

J.U.N.K. TRIP 99, NO. 20

This Way To Belmont



BELMONT

JULIA'S UNEQUIVICAL NEVADA KLAMPOUTS

NO	YEAR	LEADER	LOCATION
1	1980	GENO OLIVER (CHARTER)	STAR CITY-UN IONVILLE
2	1981	SKIP PENNINGTON	MANHATTEN
3	1982	BILL KENNEDY	KENNEDY
4	1983	JIM CRONN*	PINEGROVE
5	1984	GEORGE COURSON	LEADVILLE
6	1985	DOUG WALLING	BERLIN
7	1986	DAVID WOOD	ROCHESTER
8	1987	JOE LEOPRI*	AURORA
9	1988	BILL SAWYER*	SULPHUR
10	1989	MIKE MILLER	MILLER'S STATION
11	1990	RED BEACH	SHAMROCK
12	1991	BOB RODGERS	COMO
13	1992	RON WALSH	SEVEN TROUGHS
14	1993	DANNY COSTELLA	NATIONAL
15	1994	JIM GROWS	DESERT WELLS
16	1995	DANIEL BOWERS	HIGH ROCK CANYON
17	1996	PETER VAN ALSTYNE	FAIRVIEW
18	1997	EDDY GONZALES	GRANTSVILLE
19	1998	JOHN DORNSTAUER	HUMBOLDT CITY
20	1999	KEN MOSER	BELMONT

* GONE TO THE SILVER HILLS

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Nevada Ghost Towns & Mining Camps
 Nevada's Turbulent Yesterday
 Historical Society
 History of Nevada
 Mining Districts of Nevada
 Nevada Place Names
 Postal History of Nevada
 A Guide To The Ghost Towns & Mining Camps of Nye County, Nevada

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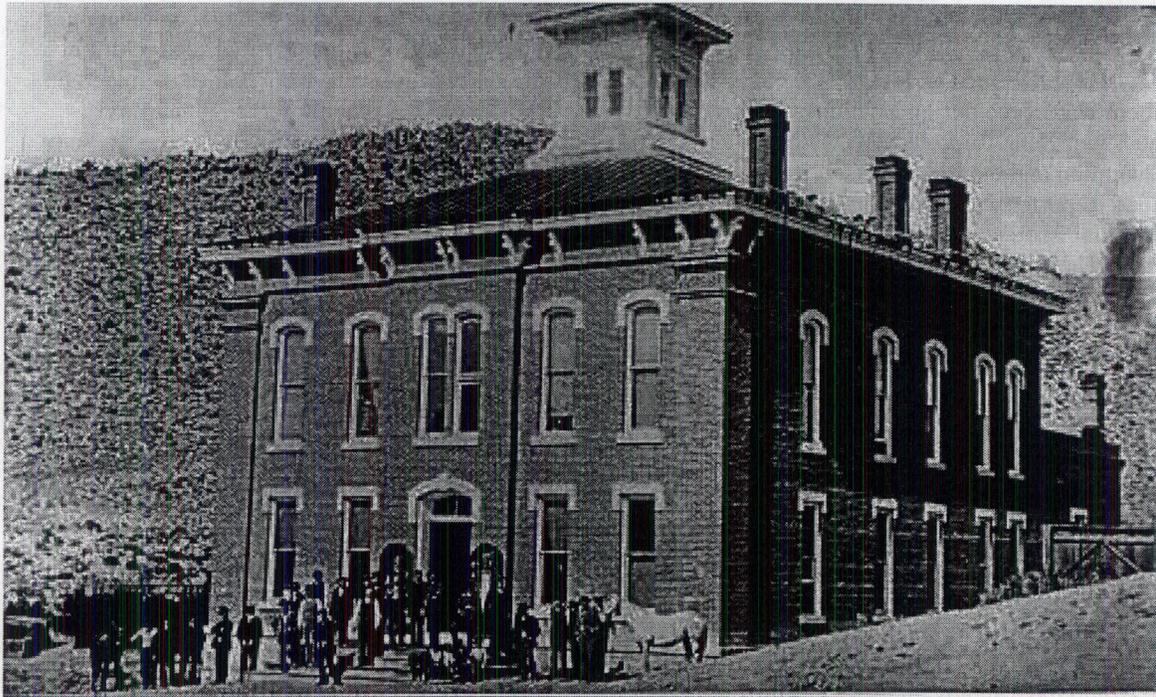
Ken Moser

This Trip Is Dedicated To Our Brothers Who Have Gone To The Silver Hills Since Our Last Meeting

XNGH Chip Gash
 Warren (Hoot) Gibson

Elmore Chandler
 Brian Trimble

E CLAMPUS VITUS
 AND SO RECORDED



Belmont Courthouse
Photo Courtesy Nevada Historical Society

Belmont

The following is a reprint from "A Guide To The Ghost Towns And Mining Camps Of Nye County, Nevada" by Shawn Hall.

Belmont's history begins in October 1865 when an Indian discovered a rich deposit of silver in the Toquima Mountains. A small camp called Belmont (meaning beautiful mountains) soon formed. By the beginning of 1866, a full-scale rush had begun. During 1866-67 Belmont was credited with a population as high as 10,000, but better estimates are that about 2000-4000 people were living in the bustling town. The Belmont boom drained the population from many nearby towns, including Nye County seat Ione. As Belmont continued to grow, the residents began to call for a county seat change. In February 1867 Belmont became the new county seat. The town was appropriated \$3400 to construct a courthouse; a huge brick building was started but not totally completed until 1874. A post office opened in Belmont on April 10, 1867, and the town seemed destined for permanence.

Mining in Belmont's early years was very good. Ten major mines were being worked within a

year after the first discoveries. The deepest of these was the Belmont Mine, well over 500 feet in the earth. The mine also had about 2000 feet of lateral workings. The full potential of the mine could never be realized because of the exceptionally heavy water flow that continuously hampered mining operations. Other important mines were the Monitor-Belmont, 250 feet; the Arizona, 175 feet; and the Green and Oder Mine, which yielded ore valued at \$400 per ton.

Six mills were built in and around Belmont during its peak years. The first was a ten-stamp mill built in 1866; it continued to operate until 1869. In 1867 a larger twenty-stamp mill was built. This operated only a short while and was eventually moved to Gold Mountain. The largest mill, the Combination, was built in 1868. It had forty stamps and cost over \$225,000 to build. There were also three quartz stamp mills, of five, twenty and thirty stamps. The twenty-stamp mill was the Monitor-Belmont, built by the Belmont Silver Mining Company in 1867. There were also five sawmills in the area, all extremely busy turning out board lumber for buildings in Belmont. The largest of these, owned by men

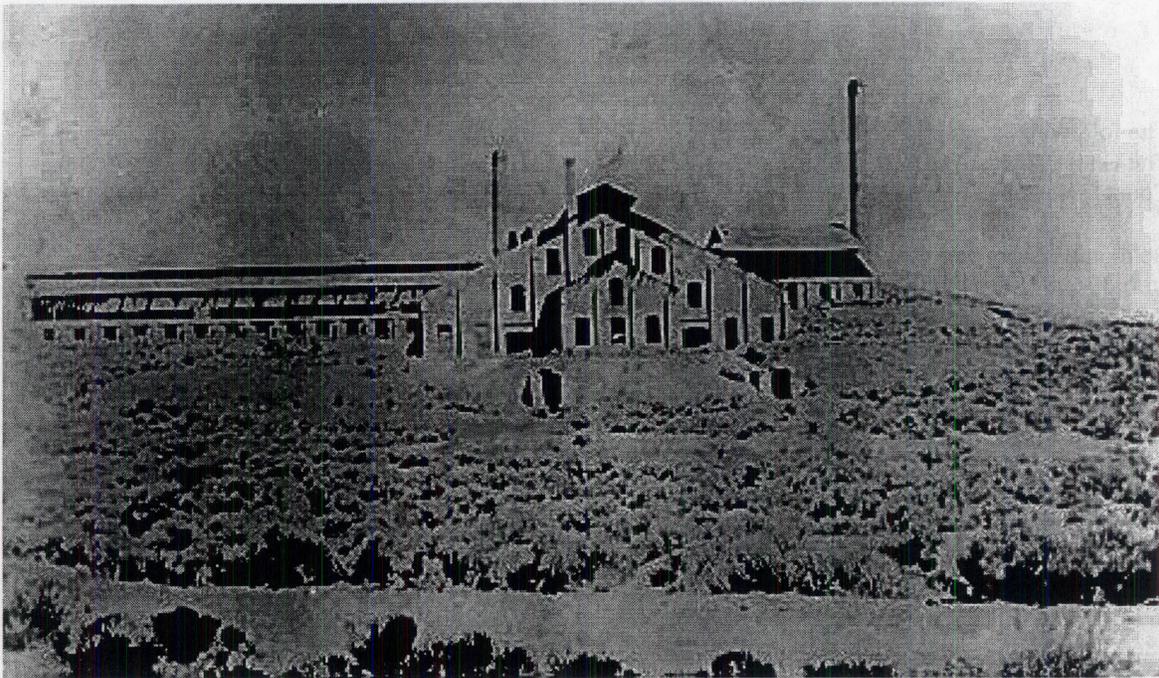
named Crowell and Myers, produced over 4000 board feet of lumber daily.

Newspapers formed an integral part of Belmont. There were three during Belmont's early years: the Silver Bend Reporter, the Mountain Champion and the Belmont Courier. The Silver Bend Reporter was the first Belmont newspaper; its initial issue was published on March 30, 1867. The paper was run by Oscar Fairchild, and his brother, M. D., was editor. The paper started out as a weekly but eventually became a semiweekly, published on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Things just did not work out for the paper, however. It folded on July 29, 1868, and was moved to Austin.

The second paper in Belmont was formed completely as a political weapon. The Mountain Champion was owned by Thomas Fitch, known far and wide as the "silver-tongued orator of the West." Fitch was running for a congressional seat and felt that by having his own newspaper he would have an advantage in the election. The first issue of the weekly tabloid came out on

June 3, 1868. The paper only lasted until Fitch first issue of the weekly tabloid came out on June 3, 1868. The paper only lasted until Fitch was successfully elected to office; it folded on April 10, 1869, having served its purpose.

The Belmont Courier was first published on Feb. 14, 1874, with John Booth as owner. Booth, along with Andrew Casamayou, put together one of the best liked and most successful newspapers ever published in Nye County. The paper went smoothly until 1875 when Andrew Casamayou died. After his death on December 10, Booth lost most of his enthusiasm for the paper and finally decided to leave it on Dec. 16, 1876. The paper was never the same. Andrew Maute took over, joined by Sam Donald in 1880. By then Belmont was well on its way to being a ghost town and the paper had a rough time. Donald left in 1889, leaving Maute to keep the struggling paper afloat. The Belmont Courier finally folded on March 2, 1901, with this closing statement: "Our last issue-every branch of business in Nye County is dull."



Combination Mill, East Belmont
Photo Courtesy Nevada Historical Society



Cosmopolitan Hotel
Photo Courtesy Nevada Historical Society

Belmont was not always dull. The town had a number of murders and even a couple of lynchings. The first major conflict occurred as a result of dissension between Irish and Cornish miners. It was April 17, 1867, when the Irish miners marched on the Silver Bend Mining Company's offices. They took the president, R. B. Canfield, placed him on a C6 rail" and paraded him around town, while stopping at most of the saloons. The group became more and more mean as they drank. One man, Louis Bodrow, a former Austin marshal, dared to confront the mob. John Dignon, one of the parading group, hit Bodrow, and all hell broke loose. In the ensuing gun battle, Bodrow

and Dignon were killed, a number of men were injured and Canfield escaped.

The second incident involved the lynching of two men, and it remains a black mark in Belmont's history. The two, Charlies McIntyre and Jack Walker, had been involved in a shooting in May 1874 and both were arrested.

They escaped but were soon found hiding in an old mine shaft. That night vigilantes lynched the pair. The man that the pair had killed was known to be no good and the circumstances of the death are unclear. Memory of that night still hangs over the town.

Belmont, after a slowdown from 1868-73, received a big boost when a number of new rich deposits were discovered in the Belmont, Highbridge, Monitor-Belmont and the Quintero mines in 1874. Most of these were located about a mile east of Belmont. A small settlement known as East Belmont formed there. Belmont soon had over 2000 people once again and the outlook seemed good. The mines stayed open until 1887, when declining ore value put a damper on profits and forced close-downs. From 1865 to 1887 the Belmont mines recorded production in excess of \$15 million. For the most part the mines remained quiet until about ten years after the turn of the century.

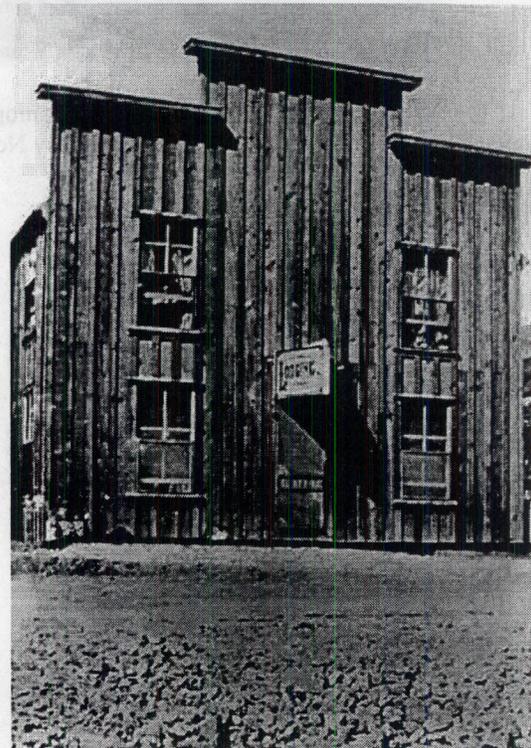
When Jim Butler left his Monitor Valley ranch in May 1900 to head for the strikes in Klondike (Esmeralda County), no one knew his trip would change the state's history. After Butler discovered the rich silver deposits at Tonopah Springs, a huge rush began to that area, emptying many small towns near the site. Almost immediately a strong call went up to transfer the county seat from Belmont to the newly rich Tonopah. By 1903 Belmont only had thirty-six qualified voters and could manage but feeble resistance. In May 1905 the transfer was made. By 1911 Belmont's population had shrunk to less than fifty, and on May 31, 1911, the town lost its post office.

Belmont had a fairly active revival beginning in 1914. The Monitor Belmont Mining Company had acquired almost all of the old mines near Belmont and, in 1915, constructed a huge mill to process the ore. The mill, the Cameron, had ten 1600-pound stamps and a 150-ton flotation system to process ore from the Monitor

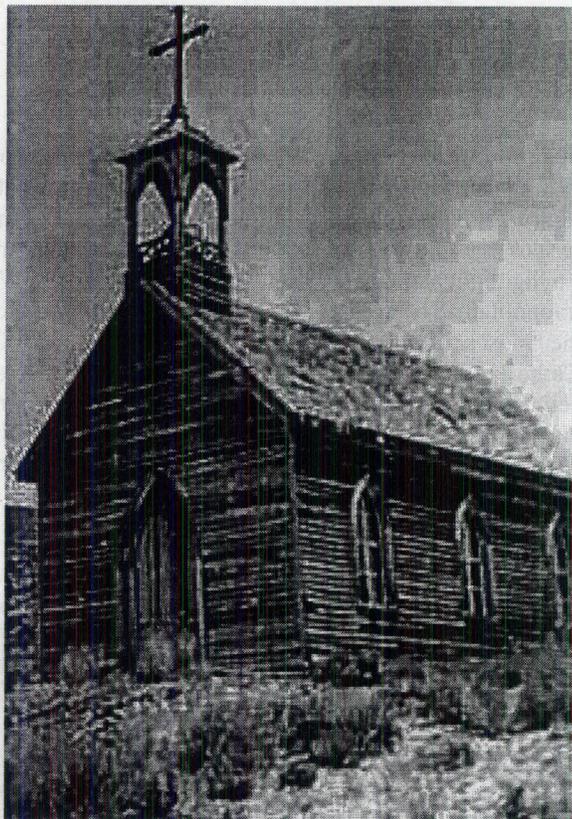
Belmont's twenty-one claims. The bricks used to construct this mill were taken from the Combination Mill, torn down the year before. The Cameron Mill was also used to rework some tailings from the earlier activity. The company had three major mines (600 feet, 750 feet and 1100 feet), which kept the mill running until 1917. With all this activity, the population of Belmont began to rise slightly. The post office reopened on Sept. 27, 1915. It looked like Belmont was going to get a second chance for survival.

The Monitor Belmont Mining Company left the district after closing the Cameron Mill in 1917. The property was leased to the Nevada Wonder Mining Company in early 1918. Nevada Wonder spent huge amounts of money for exploration that turned out to be fruitless; the company relinquished its lease in 1919. But Belmont was not ready to die yet. A 30-ton cyanide plant opened in 1921 to treat the old tailings. When this was given up, Belmont drifted back to ghostdom. The post office closed on Aug. 31, 1922, and there have been no revivals since. The town still had twenty-eight people in 1945. Soon that figure was down to ten, and that remains

fairly consistent even today. The activity from 1914 to 1922 yielded a reported \$1 million. Belmont is the queen of Nye County ghosts-in fact, one of the top three ghosts in the state. The remains at and around Belmont are amazing. There are picturesque ruins of the three mills. Only a stack and some rubble mark the site of the Monitor Belmont Mill, located just below the town. The Combination Mill is marked by a huge, pockmarked stack and extensive ruins, including a small brick room that probably housed explosives. The best of the mills is Cameron, whose skeletal brick walls of enormous size are awesome to behold. Both the Combination and Cameron mills are in East Belmont, a mile east of Belmont. The Forest Service has mistakenly labeled the Cameron Mill as the Highbridge Mill. This mistaken identity has also appeared in a few of the more recent books on Nevada. The Highbridge Mill was built in the 1860s and was located on the far side of the mountain behind the Cameron Mill. The mill was high up on the mountain, and today only stone foundations mark the site.



Warburton Hotel
Photo Courtesy Nevada Historical Society



Catholic Church
Later moved to Manhattan
Photo Courtesy Nevada Historical Society

Belmont A Synopsis NGH Ken Moser

The town of Belmont and the mining district named 11br it came into being in the year 1865. The discovery of gold is attributed to C.L. Straight and others. The richness of the strike quickly brought miners to the area and Belmont's boom was on.

The population grew to over 2,000 people, and Belmont was made the County seat of Nye county effective in Feb. 1867. Belmont remained the County Seat until the new gold strikes in the Tonopah area overshadowed the dwindling ore in the Belmont area. This pulled the population away to Tonopah, and the County Seat was moved there in May 1905.

The Belmont Courthouse was built soon after the establishment of the County Seat at a cost of \$25,000. The bricks were made in Belmont and fired at one of the local kilns. The granite foundation was also quarried in the area and brought to the construction site. This Courthouse, topped by a square cupola has

endured due to the materials used in its construction, and because of the care and restoration efforts of the people who want to save this historic building for the future.

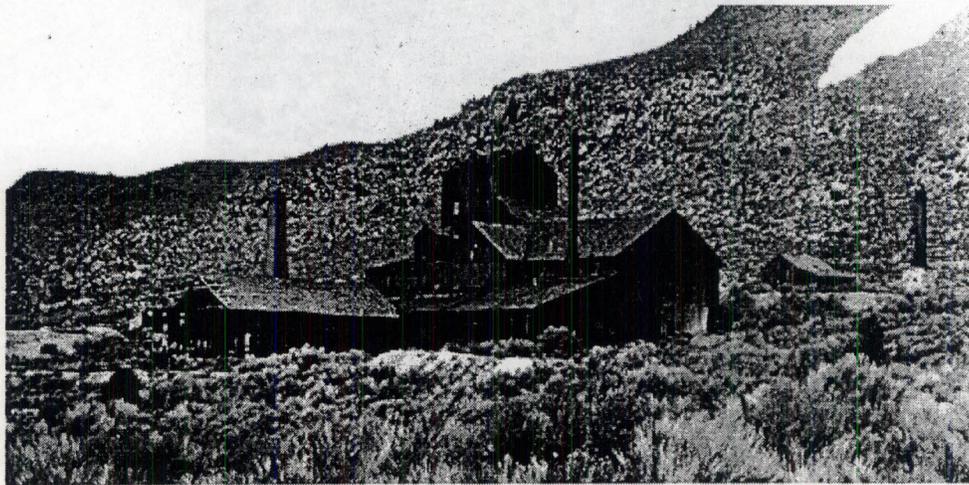
The mining operations in the Belmont area accounted for Fifteen million dollars worth of gold that was removed during the twenty years of active mining in the district. In 1868, the Combination Mill was built and had a total of 40 stamps. This mill's capacity allowed large amounts of ore to be crushed daily. The local press referred to this Mill as the "QUEEN OF THE SOLFHEAST", and was built at a cost of \$225,000.

Belmont's mining activity ended in 1885, but during that time Belmont was the center of civilization for a one hundred mile radius. The town had a Bank, two newspapers that competed with each other, the Silver Bend Reporter and the Mountain Champion. There was also a school, telegraph service and a Post Office. The stores in

the town boasted choice hams from Chicago and butter from Iowa. The prices for such good were not considered high, because freight rates from nearby Austin made lower prices possible. Cultural activities were also a highlight and the local opera house, The Cosmopolitan advertised entertainment suitable for the "most squeamish" of audiences. There was a Catholic Church built in Belmont, but after the decline it was moved to the town of Manhattan and is still being used to this day.

In 1909 there was a discovery of turquoise by a woman named Weber. two years earlier, there

was an extensive reworking of the tailings dumps to recover whatever was leftover from the earlier efforts this activity took place at a new mill, called the Highbridge mill this activity was prompted by World War One. Belmont's mining all but ceased thereafter and by the 1920's, Belmont's future as a Ghost town was virtually guaranteed. Belmont is now a beautiful small town with permanent residents and some small businesses surrounded by tree covered mountains that have grown in during the last seventy or so years.



20Stamp, Monitor-Belmont Mill, Originally Built 1867
Photo Courtesy Nevada Historical Society, Griffen Collection



Belmont About 1904, Catholic Church in Foreground, Later Moved To Manhattan
Photo Courtesy Western History Research Center, University of Wyoming



