circulation until the 1950s.[18] William Henry Jackson, a prominent photographer well-known for his images of the American West, also carefully staged and embellished a series of postcards portraying Chinese children. Jackson later sold these images to, and went to work for, the Detroit Publishing Company. Although the Detroit Publishing Company was not a San Francisco-based company, it produced numerous images of Chinese-American children and marketed them in cities with major Chinatowns like San Francisco. Positioned on the roof of an unknown building in an unknown city, the children posed in their holiday attire and stood next to signs bearing Chinese calligraphy. Jackson also took a number of photographs of the children walking in front of the camera. In the actual production of the postcard, Jackson isolated and cropped individual children from the photographs. The publisher then pasted the isolated image onto a white background and embellished the original black-and-white image with bright colors. The finished postcard highlighted the Chinese designs of the children's clothing and included cute or descriptive captions. One image of two seated girls included the caption "A Bit of Gossip." The title erroneously suggests to the viewer that the photographer spontaneously captured the children engaged in a private conversation. The original series of photographs, however, reveals the staged nature of the actual photo shoot, and the "Chinese" flourishes serve only to further isolate and crop Chinese children from mainstream American society.[19]

The captions on the cards also often had an Orientalizing and dehumanizing effect. Publishers at the Detroit Photographic Company labeled a 1901 postcard of a young Chinese girl "Demure and Shy." The downward tilt of the girl's head and eyes seems to affirm that assertion. However, such captions only furthered the stereotype of the passive and meek Asian female. Most cards include simple captions that describe the individuals as "a group of Chinese children" or "Chinese girls." The true identity of the children remains unknown. Similar studies of ethnic postcards conclude that the anonymity of ethnic subjects helps to dehumanize the Other.[20] This was no doubt, one of the consequences of the mass production of these nearly identical images of Chinese-American children. Ironically, at the same time that these postcards distanced Chinese children from

"Troubles of His Own," ca. 1901. Published by Detroit Photographic Co. (*Wendy Rouse Jorae*)

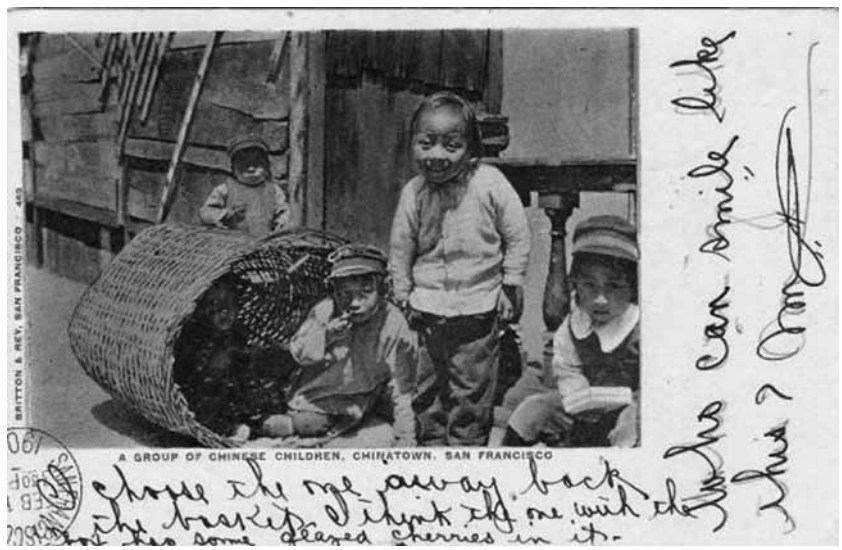
"Chinese Subjects," ca. 1901. Photograph by William Henry Jackson. *(Detroit Publishing Company Collection, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.)*

"A Bit of Gossip," ca. 1901. Published by Detroit Photographic Co. (*Wendy Rouse Jorae*)

American society, the very production of these images of Chinese childhood countered the invisibility of Chinese family life as perpetuated by anti-Chinese rhetoric. In a sense, then, the creation and distribution of these postcards helped to increase the visibility and to humanize the Chinese-American community for white audiences. The actual reactions of the individuals who purchased, sent, and received the postcards were no doubt more varied and nuanced. A careful reading of the messages inscribed on the cards can help illuminate their thoughts.

Postcards featuring Chinese children, made available for purchase in many local shops and newsstands in Chinatowns across the West Coast, apparently had widespread popular appeal. Visitors sent postcards from San Francisco and Oakland to friends in small towns and big cities in California, Nebraska, Missouri, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and New York City. Many of these cards ended up overseas in Liverpool, England, or Paris, France. Sightseers sent the cards to family and friends as mementos of the sights and sounds of their trips. Others used the cards simply to send messages. One gentleman sent a postcard featuring Chinese women and children to St. Joseph, Missouri. He wrote, "Just to let you know that in my hurry in leaving I forgot to mail you my check. Will do so on my return." Another man sent a postcard picturing two Chinese girls and one Chinese boy to inform friends that his family had moved

"Demure and Shy," ca. 1901. Postmarked 1907. Copyright 1901. Published by Detroit Photographic Co. (*Wendy Rouse Jorae*)



"A Group of Chinese Children." Published by Britton and Rey, San Francisco. (*Wendy Rouse Jorae*)

once again: "Dear Bess and George, Back Again in the same little cottage we left 6 months ago." Such nonchalant messages written on postcards demonstrate the increasingly widespread acceptance and popularity of Orientalized images of Chinatown.[21]

The messages written on postcards featuring Chinese children were generally positive. In 1909, Colonel George Armistead sent a postcard showing fourteen Chinese children to Miss Gallagher in Liverpool, England. Colonel Armistead wrote: "Here is quite a nice assortment of little Chinese tots for you." Another tourist sent a postcard of Chinese children playing in and around a giant basket. The writer remarked, "I choose the one away back in the basket." Grace Locke Davis sent a card featuring a Chinese boy in a wagon to Felix Sandder. Davis wrote, "Here's a little boy with a push mobile come to call on you from San Francisco." In each of these three postcards the writers selectively chose the children and in a sense took possession of them as their own. Through buying these postcards the senders seemed to be purchasing a sense of ownership over Chinese-American children which partially reflects an attitude of cultural superiority.[22] However, these images and their reception prove much more positive than earlier anti-Chinese depictions of Chinatown. By selecting and buying the postcards these visitors in a sense were purchasing a stake in the new Chinatown. By sending these images and sentiments to friends and relatives around the world, the writers were in effect assisting in the campaign to promote this alternative image of Chinatown. Meanwhile, the lives of the real children captured in the photographs remain obscured by their Orientalized and commodified representations.

Many writers used the images to point out distinctions between white middle-class Americans and Chinese-American children. A postcard sent from Oakland, California, to Miss Emma Johonnett in Pittsfield, Maine, in 1907 bore the image of five Chinese boys and girls. Although the photograph featured one boy dressed exclusively in western attire, the writer chose to focus on the exotic clothing of the other four. In reference to the women and children of Chinatown the writer remarked, "Their dresses are very rich of silk and alpaca principally. The little caps the babies wear have ridiculous little ears lined with fur stitching up on top." In 1909, an adult member of the Campbell family made similar comments on a postcard featuring women and children. The writer, sending the card to an obviously younger child, asked, "What do you think of these little children in their play clothes? And what do you think of the way the ladies are dressed would you like your mama, me and Ellen and Helen to dress so?" The intent of both writers was apparently to share this cute image of the quaintly dressed Chinese women and children. In so doing, however, the writers clearly set the subjects apart from their own conceptions of style and dress. Many Chinese-American families retained a distinctive Chinese identity through maintaining their ties to China, eating Chinese food, celebrating Chinese holidays, and speaking Cantonese. Although the messages on the postcards

"Children of Chinatown," ca. 1904. Postmarked 1906. Published by Detroit Photographic Co. (*Wendy Rouse Jorae*)

appear over-all to be positive in promoting a common vision of childhood innocence, by calling attention to the distinctive clothing of the individuals in the postcards the writers define Chinese women and children as foreign and separate from American culture.[23] This is even more ironic given that most Chinese children at this time were born in America, spoke English, and attended the public schools. Many Chinese-American families had converted to Christianity and adopted western-style clothing. A distinctly Chinese-American culture was emerging as individuals selectively adopted aspects from both cultures, but policies of segregation and exclusion refused them full entry into American society.

Other writers were more explicit in separating Chinatown's children from white America. A few days after the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, Dora Hansen sent a humorous note on a postcard that showed Chinese children to a friend in Germany. The writer inscribed new identities on each of the Chinese children by labeling them as "My bro.," "Myself," and "My Sister." Hansen then noted, "This is our photograph taken just a few moments before the earthquake, we look a little different now." Perhaps the writer was remarking on how much older and wiser the earthquake had made her family, in a way destroying their childhood innocence. The use of these ethnic children, clearly distinct in clothing and physical features, serves the seemingly humorous intent of Hansen in further contrasting her family's appearance before

and after the earthquake, and in effect separating Chinese children from American families. Another woman, visiting San Francisco during the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition, sent a postcard of Chinese children to a child in West Virginia. The writer remarked, "There are lots of little boys & girls here like these, but they are not as sweet & dear as little American girls." In contrasting the appearance and manner of the Chinese children with white children and refusing to recognize Chinese children as "American," the writer is effectively denying American-born Chinese children their status as American citizens.

Chinese-American entrepreneurs also produced postcards in an effort to promote their businesses and profit from the new tourist industry. Look Tin Eli was born in Mendocino, California, in 1870. By the early twentieth century, Look was a prominent member of the San Francisco business community as a secretary of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, the president of the Canton bank, and an officer of the Sing Chong Company Bazaar. Following the destruction by the 1906 earthquake, Look rebuilt the curios store to reflect the Orientalized tastes of tourists. The newly reconstructed Sing Chong Bazaar stood as a gateway to San Francisco's Chinatown, on the corner of California and Grant streets. He hoped that the large pagoda-shaped structure with bright red, green, and gold colors would attract tourists to San Francisco's new Chinatown. Soon, other Chinese and Euro-American property owners began to replicate the Oriental style of the Sing Chong Bazaar. Look Tin Eli insisted that "San Francisco's new Chinatown is so much more beautiful, artistic, and so much more emphatically Oriental, than the old Chinatown, the destruction of which great writers and artists have wept over for two years, is not worthy to be mentioned in the same breath."[24] Look Tin Eli and his imitators helped to transform Chinatown into a visible construction of white Americans' imagined, idealized Chinatown based on a concoction of western fantasies and stereotypes of Asia.[25] The Sing Chong Company catered to tourists through their large assortment of "Oriental arts and antiques." Customers also received souvenir postcards to remember their visits. One postcard shows a smiling young Chinese girl festively dressed and adorned with an elaborate headdress, fan, handkerchief, and platform shoes. The company's name appears in both English and Chinese in the corners of the postcard. In this manner, images of an exotic, Orientalized Chinese-American childhood proved crucial not only in promoting Look Tin Eli's business but in promoting a tourist-friendly image of Chinatown.[26]

Some Chinese families took advantage of tourists' specific fascination with Chinese-American family life by making arrangements with local tourist guides to perform for visitors for a small fee. Guides promised visitors the opportunity to witness a glimpse of real Chinese-American family life. The guide would lead tourists to the "singing children," who performed western and Chinese songs for paying tourists. Mother and father provided musical accompaniment for the children.[27] The Pacific Novelty Company published at least two postcards featuring the singing children. The actual identity of the children is unknown. In a sense then, they remain only caricatured images produced for the pleasure

"Sing Chong Company, Chinatown, San Francisco," ca. 1905. Publisher unknown. (*Wendy Rouse Jorae*)

of white audiences. However, this family's success in benefiting financially from the curiosity of tourists about Chinese family life reveals their effort to take some ownership of the images and to control their own lives. Tourist guidebooks often describe the family as "Christianized Chinese" in an effort to separate them from the mass of "heathen Chinese children." The western attire of the children suggests that their parents sought to set them apart from the Orientalized stereotypes of Chinese children. The family were fighting their own battle against the dominant image of an exotic Chinatown, even as they profited from the traveler's attraction to it. Some Chinese resented the tourists and those within their community who made a living by catering to them. Yet, the production of postcards and staged performances of Chinese childhood offered a safe, public venue for outsiders to experience "genuine"

Chinese-American family life. In some ways the commodification of images of Chinese childhood and family life ensured the protection and privacy of real Chinese family life from the intrusion of curious outsiders.[28]

By the 1920s, many leaders in the Chinese-American community openly resisted attempts to profit from exoticized images of Chinatown and tried to redirect public attention to the two-parent, middle-class families of Chinatown while also highlighting the degree of Americanization of Chinatown's children. In 1922, the newspaper editor Ng Poon Chew argued that Chinatown's children were "thoroughly Americanized." Chew described the complete transformation of Chinatown:

> As one strolls along the streets of Chinatown one sees no longer the sight of Chinese children garbed with the pleasing raiments of the Orient, in the colors of the rainbow with their skull cap bright and colorful chattering in the speech of their fathers playing the games which were played by their forebears centuries before in the valley of the Yangtse. But he will see Oriental children, with closely clipped hair, in smart American clothes, and many in khaki uniform of the Boy Scouts, playing American games, mostly delighting in parading with wooden guns carrying the Stars and Stripes in martial array, singing "Dixie Land" and "Marching Through Georgia." The Chinese children in their every-day speech prefer English to the Chinese language.[29]

Chew's image of Chinese family life stood in stark opposition to anti-Chinese propaganda that emphasized the unassimilability of the Chinese immigrant. He also rejected the exotic and Orientalizing postcards of Chinatown's children that consistently dressed them in the "pleasing raiments of the Orient." Chew preferred an image that celebrated the American-ness of the Chinese-American community. Middle-class white American families could relate to his references to the "Boy Scouts," "the Stars and Stripes," "Dixie Land," and "Marching Through Georgia." Chew attempted to transcend racial boundaries by appealing to the shared values of all middle-class Americans. This new image of Chinese American families positioned Chinese children as legitimate inheritors of American rights and freedoms at the same time it refused to abandon Chinese cultural traditions.

The postcard images of Chinese-American children stood in opposition to the anti-Chinese stereotype of a vice-ridden and diseased Chinatown occupied by inherently corrupt Chinese. The marketing of postcards portraying Chinese children functioned as a sort of public-relations campaign that helped to gain at least partial acceptance for Chinese families in California. White photographers and artists together with Chinese-American entrepreneurs successfully countered earlier anti-Chinese stereotypes of Chinatown. However, the new exotic caricature of Chinese childhood, which portrayed these children in traditional Chinese clothing and accoutrements, perpetuated an image of a forever foreign, static, and largely unassimilable Chinese-American community. Some Chinese-American families,

"The Singing Children," ca. 1910. Published by Pacific Novelty Company. San Francisco, California. (*Wendy Rouse Jorae*)

such as the Chews, recognized that this new image distanced their children from American society. The Chews countered the stereotype by publicly emphasizing the Americanization of their community while also encouraging the retention of select Chinese cultural traditions. As adults constructed and reconstructed images of Chinese-American childhood in an effort to promote their own agendas, Chinese-American children struggled to create a place for themselves in American society. Segregation and continued racial hostilities in San Francisco contributed to a feeling of isolation from mainstream American society. The children growing up in San Francisco's Chinatown in the post-1920 era would truly struggle to define and redefine the term Chinese American.

Notes

[1]Ivan Light, "From Vice District to Tourist Attraction: The Moral Career of American Chinatowns, 1880-1940," *Pacific Historical Review,* 43:3 (August 1974), 378-79, 388-90; Herbert Asbury, *The Barbary Coast* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1933; New York: Ballantine Books, 1973), 136. For a discussion of slumming expeditions in New York City, see also Mary Ting Yi Lui, *The Chinatown Trunk Mystery: Murder, Miscegenation, and Other Dangerous Encounters in Turn-of-the-Century New York City* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 38-39.

[2]Arnold Genthe, *As I Remember* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1936), 36.

[3]T. J. Geary, "The Other Side of the Chinese Question," *Harper's Weekly* (13 May 1893), 458.

[4]Politicians and health reformers would also examine the unique household structures in Chinatown in opposition to white middle-class models of domesticity. See Nayan Shah's chapter on queer domesticities in *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

[5]Judy Yung, *Unbound Feet: A Social History of Chinese Women in San Francisco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 296; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920,* microform (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1992.)

[6]"Asks That Police Enforce Opium Laws," *San Francisco Chronicle* (21 September 1904), p. 5; "Call a Halt on the Guides," *San Francisco Chronicle* (24 September 1904), p. 13.

[7]"Mob Attacks House of an Opium Smoker," *San Francisco Chronicle* (24 September 1904), p. 5.

[8]"Call a Halt on the Guides."

[9]John Kuo Wei Tchen, *Genthe's Photographs of San Francisco's Old Chinatown* (New York: Dover Publications, 1984), 3, 10-13; Arnold Genthe and Will Irwin, *Old Chinatown: A Book of Pictures* (New York: Mitchell Kennerly, 1912).

[10]Tchen, *Genthe's Photographs*, 14-15.

[11]Rosamond B. Vaule, *As We Were: American Photographic Postcards, 1905-1930* (Boston: Davis R. Godine, 2004), 47; George and Dorothy Miller, *Picture Postcards in the United States, 1893-1918* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1976), 15, 22, 26, 28, 155-56; Sam Stark, "Edward H. Mitchell, His Life and Times," Walter Kransky, ed. Walt's Postcards, http://www.thepostcard.com/walt/pub/ehm/chklst/ehmlife.pdf (accessed 18 March 2008.)

[12]Miller, *Picture Postcards,* 126-30; Vaule, *As We Were,* 117; Brooke Baldwin, "On the Verso: Postcard Messages as a Key to Popular Prejudices," *Journal of Popular Culture*, 22:3 (Winter 1988), 15, 17, 22; Wayne Martin Mellinger, "Postcards from the Edge of the Color Line: Images of African Americans in Popular Culture, 1893-1917," *Symbolic Interaction,* 15:4, (1992), 415, 419, 422, 430; Robert W. Rydell, "Souvenirs of Imperialism: World's Fair Postcards," in *Delivering Views: Distant Cultures in Early Postcards,* Christraud M. Geary and Virginia-Lee Webb, eds (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998), 55: Patricia C. Albers, "Symbols, Souvenirs, and Sentiments: Postcard Imagery of Plains Indians, 1898-1918," in *Delivering Views,* Geary and Webb, eds, 65-66.

[13]Colin and Tim Ward, *Images of Childhood in Old Postcards* (Phoenix Mill, United Kingdom: Alan Sutton Publishing Limited, 1991), 10.

[14]Joseph E. Illick, *American Childhoods* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 60-62; Priscilla Ferguson Clement, *Growing Pains: Children in the Industrial Age, 1850-1890* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1997), 36-39, 57.

[15]Veta Griggs, *Chinaman's Chance: The Life Story of Elmer Wok Wai* (New York: Exposition Press Inc., 1969), 49.

[16]Donna R. Yick, *Esther Hunt: A Collector's Guide* (San Francisco: Poco Books, 2005), 15, 19.

[17]Albers makes a similar point with regard to postcards featuring Native Americans. Albers, "Symbols, Souvenirs, and Sentiments," in *Delivering Views,* Geary and Webb, editors, 67, 70, 76.

[18]Mervyn Silberstein, "Chinee-Graphs!" post 1910, SF Chinatown (iii): Silberstein: 23250, California Historical Society, San Francisco, http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/award99/cubhtml/cichome.html (accessed 5 May 2006.)

[19]William Henry Jackson, Photographer, "Chinese Subjects," ca. 1901 (The Detroit Publishing Company Collection, from Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online Catalog), http:/memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/touring/index.html (accessed March 18, 2008). See Albers, "Symbols, Souvenits, Sentiments," in *Delivering Views,* Geary and Webb, editors, 70, for a similar discussion of modifications to postcards featuring American Indians.

[20]Albers, "Symbols, Souvenirs, Sentiments," 70.

[21]Brooke Baldwin has argued that the ubiquitous use of postcards featuring racist stereotypes of African Americans demonstrates the deep-rooted racism in American society. Baldwin, "On the Verso," 17. Wayne Mellinger makes a similar point in "Postcards from the Edge," 428.

[22]See also Albers, "Symbols, Souvenirs, Sentiments," 72.

[23]Baldwin explains that postcards depicting blacks as "slow-witted, lazy beasts of burden" and associating them with agricultural products denied them their humanity. Similarly, postcards of Chinese children that focus on the exotic nature of their dress deny American-born Chinese children their status as Americans. Baldwin, "On the Verso," 22.

[24]Look Tin Eli, "Our New Oriental City — Veritable Fairy Palaces Filled with the Choicest Treasures of the Orient," in *San Francisco, the Metropolis of the West* (San Francisco: Western Press Association, 1910).

[25]Raymond W. Rast, "The Cultural Politics of Tourism in San Francisco's Chinatown, 1882-1917," *Pacific Historical Review*, 76: 1 (February 2007), 53-54; Catherine Cocks, "Other People's History: Ethnic Slumming in American Cities, 1890-1915," paper presented at the 1997 Organization of American Historians, San Francisco, 17-20 April 1997, available online at http://www.oah.org/meeting/1997/cocks.htm (accessed 5 March 2008.)

[26]"Chinese Bazaars Are Radiant with New Goods," *Oakland Tribune* (11 September 1910), p. 70.

[27]Griggs, *Chinaman's Chance*, 47, 52; Joseph Carey, *By the Golden Gate or San Francisco the Queen City of the Pacific Coast; With Scenes and Incidents Characteristic of Its Life* (Albany, New York: The Albany Diocesan Press, 1902), 166-68.

[28]Pardee Lowe, *Father and Glorious Descendant* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1943), 38; "How to Show Your Eastern Cousins through Chinatown," 7; "A Bevy of Chinese High School Girls," *The San Francisco Call* (2 July 1905), p. 11; Rast, "Cultural Politics of Tourism," 45, 50-54.

[29]Ng Poon Chew, "Chinese Are Riding on Waves of Changing Sea of Modernism," *San Francisco Chronicle* (18 January 1922), Magazine Section, p. 8.

The Morelli House
Rescued and Restored

Carole Cosgrove Terry

In the early morning hours of September 30, 2001, Las Vegans were amazed to see police motorcycle escorts slowly leading an enormous flatbed truck carrying a Mid-century Modern residence down Fremont Street. The Junior League of Las Vegas had commissioned the movers to relocate the residence, the Morelli House, from its original site on Twain Road in the Desert Inn Country Club Estates to its new home at Ninth and Bridger streets in downtown Las Vegas. In keeping with the philanthropic organization's ongoing interest in historic preservation, the Junior League planned to restore the house in a manner as historically accurate as possible, to 1959, when Helen and Antonio Morelli built it. The house would not only be an important piece of Las Vegas's history saved for future generations to enjoy but was also to serve as the headquarters for the Junior League. But moving the house was only a middle step in the restoration process.[1]

In the 1990s, while the Junior League determined the need for a permanent headquarters, it wanted to continue its tradition of restoring and preserving Las Vegas's past. Its first preservation project, during the summer of 1977, was the Spring Mountain Ranch House located fifteen miles west of Las Vegas in the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. In 1974, the property had

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Current view of the front door of the Morelli House, 2007. Photograph by Rex Windom. (*Special Collections Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas)*

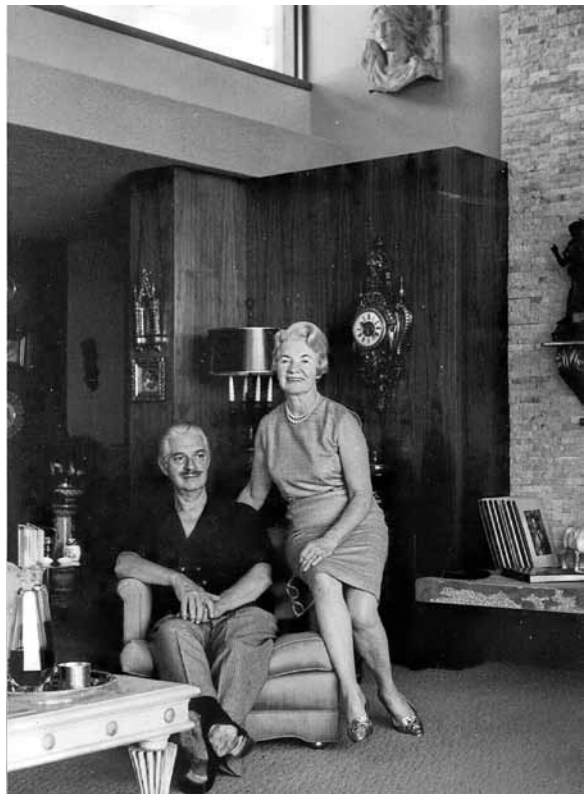
Morelli House being moved down Fremont Street, 2001. Photographer unknown. (*Special Collections Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas)*

been sold to the Nevada State Park System. Its former owners included Chester Lauck, a member of the radio team "Lum and Abner," the German actress Vera Krupp, and the billionaire Howard Hughes. In the spring of 1977, the Junior League restored the ranch to reflect the time that Howard Hughes had owned it. They created a docent-led program, trained volunteers, and began leading the public through the property. That same year, the League initiated and helped fund "Shakespeare in the Park," adjacent to Spring Mountain Ranch State Park, known today as the Super Summer Theater.[2]

A subsequent preservation project was the relocation of the Will Beckley House in 1979. When the home of the pioneer Beckley was slated to be destroyed to make way for a parking lot, the Junior League acquired it from his descendants and supervised and funded its move to the Clark County Heritage Museum on Boulder Highway in Henderson. In April of that year, the Beckley House was lifted onto a truck and moved from its original location at 120 South Fourth Street. Will Beckley had arrived in Las Vegas in 1908, opened a clothing store, and married Lena Grimes, a school teacher he had met in Illinois. The Beckleys built their home in 1912, and in 1979 the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* reported that it was the last pioneer home in downtown Las Vegas. For the next four years, the Junior League refurbished the house with authentic period furniture and accessories, officially dedicating it to the museum in 1983. It was the first structure on what the museum developed as Heritage Street, a collection of houses and buildings related to Las Vegas history.[3]

In 1997, during a search for an appropriate preservation project for its headquarters, the Junior League learned that the Whitehead House, an historic Mission Revival building located at Seventh Street and Mesquite Avenue, was scheduled for demolition to make way for a parking structure. With the organization's history and experience in preserving Las Vegas's past, it enthusiastically accepted the project of moving and restoring the house. Stephen R. Whitehead, the original owner and Clark County's first elected assessor, had been a prominent businessman during the industrial boom years when Las Vegas was transforming itself from a small town into a city. The Whitehead House cost $15,000 when it was built in 1929. After Whitehead's death, the Sisters of the Holy Family used the building as their convent for forty-three years, and after 1985, it served as an office for an insurance company. In 1987, the Whitehead House was listed in the National Register of Historic Places.[4]

The Whitehead House seemed the perfect property for the Junior League: The organization could be instrumental in saving a piece of Las Vegas's history, and the building was spacious enough to serve as its headquarters. A condition of its acquisition, however, was that it needed to be moved immediately. At that time, the Junior League had not purchased the necessary plot for the house, but, in 1998, the downtown casino owner Jackie Gaughan kindly donated some vacant land at Carson and Tenth streets, where it could remain until the Junior League could raise the funds and purchase a permanent site for the house. The



Helen and Antonio Morelli, 1960. Photographer unknown. (*Special Collections Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas)*

Nevada Commission on Cultural Affairs awarded the Junior League sufficient funds to purchase three adjoining lots at Ninth and Bridger, and the League made arrangements to move the Whitehead House. Tragically, on July 25, 2000, vandals gained access to the property. A fire ensued and the house burned to the ground.[5]

At an emergency meeting to discuss the destruction of the Whitehead House, the Nevada Commission on Cultural Affairs agreed that the Junior League could search for another historic property to restore and preserve. In April 2000, Steve Wynn had announced plans to reconfigure the Desert Inn golf course. His plans included the demolition of the houses in the Desert Inn Country Club Estates subdivision, originally developed in 1952 to border the golf course. After the fire in July, the Molasky Development Group, acting for Wynn, approached the League about relocating the Morelli House. The School of Architecture of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, had already determined that the house was most worthy of saving because of its nearly original condition and its architectural design. Furthermore, the house was constructed on a wooden post-and-

pier foundation that would allow it to be lifted onto a flatbed truck. With the assistance of the staff of the State Historic Preservation Office, the Junior League determined that Antonio Morelli was a significant pioneer in the entertainment field in Las Vegas in the 1950s and 1960s. The Nevada Commission on Cultural Affairs agreed with the Junior League that the Morelli House was an excellent example of the Midcentury Modern residential architecture prevalent in Las Vegas in the 1950s and 1960s and that it should be restored and preserved.[6]

Antonio Morelli came to Las Vegas in 1954 to serve as the musical director of the Sands Hotel. Educated at the Conservatory in Parma, Italy and trained in the classics, Morelli had traveled around the country in the 1930s and 1940s writing music and conducting theater and civic orchestras. The Sands president Jack Entratter, who had known Morelli from the Copacabana Club in New York, was looking for an orchestra leader and musician with a classical background to serve as the new hotel's musical director, and he offered the position to Morelli. According to Morelli's wife, Helen, he eagerly accepted the position because of the decline in the theater circuit on the East Coast. Also, it was Morelli's opportunity both to lead an orchestra in a growing entertainment center and to adapt to all the changes occurring in the industry after World War II.[7]

Dean Martin, Antonio Morelli and Frank Sinatra, 1960. Photographer unknown. (*Special Collections Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas)*

Don Rickels, George Burns, Mr. and Mrs. Nat King Cole, Carlos Gastel (Cole's agent), Antonio Morell, 1958. Photographer unknown. (*Special Collections Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas)*

Senator Alan Bible, Antonio Morelli, President Lyndon B. Johnson, Senator Howard Cannon, ca. 1664. Photographer unknown. (*Special Collections Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas)*

Morelli's duties as musical director included writing arrangements for the Sands's regular orchestra, which was reportedly the Strip's largest. Jack Entratter knew that big-name entertainers would help draw the high rollers the casinos sought. He engaged such headliners as Nat King Cole, Danny Thomas, Jerry Lewis, Florence Henderson, Red Skelton, and others. Many of the stars brought their own musical directors, but Morelli worked with them to produce an integrated show, enlarging the orchestra to as many as thirty-two musicians by adding a string section. His most famous collaboration was with the legendary Rat Pack: Dean Martin, Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis, Jr., Joey Bishop, and Peter Lawford. Historic photographs show Morelli enjoying the Rat Pack's on-stage clowning while standing in front of his orchestra. Morelli's niece, Adele Tartaglia, reports that Sinatra teased Morelli beyond the showroom. When the Rat Pack golfed behind the Morelli House, Sinatra always asked Morelli to join them, to which Dean Martin responded, "Stop it. You know Tony doesn't like golf."[8]

During the extravagant years of midcentury Las Vegas, when the city was creating its prominence in world entertainment venues, Morelli played an important role, but he also encouraged and promoted the development of the culture of classical music. He created the Las Vegas Pops Concert Orchestra, whose performances were sometimes called Shirt Sleeve Symphonies. These free classical-music concerts were held first at the Sands Convention Center and then, as audiences grew, at Cashman Field. The programs ranged from concert versions of operas to performances with nightclub stars such as Dean Martin and Danny Thomas. In the Las Vegas Convention Center, audiences as large as ten thousand would listen to the music that Morelli composed and conducted especially for Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, and Mother's Day. Helen Morelli recalled that one local magazine referred to her husband as the "Toscanini of the Desert." Antonio and Helen were also active in the Roman Catholic Church, including preparing special services and, in 1963, they commissioned a window in the Shrine of the Guardian Angel on Cathedral Way, just north of the Wynn Las Vegas Hotel. Morelli created a Music Performance Trust Fund that subsidized the musicians' salaries. Looking ahead, he showcased "Musicians of the Future" in gala concerts with young artists performing with the Las Vegas Pops Orchestra. Tom Constanten, who became a member of the Grateful Dead, reports, "Morelli's showbiz savvy got us kids to play way over our heads." Furthermore, in 1969, Morelli arranged for a scholarship fund for music students entitled the Antonio Morelli Friends of Music Endowment Fund and gave the lead gift of $5,000. The Junior League was thrilled to find that the Morelli House had belonged to a pioneer who believed in the future of Las Vegas.[9]

For the Junior League, architectural significance was just as important in selecting a preservation project as the original builder, in this case particularly so because the Morelli House was the only example from the Desert Inn Country Club Estates to be saved. Alan Hess, a noted preservationist and prolific

writer about midcentury architecture in the West states in his essay "The Morelli House: A New Architecture for a New City": "The historic Antonio and Helen Morelli house . . . is a vibrant reminder of the newness, optimism, and style in Las Vegas in the mid-twentieth century. The house's bold horizontal lines, glass walls, open plan, and natural materials embody the fundamental tenets of Modern Architecture and Modern living in that period."[10]

The Morellis were influenced by the modernist architects R. M. Schindler and Philip Johnson, who built the "Glass House" in New Canaan, Connecticut, Helen's hometown. When the Morellis hired Las Vegan Hugh E. Taylor as the lead architect, they asked him to include modernist styles they had seen. Taylor grew up in Southern California and, according to the architect Robert A. Fielden, was influenced by Richard Neutra, a practitioner of the California Movement of Midcentury Modern architecture. Taylor had worked with Wilbur Clark on the Desert Inn, and he designed other residences in the Desert Inn Country Club Estates, as well as the original Sunrise Hospital and Country Club Towers. The Morellis provided input into Taylor's designs of the house, adding what Fielden calls "Vegas touches," such as the chest-high sink in the master bathroom built to accommodate Morelli's height and the one-of-a-kind copper hood over the

Current view of the living room in the Morelli House, 2007. Photograph by Ernie Cabo. (*Special Collections Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas)*

living-room fireplace. The builder, Richard Small, also worked closely with the Morellis. Small was the head carpenter at the Sands and had been carpenter foreman at the Nevada Test Site near Las Vegas. Fielden confirms that the house is an excellent example of Midcentury Modern architecture but adds that those "Vegas touches" firmly place it in the context of Las Vegas history.[11]

Antonio Morelli died in June of 1974, and in 1978 Helen sold the house to Kay G. Glenn, who had been Howard Hughes's press secretary from 1951 until Hughes's death, in 1976. In August 2000, Glenn donated the Morelli House to the Junior League. In a 2007 interview, he related that Helen Morelli sold the house to him only because he promised not to make any changes to the style or structure. Indeed, over the years, the only changes he made were to the paint color. And so it was that, in September of 2000, the Morelli House arrived at Ninth and Bridger.[12]

After moving the house to its new location, the Junior League faced many challenges with the restoration. A problem with expansive soil required $35,000 to remedy before the house could be settled on its new foundation. The house itself required extensive mechanical, structural, and electrical repairs. The Junior League conducted a major funding drive and received numerous in-kind contributions from the community, as well as additional grant funds from the Nevada Commission on Cultural Affairs. At every step, the Junior League was careful to adhere to the proper procedures and to the *U. S. Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitation*, as well as the *Nevada State Historic Preservation Commission Guidelines for CCA Grants.* Janet White of UNLV's School of Architecture identified the entry hall, kitchen/breakfast room, dining/living "great room," and master and guest bathrooms as primary spaces crucial to the integrity of the Midcentury Modern structure. Jane Fielden, IIDA; Mimi Rodden, a former state historic preservation officer; and Donna Andress, a Las Vegas resident during the 1950s and 1960s, developed restoration plans compatible with the architectural theme. Although the Junior League received its certificate of occupancy in December of 2003, the formal public opening was held in April of 2007, when most of the restoration work had been completed.[13]

Today, a stop at the Morelli House allows one to imagine what it would have been like to visit the Morellis in the 1960s or 1970s. The Junior League was careful to restore the exterior of the house as closely as possible to its original look as a Midcentury Modern "planer" house, in which the architect used planes to define and articulate spaces in the interior. The clean, horizontal lines, overhanging roof, and the beams that extend into the interior are typical of this style. The exterior walls are faced with a stone screen of ornamental concrete blocks, a feature designed by the architect Edward Durell Stone in 1958 for the American Embassy in New Delhi. The original screen at the Morelli House could not be moved, but the Junior League searched for replacements that closely resemble the original design. In addition, the concrete foundation of the music room that the Morellis had added to the open carport area on the east side of the house prohibited its

Historic view of the Morelli house's front door showing swimming pool, ca. 1963. Photographer unknown. (*Special Collections Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas)*

Current view of the breakfast nook, 2007. Photograph by Rex Windom. (*Special Collections Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas)*

move. Another unique feature was the swimming pool, which the Morellis had located behind a privacy wall in the front yard so as not to hinder the view of the Desert Inn golf course in the back. The tall blue double-entry door looks exactly as it did when the Morellis lived there.[14]

Upon entering the house, one immediately recognizes the many original materials from 1959. The entryway retains the original gold-bordered white linoleum flooring and the redwood room divider that served as a hall closet. The front door is framed by unusual tear-drop glass panels created by Isabel Piczak, who designed the stained-glass window sponsored by the Morellis at the Shrine of the Guardian Angel. It is a visual reminder of the contribution the Morellis made to their church.[15]

Docents trained by the Junior League lead visitors to the kitchen and the breakfast nook, which served as the nerve center of the Morelli home. In the kitchen, the copper finishes, redwood walls and cabinets, and the mustard-yellow tile and Formica counter tops reflect the popular motifs of the late 1950s. The Morellis included many innovative features in the kitchen, including a counter-top stove, magazine racks, a bun-warmer drawer, enclosed storage behind the sink, lazy susans in corner cabinets, and a special cabinet with a heavy-duty shelf for a Mixmaster. The original flooring of orange linoleum, bordered with blue-green stripes, covers the floors in the kitchen and breakfast nook. The flooring there and in the guest bathroom and entry hall are of a vinyl composition with inserts of pieces that are not necessarily typical of a Midcentury Modern, but it is the kind of detail rarely found today. The original brown appliances—ovens, refrigerator, and stove cook-top hood—and the frosted egg-shaped hanging globes and punched-brass cones complete the Midcentury Modern look.[16]

In the breakfast nook alcove, black leather benches in the corner originally faced a table that could be raised and lowered to either dining or cocktail-table height. The Morellis entertained often, so they customized the television unit at the west end of the breakfast nook so that it could be moved from the wall into the room to create a bar. Eventually, Helen Morelli deemed this area too cramped for rehearsing, so a music studio was added on the site of the carport. The kitchen counter is faced with padded and pleated Naugahyde, a vinyl simulated-leather fabric, this "Vegas" touch was often seen in the local hotels and casinos in the 1950s. The utility room adjacent to the kitchen has the original redwood cabinets, steel utility sink, and brown built-in washer and dryer. At one point, the half bathroom was used as a laundry room, but the Junior League restoration turned it back into a bathroom, complete with yellow tile and turquoise toilet, in 2007.[17]

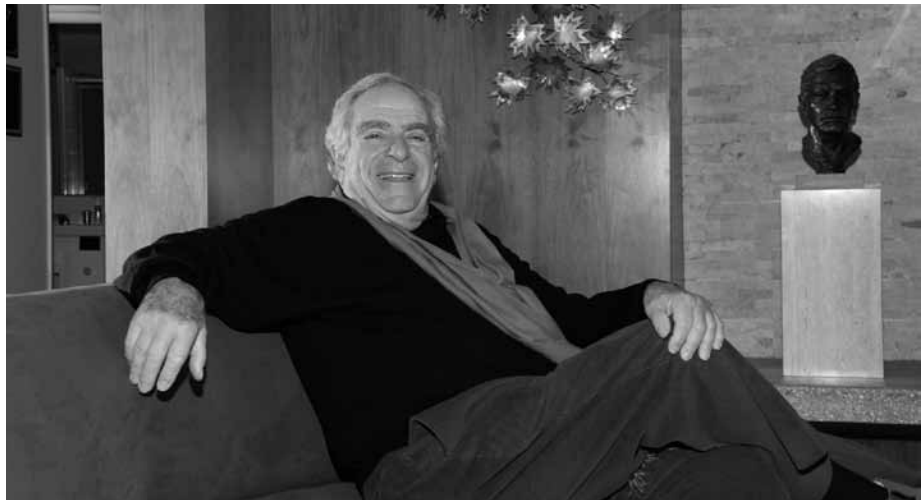
Historic photographs of the breakfast nook show that the Morellis displayed books and memorabilia on the shelves above the benches, and the Junior League has replicated that look with period artifacts and pictures of the house and family. Shortly after the house was moved, in 2000, a former neighbor of Helen

Morelli knocked at the door. She was carrying several boxes of photographs and personal souvenirs. As Patricia Wippel, the 2008-09 president of the Junior League of Las Vegas, reports, "We were amazed and thrilled to receive such a valuable photographic record of the House and the family." When Morelli moved east after selling the house, she gave her neighbor boxes of photographs, newspaper clippings, and personal scrapbooks for safekeeping. After the neighbor saw a newspaper article about the house, she brought them to the Junior League, stating that she was glad they could help in the restoration. Volunteers sorted the material, identifying as many Morelli family members as possible. Subsequently, the Junior League donated them as the Morelli Collection to the Special Collections Department in the Lied Library at UNLV.[18]

When visitors move into the dining/living "great" room, they immediately recognize the Midcentury Modern features the Morellis employed. As Alan Hess wrote, "In this view of Modern design, the walls, ceilings, dropped ceiling soffits and fireplaces are treated as an abstract composition of interlocking planes that subtly define the entry, living and dining spaces—a common goal of Modern design."[19] The wood panels, unpainted high ceiling, and stone facing around the fireplace call attention to the use of simple, natural materials common in Midcentury Modern houses. The clerestory windows and the sliding glass door and windows of the north wall give the area a light, unobstructed feel. Neither the 15-to-16-foot-high panels of matched mahogany nor the posts and beams supporting the large expanse of glass can be duplicated today. The rare wood is one that architects are trying to preserve, and the windows are incompatible with earthquake building codes. The floating marble fireplace, with its massive pleated-copper hood, dominates the living room portion of the room, and the Morellis added another innovation: The drapes covering the north wall could be drawn with a touch of a button, disappearing into a panel next to the fireplace.[20]

On the east wall of the dining area is a mural, "Layers of Legacy," a visual history of some of the more than two hundred community projects and advocacy efforts the Junior League of Las Vegas has accomplished since its founding in 1946.[21] As part of the 2005 Las Vegas Centennial Commission's 100 Mural Project, the Junior League commissioned Margaret DeClerk, a graphic artist for the City of Las Vegas Department of Leisure Services, to create the mural specifically to hang in the Morelli House dining room to inform visitors of the League's legacy of service.[22]

Beneath the mural in the room's dining area is a unique cubist dining-room set, one of the Midcentury Modern furnishings designed and donated by the prominent designer Vladimir Kagan, named "the grandfather of modern furniture design" by *European Magazine*. Originally, reflecting Antonio's Italian heritage, the Morellis chose a European theme with comfortable, traditional furniture, heavily swagged curtains, and classical busts, but the Junior League decided that the furnishings should reflect the Midcentury Modern architectural design rather than the European.[23] According



Vladimir Kagan, 2008. Photograph by Rex Windom. (*Special Collections Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas)*

to Dedee Nave, the Junior League is fortunate that Kagan oversaw the furniture acquisitions, and she relates how he became involved:

> During the summer of 2006, I had dropped by to see Dave Palmer, then the CEO of the World Market Center, looking for advice on how to obtain Midcentury Modern furnishings for the House. After I explained what we were looking for, he introduced me to Victor Pedraz, the head of the World Market Design Center. Excitedly they informed me that Vladimir Kagan was scheduled to give a presentation lecture the very next day and that together they would ask him to consult with us and perhaps be able to help us. The next day, three of our committee members, myself, Sherry Colquit and Jane Fielden, attended the Kagan presentation and were indeed given the opportunity to explain our project to Mr. Kagan over lunch. After trying to describe the restoration project and the house to him, we asked him if he would be able to go to the house to see it since it was less than a mile away from the World Market Center. He agreed. We drove Mr. Kagan over to the house and upon entering he exclaimed, "You ladies do not know what a treasure you have here. Please let me be your interior designer. I will help you obtain my furniture for the House." One week after our encounter with Vladimir Kagan we had an email from him that he had secured donations of his furniture to his specifications from his current manufacturers and that he would fill in the rest from his own historical furniture collection. Not only did he secure the iconic museum quality furniture for us, but he also specified the carpeting, and the furniture arrangement. It was pure kismet.[24]

As a result, all the iconic furniture pieces in the room reflect Kagan's motif of Midcentury Modernism. In addition to a cubist dining-room set, Kagan donated a large Nautilus sofa and tri-symmetric footstool from his private collection. Following Kagan's designs, the American Leather Company donated a pair of red serpentine sofas and leather ottomans, and Weiman Preview Furniture donated the cocktail table and barrel chairs. Because of Kagan's interest and generosity, visitors can truly step back to the mid twentieth-century when standing in the living/dining room.[25]

The Junior League is fortunate to have an artist's rendition of the original Desert Inn Country Club Estates plot plan to display adjacent to the living room. Richard Hooker, Senior Cultural Arts Specialist of the City of Las Vegas Department of Cultural Affairs, owns the original and generously allowed the Junior League to make and display a reproduction. An arrow helps visitors find the location of the Morelli House in the development. Below it, on a laptop computer, the Junior League displays photographs taken by Fred Cozzens that document the house's 2001 journey from the Country Club Estates to its present location.[26]

During the house tour, docents point out the other primary spaces—the guest and master bathrooms—which are restored as closely as possible to the original. In the guest bath, the Morellis chose yellow as the dominant color, and the yellow fixtures and bright wallpaper with stylized orange flowers mark the room as typical of their time. Passing through the Junior League board room (formerly the master bedroom) with its extensive built-in closets and wardrobes, visitors reach the master bath, which includes features innovative for its day: dual sinks, an open step-down shower, and beautiful custom turquoise gold-fleck ceramic tile. Both bathrooms have an additional Morelli customized touch: the initials "AM" on the faucets. Visitors are always amazed at the detail in the Morelli designs.[27]

To fulfill the organization's mission to keep this piece of Las Vegas's past alive for all, the Junior League has designed public tours and holds free special events. The first event, co-sponsored by the Las Vegas Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, SH Architecture, and Nevada Humanities, was held on April 9, 2007, when the restoration and refurnishing were nearly complete.[28] The occasion featured a lecture by Alan Hess followed by a reception in the house. More than three hundred people attended, attesting to the interest of Las Vegans in the newly preserved piece of the past. In May 2007, the public was invited to tour the Morelli House during Historic Preservation Week. In September of that year, the Junior League hosted another special open house that displayed Midcentury clothing and accessories from the collection of Diane Bush.[29]

In 2008, the Junior League held additional special events celebrating the Morelli House. In January, when Vladimir Kagan gave a special lecture at the World Market Center, the Junior League hosted a post-lecture book signing at the house, and more than a hundred people enjoyed meeting Kagan. In May, the Junior League again participated in the community's Cultural History Fair held at the Las Vegas Springs Preserve. On December 6, 2008, the

Christmas at the House, 2008. Photograph by Rex Windom. (*Special Collections Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas)*

prize-winning "Merry Morelli Christmas" open house featured a number of collectible Midcentury Christmas ornaments, crèches, Hanukkah menorahs, and holiday decorations. In April 2009, the Junior League presented "Morelli and His Music," an event co-sponsored with the Oral History Research Center and Arnold Shaw Music Library and Archives at UNLV, the Musicians Union Local 369, and the Las Vegas Jazz Society, and funded in part by Nevada Humanities. It presented stories and recollections by musicians who performed in the Morelli orchestras as well as a concert of Morelli's orchestral selections by the Las Vegas Academy High School Jazz Band. A reception with guided tours at the Morelli House concluded the program. Attendees received a CD featuring Morelli's music and an oral interview of Helen Morelli made in 1976. In October of 2008, the Junior League held two events for the public to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the house's construction: A lecture, followed by a book signing and reception, by Elliot Engel entitled "The Genius of Mark Twain," and a "Golden Anniversary" Open House with special exhibits of memorabilia relevant to the late 1950s era. In October of 2010, the public was invited to the Morelli House to view the exhibit "Remains of the Day," photographs of Midcentury Modern buildings in Las Vegas that escaped the wrecking ball. The open house was part of the "Mid-Mod Marvels Weekend" convention co-sponsored

by the Architectural and Decorative Arts Society and the Friends of Classic Las Vegas. The Junior League intends to hold at least one educational event a year in addition to providing tours to assure that the Morelli House will always be accessible to the public.[30]

Tours of the Morelli House, always free of charge, are available for groups by appointment. Many have visited the Morelli House, ranging from the famous Red Hat women's organizations to the Atomic Age Alliance to guests from the United Kingdom interested in following the Rat Pack of the 1960s. In the first year after its formal opening in April 2007, nearly one thousand people toured the house. Reservations for group tours are available by calling the Junior League office, at (702) 822-6536. For those unable to visit in person, Nevada Humanities, in partnership with the Junior League, has listed the Morelli House in its Online Nevada Encyclopedia with galleries of photographs, a complete presentation of Alan Hess's article "A New Architecture for a New City," and an interactive virtual tour of the house at www.onlinenevada.org.[31]

Demonstrating the support the Junior League has received from the community, its project has been granted awards by several organizations. In 2001, the State of Nevada placed the Morelli House on the State's Historical Registry. The City of Las Vegas designated the Morelli House as an Historic Place and listed it on the City of Las Vegas Historical Registry in March of 2007. In April of that year, the Junior League received the American Institute of Architects Community Award as well as recognition by the United States Congress, in the *Congressional Record*, this last sponsored by Representative Shelley Berkley in the House, and in the Senate by Senator John Ensign. In May 2007, the Las Vegas City Council awarded the Junior League its Historic Preservation Award. That month, the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office awarded the League a 2007 Historic Preservation Award in ceremonies in Virginia City and, again at the Nevada State Museum in Lorenzi Park for the benefit of Southern Nevadans. In January 2008, the Morelli House received the Mayor's Urban Design Award for Historic Preservation, again honoring the Junior League's preservation project. In August 2010, Ida Siverio spotlighted the Morelli House as one of the nine outstanding buildings important in Las Vegas's architectural history. In recognition of the Morelli House's fiftieth year, the Junior League applied for listing on the National Historic Registry.[32] On June 15, 2012, the Morelli House was placed on the National Registry for Historic Places through the efforts of Ron James, the Nevada State Preservation Commission and of Sally Rycroft and Dr. Carole Terry of the Junior League of Las Vegas.

The restoration and refurbishing of the Morelli House is a project that continues the Junior League's tradition of rescuing and capturing the history of Las Vegas, a culture opposed to the community's prevalent tear-down-and-rebuild ethos. Since its opening to the public, the many visitors who have visited the Morelli House reflect an increased interest in the mid-twentieth-century history of Las Vegas. Like Spring Mountain and the Beckley House projects, the Morelli House represents an important era in the history of Las Vegas and in architecture.

Notes

[1]*Las Vegas Sun (*1 October 2001).

[2]http://parks.nv.gov.smr.htm; Patrick Gaffey, "Junior League of Las Vegas: Laying Foundations for the Arts," *Arts Alive* (March/April 1990), 24,5,30; *Junior League of Las Vegas Annual Scrapbook*, 1977-78, Special Collections, University of Nevada, Las Vegas; Dedee Nave (President, Junior League of Las Vegas Endowment Committee 2008-09, and Co-chair, Morelli House Public Program Committee), interview by author, 9 December 2008, 13 September 2010; Dedee Nave and Robin McClain, eds., *Junior League of Las Vegas, 1946-1996: A Golden Heritage of Community Service* (Las Vegas: Junior League of Las Vegas, 1997, 63: *The Sage,* 17:5 (December 1976), 19; and 17:6 (January 1977), 17.

[3]*Las Vegas Review Journal* (11 March 1979); (16 November 1979); (13 March 1983); Nave and McClair, *Junior League,* 59; *The Sage,* 20:1 (August 1980), 11-12, and 20:6 (January 1980), 25.

[4]*Las Vegas Review-Journal,* (26 July 26, 2000); *Las Vegas Sun,* (26 July 2000).

[5]http://www.et-las-vegas.nv.us/whitehead_house_moved.htm; Sherry Colquitt (President, Junior League of Las Vegas Endowment Committee, 2003-08, Vice President, 2002-03), interview by the author, 22 February 2008; *Las Vegas Sun* (26 July 2000), p. B5; Carole Cosgrove Terry, "A Mid-Century Modern Miracle," *In The Morelli House* (Las Vegas: Junior League of Las Vegas, 2008), 20.

[6]Headquarters Sub-committee, Junior League of Las Vegas Endowment Committee, minutes of 16 August 2000; Colquitt interview; Alan Hess, "A New Architecture for a New City," *In The Morelli House,* 6; Mella Rothwell Harmon, "Description" and "Significance," Registration Form, Nevada Register of Historic Places, submitted by the Junior League, 15 July 2001; Terry, "Mid-century Modern Miracle," 20

[7]Helen L. Coffer, "Antonio Morelli: From Broadway to Las Vegas," *The Sage*, 2:1 (Summer 1967), 22; Hess, "New Architecture," 2-3; Helen Morelli, oral interview, 6 March 1976, Special Collections, University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

[8]Adele Tartaglia, e-mail interview with Heather Schaeffer, 25 January 2009; Coffer, "Antonio Morelli," 20; Hess, "New Architecture," 3-4; Morelli, interview.

[9]http://www.digitalinterviews.com; http://system.nevada.edu/Board-of-R/Meetings/Minutes; Coffer, "Antonio Morelli," 23-5; Hess, "New Architecture," 5; Morelli, Interview.

[10]Hess, "New Architecture," 1.

[11]Robert A. Fielden, interview by author, 25 May 2010; Alan Hess, interview with Hugh E. Taylor, 11 April 2007, Hess collection; Morelli, interview; Coffer, "Antonio Morelli," 22; Hess, "New Architecture," 10, 12, 19; Alan Hess, *Viva Las Vegas: After Hours Architecture* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1993); Minutes, Junior League of Las Vegas Endowment Committee, 23 January 2003.

[12]Kay G. Glenn, interview by author, 10 April 2007; Minutes, Junior League, 23 January 2003. *Las Vegas Sun* (18 June 1974).

[13]Colquitt, interview; Narrative, CCA Grant Program Application, (29 September 2006), 2; Nave, interview.

[14]Fielden, interview; Hess, "New Architecture," 12; Morelli, Interview; Carole Cosgrove Terry, docent tour, September 2008.

[15]Hess, "New Architecture," 14; *Las Vegas Sun*, (18 June 1974); Terry, docent tour, 3.

[16]Fielden, interview; Hess, "New Architecture," 17-18; Terry, docent tour, 3.

[17]Fielden, interview; Hess, "New Architecture," 18; Terry, docent tou r, 4.

[18]Hess, "New Architecture," 18; Terry, docent tour, 4; Patricia Wippel, interview by author, 3 December 2008.

[19]Hess, "New Architecture," 13.

[20]Fielden, interview; Hess, "New Architecture," 14-15; Terry, docent tour, 5.

[21]The Junior League was founded on 26 February 1946 as the Service League. On 22 September 1971, the Association of Junior Leagues International (AJLI) named the Service League as its 219th affiliated member. Nave, and McClain, *Junior League*, 4.

[22]Terry, "Layers of Legacy," *In The Morelli House,* 24.

[23]Hess, "New Architecture," 15; Terry, "The Kagan Connection," *In The Morelli House,* 22-23.

[24]Nave, interview.

[25]Colquitt, interview; Nave, interview; Terry, "Kagan Connection," 23.

[26]Nave, interview.

[27]Hess, "New Architecture," 16; Terry, docent tour, 6.

[28]Some carpentry, electrical work, and tile replacements had not yet been finished. Nave, interview.

[29]Nave, interview; *Las Vegas Review Journal,* 14 April 2007.

[30]The Morelli House was awarded third prize for indoor decoration in the contest held by the *Review-Journal. Review-Journal Luxury Magazine* (25 December 2008); Nave, interview; Press Release, Junior League of Las Vegas, 15 September 2010; Sandra Windom, Chair, Junior League of Las Vegas Morelli House Public Program Committee, 2008-09, interview with author, 23 November 2008.

[31]http://www.nevadahumanities.org; Colquitt, interview; Nave, interview; Ida Siverio, "Dreams of Stone and Steel—Nine Spots That Put—or Should Put—Las Vegas on the Architectural Map," *Vegas Seven*, 29 (26 August-1 September 2010), 26-29.

[32]Colquitt, interview; Nave, interview.

Notes & Documents

A Tale of Two Wests: A New Census Report for Nevada in 1860

RONALD M. JAMES

The eighth United States Census, in 1860, recorded the number of people living in Utah Territory more than a dozen years after Brigham Young declared the region to be Zion, the new home of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints, otherwise known as the Mormons. The subsequent census report documented the region before President James Buchanan signed the act that split Utah Territory in half in March 1861, creating Nevada Territory and giving the emerging mines of the western Great Basin an industry-friendly government located in the nearby territorial capital of Carson City. Enumerators recorded the booming population of the future Nevada as part of the larger picture of Utah, but the final report separated the statistics, issuing final, divided reports on Utah and Nevada, just as the latter was taking shape.

Fortunately, the Online Nevada Census database at www.Nevadaculture.org allows for an even more detailed examination of Nevada in 1860.[1] The Census Bureau documented 6,853 people living in western Utah that year. Enumerators from the New Mexico Territory failed to cross the Colorado River to record people in the Las Vegas meadows, so the small number living there was absent in that census.[2] The discovery of the fabulously rich Comstock Lode in January and June of 1859 initiated the Rush to Washoe, attracting more than half of the people documented in the western Great Basin in 1860.[3] With 3,597, or 57 percent, of the 6,291 adults in the region living on the Comstock, it is clear the rush radically changed the demography of the future Nevada Territory.

Men dominated those attracted by gold and silver even more than in the rest of the region, which exhibited a severe gender imbalance from the start. Not surprisingly, mining typically attracted the single, young, and male. Of the entire population, 6,117, or 89 percent, were male. Only 736, or 11 percent, were female.[4] This statistic becomes even more remarkable when considering only

adults. Children fifteen years and younger totaled 562 in the western Great Basin. Removing them from the picture reveals 5,830 men in the region and only 461 women, representing 7 percent of the adults.

The scarcity of women was most dramatic in mining districts. By looking at the distribution of men, women, and children in the various communities of the young territory, it is possible to examine two distinct places in the region settled first by a diverse population in the 1850s and then by a new flood of emigrants attracted by the emerging mining districts.

TABLE 1
1860 Census: Distribution of Men, Women, and Children among Non-Mining Districts

District	*Men*	*Women*	*Children*[i]	*Total*
Carson City	484	107	123	714
Carson Valley	290	66	96	452
Eagle Valley	164	23	40	227
Fort Churchill and area	366	8	14	388
Genoa	104	23	28	155
Jacks Valley	77	14	26	117
Long Valley	45	2	2	49
Ragtown and vicinity	35	1	2	38
Ruby Station	105	---	---	105
Stations on mainline	40	---	---	40
Steamboat	166	13	17	196
Truckee Meadows	96	3	6	105
Walker River Valley	16	3	5	24
Washoe Valley	167	33	70	270
Totals	2,157	296	429	2,882

[i]Children here are defined as age of fifteen years or younger.

TABLE 2
1860 Census: Distribution of Men, Women, and Children among Mining Districts

District	*Men*	*Women*	*Children*	*Total*
Chinatown	69	8	1	78
Flowery Mining District	80	---	---	80
Gold Hill	568	13	17	598
Gold Hill Mining District	40	---	---	40
Mammoth Eagle District	34	2	4	40
Palmyra Mining District	80	---	---	80
Silver City	604	14	18	636
Sullivan Mining District	39	---	---	39
Virginia City	2140	98	104	2342
Virginia City Mining Dist.	40	---	---	40
Totals	3,694	135	144	3,973

The distribution of women in mining camps as opposed to the non-mining areas provides some immediate contrasts. Not surprisingly, there were more women in the non-mining areas settled in the 1850s. Removing the military outposts, which men naturally dominated, shows women representing 12.1 percent of the population in these "older" areas, a dramatic difference from the scarce 3.4 percent who lived in the mining districts. Generally, larger communities had higher percentages of women. Virginia City follows this pattern, but women reached only 4.2 percent, compared to Carson City, where they were 15 percent of the community. The distribution of children naturally echoed this pattern.

An examination of immigrants provides another way to consider the region. It is well known that Nevada consistently had more foreign-born than most other states throughout the nineteenth century.[5] Table 3 identifies the birthplaces of residents as grouped into major geographic areas. In fact, there were 96 distinct places of birth identified.

TABLE 3
1860 Census: Places of Birth

Place of Birth	*Number of Males*	*Number of Females*	*Total*
All USA and terr.	4,151	579	4,731
Northern U.S.	1,939	142	2,081
Southern U.S.	890	99	989
Midwestern U.S.	1,162	188	1,350
Western U.S.	161	150	311
United Kingdom	971	100	1,071
Ireland	616	32	648
England	248	47	295
Scotland	85	15	100
Wales	16	5	21
UK: Other lands[i]	6	1	7
The Germanies[ii]	426	18	444
Canadian provinces	202	11	213
Other Western Europe[iii]	96	3	99
Mexico	68	19	87
Scandinavia	63	1	64
Central/South Am.	32	1	33
Eastern Europe[iv]	26	2	28
China[v]	22	0	22
Australia and Pacific[vi]	3	1	4
Other[vii]	5	3	8
Blank[viii]	66	0	66

With these statistics, it is possible to make a few observations about place of birth among the region's settlers. Although Nevada would be noted for its foreign born, most of its residents in 1860, slightly more than two-thirds, came from the United States. Of these people, roughly three-fourths were from the northern states. Nevada was fiercely pro-Union during the Civil War. Indeed, Abraham Lincoln circumvented the minimum population count to make it a state, on October 31, 1864, just before the presidential election. The president did this believing he could count on Nevada's electoral votes in the ensuing election. He also anticipated the state's support for his reconstruction program. He was correct on both counts. By understanding the Nevada portion of the 1860 census of the Utah Territory, it is clear why Nevada supported the Union. Not only did it have an inherent anti-Mormon perception of secessionist tendencies, but the overwhelming majority of its American-born residents were from the North and more likely to swear allegiance to the Union.

A closer examination of the Americans yields additional insight. While settlers from the Northeast and Midwest represented almost three-quarters of the Americans, nearly half–44 percent–of the native born were from the Northeast. The South, standing on the brink of Civil War, contributed only 21 percent of the American-born population to the future Nevada Territory. Native Midwesterners represented 29 percent of the American-born in the future Nevada, but the 1860 census indicates that many from west of the Mississippi were underage, and whose parents had merely stopped in the Midwest long enough to have a few children before moving on. Similarly, native westerners, nearly 7 percent of the Americans, were almost all children, underscoring the youth of a society in which most adults were from somewhere else.

[i]These include the Isles of Man and Jersey, which have unique relationships with the English Crown aside from the United Kingdom, but they are included here because they are nevertheless related to the kingdom as a whole. In 1860, all of Ireland was part of the United Kingdom, and so it is listed with that total.

[ii]The 1860 census documents the following German states: Bavaria, Hesse, Prussia, and Saxony. A majority of individuals from the various German states (364) declared Germany as their place of nativity. Austrians (6) are also included with this group in this table.

[iii]Other Western Europe nations include Belgium, France, Gibraltar, Holland, Italy, Portugal, Spain, and Switzerland.

[iv]Eastern Europe includes Bohemia, Hungary, Poland, Russia and Slovenia with two spellings.

[v]Those born in China include one white colonial. The number of Chinese, as defined by ethnicity, living in the emerging Nevada territory in 1860 is 21.

[vi]This includes Australia, New Zealand, the East Indies, and "South Sea Islands."

[vii]"Other" includes "At Sea," Bengal, St. Domingo, St. Lucia, and "Sea."

[viii]"Blank" includes individuals where "place of birth" was left blank or listed as "unknown."

An additional difference between those from the Northeast and South involves gender. Of the 4,731 native-born Americans in the future Nevada Territory in 1860, only 579, or 12 percent, were females, and many of these were children from the West or Midwest. Most women from the United States and its territories came from the East, but 10 percent of the southerners were women, compared to the Northeast's 7 percent. As a point of comparison, speakers of Spanish and immigrants from Britain and Ireland in 1860 also contributed more women per capita than the states of the Northeast.

The 1870 census would demonstrate how Nevada had changed since 1860. The native born had lost ground, representing only a slight majority, at roughly 56 percent. Relative distances gave the native born an advantage in the first months of the 1859 Rush to Washoe following the discovery of the Comstock Lode. Foreigners made up for a slow start by arriving in ever-increasing numbers throughout the rest of the decade, but they never became the majority. Nevertheless, the foreign born were already an important factor by 1860.

Based on his Nevada sojourn between 1861 and 1864, Mark Twain was able to observe that "all the peoples of the earth had representative adventurers in the Silverland."[6] Although immigrants came from many exotic places, most in 1860 were from Western Europe or North America. The United Kingdom, and Ireland in particular, sent the largest group, but people from the German states and Canada were also present in large numbers. This profile of the foreign born remained consistent throughout the nineteenth century, with a notable exception. The Chinese were scarce in 1860, but within ten years their numbers swelled, eventually exceeding five thousand and rivaling the Irish as the most numerous among immigrants.[7]

While mining communities failed to attract as many women as had settled elsewhere in the region, booming mining districts were magnets for the foreign born. As noted earlier, the Comstock communities represented more than half of the Nevada potion of the Great Basin, but they attracted two-thirds of the Irish and the German immigrants. The pattern suggests that these immigrants had not arrived in the region until word of the discovery of gold and silver reverberated elsewhere. The English population was more evenly distributed: a little more than 60 percent lived on the Comstock. Nevertheless, the census documented a large concentration of these immigrants in Carson Valley, where they represented 12.4 percent of the valley's recorded residents. This suggests that the English had settled in the region for a longer period than some of the other Europeans.

Apparently, few of the English were Cornish in 1860. Immigrants from Cornwall can be difficult to identify in census records because they generally told census workers they were English. Still, they can be segregated from the rest of the English because many had unique names, and yet a search for Cornish names in 1860 fails to reveal more than a handful of possible representatives of this group. Most Cornish were expert miners, but even the riches of the

Comstock Lode failed to attract them at first. It is likely that they knew better than to rush to mining booms, which often dissipated within months. The Cornish were present in large numbers in the 1870 census, suggesting they employed a "wait-and-see" strategy to make certain that a mining district would sustain itself long enough to justify relocation. When the Comstock and military forts are removed from the picture, immigrants such as the Irish and Germans nearly drop out of the picture entirely. In fact, the Irish of 1860 were roughly a third of the soldiers stationed in the future Nevada. Germans represented an important but less numerous part of the military. Instead, the Germans and Austrians found their greatest presence in mining districts and in particular on the Comstock, suggestive, again, of their recent arrival.

One peculiar difference in the distribution of the Irish and English anticipates a later trend. While the Irish were 9.5 percent of the entire region's population, they represented almost 12 percent of the people living in Virginia City. In contrast, the English were 4.3 percent of the region but only 4 percent of the Virginia City population. In Gold Hill, however, the trend is reversed: The number of Irish declined to 8.3 percent while the English population increased to 6.2 percent. Ten and twenty years later this difference would be exaggerated. In addition, by 1870 the English community had transformed. During the decade after 1860, the Cornish arrived in increasing numbers so that perhaps more than half of the English in 1870 were from Cornwall. Nevertheless, the tendency for Virginia City to be Irish and Gold Hill to be English (or Cornish) persisted. The 1860 census suggests the often antagonistic ethnic groups began to live apart at an early date.[8]

The 1860 census is largely silent on Native Americans, who certainly numbered in the thousands.[9] Native Americans had their own communities, which were mobile and remained largely apart from the new settlements. Sadly, this population was undocumented by the 1860 census. Among the new arrivals, African Americans were relatively scarce, numbering only 46. Similarly, the census documented only 125 speakers of Spanish in the western Great Basin.[10] Although there were representatives of these ethnic groups, settlements founded after 1850 in the region were exceedingly white, and although many languages were spoken, English dominated.

The 1860 census identified roughly 230 occupations that were pursued in the western Great Basin, but dozens of these were merely different names for the same pursuits. It had been little more than a year since the discovery of the Comstock Lode. Nevertheless, mining provided most the region's employment. Almost three thousand miners worked in the region, most in the new mining districts. This represented half the men in the western Great Basin, but that is merely part of the story. Mining supported many other professions, from millers and assayers to superintendents and engineers. Dozens of carpenters and blacksmiths were also tied directly to mining, fashioning and sharpening tools and constructing underground supports. Many of the 341 men who claimed "laborer" as an occupation were probably also involved in mining.

Later census reports for Nevada indicated a wider spectrum of titles for occupations in mining. In 1860, the industry was still in its infancy in the region, and practically anyone with a shovel or a pick-axe called himself a miner. Aside from the laborers, the few additional occupations associated with the retrieval of mineral resources were poorly represented, numbering less than one hundred. Because the idea of making a fortune in gold and silver was so seductive, most men living in mining districts worked in that industry. Echoing the pattern found in the mining industry, other occupations lacked specialized titles and were relatively few in number. Nevertheless, the 1860 enumerators documented mining communities as they were becoming increasingly complex. In contrast, towns lacking mines already exhibited greater diversity in occupations by 1860. Agriculture and transportation dominated these places, which lacked a single industry. Men there consequently worked at a greater range of jobs.

Later censuses would capture a far wider spectrum of possibilities as professions were finely graded by titles and distinctions. In 1860, the young society was not prepared to support these differences, and the workplace was a free-for-all, with men and women doing whatever made the most sense at the moment. For example, a significant minority of the men recognized an opportunity in moving things from one place to the next.

The territory was young and growing, and it had a voracious appetite for items produced elsewhere. In addition, ore needed shipping to mills. Mines needed lumber from the mountains. Mountain boomtowns needed food from the valleys. Consequently, teamsters and packers were in demand. Together with other road-related occupations, these workers represented almost 7 percent of the men. Packers, who were largely speakers of Spanish, would become an anachronism within a few years as good roads crisscrossed the territory. Teamsters would continue to dominate the decade, but their days were also numbered. Railroads would cut their numbers dramatically by the time of the 1870 census, as noted elsewhere.[11]

The women in 1860 rarely proclaimed an occupation to census enumerators. Analysis presented elsewhere demonstrates that few of these earliest settlers were prostitutes, contrary to folklore often associated with the West.[12] For a variety of reasons, which suited the Victorian ideals of the time, women in the nineteenth century often chose not to declare an occupation other than housekeeping. In addition, and unlike men, women often pursued several money-making opportunities simultaneously, so choosing the one to declare could be a problem. Most in 1860 declared none, making occupation-related information presented in the census less than helpful for women. A few provided enumerators with professions such as teacher or operating a boarding house. Emma Rigg, who indicated that she was involved in the theater with her husband, adds color, but she was a rarity. For the most part, the document is silent on the subject of women's occupations.

Carson City, a non-mining town, had more women than many communities. Echoing the pattern found among men in older communities as opposed to mining camps, Carson City's women identified occupations slightly more diverse than those of Virginia City. Laundry workers, servants, and women pursuing a few other occupations appear in the future capital. The presence there of a "sport" is the only clearly identified prostitute in the entire census. Despite these few examples, even in Carson City, the occupation column was typically blank for women.

This analysis addresses only one of six federal censuses available online for the investigation of Nevada's past. The research potential of this tool is immense. Besides finding individuals, it makes possible the understanding of the history of communities, ethnic groups, gender, occupations, or the region as a whole as it changed over time. In addition, the database can serve as a comparative tool for the entire West. Specifically, the 1860 census documents a transformation, begun only a year before, that created two types of territories in what would become Nevada. In *Devils Will Reign,* her eloquent portrayal of the early western Great Basin, Sally Zanjani describes how people settled the region. The census furnishes a statistical bedrock for this story and offers that sort of basis for many other portraits of the region between 1860 and 1920.

The older part of the western Great Basin, hugging the foothills of the Sierra Nevada, had begun to take shape in the 1850s as part of Utah society and culture. It was chiefly composed of young men, but women and children arrived as well. With the realization in the summer of 1859 that a significant gold and silver deposit existed not far from the early trading posts, the western Great Basin became the center of one of the more significant mineral rushes of North American history. Young men from older nearby settlements were the first to arrive in the new mining district. Others from California followed during that first year and then again in the early spring of 1860. The Pyramid Lake War in May of that year chased away some of the meek, but by mid summer when enumerators were conducting most of their work, hundreds had joined the tidal wave that was pouring back in and would not cease for nearly two decades.[13]

As a result of this process, the two Nevadas captured during the 1860 census, in fact before the creation of the new territory, reveals older settlements that experienced some depopulation in favor of the mining districts. Agricultural communities and trading posts were part of a backdrop that would never cease to be a part of the West. They were a base note of a new western chord that was building to sound a distinct melody for the nation. Nevertheless, the mining districts would come to dominate the intermountain West's culture and society and, perhaps more important, its persona. Because the 1860 census had the good fortune to occur at the very beginning of the transformation of Nevada from a transportation corridor into the most important center of the nation's late-nineteenth-century mining industry, historians have the opportunity to understand differences and change just as the two faces of the territory took form.

Notes

[1]The late Kenneth Fliess of the Anthropology Department, University of Nevada, Reno, directed the effort to encode the Nevada manuscript census records. The project was supervised by the Nevada Historic Preservation Office of the Department of Cultural Affairs, which manages the public website that offers this information to the public. Special thanks to the Nevada Legislature for its support in this endeavor. Parts of this article incorporate material from the author's article "Americans at the Birth of Nevada," appearing in the Online Nevada Encyclopedia: www.onlinenevada.org

[2]The documentation of Native Americans was handled differently during nineteenth-century censuses. Separate efforts usually attempted to record them, but enumerators sometimes failed to count them. At other times, enumerators counted them in the main census, disobeying directions that would have them recorded separately. Differences between statistics presented here and the final report issued by the Census Bureau are probably the result of inaccurate counts in the latter.

[3]For a look at the western Great Basin during the 1850s and early 1860s, see Sally Springmeyer Zanjani, *Devils Will Reign: How Nevada Began* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2006). For the Rush to Washoe, see Zanjani, ibid., and Ronald M. James, *The Roar and the Silence: A History of Virginia City and the Comstock Lode* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1998).

[4]Because many women were part of families with children, the count of both females and males includes some children. For a look at women in this early period, in Ronald M. James and Kenneth Fliess, "Women of the Mining West: Virginia City Revisited," from Ronald M. James and C. Elizabeth Raymond, *Comstock Women: The Making of a Mining Community* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1998).

[5]See, for example, Wilbur S. Shepperson, *Restless Strangers: Nevada's Immigrants and Their Interpreters* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1970).

[6]Mark Twain arrived in Nevada as Samuel Clemens, then took his pen name while working for Virginia City's *Territorial Enterprise* newspaper. For his comment about ethnicity, see his *Roughing It* (Hartford, Conn.: American Publishing Company, 1872), 2:43.

[7]Thousands of Chinese laid track for the Central Pacific for the transcontinental railroad in 1868. Many probably left after the completion of the project, and so it is easy to imagine an Asian population in 1868 far greater than the 3,156 recorded in 1870 for Nevada. There were 5,425 Chinese identified in the 1880 census of the state.

[8]Ronald M. James, "Defining the Group: Nineteenth-Century Cornish on the Mining Frontier," in *Cornish Studies 2*, Philip Payton, ed. (Exeter, UK: University of Exeter, 1994).

[9]For Native Americans at the time of contact, see Eugene M. Hattori, "'And Some of Them Swore Like Pirates': Acculturation of American Indian Women in Nineteenth-century Virginia City," in James and Raymond, *Comstock Women.*

[10]It is clear that some African Americans were not included in this count as individuals known to be African American are occasionally listed with "W" for color. This identifies speakers of Spanish as those with a place of birth of Spain, Gibraltar, Mexico, or South and Central America (excluding Brazil). This does not include children born north of the Mexican border, who may or may not have spoken Spanish as their principal language.

[11]James, *Roar and Silence*, 26-30, 83-84.

[12]James and Fliess, "Women of the Mining West: Virginia City Revisited." See also James, *Roar and Silence*, 31-32; Sally Springmeyer Zanjani, *Goldfield: The Last Gold Rush on the Western Frontier* (Athens: Ohio: Swallow Press, 1992) 102-103, 104-108; Ralph Mann, *After the Gold Rush: Society in Grass Valley and Nevada City, California, 1849-1870* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982), 201.

[13]On the effect of the Pyramid Lake War on the population, see, for example, the letter by Dr. Edmund Bryant, the text of which appears in John B. Reid and Ronald M. James, *Uncovering Nevada's Past: A Primary Source History of the Silver State* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2005).

Las Vegas, Hiding among the Pages
A Review Article

David G. Schwartz

Zeropolis: The Experience of Las Vegas, by Bruce Bégout (London: Reaktion, 2003).

Winner Takes All: Steve Wynn, Kirk Kerkorian, Gary Loveman, and the Race to Own Las Vegas, by Christina Binkley, (New York: Hyperion, 2008).

Double or Nothing: How Two Friends Risked It All to Buy One of Las Vegas' Legendary Casinos, by Tom Breitling and Cal Fussman (New York: Collins Business, 2008).

Policing Las Vegas: A History of Law Enforcement in Southern Nevada, by Dennis N. Griffin (Las Vegas: Huntington Press, 2005).

The Leisure Architecture of Wayne McAllister, by Chris Nichols (Salt Lake City: Gibbs-Smith, 2007).

Playing the Odds: Las Vegas and the Modern West, by Hal K. Rothman, edited by Lincoln Bramwell (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007).

Howard Hughes: Power, Paranoia, and Palace Intrigue, by Geoff Schumacher (Las Vegas: Stephens Press, 2008).

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When viewed objectively, Las Vegas has attracted literary attention completely out of proportion to its size or importance. Everyone has an opinion about Las Vegas. Yes, there are fine books written about Indianapolis, Milwaukee, and Sacramento, but none of those similarly sized metropolitan areas attracts the same range of enthusiasts, crackpots, philosophers, and literary adventurers as Las Vegas.

While many Las Vegas books touch on history, history is not generally a strong point for writers about Las Vegas. Most writers, of course, don't technically write about the city of Las Vegas—they are consumed by interest in the casino wonderland of the Strip, which lies outside the city limits. Nor do they make much of an effort to trace the history of their subject as it evolved in response to local and national stimuli.

The history of Las Vegas is, rather, customarily ignored or, if acknowledged, reduced to a simple dichotomy: the good old mob days and our current age of corporate blandness. A quick tour through some recent books demonstrates the current state of Las Vegas historiography, such as it is, in the popular and academic realms.

THE CITY

Some who write about Las Vegas consider the concrete: its buildings and institutions. In *The Leisure Architecture of Wayne McAllister*, Chris Nichols summarizes the career of the architect who got some of the most historic commissions in Las Vegas history: the El Rancho Vegas (1941), the first real resort on the Strip; the basic plan for the Desert Inn (1950); the Sands (1952); and the Fremont (1956).

McAllister's career wouldn't have been possible today: With no formal architectural training, he nonetheless became a sought-after restaurant, nightclub, and hotel designer. He got his first casino work with the Agua Caliente resort, a cross-border casino/racetrack/resort complex near Tijuana. This was a look ahead to the future of Las Vegas, though no one knew this when it opened in 1928, as legalized Nevada gaming was still three years away. Though it closed with the Mexican government's gambling ban in 1935, Agua Caliente remained fixed in the public consciousness well into the early Strip era.

About a decade later, McAllister came to Las Vegas to design the El Rancho Vegas. With its central casino/dinner theater building circled by ample greenery and sprawling bungalows, the El Rancho Vegas set the pattern for the first generation of casino resort.

Through his initial plan for the Desert Inn, McAllister influenced this seminal resort as it was finally realized; later designers reworked the casino, but adhered to his general property layout. His initial plan for the Sands, by contrast, stands as McAllister's biggest legacy on the Strip—the El Rancho Vegas burned

down in 1960, just when Las Vegas was getting off the ground, and the Sands was just coming into its Golden Age then. McAllister designed the casino, the Copa Lounge, and the original low-rise hotel wings (Martin Stern, Jr., created the iconic circular tower in 1965). Looking at the wealth of Sands pictures that adorn this book, the reader is transported back in time.

Nichols's book is well researched and has a multitude (150, actually) of photographs that give the reader a real sense of McAllister's design. For those who revel in all things Moderne, the book is a visual treat. Yet, because of its idiosyncratic organization, there's not a real sense of evolution, just a choppy synopsis of a series of similar building types. This approach is fine for those who want to look at all of the drive-ins, then all of the dinner houses, but it doesn't really get to McAllister's growth as an architect. How did his work between 1941 and 1947 change his conception of the resort as reflected in the El Rancho Vegas and the Desert Inn? That's an important question and one seemingly crucial to evaluating his career as an architect, but it isn't even asked here.

This might be the difference between history and historic preservation; historians want to understand change over time, while historic preservationists want to keep what they consider significant buildings intact, in something close to their original state. A real study of McAllister's work would ask deeper questions and provide more satisfying answers.

Dennis Griffin's *Policing Las Vegas* gives a similar treatment to the history of law enforcement in Las Vegas. This book bills itself as a history of Southern Nevada police, but ultimately feels more like a collection of anecdotes, facts, and personalities than a cohesive narrative. Griffin is also a mystery writer, and his forte is serving his readers a nice, meaty *story*. That's where *Policing Las Vegas* is the strongest—particularly in the chapters on the mob and the 1992 race riots, where it reads almost like an eyewitness account.

The early material, however, is whisper-thin. While Griffin has my sympathies—there's probably a lack of documentary evidence of the region's police departments' early years—there's not much excuse for the scattershot presentation of the first six decades of this history. Chiefs are raised to honor and toppled from grace (usually with no explanation of why), Las Vegas sees milestones such as its first patrol car and first female officer, and statistics about the city's growth occasionally march in, but with little sense of flow or progress. And there's certainly nothing to put what we're reading into context: As western towns go, was Las Vegas progressive or reactive in its policing? This part has the feel of an author with limited sources writing a chronology rather than a true history.

In its coverage of later years, as newspaper accounts grow less telegraphic and living interviewees emerge, though, the book is quite good. As it happens, this uptick in quality coincides with the establishment of the unified Las Vegas / Clark County Metro Police Department, in 1973. From here on in, *Policing Las Vegas* is rock-solid and far more readable. The reader almost forgets that the first

sixty-eight years of Las Vegas policing were covered in a perfunctory forty-two pages. You don't get the answer to life, the universe, and everything, but you do learn the basic history of Metro.

And what a history it is. Political squabbles over consolidation give way to a struggle with various organized-crime figures. There's some solid police work discussed here. And the long chapter on the 1992 riots reads almost like a primary source document. There are also stirring testimonials to Metro officers who have fallen in the line of duty and helpful appendices with various landmark dates and Metro initiatives. The richness of the material from 1973 onwards, though, only makes the book's initially skeletal treatment stand out more starkly.

THE PERSONALITIES

The buildings and institutions of Las Vegas don't attract nearly as much attention as the personalities who have called that city home, even briefly. Thus far, there has been no great Vegas visionary born in Las Vegas; those who have changed the city have, for the most part, come to town from elsewhere. Most of the stories, then, have the same trajectory: The genius moves to Las Vegas, does something never before seen, then reaps the fruits of his fortune, for better or worse.

Perhaps the most exhaustively written-about Las Vegan, Howard Hughes has attracted numerous biographers of all stripes. More than four dozen books about him have been published since the 1960s. It would seem that there's little more we can learn about his life. But a recent book places Hughes into what may be his definitive Las Vegas context. In *Howard Hughes: Power, Paranoia, and Palace Intrigue*, Geoff Schumacher has written a hybrid. In some regards, it's a synthesis of the plethora of previous Hughes works. Schumacher combed through what must have been an endless array of news clippings and tomes of Hughesiana. But he also availed himself of rare and unique primary sources at University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Special Collections; the Nevada State Museum and Historical Society; and the treasure troves of private collectors. His thoroughness definitely shows. I doubt there's much about Hughes—particularly his four Las Vegas years—that Schumacher doesn't touch on.

The book starts with a quick summary of Hughes B.V. (Before Vegas), then discusses his less-known earlier stays in Las Vegas, including his 1943 Lake Mead crash and his 1953 purchase of the Green House, which is still intact on the land of KLAS-TV. Then he brings in the story of Hughes's right hand, Bob Maheu. Maheu's story has been well documented, but seems to gain something by being placed more clearly in the critical context of Hughes's time in Las Vegas, as presented by Schumacher.

As the Hughes roller coaster inches higher up the initial slope, Schumacher stops to describe "what Vegas saw" with a quick chronological survey of

contemporary media coverage of the Hughes Las Vegas years (1966-1970). The he dives into detailed chapters on Hughes in Vegas. These run the gamut from profiles of significant figures such as Hank Greenspun, Paul Winn, and John Meier, to discussions of key topics: the Clifford Irving hoax biography, the palace coup that brought Maheu down, and the sometimes outlandish fight over the estate in the face of competing Hughes wills, none of which was proved authentic. Melvin Dummar's tragicomic tale—more tragedy than comedy, it now seems—gets ample space, and probably its best analysis yet.

Schumacher then jumps tracks, switching from biographer to critic with a section called "Hughesiana" that features a mix of non-Vegas profiles (Jane Russell, Rupert Hughes, and the RKO fiasco) and extended takes on "Weird Tales" (obscure Hughes texts) and "the Fictional Hughes," which is an up-to-date consideration of the reams of paper and reels of celluloid fantasy that Hughes has inspired.

The book's key strength is Schumacher's attention to detail and thoughtful use of his sources. Without an axe to grind, he is able to write a dispassionate book about the eccentric billionaire, a decided rarity. Since Hughes was far from balanced, he invites wild speculation and still, more than thirty years after his death, an almost messianic fervor. Schumacher immersed himself in his sources without becoming captured by them—a hard task, indeed, where Hughes is concerned.

Until Glenn Schaeffer writes his memoirs, "casino boss autobiography" will probably not emerge as an accepted literary genre. The former Golden Nugget co-owner Tom Breitling, however, has thrown his hat in the ring with *Double or Nothing*, his life story through 2007 or so. His co-author is Cal Fussman. Breitling is young but accomplished, having surfed the dotcom wave along with his business partner Tim Poster. Poster and Breitling developed a pioneering Internet travel site and cashed in at just the right time. Then the pair bought the storied Golden Nugget in downtown Las Vegas (and Laughlin—people always seem to forget about that one) and had a brief, well-publicized, and, in the end, extremely lucrative career as casino owners.

As we learn, it's not easy being young, rich, and famous. Regulators, obnoxious high rollers, and the petty details of running a casino strain but don't shatter Breitling and Poster's friendship. In the end, they're still close, and there are even a few hints that they're not done in the casino world just yet. Indeed, in 2008, they joined Wynn Resorts, and appear to be planning new ventures under the Wynn umbrella.

Throughout the book, Breitling comes across as earnest and even serious. Though his career seems like a joyride, he's not doing anything on a lark here. The most informative part of the book is the dissection of the deal that scored them the Golden Nugget. Breitling pulls few punches, even talking about the poorly received reality TV show, *The Casino*. The book lacks a certain perspective, but that doesn't hurt its appeal: This is the story of two very successful young men, not a philosophical tome by an elder statesman.

The elder statesmen, apparently, leave the book writing to others. As a result, plenty of figures are ripe for biography. In *Winner Takes All*, Christina Binkley examines a few of the major players in the Strip consolidation sweepstakes. She parlays her access (she's the former lead Las Vegas reporter for *The Wall Street Journal*) into a book-length treatment of Las Vegas, roughly 1998 to 2007.

Binkley goes beyond petty corporate politics, though, and discusses the underlying business strategies that differentiate Steve Wynn of Wynn Resorts, Kirk Kerkorian (and his executives) of MGM Mirage, and Gary Loveman of Harrah's. Wynn believes in luxury above all; Kerkorian thinks that size matters (he's opened the world's biggest casino hotel three times) and is a consummate deal maker; and Loveman brings scientific management to the wild west of the casino floor.

The book's reportage is insightful, but it is riddled with historical inaccuracies, both major and minor. The most egregious is on page 16, where Binkley contends that the original MGM Grand had "shoddily built rooms" and that the tragic 1980 conflagration was the result of a "grease fire," making it sound as though this were a roadside greasy spoon that went up in smoke after the deep fryer was left unattended. Actually, it was an electrical fire that sparked the blaze, and though construction faults did exacerbate the fire (smoke was able to get into the guest tower, and sprinklers were not installed in the deli or casino), the casino was, when it opened, the biggest and most expensive building in the history of Las Vegas. Though we now know that its builders cut corners, at the time few disputed that it was a "grand" casino. Suffice it to say that Binkley is an outstanding source for the material that she personally reported on, but might have relied on less substantial sources for some of the background.

Although (or maybe because) the book is about Las Vegas, 1998-2007, it is dominated by Steve Wynn. Even when he's not there, he's there, haunting the thoughts of the author and the principals. In simple terms, MGM Grand, Inc. wants to be like Wynn, so the company buys Mirage Resorts. Harrah's realizes it can't compete with Wynn, so it relies on "propeller heads" (management wonks) rather than exploding volcanoes to better its bottom line. Las Vegas, it seems, is divided into wanna be Wynns and anti-Wynns, but there is no one who is unaffected by Wynn.

This is, of course, unfair to the men and women who've built up Harrah's, MGM, and even Wynn, to say nothing of the crowd at Las Vegas Sands. There is a host of principals in this book who deserve to stand on their own: Terry Lanni, Jim Murren, Bobby Baldwin, and Glenn Schaeffer are not "title characters," but each has contributed significantly to the creation of modern Las Vegas, so it's not entirely accurate to dismiss them as Wynn clones or antitheses. But Wynn's all-pervading presence in the book is unavoidable.

Which leads to the big question: How is Wynn treated? Like the people she writes about, Binkley is hardly agnostic when it comes to Wynn. I'm not giving much away here: The prologue features Wynn, apoplectic with rage, screaming at Binkley that the MGM Grand buyout of Mirage was a friendly deal. Though

Binkley isn't going to be disinterested, she veers into caricature at times ("His capped teeth gleam white, white, white."), which paradoxically makes Wynn even more of a larger-than-life character. Wynn-haters will glory in the chronicles of corporate extravagance; Wynn-lovers will say, "So he likes plastic surgery—he still knows how to build the best casinos in the world."

Historically, there's little meat in the book, but it will in time become a document itself, a window on a time of giddy growth and underlying anxiety. Just as Schumacher's book on Hughes provides a view of Las Vegas as a city on the rise, hungry for legitimacy, Binkley's effort will chronicle an age of prestige and high-stakes corporate brinksmanship.

Las Vegas still, it seems, has not settled down sufficiently to be just a stage for interesting character study. Those whose lives cross the city are still in the "freak, or amusement park" category, as Howard Hughes might have put it. That Hughes was bizarre is, of course, axiomatic. Earlier characters from Las Vegas history are usually lifted straight from Damon Runyon. The modern titans aren't just successful businessmen or women; they are outlandish, oversize figures who play dice with an overheated boom metropolis. Steve Wynn is less Gordon Gekko than Godzilla, Kirk Kerkorian a distant once and future king, and Gary Loveman a Strangelovean parody of the academician unbound in the business world. It makes for successful pitches to publishers, but does not come close to capturing the real nuance of Las Vegas, present or past.

The Hype

Since the days of Tom Wolfe and Hunter S. Thompson, writers about Las Vegas have staked fantastically bold claims: They come to write not about a vacation, or even a city, but the soul of America.

Usually, such books tend to be not so much about Las Vegas, instead weaving between the cosmic and the personal, the profound and the inane. The text, ostensibly about the capital city of Clark County, Nevada, is typically just a palimpsest upon which the author can exorcise whatever demons seem to be bugging him at the moment. Bruce Bégout, a French philosopher, produced such a work with *Zeropolis*. This shortish meditation on the "Vegas experience" suffers from a willful lack of focus and thoughtfulness. The book's most obvious flaw is that the author's goal is to figure out what "Las Vegas" actively does to people. "Las Vegas makes fun of everything. It makes every reality an object of mockery… it uncovers the primeval scene of society: the impossibility of believing in the truth of the other" (p. 13).

Las Vegas, of course, is an inanimate collection of asphalt, concrete, and building ordinances. It doesn't "do" anything any more than Cleveland, or Cardiff, or Amiens (Bégout's usual stomping grounds) does. Certainly *people* in Las Vegas do things: Casino executives try to maximize their revenue per room and slot win, players try to hit a royal flush, and gourmands go all in at the buffet. But it

is impossible for the city itself, which is either a physical object or an abstraction, to perform actions. Still, Bégout spends page after page treading water with this kind of superficial analysis.

Bégout's chief conceit is that Las Vegas is "Zeropolis," a city whose "urbanity is nothingness" (p. 121). Barring a sudden jump into hyperspace, this is inane. Las Vegas is a real geographic and social place. Bégout's failure to accept Las Vegas as a city built and inhabited by real people leads him to some strange twists, such as "The unknown artists who created the giant signs of the Sands, the Sahara, and the Stardust are called Hermon Boernge, Jack Larsen, and Kermit Wayne" (p. 60). What? If we know their names, they are, by definition, not unknown. It's evidence of poor writing and sloppy thinking that Bégout resorts to such byzantine formulations to make his point.

The author makes one interesting point, that someday museums will collect Las Vegas artifacts just as assiduously as they currently collect paintings by the Dutch masters or pre-Columbian Incan engravings. It's a throw-away observation, and one that, upon reflection, isn't true: By the time the intellectuals develop an appreciation for the Las Vegas of Tom Wolfe and Robert Venturi, *it won't be there anymore*. It's already not there anymore. We'll have pictures and prose, and a few scattered signs and matchbooks. But the buildings themselves will be long gone.

Bégout has a general contempt for humanity and a particular loathing for Americans, as shown by his description of the crowd at Caesars Palace: "poverty-stricken pensioners; obese and dowdily dressed black matrons; southern white trash there to gamble away their social security cheques; large parties of convention participants who have flown in to do some slumming on the cheap, etc." (p. 27). Las Vegas, Bégout says, amounts to "practically nothing in anyone's life," and he feels it's an apposite utopia for ignorant Americans.

This is what happens when writers spend their time in Las Vegas alone in their rooms, reading Jean Baudrillard and feeling uninspired, or cruising the streets in a rental car. Bégout observes, but doesn't interact. This wouldn't be a problem, but he claims with great authority to reveal the soul of Las Vegas, and it's clear that he doesn't have the slightest idea about how the city really works. He confidently tells us that "the ideal Las Vegas customer resembles Raymond, an engineer from Phoenix and an unrepentant gambler, still sitting at a craps table at half past three in the morning," then goes on to blockquote Tom Wolfe's description of Raymond, first published in 1964 (p. 51) One of the characteristics of Las Vegas is that it changes quickly, so using forty-year-old borrowed reportage hardly esteems Bégout as a topical commentator.

Nor does the author let the facts get in his way: On page 38, for example, he says that there is gambling in the "toilets" at McCarran International Airport. Yes, there are slots at the airport, but nobody's installed them in the bathrooms yet. As a result, *Zeropolis* is glib without being pithy. It's mostly stuff that Bégout has read about Las Vegas glued together with unoriginally generic "Vegas is bad" musings. Whether it's by design or by accident, there's no "experience" in this book about the "Las Vegas experience."

If Bégout is the quintessence of the Las Vegas detractors, there was no one more suited—intellectually or temperamentally—to champion the city than the late Hal Rothman. He was one of the nation's top environmental historians, and his *Devil's Bargains* sparked many a graduate student—including this writer—to seriously rethink their conceptions of tourism and economic development.

Once he arrived in Las Vegas, Rothman took on the city's history and meaning in several books. His strength was not engaging heretofore obscure primary sources, thus deepening our historical understanding, but synthesizing the accepted sources and placing Las Vegas into the context of the modern West.

Playing the Odds, a collection, primarily of newspaper essays, published posthumously, is Rothman at his best. In to-the-point, quick-hitting pieces, he shares his views on a variety of subjects: Del Webb; Steamboat Springs, Colorado; Bugsy Siegel; the Chernobyl disaster; air travel; immigration; and homeowners' associations. No single essay is comprehensive, but together they give a portrait of Rothman's public persona, an authority on a wide range of topics united only by their relationship to Las Vegas.

This book takes Rothman into places where few academic historians have trod. In these pages, the reader can see him as a public intellectual, sharing elements of his research beyond the confines of the ivory tower, and as a booster of Las Vegas. Those two roles aren't necessarily antithetical. Many professors unleash their own political, social, and economic pet peeves on unsuspecting students. As long as it's in a fashionably anti-establishment vein, this is usually accepted, and even lauded as a rare act of moral courage.

That Rothman's vigorous advocacy brought him into alignment with Las Vegas's status quo doesn't at all diminish its worth. In fact, the passion he brought to his elucidations of all things Las Vegas should be a model for academics. Rather than cut himself off from his adopted hometown and pursue his own research in isolation, he embraced Las Vegas, homeowners' associations and all, and was capable of distilling complex arguments into easily digestible yet still substantive sentences. Explaining growth in Las Vegas, or sports leagues' continuing hostility towards betting, or the variegated appeal of Las Vegas to the masses, in seven hundred words or less, Rothman in *Playing the Odds* is at the top of his game. The discourse on Las Vegas—both inside the academy and out—is poorer for his absence.

It should be clear by now that there is little hope of recovering a single, coherent Las Vegas from this raft of books ostensibly written about the same city. Most writers simply bring too much of themselves to the project, or are unduly influenced by their subject. Yet the mish-mash Las Vegas that emerges is perhaps a more accurate vision of the city than we might initially think. If anything defines Las Vegas, it is that it has been for more than a century a city where people have come to chase their dreams and create themselves anew. So it shouldn't be surprising that the city itself remains, historiographically, as elusive as a dream and as protean as luck.

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