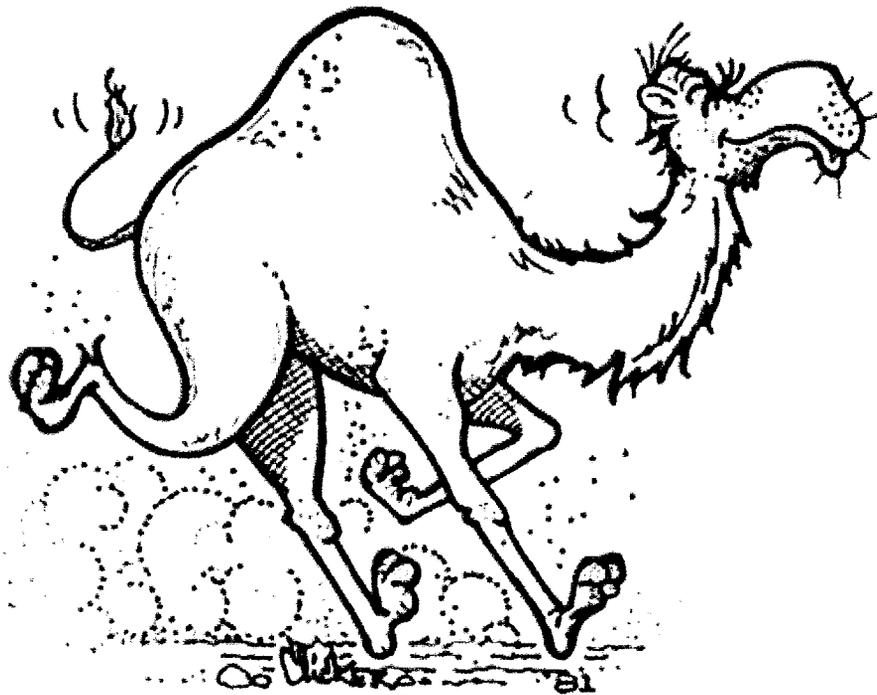


# J.U.N.K. TRIP NO. 21

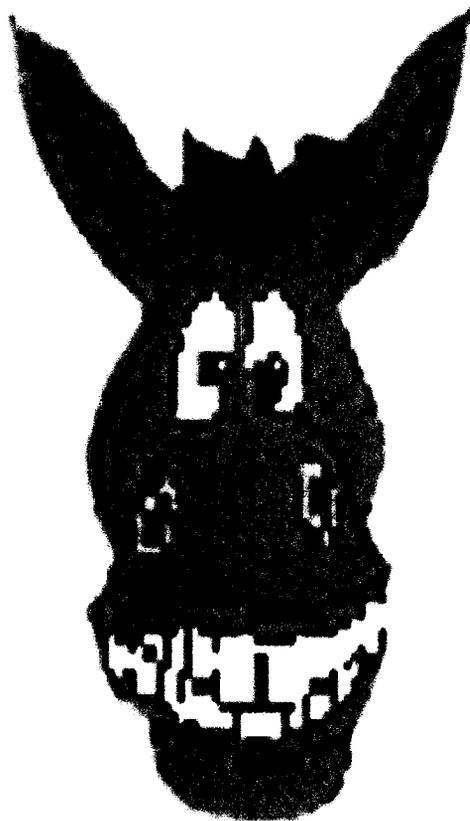
August 18th, 19th, 20th, 2000



Pepper Spring/Douglas Camp

# **J.U.N.K. TRIP NO. 21**

**Pamphlet Created By Chuck Murray**



**Enjoy!**



## 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
21	2000	VAL COLLIER	PEPPER SPRING

\* GONE TO THE SILVER HILLS

EDITED BY CHUCK MURRAY

E CLAMPUS VITUS  
AND SO RECORDED

# **The Ancient and Honorable Order of Klumpus Uhus**

## Regarding Pepper Spring:

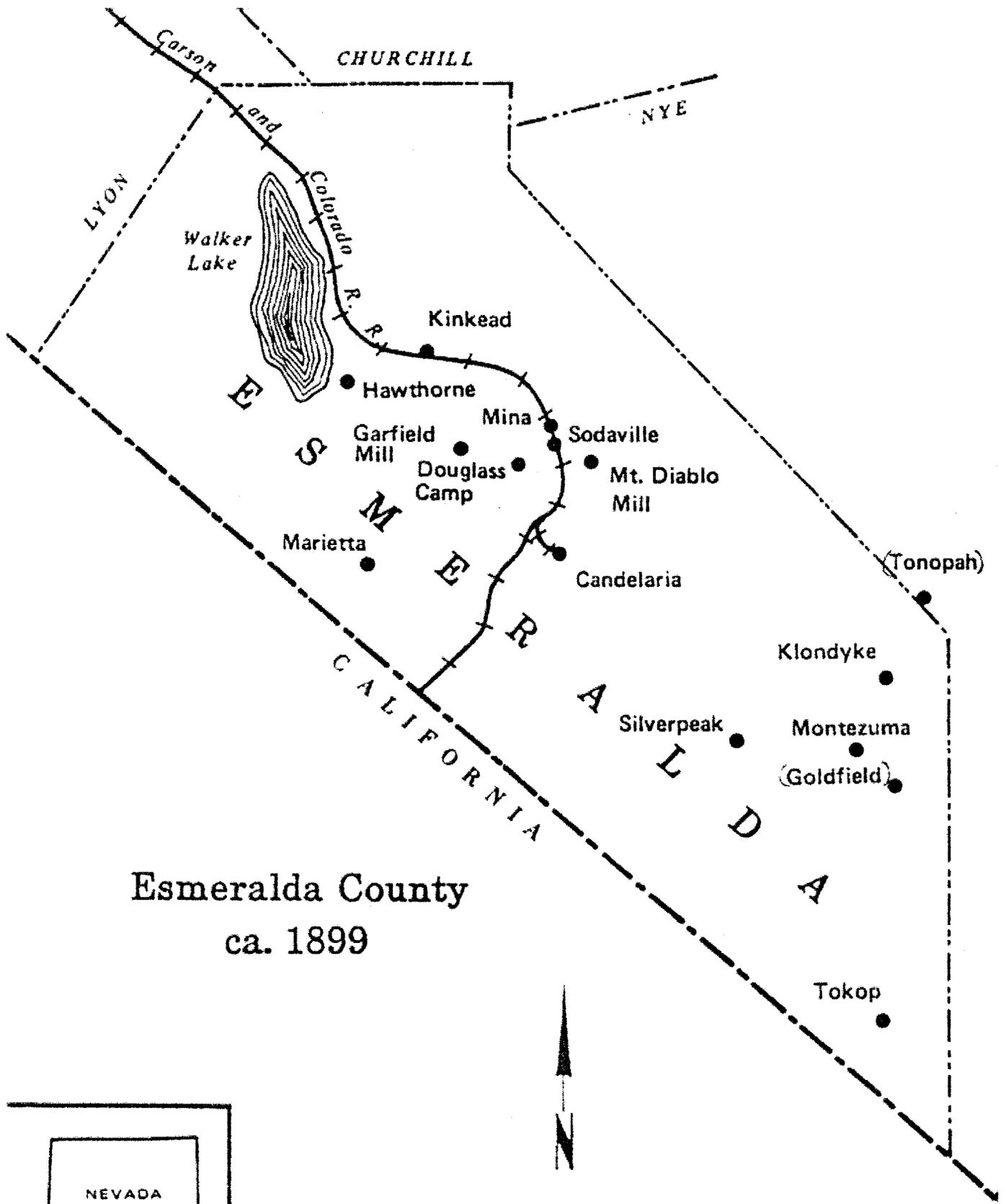
We have been unable to find but very little history through the Nevada archives about Pepper Spring, with the exception of the personal information supplied to us by the present owner, Mr. Jim Pauley.

Jim Pauley has stated that the name, 'Pepper Spring', was derived from it's original owner, Thomas Pepper.

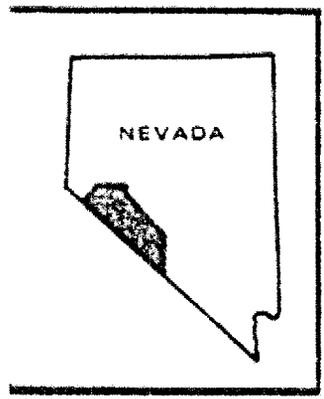
In 1888 Mr. Pepper bought the land as a potential site for mining and he bought the water rights from a Mr. O. Warren, who represented Sweetwater Ranch, for \$1,000. in gold. The State of Nevada has never recognized the transaction that was made by Mr. Pepper, and claims that the water rights belong to them. Pepper Spring is now considered public domain with grazing permits.

So thus, Pepper Spring became most noted as a place where many very heated disputes have taken place over the years, and although the Nevada Department of Water Resources permits were designated, they were also revoked.

This dispute is still going on today.



Esmeralda County  
ca. 1899



R 33 E.

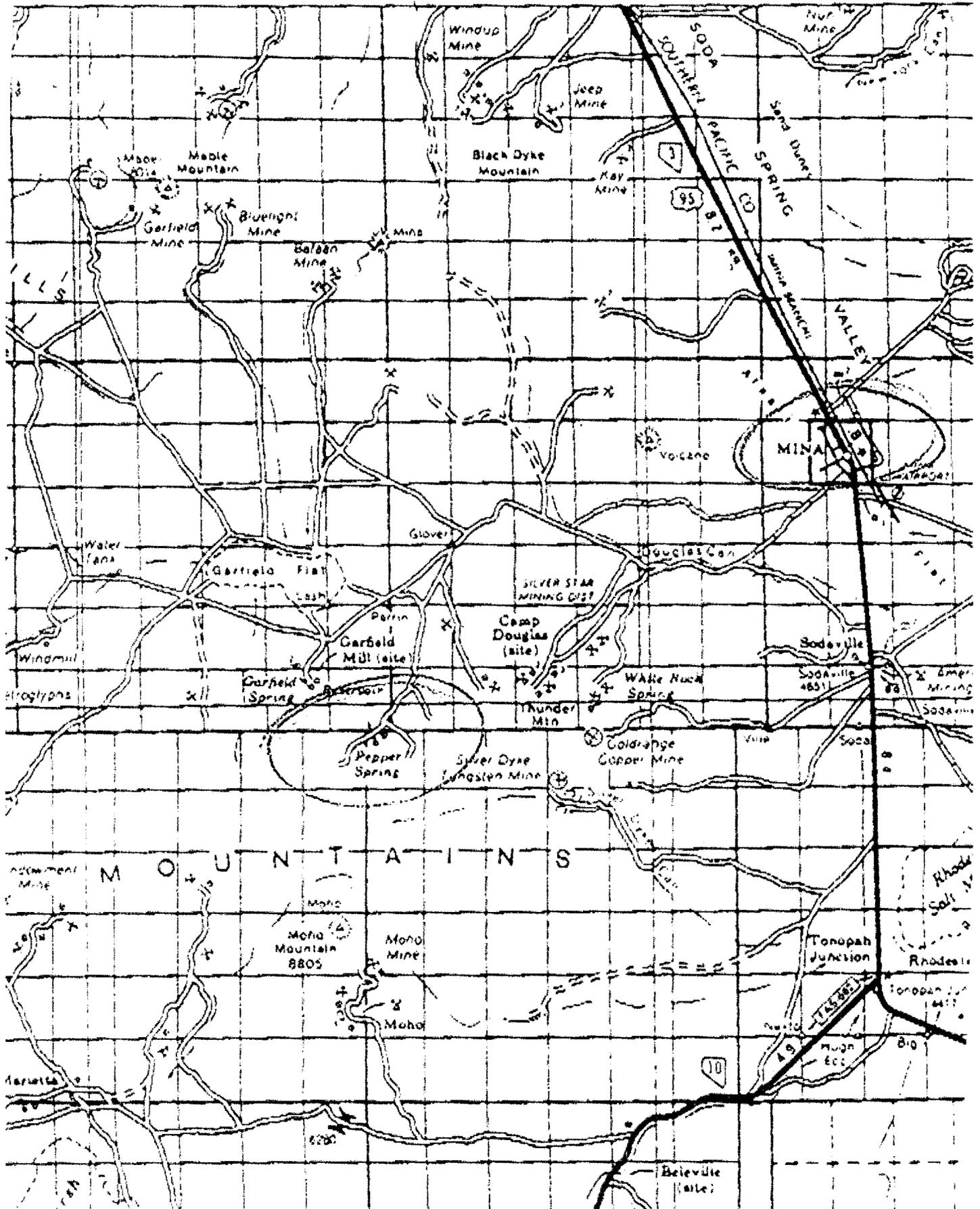
500 000 FT

TO LIVING

400 000 ME

20'

10'



## A FEW EXCERPTS FROM THE MANUSCRIPT

### Douglass Camp Days

by

Jan Douglass and William A. Douglass

The focal point of this account is William ("Billy") James Douglass prior to his move to Tonopah in 1903. It centers upon the period of his young adulthood, and particularly the period between 1893-1900 when Billy and some associates made a mining discovery in what became the Silver Star District of Esmeralda County. The ensuing mining community, one of central Nevada's most active during the bleakest period in the state's mining history, was called Douglass Camp after our protagonist.

Our first evidence of Billy Douglass in Esmeralda County dates from an 1888 newspaper account of a baseball game between the "Superflous Baseball Club" of Candelaria which was defeated by the "Hayseed Baseball Club" of Columbus. The newspaper stated "William Douglass as catcher was superb." Although he scored four runs his team lost by the score of 34 to 26! Shortly thereafter Billy was present at the initiation ceremony of the Knights of Pythias, and the following month he was the delegate from Candelaria to the county Democratic convention (D. J. Robb represented Garfield).

When mines and mills close down mining and milling men go prospecting. In February of 1892 the *Walker Lake Bulletin* reported,

D. J. Robb and W. J. Douglass have just located a ledge at June Point, near New Boston, on the Garfield range. It assays well and they think it will be a good thing.

In late spring Robb and Douglass filed additional mining claims. The following fall Robb et. al. located claims called the North Star at the same time that Douglass et. al. filed on the Golden Leaf and Golden Eagle sites.

It was in November of 1893 that news first broke in the pages of the newspaper regarding the new discovery. In the November 1 issue it was noted that,

D. W. Bowen, John Truman, D. J. Robb and W. J. Douglass are working a claim south of the Garfield Mill and about 8 miles west of Soda, which is said to be rich in gold. Last week a four-horse load of provisions and an assaying outfit was [sic] taken to the mine.

Later that month mining locations at the site, including the Duke of Wellington, the Excitement, the New Party, the Orphan Boy, the Dispute, the Surplus and the Pepper, had been filed by Douglass, Pepper, Bowen, Fottler, Grassi, and Robb. It seems that Billy also convinced his friend, Ed Brown of Candelaria, to file a claim on what turned out to be a most valuable property--the Hard Scrabble.

Nor did Billy limit his activities to the new Silver Star District or his original claims within it. He and D. W. Bowen leased the General Thomas and Sweet Apple Quartz mills in Columbus where they started a "clean-up" operation on existing ore heaps. In January of 1894 Billy visited Hawthorne to file ten mining claims (location unspecified). It was about this time that it was stated,

Silver Star District is now attracting the attention of mining men. Old prospectors who have visited the district declare that it gives evidence of being the best camp ever seen in the county. The country is taken up for about three miles. The mines are situated between Garfield and Soda Springs, and are about 30 miles from Hawthorne.

The best prospect in the district at present is being worked by Ed Brown. The shaft is about 15 feet deep and the ledge in the bottom is nearly four feet wide. We are informed that the whole ledge will pay \$30 per ton, but that it can be sorted so as to go \$100. Wood and water are convenient, and if the ore goes down Silver Star will be a great camp.

For the student of western mining history there is much in the foregoing account that is familiar. Whenever a few mining men gathered together to actually work claims, rather than simply locating them, it attracted considerable attention. During the highly entrepreneurial, exploratory phase the object was to demonstrate potential worth rather than earn a wage let alone make a fortune. Thinly capitalized and only capable of working surface deposits, the original locators hoped to demonstrate initial ore values of sufficient magnitude to attract either investors or buyers. The caveat "if the ore goes down" was the rock upon which the swords of most original locators were broken.

As early as February of 1894, or a scant three months after the first news of the Silver Star District reached the outside world, Douglass Camp was attracting the attention of possible investors. Mining magnate and promoter J. A. Yerington announced that a number of Chicago and San Francisco capitalists were planning a visit to the site.

Billy was obviously a key player in Douglass Camp's development. In May of 1894 he was negotiating the purchase of Marietta Mill (for probable removal to the Silver Star District). The Douglass Company was actively sinking a shaft on its Orphan Boy claim and announced a valuable discovery on the Duke. By midmonth Douglass Company and John Fleming had leased the Garfield Mill to work Silver Star's ore. Billy was recovering from another illness. By month's end the Orphan Boy was producing 1 1/2 tons of ore daily and the Douglass Company was also working the Mary Mine. At this time Billy was elected mining recorder of the district, running without opposition. In June Billy filed another 32 claims for himself, as well as two for D. J. Robb.

Within our family the story is told that it was about this time that Billy and his close associates D. J. Robb, George Fottler and Thomas Pepper, despairing at the economic depression which affected Sodaville and Candelaria (not to mention the U.S. economy as a whole), sought out a spot in the hills where they could plant some potatoes, hunt deer for food and get through the winter. Pepper, a cattleman, had a cow camp with a spring. It was in preparing the potato patch that they discovered the gold which led to the creation of the Silver Star District and the founding of Douglass Camp. They took their first ore samples to the closed Kinkead Mill, several miles to the north, and started it up. They were disappointed in the results of their mill run. In fact their mining experience told them that the return was inexplicably poor, given the appearance of the ore. They therefore returned to the mill and, upon examining the stamps, found a quantity of malleable gold adhering to them!

There is nothing in the pages of the *Walker Lake Bulletin* to support (or controvert) the tale. Were it true it would have presumably made good copy, but it could just as easily have been overlooked. In point of fact the "founding myths" of mining camps, such as the famous story regarding the role of Jim Butler's burro in the discovery of Tonopah, tend to emerge well after the fact and usually regard those camps which enjoy spectacular success and a degree of staying power.

Actually, examination of the site would suggest that the story merges two strands which in the retelling became one. Douglass Camp is located high on a steep, rocky mountainside covered with sagebrush, junipers and piñon pine. It was an extremely arid spot and the provision of water for both domestic use and milling was a perennial problem. In fact, the main mill included a water recapture and reprocessing system. Just to the west about a mile and located below treeline is Pepper Springs. This, in all likelihood, was where the prospectors had their camp and possibly planted potatoes.

It is also likely that the mill chosen by the men to crush their first ore was at Garfield rather than Kinkead. We have already noted D. J. Robb's earlier involvement in the Garfield district. The Garfield mill site was actually closer to the new discovery than its own mining district. The mill was just over a range of low hills from Pepper Springs, or about a mile as the crow flies.

Nineteen hundred and three was a decisive year for Billy and for the Silver Star District. In January the *Walker Lake Bulletin* announced that the W. J. Douglass family had moved to Tonopah. Shortly thereafter he and Bob Stewart purchased a hotel, saloon, barn, corral and water rights in Sodaville from A. Laiolo and Mrs. Tubino. In March Billy headed for the eastern United States in search of a big mill which he planned to purchase to reduce ores in Tonopah. He did not return until May. The following August L. L. Patrick paid \$150,000 to Billy, Bob Stewart, Harrington, O'Keefe and Lochre for Tokop. In November Douglass Company mines in the Silver Star district were sold for an undisclosed amount.

In the lean times of the 1890s it could be said "This was the only mine in Nevada where the whistle blew every day." In his *Nevada Ghost Towns and Mining Camps* book Stanley W. Paher stated, "...this camp was known as the 'dinner pail' because of the opportunity it afforded leasers to make a good living." When Jim Pauley speaks of these men it is with considerable reverence and respect. Reverence for their tenacity and respect for their skill in accomplishing as much as they did with the techniques and technology of the times.

Douglass Camp, then, represented a living for workingmen and their families while fueling their aspirations. Nor were many of the players native Americans (as an examination of the 1900 and 1910 census data shows). Rather, Douglass Camp was one of the many stages upon which the saga of the immigrant was played out. Furthermore, other roles were not limited to modest or bit players. Rather, mighty figures such as the notorious swindler Gilbert Beesemeyer and one of America's most famous millionaires, Howard Hughes, are interwoven through the story. In this respect, Douglass Camp was a microcosm of Nevada history and a metaphor of the settling of the western frontier.

# **Camel Trails**

By Geno Oliver

In 1832, when a bill was first introduced in the U.S. Congress to provide for the importing of camels for exploring the great Southwest, it was laughed right out the Senate's front door. With various amendments, several similar bills were introduced in vain during the following years.

Jefferson Davis, who would later become president of the Confederate States of America, eventually became interested in the subject and introduced a camel bill in 1850. It, too, was defeated, but this time with a lot more respect. Then in 1855, when Davis was serving as U.S. Secretary of War, he managed to gain enough support that a camel bill was finally passed.

The first shipment of camels was brought to the United States by Lt. Edward Heal within a year, followed by more shipments in 1856 and 1857. These first camels, under the control of the Department of Transportation, were used for exploring and surveying new trails and roads in the Southwest. As official interest in the camels grew, the United States Camel Corps was formed.

The Camel Corps was short-lived, however. It was disbanded soon after the Civil War broke out in order to release more soldiers to fight in the East, and especially because the Corps was strongly supported by Southern sympathizers. Jefferson Davis had already taken a small herd of camels to his ranch in Texas, thus forming the C.C.C. (Confederate Camel Corps). (Dissenting historians are referred to the author.)

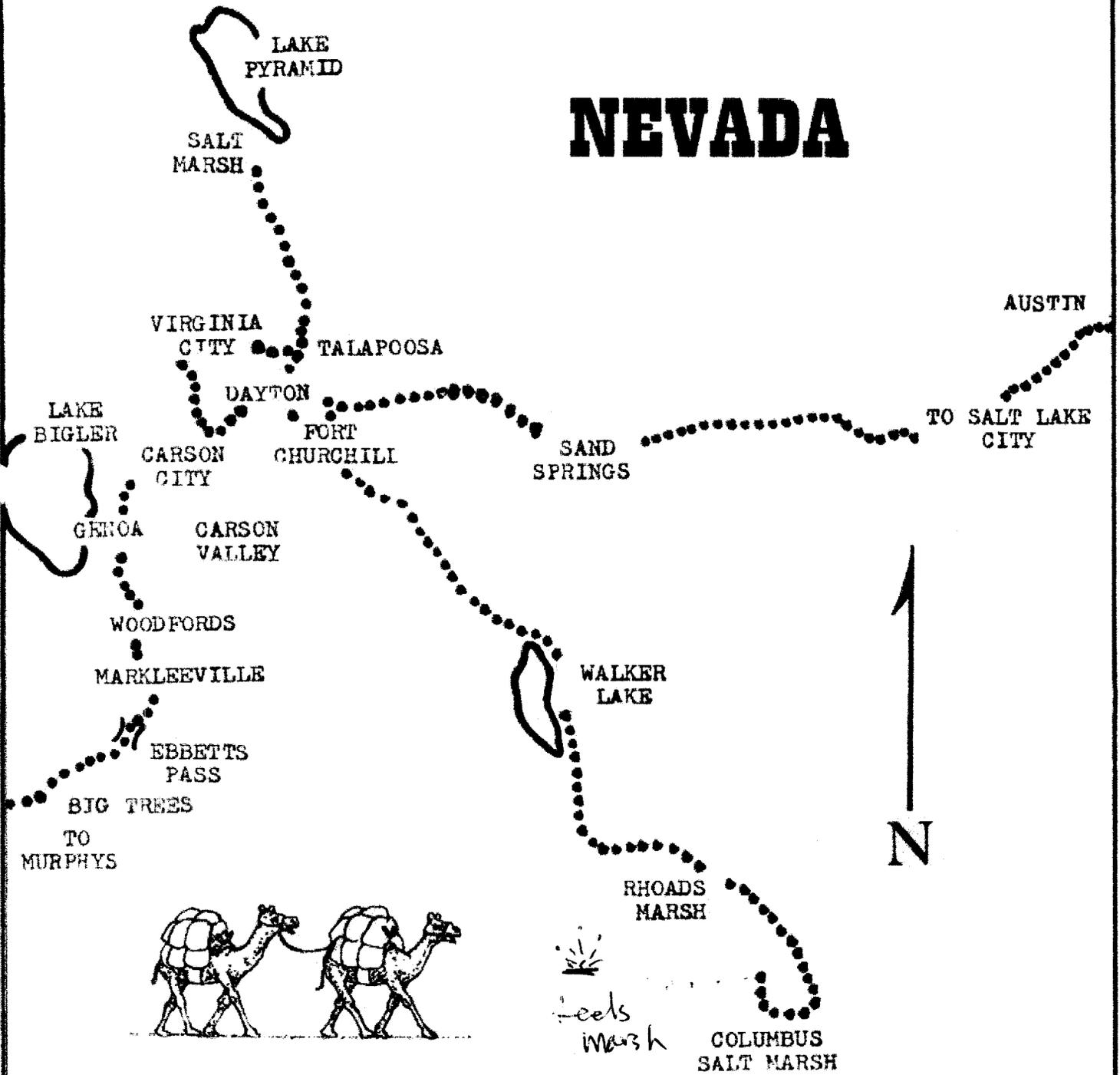
In 1861 some privately owned camels were brought over the Sierra to Nevada Territory. Traveling through Angels Camp, Murphy and the Big Trees, the herd crossed Ebbett's Pass (now California State Highway 4) before descending into Markleeville, Carson City and Virginia City. Eventually they were headquartered at the Chevalier Ranch on the Carson River between Dayton and Ft. Churchill. Soon other camels owned by freighters were brought into western Nevada.

One camel trail that the trek crosses led to the Columbus, Teels, and Rhodes Salt Marshes, the latter located just south of present day Mina. This trail came down Seven Mile Canyon to the Carson River, turned east to near Ft. Churchill, then swung south along the east side of Walker Lake to the salt marshes.

Salt was an important factor in the recovery of Comstock silver. In Virginia City the price was high, and each camel could carry about 500 pounds of the stuff. But when the price of salt declined, greedy camel owners began loading their animals with as much as 1,000 pounds per animal. Camels also carried large loads of firewood from the banks of the Carson River up to Virginia City, as well as coal from the hills near Como.

# CAMEL ROUTES

## NEVADA



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