

Julia's Unequivocal Nevada Klampout

#41

120 West by 42 North

Clamper year 6025

Brought to you by
Julia C. Bulette Chapter 1864,
E Clampus Vitus

**Researched and fabricated by
Jeffrey D. Johnson XNGH,
Clamphistorian at chapter 1864**

**Envisioned by
Noble Grand Humbug Metric Q. Ebert**

**Dedicated to
The 1422 gang who got hammered by noon and said
there is no history here.**

29 August 2020 C.E.

WHY

We are exposing the plethora of historic activities in Northern most Washoe County

Never a discouraging word

Shadowed by the Hays Range on the West, Mosquito Mountains on the North and the Painted Point Range on the East, Long Valley's floor consists of small playas, such as Calcutta Lake and Boulder Lake. The West edge of the valley has lush ranches where springs bubble along the fault line. As part of the events that ultimately led to the creation of the Basin and Range Province, during the late Pliocene and early Pleistocene, basalt was extruded in the region as the surrounding mountains were lifted and the valley floor dropped. Due to the lack of natural drainage in the valley, the valley periodically filled with water, transforming the valley into pluvial Lake Meinzer, which peaked at a maximum depth of 250 feet over the valley floor.^[3] Much of the valley is filled with deposits from the former lake. Aspen Groves (*populus tremuloides*) and Western Juniper (*juniperous occidentalis*) dot the escarpments on either side of the valley. Ponderosa (*pinus ponderosus*) and Washoe Pine (*pinus washoensis*) can also be found. The Mosquito Range is the only location the Washoe Pine is found East of Hwy 395. Massacre Rim's remote location is beyond the glow of city lights. There are only six other certified Dark Sky Sanctuaries on the planet. *Antilocapra americana* thrived here since ancient days and is the sole survivor of the Pleistocene extinctions that wiped out most of the competition 11,000 years ago. The pronghorn evolved its running ability to escape from now-extinct predators since its speed greatly exceeds that of all current North American predators. Exploiting their natural curiosity is the best way to hunt them. Females visit several males and remain with each for a short time before switching to the next male. They incite conflicts between males, watching and then mating with the winners.

PETROGLYPHS

Since ancient times the local hunter gatherers have built blinds, walls and tagged the basalts and tufas with Curvilinear scribbings. Many petroglyph sites mark the entrances to canyons and routes between forage and water. Some petroglyphs record plasma discharges that were once seen over the earth's atmosphere long ago. Some mark celestial events and some are said to have been made by early explorers from before the time of Columbus. The Petroglyphs in Northern Washoe County are connected to the migratory routes of Pronghorn Antelope.

Adams Onis Treaty 1819

First, the Spanish traded Florida to the British after the Seven Years War in 1763 in exchange for Cuba back. During the American Revolution the Spanish captured it from the British. In the Peninsular war (1807-1814) the French occupation ruined the Spanish administration. By 1819 Spain was forced to cut their losses, get a grip on their rebellious colonies and negotiate with the United States. In Spanish Florida the U.S. Army under Andrew Jackson had seized the vital forts and towns and set the standard of American Imperialism. John Q. Adams, Secretary of State under President James Monroe, and Luis de Onis, Minister of Foreign Affairs for King Ferdinand VII, signed the treaty to settle the border disputes between the U.S. and New Spain. The treaty set the boundary at the Sabine River, the present Louisiana-Texas border and North to the Red. West on the Red River to the 100th meridian West, North to the Arkansas. West on the Arkansas River to its headwaters, location unknown till J. C. Fremont located it in 1845. From there the line went North to the 42nd parallel and due west. Spain had claims, authorized by papal bull, to the West Coast of the continent since 1493. By signing the Adams Onis Treaty the Americans acquired all the Spanish claims north to Alaska, disputed only by the British, Russians and the natives.

Captain John C. Fremont

Excerpt from report to Congress on invasion of the sovereign nation of Mexico by detachment of Topographical Engineers, 1843, 1844. This is Fremont's description of his company's route from Warner Valley Oregon to the High Rock Canyon area of Nevada.

December 26. — Our general course was again south. The country consists of larger or smaller basins, into which the mountain waters run down forming small lakes. They present a perfect level, from which the mountains rise immediately and abruptly. Between the successive basins, the dividing grounds are usually very slight and it is probable that, in the seasons of high water, many of these basins are in communication. At such times there is evidently an abundance of water, though now we find scarcely more than the dry beds. On either side, the mountains, though not very high, appear to be rocky and sterile. The basin in which we were travelling declined towards the southwest corner, where the mountains indicated a narrow outlet and, turning round a rocky point or cape, we continued up a lateral branch valley, in which we encamped at night on a rapid, pretty little stream of fresh water, which we found unexpectedly among the sage near the



ridge, on the right side of the valley. It was bordered with grassy bottoms and clumps of willows, the water partially frozen. This stream belongs to the basin we had left. By a partial observation tonight, our camp was found to be directly on the 42nd parallel. Tonight, a horse belonging to Carson, one of the best we had in the camp, was stolen by the Indians.

They Cross into Nevada Looking for the Humboldt Sink

December 27. — We continued up the valley of the stream, the principal branch of which here issues from a bed of high mountains. We turned up a branch to the left, and fell into an Indian trail, which conducted us by a good road over open bottoms along the creek, where the snow was five or six inches deep. Gradually ascending, the trail led through a good broad pass in the mountain, where we found the snow about one foot deep. There were some remarkably large cedars in the pass, which were covered with an unusual quantity of frost, which we supposed might possibly indicate the neighborhood of water and as, in the arbitrary position of Mary's lake, were already beginning to look for it, this circumstance contributed to our hope of finding it near. Descending from the mountain, we reached another basin, on the flat lake bed of which we found no water, and encamped among the sage on the bordering plain, where the snow was still about one foot deep. Among this the grass was remarkably green, and tonight the animals fared tolerably well.

From a camp near the entrance to the Sheldon Antelope Range.

December 28. — The snow being deep, I had determined, if any more horses were stolen, to follow the tracks of the Indians into the mountains and put a temporary check to their operation but it did not occur again. Our road this morning lay down a level Valley, bordered by steep mountainous ridges rising very abruptly from the plain. *Artemisia* was the principal plant, mingled with *Fremontia* and the *Chenopodiaceous* shrubs. The *artemisia* was here extremely large, being sometimes a foot in diameter and eight feet high. Riding quietly along over the snow, we came suddenly upon smokes rising among these bushes; and, galloping up, we found two huts, open at the top, and loosely built of sage, which appeared to have been deserted at the instant; and, looking hastily around, we saw several Indians on the crest of the ridge nearby, and several others scrambling up the side. We had come upon them so suddenly, that they had been well nigh surprised in their lodges. A sage fire was burning in the middle, a few baskets made of straw were lying about, with one or two rabbit skins, and there was a little grass scattered about, on which they had been lying. "Tabibo bo!" they shouted from the hills, a word which, in the Snake language, signifies white and remained looking at us from behind the rocks. Carson and Godey rode towards the hill, but the men ran off like deer. They had been so much pressed, that a woman with two children had dropped behind a sage bush near the lodge and when Carson accidentally stumbled upon her, she immediately began screaming in the extremity of fear, and shut her eyes, fast, to avoid seeing him. She was brought back to the lodge, and we endeavored to open a communication with the woman. By dint of presents, and friendly demonstrations, she was brought to calmness and we found that they belonged to the Snake nation, speaking the language of that people. Eight or ten appeared to live together, under the same little shelter; and they seemed to have no other sustenance than the roots

or seeds they might have stored up, and the hares which live in the sage, and which they are enabled to track through the snow, and are very skillful in killing. Their skins afford them a little scanty covering. Herding together among bushes, and crouching almost naked over a little «age fire, using their instinct only to procure food, these may be considered, among human beings, the nearest approach to the mere animal creation. We have reason to believe that these had never before seen the face of a white man. The day had been pleasant, but about two o'clock it began to blow and crossing a slight dividing ground we encamped on the sheltered side of a hill, where there was good bunch grass, having rode a day's journey of 24 miles. The night closed in, threatening snow but the large sage bushes made bright fires.

Our intrepid explorers discover the High Rock Canyon and Black Rock Desert

December 29.— The morning was cold and at 4 o'clock it commenced snowing. We took our way across a plain, thickly covered with snow, towards a range of hills in the southeast. - The sky soon became so dark with snow, that little could be seen of the surrounding country and we reached the summit of the hills in a heavy snowstorm. On the side we had approached this had appeared to be only a ridge of low hills; and we were surprised to find ourselves on the summit of a bed. of broken mountains, which, as far as the weather would permit us to see, declined rapidly to some low country ahead, presenting a dreary and savage character; and for a moment I looked around in doubt on the wild and inhospitable prospect, scarcely knowing what road to take which might conduct us to some place of shelter for the night. Noticing among the hills the bead of a grassy hollow, I determined to follow it, in the hope that it would conduct us to a stream. We followed a winding descent for several miles, the hollow gradually broadening into little meadows, and becoming the bed of a stream as we advanced and towards night were agreeably surprised by the appearance of a willow grove, where we found a sheltered camp with water and excellent and abundant grass. The grass, which was covered by the snow on the bottom, was long and green, and the face of the mountain had a more favorable character in its vegetation, being smoother, and covered with good bunch grass. The snow was deep, and the night very cold. A broad trail had entered the valley from the right, and a short distance, below the camp were the tracks where a considerable party of Indians had passed on' horseback, who had turned out to the left, apparently -with the view of crossing the mountains to the eastward.



Applegate Trail

The Oregon trail was rough and then people drowned regularly in the Columbia on the last leg. Three years after Fremont, the Applegate brothers headed the South Road Party to locate a less dangerous route to the Willamette Valley from Fort Hall. The new route would lead emigrants to the Humboldt River on the California Trail, veer North at present day Imlay, cross the Black Rock desert and out through High Rock canyon, across Surprise Valley and Goose Lake through the southern mountains of the Cascade Range. In 1849 Thousands of Emigrants took the detour that was hundreds of unnecessary miles out of the way because the route goes clear to the edge of Oregon before the spur to California meanders South again. The Applegate Trail passed through the homeland and hunting grounds of the Modoc, the Northern Paiute and the Bannocks. Springs were few and far. From the Upper High Rock Canyon the trail turned due West and crossed the 49 lake in Long Valley to 49 springs, now Vya, and rolled up 49 canyon to the 49 Pass. From the crest of the Hays Mountains the argonauts were surprised to see Surprise Valley, 15 miles across an alkaline plain. The trail crossed near a series of hot springs on the bottom of the eastern hills and made a beeline over the lakebed towards today's Lake City and on over the Warner Mountains at Fandango Pass.

William H. Warner

Born on 8 May 1812 in New York He graduated from West Point in 1836. During the Mexican War Warner was assigned to General Kearney's Expedition from Santa Fe to California. He was wounded at the Battle of San Pasqual. In the new domain Warner surveyed Alcatraz Island and the Presidio. In early 1849 the military governor directed Warner to survey and explore the upper reaches of the Pit River to scout for mountain passes for a railroad route.

Warner first headed north to Abert Lake. He then followed Captain John C. Fremont's route east into what is now the Warner Valley. On 26 Sep 1849, Warner's party was ambushed by Indians, just south of the Oregon-California border near Eighteenmile Creek. In 1850, an army expedition under the command of Captain Nathaniel Lyon of Lyon County fame was sent out to recover Warner's body, but it was not found. The Warner Mountains of California, the Warner Valley of Oregon and many other landmarks were named for him by Army Topographical Engineers.

George R. Crook

Crook was born in Ohio and he graduated from West Point in 1852. He commanded the Pitt River Expedition of 1857 and was severely wounded at the location described by Fremont's expedition as New Years Lake, subsequently named 'Crooks Lake'.

General Crook returned in 1866 and waged the Snake River Campaign. Starting at Fort Boise, Crook's punitive expedition beat down on the Paiute and Shoshones that haunted the endeavors of the merchants capitalizing on the development of new Mines in the Owyhee Mountains. He took his fight from Idaho to Fall River Mills in California.

Fort Bidwell

In 1865 a petition from the population at Red Bluff demanded protection on the trail to the Owyhee mines of Idaho. The U.S. Army selected a site near the bottom of Fandango Pass and named it for Major John Bidwell, California Volunteers, a veteran of the Mexican War, and a pioneer Californian. Although Surprise Valley settlers desired Army protection, ranchers dispossessed of lands for the fort of course complained, and claimed damages. It was a base for operations in the Snake War, the Modoc War of 1872–73 and the Bannock and Nez Perce campaigns. Traffic on the stage line dwindled after the Central Pacific Railroad was completed in 1869, but Fort Bidwell garrisoned soldiers until 1893. A town sprouted to provide supplies and diversions. The cable TV system was inferior, so theatre and Marksmanship became popular to pass the time when hostilities ceased. The land was transferred to the Department of the Interior and given to the Kidütökadö band (Yellow-bellied marmot-Eaters) of the Paiute nation. The parade ground alignment and a few original buildings remain. A post cemetery is nearby.

Lake County

Roop County is a defunct county of Nevada. It was created as Lake County in 1861 as one of the original nine counties of Nevada Territory and is still defined in the Nevada Revised Statutes. Lake County's Southern border was separated from Washoe County by an East West line located at the "mouth of the Truckee River" where it flowed into Pyramid Lake and Winnemucca Lake in 1861 near Nixon Nevada. The name Lake County was chosen due to the many endorheic sinks in the area. Streams from the Mountains flow into terminal basins. Some were connected into larger bodies during wetter epochs. The Territory of Nevada failed to define its Western border and for simplicity just assumed it would be the boundary of the Great Basin drainage, but the State of California was not that generous. In 1862 Lake County was renamed Roop County after Isaac Roop, Provisional governor of the Territory and founder of Susanville. On February 15, 1863 when Plumas County California disputed the claim, bullets and injunctions flew. Nobody died during the Roop County War, but the area West of the 120th line of longitude became Lassen County California on April 1, 1864 from parts of Plumas and Shasta counties. This resulted in the appointment of a joint California–Nevada boundary survey, with Surveyor-General J.F. Houghton acting for the State of California and Butler Ives, for the Territory of Nevada. The final surveyors

report was accepted by California on April 4, 1864, and by Nevada on February 7, 1865. The area East of the 120th line and North of Nixon had no government until it was attached to Washoe County (with prejudice) in 1866.

Alexey W. Von Schmidt

(1821–1906) Came to California in 1849 from New York to prospect for gold but soon returned to surveying and engineering. In 1853 he surveyed Contra Costa County and Yuba County. In 1855 he surveyed Mono Lake. He surveyed and built San Francisco's first dam and water aqueduct. He worked on the San Francisco cable car system. In 1872 he started the survey of the state's border. For a time Von Schmidt tried to engineer a way to tap Lake Tahoe's waters for dispersal in the Bear Flag Republic. Fortunately, he failed in that endeavor. Von Schmidt died on May 18, 1906 in San Francisco after the earthquake.

Massacre Lake

(by Matthew Q. Ebert NGH)

In the 1930s, several newspaper accounts referred to a massacre along the Applegate Trail near the Black Rock Desert. These reports went into lurid detail to describe how Indians killed 40 emigrant men and buried them in a common unmarked grave in 1850. The published stories describing this "massacre" had no corroborating evidence, just the legend passed on from one writer to the next. In 1977, an article by Thomas Layton in the Nevada Historical Society Quarterly convincingly disproved any emigrant "massacre" of such a magnitude occurred in 1850 or any other year in this part of northwestern Nevada. Although the name "Massacre Valley" does show up in History of Nevada published in 1881, none of the emigrant diary accounts of the Applegate Trail from that period mention either a large-scale Indian attack or any emigrant deaths of this number. If a massacre of this magnitude had occurred, it most certainly would have been reported and recorded. Large-scale attacks on emigrant trains were not characteristic of Indian warfare in this region. Marauding Indian bands such as one led by Black Rock Tom did attack isolated prospectors, ranchers, and stage stations in the 1860s, but nothing like the "massacre" attributed to 1850. The article in



This portrayal of the 1850 Massacre was drawn by Paul Nyland as one of a series of historically oriented newspaper advertisements for Harold's Club of Reno.

the Nevada Historical Society Quarterly suggests that perhaps two large piles of rocks near the Massacre Ranch buildings could have some bearing on the creation of this tale. Layton surmises that perhaps the rocks were placed there to mark a cache of belongings left behind by emigrants who could no longer carry them and hoped to return. Such behavior was not unusual for distraught and over loaded emigrants. The theory is that people came along later and seeing the rock piles assumed that they must mark the location of a burial site. More recently, military historian Mike Bilbo has suggested that the rocks were a foundation for military tents. There was a temporary U.S. military supply encampment called Camp Black that was known to be in the area around 1865 supporting troops on Indian campaigns. Fort McGarry and Soldier Meadows Ranch (an outlying picket post of Fort McGarry) were 1st Regiment, U.S. Cavalry during the Civil War. In the time since Bilbo made this suggestion, a person is reported to have found 1st Regiment Cavalry insignia and a 1st Cavalry-marked rosette from bridle at the site.

Surprise Valley Road

A stage line connected Surprise Valley to Reno after the Central Pacific Railroad was completed. Heading North up Valley Road in downtown Reno, Stage stops were established at Pyramid on the Lake, Sheepshead on the Smoke Creek Desert, Buffalo Meadows, Duck Flat, Eagleville, Cedarville and Fort Bidwell. When the Western Pacific Railroad was completed in 1909 Stage service began and ended at Sand Pass. A branch line was proposed to Surprise but never graded from Reynard on the Wobbly in the Smoke Creek Desert.

Kelly Creek Massacre

In 1910 Shoshone Mike (as the news media tagged him) left the Fort Hall Reservation in Idaho with his family and friends. They wandered across Northern Nevada and as far West as Oroville, California, In January 1911, in High Rock Canyon, running low on food they were spied rustling cattle. A posse of four men from Surprise Valley were ambushed by Mike Daggett and his sons in the canyon. The bodies were discovered looted and butchered, by a search party from Eagleville, California. The surrounding settlements became anxious that something be done about it. The Nevada and California State Police organized a posse under the command of Captain J.P. Donnelly to find the suspects. A large cash bounty was promised to anyone who managed to arrest or kill the fugitives. The posse caught up with the band at Kelly Creek, North of Midas and Golconda on February 25th and all but a few children were shot dead. They had run out of ammo and fought back with arrows and rocks. Dynamite blew a hole in the frozen ground and the deceased were buried in a mass grave. Ed Hogle of Eagleville was the only posse casualty. By 1913, three of the children had died of natural causes. Mary Jo Estep, last survivor of the last Indian Massacre died in 1992.

Governor Tasker Oddie reneged to pay the reward for the slaughter, but the case was later settled in favor of the posse by the Nevada Supreme Court.



Charles Alexander Sheldon

He was born in 1867 and graduated from Yale in 1890. After school he hired out on the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railroad. He moved to Mexico in 1898 to become general manager of the Chihuahua and Pacific Railroad. He invested in the Chihuahua and Pacific Exploration Company, developers of one of the richest silver and lead mines in Mexico. In four years this investment allowed him to retire at age 35. Sheldon's conservation career began in 1904 when he became fascinated with North America's wild mountain sheep. He first hunted desert sheep in Mexico's Sierra Madre and then pursued bighorns in the Rocky Mountains. In 1904, he hunted and observed Stone sheep in Canada's Yukon. His endeavor to study the Dall sheep in Alaska and all his friends in high places culminated in the creation of what is now Denali National Park.

Sheldon Antelope Range

The Northern Paiutes, and the indigenous peoples that preceded them for 10,000 years lived in a far different habitat with ample moisture, lakes, springs, creeks, marshes, and forests. Over time drier conditions set in, people and critters adapted accordingly. Ranching and homesteading filled the vacuum left by the natives. Livestock and hunting put a large dent in the Pronghorn population by 1920. Originally called the Section of

Economic Ornithology of the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1885, later known as the U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey was created to gather and analyze information on bird migrations. E.R. Sans, Superintendent of predatory animal control of the U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey, advocated for protections that included hunting regulations and private purchases by the Audubon Society and Boone and Crockett Club of the ranches and grazing areas of Northwest Nevada. The Range was named after a long-time Boone & Crockett member and avid outdoorsman. President Herbert Hoover designated the Charles Sheldon Wildlife Refuge by executive order in 1931. In 1936, President Franklin Roosevelt designated the Charles Sheldon Antelope Range and in 1976 the range and the refuge were combined and renamed the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge. Transferred to the Department of the Interior in 1939, the Biological Survey was merged with the Bureau of Fisheries in 1940 to create the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. More than 1,000 of FDR's Civilian Conservation Corps workers served in Sheldon between 1936 and 1942 and built the main infrastructure of the refuge, roads, fences, buildings, and water control structures. Their impeccable craftsmanship can be admired to this day. Pronghorn populations have recovered from an estimated 13,000 to a million today.

Vya

Vya is 10 miles east of the state line, north of Forty Nine Canyon from the Applegate days on the junction of Road 8A and Nevada State Rte. 34. The settlement was named for Vya Wimer, the first white child born in Long Valley. A pair of wooden cabins remain. A post office was in Vya from 1910 till 1941. Vya's biggest claim to fame was the rescue of the Stumpy Stolpa family. On a stormy Christmas Holiday in 1993 when every other road was blocked for the safety of the public, The Stolpas found a way to get stuck in a snow drift 50 miles from civilization. While the mother and child holed up in a cave Jim walked for 30 hours till stumbled upon by the Washoe County Road crew.

Pacific DC Intertie

The Pacific Northwest-Pacific Southwest Direct Current Intertie (also called Path 65) is a high-voltage electric superhighway between the Northwest and Southwest that helps balance power needs in the West and allows the two regions to share surplus electricity. It was the largest single transmission program ever undertaken in the United States. Construction began in the 1960s through a cooperative effort between public and private utilities in the Pacific Northwest and California. The 3,100-megawatt combined AC and DC transmission system was completed in 1970. It delivers enough to serve two to three million Los Angeles households and represents almost half of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) electrical system's peak capacity.

The intertie originates near the Columbia River at the Celilo Converter Station of Bonneville Power Administration's grid outside The Dalles, Oregon, and is connected to the Sylmar Converter Station north of Los Angeles, which is owned by five utility companies and managed by LADWP. The Intertie can transmit power in either direction, but power flows mostly from north to south. The section of the line in Oregon is owned and operated by Bonneville Power Administration, while the line in Nevada and California is owned and operated by Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. In 2016, BPA upgraded the BPA-owned portion of the transmission line, which runs 265 miles from The Dalles to the Nevada/Oregon border. The transition is at the Oregon-Nevada border, at 41°59'47"N 119°57'44"W

One advantage of direct current over AC is that DC current penetrates the entire conductor as opposed to AC current which only penetrates to the skin depth. For the same conductor size the effective resistance is greater with AC than DC, hence more power is lost as heat. In general the total costs for HVDC are less than an AC line if the line length is over 500–600 miles, and with advances in conversion technology this distance has been reduced considerably. A DC line is also ideal for connecting two AC systems that are not synchronized with each another. HVDC lines can help stabilize a power grid against cascading blackouts, since power flow through the line is controllable.

The Pacific Intertie takes advantage of differing power demand patterns between the northwestern and southwestern US. During winter, the northern region operates electrical heating devices while the southern portion uses relatively little electricity. In summer, the north uses little electricity while the south reaches peak demand due to air conditioning usage. Any time the Intertie demand lessens, the excess is distributed elsewhere on the western power grid (states west of the Great Plains, including Colorado and New Mexico).

PACIFIC NORTHWEST - SOUTHWEST INTERTIE



Part 1 | The Colorful History of the California/Nevada State Boundary

John P. Wilusz, LS, PE

The California/Nevada state boundary has a history as interesting and colorful as the states it separates. The boundary line, described in 1849 by men who had little experience with such things, was subject to many years of doubt, disagreement, and confusion. Its location on the ground has been questioned right up to the present age. This article is an introduction to the story behind one of the most surveyed boundaries in the United States.

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo

As a result of the Mexican-American War, the United States acquired a huge area known to the Mexicans as Upper California. It included land south of the Oregon Territory, west of the Rocky Mountains, and north of the newly established border between the United States and Mexico. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, signed in 1848, was generous to the victors. As if this were not enough, insult soon followed injury for the Mexicans. Shortly after the treaty was signed, word spread of the first gold strikes on the American River. By the spring of 1849, all the world had heard of California and became intoxicated by the dream of instant riches. The discovery of gold caused such phenomenal growth that in the fall of 1849, California was already preparing to enter the Union as a state.

The Constitutional Convention of 1849

In October of 1849 a Constitutional Convention assembled in Monterey, former capital of the Mexican government. Forty-eight delegates met at Colton Hall to debate their visions of California. They were a diverse mix including Californios, American settlers, and miners. They were young, mostly ranging in age from 25 to 53. Some were fluent only in Spanish. One of many pressing issues on their agenda was to propose state boundaries to be submitted to Congress. For several days the delegates could not agree on where to establish the easterly state line. Some sought to include all of Upper California as the Mexicans knew it. This would have put the Great Basin and portions of present day Utah and Arizona in California. Others argued that it made more sense geographically and politically to run the line along the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

Some historians speculate that those advocating the larger area were hoping for an eventual subdivision creating a new state to the south which would allow slavery. Although nearly all delegates wished California to be a free state, their reasons were as diverse as their backgrounds: some were morally opposed to slavery, some were miners who didn't want competition from slaves, and some were politicians who realized the U.S. Congress was unlikely to admit another slave state into the Union.

There were several compelling reasons to adopt the smaller proposition. For starters, a state the size of Upper California

would be nearly impossible to manage. Some delegates argued that including the Mormons, who had settled near the Great Salt Lake several years earlier, would be a mistake because they were not represented at the Convention. Furthermore, some delegates didn't like the idea that such an enormous state would have no more representation in the Senate than Delaware. They reasoned that allowing Upper California to develop into many states would eventually lead to more political clout for the West.

Boundaries Described

Ultimately the delegates agreed that drawing the line in the Sierra Nevada Mountains was the most practical solution. On October 11, 1849, James M. Jones, the youngest member of the Convention, offered the following land description. It was adopted and incorporated into the Constitution of 1849 and went on to define the boundaries of the 31st State: The boundary of the State of California shall be as follows: Commencing at the point of intersection of 42nd degree of north latitude with the 120th degree of longitude west from Greenwich, and running south on the line of said 120th degree of west longitude until it intersects the 39th degree of north latitude; thence running in a straight line in a southeasterly direction to the River Colorado, at a point where it intersects the 35th degree of north lat-





FEATURE



Astronomical station at Lake Tahoe, 1893.

itude; thence down the middle of the channel of said river to the boundary line between the United States and Mexico, as established by the treaty of May 13, 1848; thence running west and along said boundary line to the Pacific Ocean, and extending therein three English miles; thence running in a northwesterly direction and following the direction of the Pacific coast to the 42nd degree of north latitude; thence on the line of said 42nd degree of north latitude to the place of beginning. Also, all the islands, harbors and bays along and adjacent to the coast.

Unfortunately the delegates lacked the foresight of those that drafted the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The Treaty did more than describe the international boundary between the U.S. and Mexico; it required a commissioner and surveyor to be appointed by each government to run and mark the boundary line upon the ground. The results of this survey were to be deemed a part of the Treaty as if inserted therein. This requirement circumvented future disagreements based on conflicting interpretations of the intent of the written land description. Despite the presence of at least one surveyor at the Convention, the delegates did not incorporate similar wisdom in their description of California.

President Zachary "Rough and Ready" Taylor and the U.S. Congress did not delay in welcoming California and her abundant wealth into the Union; California sprung into statehood on September 9, 1850 without undergoing probation with a territorial government. Yet without physical monuments to rely on, people living in the vicinity of the 120th meridian and the oblique line could not know with certainty if they lived in California or Utah Territory.

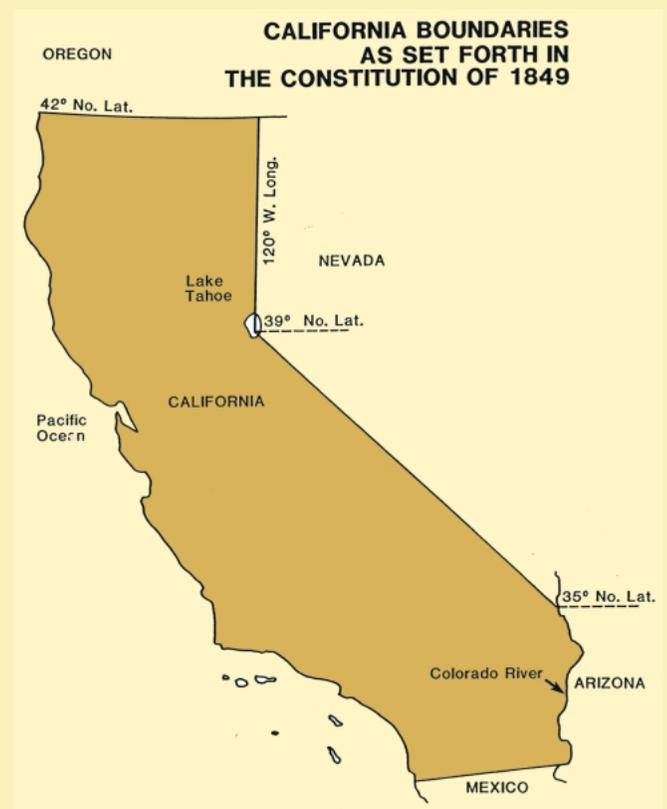
Challenges Determining Longitude

One reason why California's eastern boundaries have been subject to dispute is the difficulty early surveyors had in locating geographic coordinates, especially longitude. Using lines of lati-

tude and longitude was handy for the scrivener, but the question as to where these lines fell on the ground was left to future generations. Of the two coordinates, latitude is by far the easier to determine. It is the angular distance between the observer's horizon and the celestial pole. It can be measured by astronomical observations using relatively simple instruments. Longitude, however, is a horse of a different color. Longitude is the angular distance between the great circles of Greenwich, England and the observer's meridian. It is a function of time. Although the rotation of the earth has no bearing on latitude, it has everything to do with longitude. Because the earth rotates 360 degrees in about 24 hours, the velocity of its rotation is approximately 1,200 feet per second at 39 degrees north latitude. In other words, at that latitude a clock error of one second would result in staking a meridian nearly a quarter of a mile out of position. Correctly determining longitude was a substantial challenge to 19th century state boundary surveyors.

First Effort to Determine Easterly Boundary

The first astronomical observations for longitude used for determining the east boundaries of California were made in Placerville in 1855 by Surveyor General William Eddy. The crude protraction of the state boundaries on John Fremont's map was a function of convenience, not science, and they did not reveal to the residents of the Carson Valley upon which side of the line they stood. Eddy was a budget-minded civil servant and he knew it would be cheaper to make his observations close to home in Placerville. He determined the longitude of his position to be 120° 48' 11". The route from Placerville to the Carson Valley had been traveled enough by 1855 for the distance to be com-





monly known as at least 60 miles. Eddy's observations told him he was about 44 miles west of the 120th longitude. Without doubt, Carson Valley was in Utah Territory.

One of the primary routes into California in the mid 1850s passed through the heart of Carson Valley. This fork of the California Trail traversed the Sierra Nevada via Carson Pass and was considered by many to be superior to the Stevens/Townsend/Murphy route, or what today is known as Donner Pass.

In 1852, John Reese and a handful of other ambitious entrepreneurs arrived from Salt Lake City planning to sell supplies to the emigrants. They established a trading post which came to be known as Mormon Station, which in turn gave birth to Genoa, Nevada's first town. It seems more than a little ironic that Nevada, today renowned for gambling and brothels, was founded by Latter Day Saints.

The merchants at Mormon Station began arguing for territorial status apart from Utah almost immediately. However, their case did not become compelling to Washington, D.C. until the discovery of the Comstock Lode in 1859.

Early Surveys

Due to the enormity of the job, California's easterly boundary was surveyed piecemeal for the first 20+ years after statehood. During that time money was only available to survey those portions along corridors of significant development. In 1855, civil engineer George H. Goddard, working under California Surveyor General S.H. Marlette, undertook

a survey to determine the eastern boundary of the state in the vicinity of Carson Valley. He made astronomical observations at Bigler Lake (Lake Tahoe) to locate the angle point in California's eastern boundary and discovered that the angle point could not be occupied because it fell within the lake. Using data on the location of the southeast terminus point of the oblique boundary line generated in 1852 by Captain L. Sitgraves, U.S. Topographical Engineer, Goddard ciphered the spherical angle between the 120th longitude and the oblique line. Unfortunately, he never turned over the bulk of his work because he was never paid. As the saying goes, "The more things change, the more they remain the same."

The next round of astronomical observations at the terminus points of the oblique boundary line were performed by Lt. Joseph C. Ives of the Topographical Corps, U. S. Army. In 1858 he determined that the intersection of the 35th north latitude and the middle of the channel of the Colorado River occurred at longitude 114 degrees and 36 minutes west of Greenwich. Riparian boundaries can be troubling from a land title perspective because rivers move, and when the Colorado River moved, it carried the terminus point with it. In 1861 Lt. Ives relocated the northwest terminus point at Bigler Lake, and then promptly quit

his job, joined the fledgling Confederacy, and waged war against his former employer. For obvious though perhaps irrational reasons, his work lost credibility with Washington.

Nevada Territory

With the outbreak of the Civil War the mountain of silver under Virginia City became critical to national security. Nevada became a Territory by Act of Congress on March 2, 1861. The scribes of Nevada Territory's land description overestimated California's generosity because they included that portion of California easterly of the crest of the Sierra Nevada. The description reads as follows:

Beginning at the point of intersection of the forty-second degree of north latitude with the thirty- ninth degree of longitude west from Washington; thence running south on the line of said thirty- ninth degree of west longitude, until it intersects the north-

ern boundary line of the territory of New Mexico; thence due west to the dividing ridge separating the waters of Carson Valley from those that flow into the Pacific; thence on said dividing ridge northwardly, to the 41st degree of north latitude; thence due north to the southern boundary line of the state of Oregon; thence due east to the place of beginning.

It is interesting to note that longitude is not referenced to Greenwich, but to Washington, D.C.

Nevada Territory's land description set the stage for a minor civil

war even though it acknowledged that the overlap would continue to belong to California until and unless she ceded it to Nevada Territory. These qualifying words did not stop Plumas County, California, and Roop County, Nevada Territory (now in Washoe County, Nevada) from exercising jurisdiction over the same ground in the vicinity of Honey Lake Valley. The powder keg exploded when the Roop County judge arrested the Plumas County justice of the peace. This outrage prompted the Plumas County sheriff to arrest the Roop County judge. Before long shots were fired and blood was shed. Fortunately, a truce was declared before things got completely out of hand and each side resolved to petition their governor for an equitable solution. Clearly it was time to put state line monuments on the ground.

Houghton and Ives Survey of 1863

In the spring of 1863, Governor Leland Stanford of California, and Orion Clemens, older brother of Mark Twain and Acting Governor of Nevada Territory, jointly appointed surveyors to mark their common boundary. Stanford appointed California Surveyor-General J.F. Houghton. Clemens chose Butler Ives as Commissioner for Nevada Territory. Everyone involved hoped this would put an end to further confusion.



Old instrument blocks, upper Truckee River.



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The two chief surveyors hired John F. Kidder as Engineer in Charge of the field work and instructed him, per the Act of the California Legislature which authorized the survey, to mark a . . . transit line between the point of intersection of the 39th degree of north latitude with the 120th degree longitude west from Greenwich, near Lake Bigler, and the point where the 35th parallel of north latitude crosses the Colorado River, as the said points were established by Lieutenant Ives, Chief Astronomer of the United States Boundary Commission."

They also instructed Kidder to run and mark ". . . in the same manner all that part of the said boundary lying between first named point, near Lake Bigler, and due north from said point to the southern boundary of Oregon."

Twenty-five thousand dollars was appropriated to mark the line. In the words of Surveyor-General Houghton, the California/Nevada boundary was "six hundred and thirteen miles long, over a rugged, mountainous country, through several tribes of Indians not known to be friendly, passing through dense forests, over almost unexplored and uninhabited deserts with intervals of thirty, fifty, and eighty miles without water." With this sum Houghton was expected to organize the project, hire technical consultants to cipher complex geodetic calculations, purchase equipment and supplies, pay his men's wages, provide and maintain a large train of pack animals, set cut stone monuments, prepare maps in triplicate, cover travel expenses, prepare reports, and settle all incidentals. Not surprisingly, twenty-five thousand dollars proved to be inadequate to complete the job in its entirety.

John Kidder began the field work in late May of 1863 by recovering and occupying Lt. Ives' observatory at the south end of Lake Tahoe. There he made test observations for latitude. Finding his observations agreed substantially with Lt. Ives' work of 1861, he sent three members of his party to the north shore of the lake and put them on the meridian of the observatory by use of signal fires. After measuring westerly on the north shore of the lake to the 120th meridian, the entire party proceeded to north to Oregon. They marked the line as they went.

By late July the surveyors completed their work on the 120th meridian and had returned to Lake Tahoe to blaze the oblique

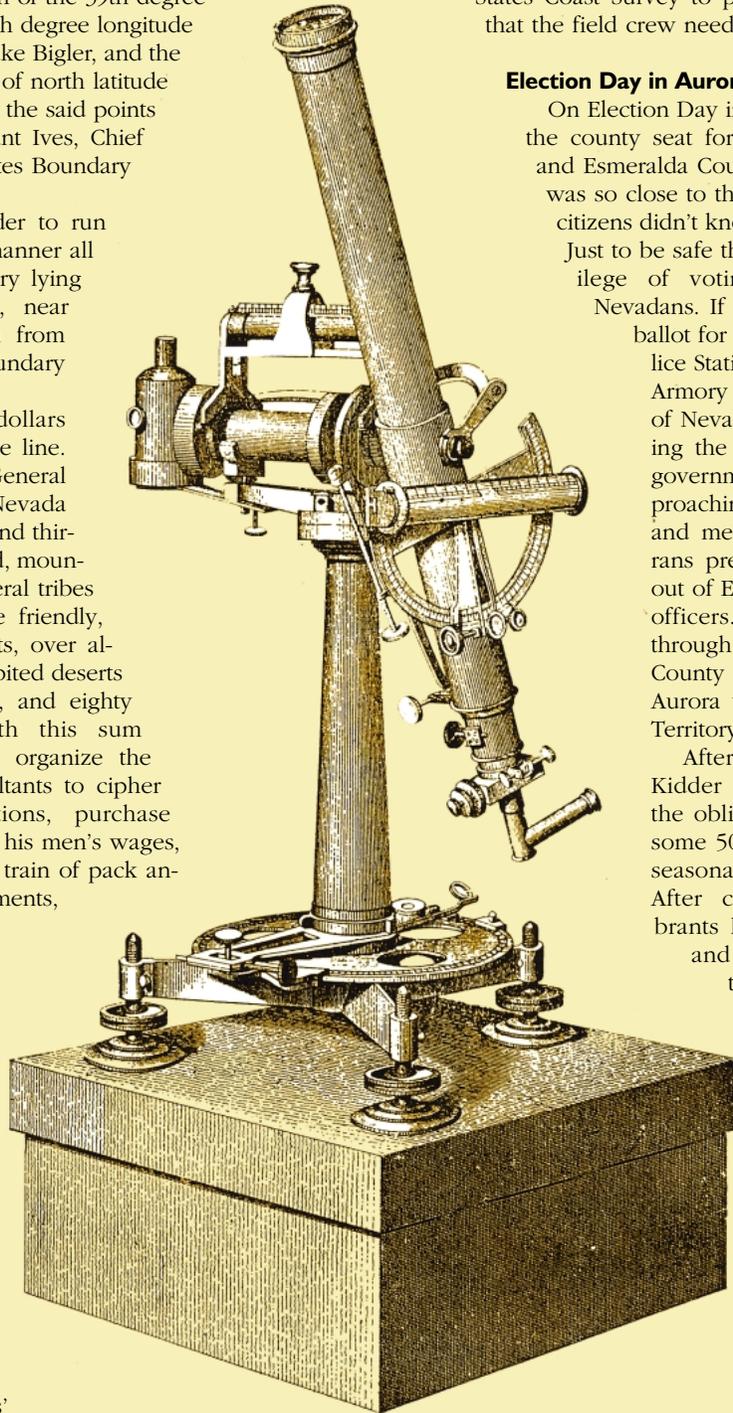
line southeasterly to the Colorado River. The oblique line presented a special challenge. It is a line of constantly changing azimuth and therefore required the expertise of a geodesist. Houghton retained Professor J.E. Hilgard of the United States Coast Survey to provide the complex calculations that the field crew needed.

Election Day in Aurora

On Election Day in September of 1863, Aurora was the county seat for both Mono County, California, and Esmeralda County, Nevada Territory. The town was so close to the oblique boundary line that her citizens didn't know for sure which side it was on. Just to be safe they afforded themselves the privilege of voting both as Californians and Nevadans. If so inclined, a voter could cast a ballot for his favorite Californian at the Police Station, then walk down the street to Armory Hall and do likewise as a citizen of Nevada Territory. Instead of postponing the election until the arrival of the government survey party, which was approaching the area from the northwest and merely several weeks away, Aurorans preferred to make a public wager out of Election Day and elect two sets of officers. After the surveyors passed through, politicians representing Mono County were promptly retired because Aurora was found to be inside Nevada Territory by approximately 3 miles.

After resolving Aurora's dilemma, Kidder continued southeasterly along the oblique line and soon encountered some 500 Indians who were enjoying a seasonal celebration directly in his path. After communicating with the celebrants he decided to return to Aurora and wait out the festival before continuing with the survey. On the night of October 29th, while the crew was camped between Adobe Meadows and Aurora, a 36-hour blizzard began. Winter arrived in the high country and ended field work for the Houghton-Ives survey of 1863.

Special thanks to François D. Uzes, LS, and Judge James Thompson, without whom this article would not have been possible. ▼



Zenith telescope

JOHN P. WILUSZ is employed by Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) in Auburn, California. In addition to his responsibilities as PCWA's sole land surveyor, he is also responsible for approving the water systems components of development plans. He can be reached at: jwilusz@pcwa.net.

Part 2 | The California/Nevada State Boundary

John P. Wilusz, LS, PE

In the spring of 1863, J.F. Houghton of California and Butler Ives of Nevada were appointed chief surveyors to solve the ongoing California/Nevada boundary disputes. They hired John F. Kidder as Engineer in Charge of the field work, who was to mark the boundary line from a point on the 39th parallel near Lake

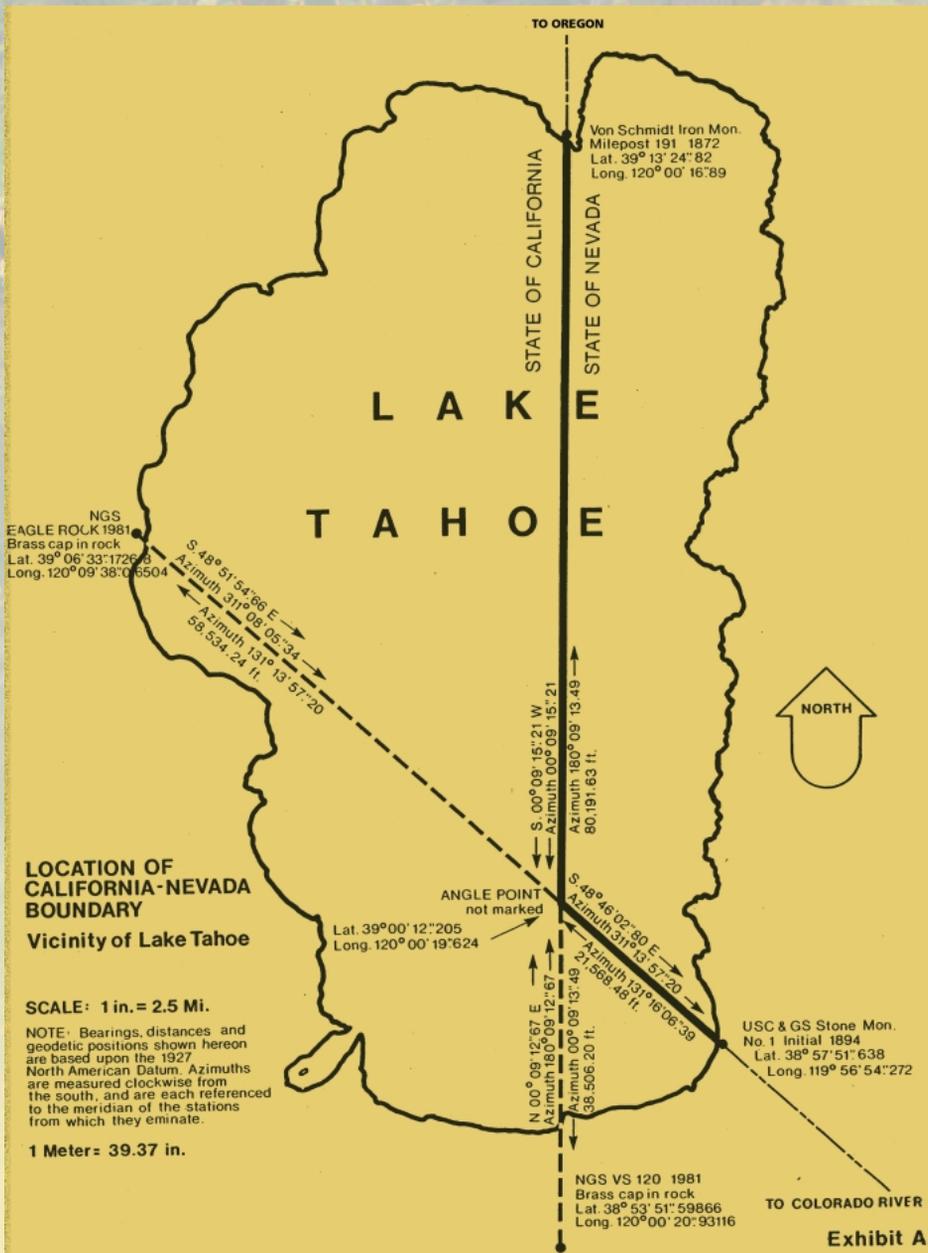
Bigler, north to the southern boundary of Oregon, and then southeasterly to a point where the 35th parallel crossed the Colorado River. Safety was an ever-present concern as the surveyors were required to cross the lands of hostile Indian tribes and overcome tremendous geographic obstacles. For the sum of \$25,000,

Houghton was expected to organize the project, hire technical consultants to cipher complex geodetic calculations, purchase equipment and supplies, pay his men's wages, provide and maintain a large train of pack animals, set cut stone monuments, prepare maps in triplicate, cover travel expenses, prepare reports, and settle all incidentals.

Kidder began the field work in late May of 1863 and by late July the surveyors completed their work on the 120th meridian and had returned to Lake Tahoe to blaze the oblique line southeasterly to the Colorado River. Their efforts were halted when they met up with Indians celebrating a seasonal festival. The crew turned back to wait out the festival, and on the night of October 29th, while camped between Adobe Meadows and Aurora, a 36-hour blizzard began. Winter arrived in the high country and ended field work for the Houghton-Ives survey of 1863.

Snow wasn't the only threat to the Houghton-Ives survey because money was running out at the same time that the crew was shivering in camp. Most of the \$25,000 dollars appropriated for the job was already spent and yet the work was only half complete. The oblique line that the field crew was forced to abandon near Aurora was essentially a precisely-calculated random line. Had the survey been completed as planned, Engineer in Charge John Kidder would have continued this line to its terminus as determined by Lt. Joseph Ives in 1861. There, Kidder would have measured the falling between his line and Ives' position. With this data he would have returned along the oblique line to Lake Tahoe, applying appropriate corrections and resetting his monuments along the way. The oblique line would have then been marked from Lake Tahoe to the 37th parallel of north latitude, which until 1867 was Nevada's southerly boundary.

In his report to Governor Leland Stanford, Surveyor General J.F. Houghton ac-





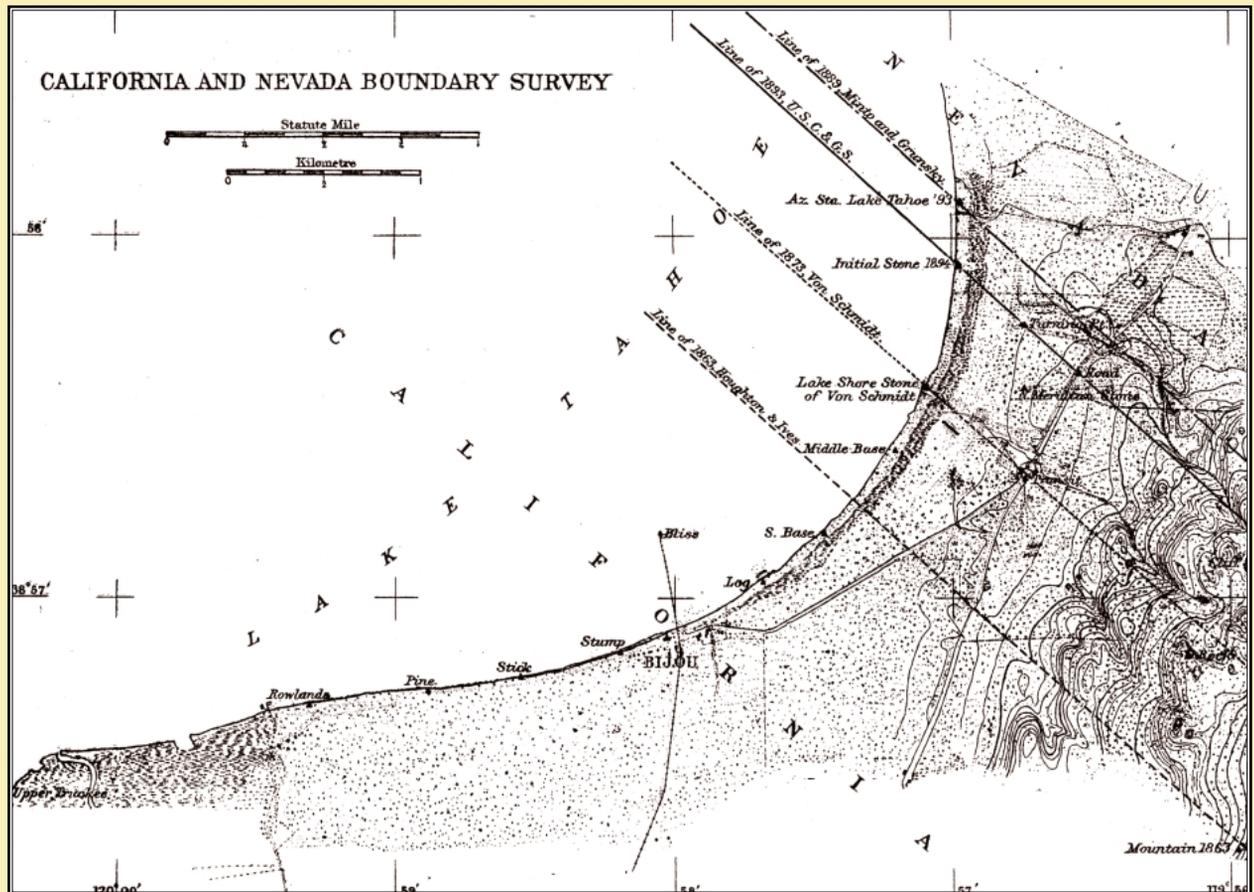
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knowledge that because the oblique line was not completed and corrected, it could not be considered entirely accurate. He requested an additional \$20,000 to complete the survey as planned, but unfortunately, the money never materialized. California and Nevada had to make do with things as Kidder left them. It didn't take long for problems to resurface.

CA/OR Border

In March of 1867, Congress authorized a survey of "the 42nd parallel of north latitude, so far as

it constitutes the common boundary between the States of California and Oregon." The General Land Office (GLO) hired astronomer and surveyor Daniel Major to execute the work. Major's instructions were to establish the intersection of the 42nd parallel of north latitude with the 120th meridian west from Greenwich and survey and mark the common boundary west to the Pacific Ocean. By 1870 his survey was completed and accepted by the GLO. Perhaps the first thing people noticed about his map was that he did not show the Houghton-Ives monument of 1863 at the northeast corner of California. However, he did plot topographical features common to those plotted on the earlier survey, and therefore government cartographers were able to establish a spatial relationship between the two. What they found did not look good. Careful comparison of the maps revealed a considerable difference of opinion regarding the location of California's northeast corner. This conflict was especially disturbing to the GLO because the public lands surveys were being closed on the Houghton-Ives line. If that line fell it would take other



surveys with it. Matters would only get worse with time. Yet again, something had to be done.

The Von Schmidt Survey of 1872-73

In June of 1872, Congress authorized another survey of the common boundary between California and Nevada. GLO Commissioner Willis Drummond hired astronomer and surveyor Alexey W. Von Schmidt to do the field work. A sum of more than \$41,000 was appropriated for the survey, so it appears that someone important learned a lesson from underfunding Houghton and Ives. Drummond had complete confidence in Major's location of the northeast corner so he instructed Von Schmidt to begin there and proceed south along the 120th meridian. Von Schmidt developed other plans.

In the spring of 1872, Professor George Davidson of the U.S. Coast Survey was in the Verdi area making observations to locate the 120th meridian in relation to the Houghton-Ives line. State Geologist J.D. Whitney and U.S. Geologist Clarence King requested his services to facilitate geographical surveys which

were being executed nearby. Davidson used telegraphic time signals and made independent calculations for the longitude. Von Schmidt was present for some of this work and was much impressed with Davidson's use of the telegraph. In fact he was so impressed he wrote to Commissioner Drummond and requested permission to use Davidson's location of the 120th meridian and run the line north to Oregon instead of south from Major's corner. He mailed his letter and went straight to work on this new strategy. By the time he received Drummond's negative reply he had already blazed about a hundred miles of flag line on his way north. The Commissioner was not pleased about this change in plans and ordered Von Schmidt to conduct the survey per the original instructions. Upon receiving the news, Von Schmidt dropped everything and headed for Major's monument at the northeast corner of the state. From there he surveyed south along the 120th meridian, setting monuments along the way.

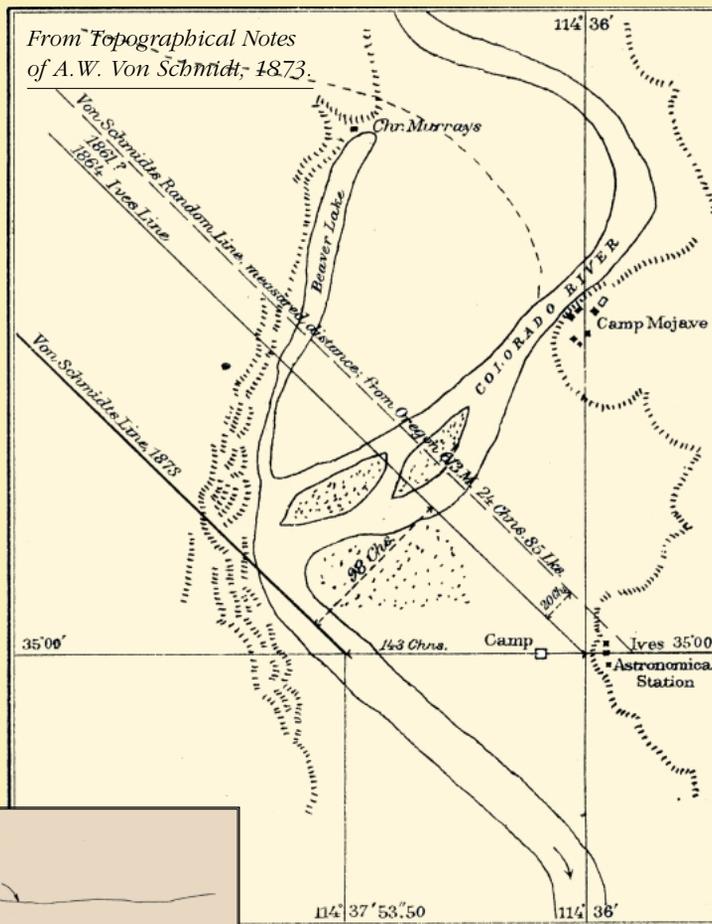
By late September he had traveled far enough to encounter the northerly terminus of the line Drummond ordered him



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to abandon. It was more than three miles easterly of the line he was currently on. That discovery must have been very discouraging. However, his faith in Davidson was unshakable, so he stuck with the professor's opinion on the location of the 120th meridian. He returned to Major's monument, chained easterly, and set a new monument for the northeast corner of California. He then surveyed south along this line to the north shore of Lake Tahoe. At that point he dispersed his crew and returned to San Francisco for the winter.

Von Schmidt returned to the field in the spring of 1873 and set a cast iron state line monument at the north shore of Lake Tahoe. He made observations to locate the angle point in California's easterly boundary, and then made his

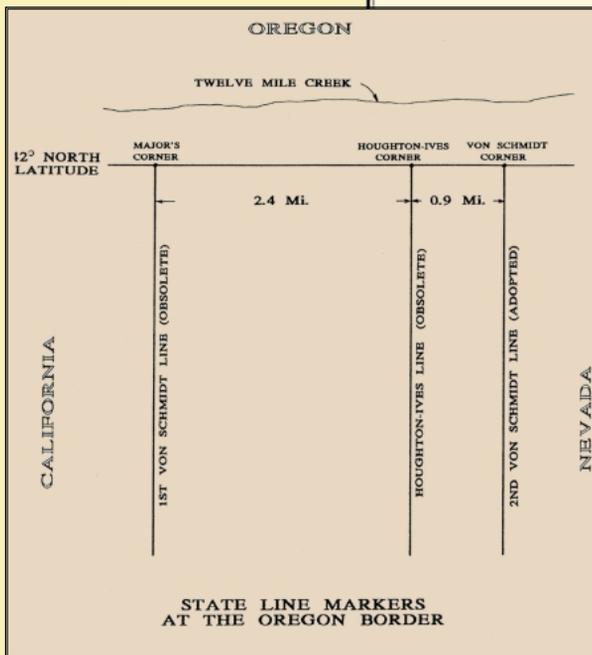


ing this monument, a common point in the two surveys, was to try and clear things up. The last thing he wanted was more trouble.

Unlike Von Schmidt, Major used the 1868 monument as instructed. That's not surprising since he set it himself. It also comes as no surprise that he didn't like Von Schmidt's monument any more than Von Schmidt liked his. Major's map of 1873 showed Von Schmidt's monument at the northeast corner of California to be in error by some three miles. After so much effort and money spent, the citizens still had no satisfaction.

Grunsky and Minto Survey

By 1889, Von Schmidt's work in California had aroused enough suspicion to inspire the Legislature to commission another survey. Legislators appropriated \$5,000 "to correct and establish" the oblique line. Surveyor General Theo. Reichert hired C.E. Grunsky and



During the course of his work Von Schmidt set cut granite monuments, and reset and remarked several of the obsolete monuments of the Houghton-Ives survey. He also set several other cast iron monuments similar to the one at the north shore of Lake Tahoe. Upon completion of the survey, GLO Commissioner Drummond accepted Von Schmidt's work and directed future public lands surveys to close on his lines. For a while there was peace in the neighborhood.

William Minto, civil engineers, to make things right. Reichert instructed the engineers to tie into the new transcontinental control net established by the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey. The control net came along some years after Von Schmidt, and likely brought its inaccuracies to light. One can only speculate as to why so little money was authorized, considering that 16 years earlier the Von Schmidt survey cost more than \$40,000. Perhaps the intent of the Grunsky-Minto survey was primarily to confirm the deficiencies in Von Schmidt's oblique line and thereby assist in determining if another full-blown effort was warranted.

The same Professor Davidson who helped Von Schmidt in 1872 helped Grunsky and Minto establish fresh initial points at each end of the oblique line. They surveyed a dozen or so miles of the line southeasterly from Lake Tahoe and then quit for lack of money. Now there was yet another line on a map already abundant with conflicting opinions. At the north shore of Lake Tahoe Von Schmidt determined Houghton and Ives

way along the oblique line to the Colorado River. When he arrived he found the river to be in a different place than where Lt. Ives found it in 1861. In his notes, Von Schmidt indicated that he re-established the intersection of the 35th degree of north latitude and the Colorado River, and then corrected back along the oblique line all the way to Lake Tahoe.

Disagreement at the Corner

In September of 1872, GLO Commissioner Willis Drummond hired Daniel Major to survey Nevada's northern boundary. Just as he instructed Von Schmidt several months earlier, he directed Major to use the monument of 1868 at the northeast corner of California as the initial point of the survey. Undoubtedly his intent in us-



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to be about 3,100 feet west of the “correct” position. In turn, Grunsky and Minto concluded that Von Schmidt set his line about 1,600 feet too far west. Disagreements of a similar magnitude existed at the south shore of the lake and all along the California-Nevada boundary.

The USC&GS Survey of 1893-99

Because of the continuing disparities, California pressured the federal government to find money to solve the problem once and for all. In 1892, Congress appropriated funds, but only for a survey of the oblique line. The following year the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey began the most precise survey yet. The USC&GS made astronomic observations to locate each end of the oblique line and connected the two points using a triangulation network. Running from northwest to southeast, they reportedly missed their closing station at the Colorado River by less than 500 feet. They corrected back along the entire line, and reset temporary monuments using proportionate corrections. Along the way they discovered that Von Schmidt had not done similarly as he reported to the GLO. By locating many of his monuments, they ascertained that he corrected back only about 1/3 of the way to the lake. There he intersected his random line and put an unauthorized kink in the boundary. At no point did he faithfully trace the inverse between his astronomic positions at each end of the line.

The USC&GS survey was in progress from 1893 to 1899. It had the best resources and most advanced technology of any survey up to that time. Finally, there was a highly accurate and well-monumented boundary between California and Nevada—at least between Lake Tahoe and the Colorado River.

Steps to Resolving the Conflict

In 1977, California brought suit against Nevada in the United States Supreme Court. The time had come to establish their common boundary with certainty and eliminate potential confusion regarding tax collection and other issues of jurisdiction. Since 1873 both states acquiesced to the Von Schmidt line north of Lake Tahoe. The problem was that neither state’s

legislature enacted statutes adopting the Von Schmidt line. Despite the fact that almost no one knew where it was, the Houghton-Ives line was still the official boundary from Lake Tahoe to Oregon.

The oblique line as surveyed by the USC&GS did not figure into California’s initial argument because, unlike the Von Schmidt line, it had been adopted by both states by statutes. It was known to be substantially accurate and well-monumented. Since 1899 it had been accepted without reservation by both states. On the surface the situation looked much better than along the 120th meridian, but before the conclusion of litigation the location of this line would be argued as well.

Along with questions about tax collection and jurisdiction there were also land title issues regarding state school and selection lands between the lines marked in 1863, 1873, and 1899. Some federal lands acquired and subsequently sold by Nevada were eventually found to have belonged to California. Consequently, Congress enacted a law that protects the property rights of parties whose chain of title emanated from the wrong state.

Litigation Intensifies

As the litigation got into full swing, claims and counter claims flew about with a level of intensity that no one anticipated. Once shaken from her complacency, Nevada had no problem generating creative alternatives. Her primary argument was for the Houghton-Ives line, even though its very existence was un-

known but to a handful. Another suggestion was to extend a line south to Lake Tahoe from the 1868 Major monument at the northeast corner of California. One alternative offered for the oblique line was based on the work of Houghton and Ives. Another was based on Von Schmidt, which is interesting, since Nevadans considered him an “*officious intermeddler*” who caused them to lose land to California. In short, all of Nevada’s suggestions would have pushed the common boundary to the west. California’s counter argument was to resurvey the entire line from Oregon to the Colorado River using state of the art technology and then adopt the new line as official once and for all. This would have pushed the boundary somewhat into Nevada with the result of annexing several casinos. The Golden State was prepared for this contingency; an Assemblyman from Long Beach sponsored a bill exempting those casinos from California’s anti-gambling laws.

Peace at Last

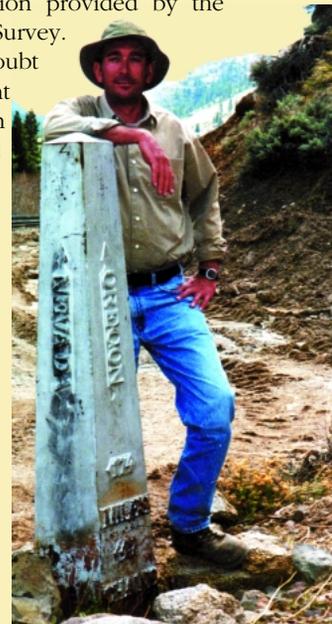
In 1980, the Supreme Court of the United States decreed that the boundary between California and Nevada would consist of the Von Schmidt line as marked between Oregon and the north shore of Lake Tahoe, and the USC&GS line as marked from the south shore of Lake Tahoe to the Colorado River. The Court allowed the states to determine the location of the intersection of these two lines inside the lake, which they soon did using monumentation provided by the National Geodetic Survey. After 80 years of doubt and disagreement there was peace in the neighborhood at last. ↓

JOHN WILUSZ is employed by Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) in Auburn, CA. In addition to his responsibilities as PCWA’s sole land surveyor, he is also responsible for approving the water systems components of development plans.



Von Schmidt monument at northeast corner of California. Inset: Inscribed rock at Von Schmidt monument, northeast corner of California: “1872, A. W. Von Schmidt,

Photos courtesy of Judge James H. Thompson.



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Blasts in the Past

1980 GENO OLIVER, STAR CITY-UNIONVILLE
1981 SKIP PENNINGTON+, MANHATTEN
1982 BILL KENNEDY, KENNEDY
1983 JIM CRONN+, PINEGROVE
1984 GEORGE COURSON,+ LEADVILLE
1985 DOUG WALLING, BERLIN
1986 DAVID WOOD, ROCHESTER
1987 JOE LEPORI, AURORA
1988 BILL SAWYER+, SULPHUR
1989 MIKE MILLER, MILLER'S STATION
1990 RED BEACH+, SHAMROCK
1991 BOB RODGERS, COMO
1992 RON WALSH, SEVEN TROUGHS
1993 DANNY COSTELLO, THE REAL NATIONAL
1994 JIM GROWS+, DESERT WELLS
1995 DANIEL BOWERS, HIGH ROCK CANYON
1996 PETER VAN ALSTYNE+, FAIRVIEW
1997 EDDY GONZALES, GRANTSVILLE
1998 JOHN DORNSTAUDER, HUMBOLDT CITY
1999 KEN MOSER, BELMONT
2000 VAL COLLIER+, PEPPER SPRINGS
2001 CHUCK MURRAY, NIGHTENGALE
2002 MARC BEBOUT, NEW PASS MINE
2003 AL NICHOLSON, IONE
2004 RON THORNTON, FLETCHER STATION
2005 J D PATERSON, APPLGATE-LASSEN TRAIL
2006 WALT SIMMEROOTH, NEVADA CENTRAL R. W.
2007 JEFF JOHNSON, ADELAIDE
2008 OWEN RICHIE+, TYBO
2009 KARL SMALL,+ DUN
2010 DAN WESTON, KINGSTON
2011 RUSS BREAM, SMOKE CREEK
2012 JESS DAVIS, + FREMONT'S CASTLE
2013 CLIFF McCAIN, KNOTT CREEK
2014 BOB STRANSKY, JARBIDGE
2015 TIM PIERCE, WHISKEY FLAT
2016 KEVIN BRECKINRIDGE, COMSTOCK
2017 REID SLAYDEN, WONDER
2018 DOC ASHER, SILVER PEAK
2019 VIC MENA, SILVER PEAK II

+“Gone to Silver Hills”