



Kick em.

Julia's Unequivocal Nevada Klampout

#39

Silver Peak

clamber year 6023

Brought to you by
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E Clampus Vitus

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Dedicated to
Fannie Gore Hazlett and Geno Oliver in general

2018 c.e.

Esmeralda County

Esmeralda County is an original county from Nevada's Territorial Days, established in 1861. The Esmeralda Mining District was named for Esmeralda, the gipsy girl from the Hunchback of Notre Dame. When Esmeralda County was organized no one knew what was there. Jedidiah Smith in 1827 and John C. Fremont in 1845 had traversed Big Smoky Valley. Aurora was the county seat at the end of the Esmeralda Trail in the North. Nye County was gouged out of Esmeralda in February of 1864. Aurora was the county seat till 1883 when Hawthorne took over. In 1907 Goldfield wrested the seat from Hawthorne. By 1911 Hawthorne received the Northern half to start their own county, Mineral. 783 souls live in Esmeralda County, one of the most sparsely inhabited counties in America

Atlantic and Pacific Railroad Survey

California commercial interests financed a surveying expedition in 1853, the same year Congress passed The Military Appropriations Act of 1853 that appropriated the funds for topographical surveys to ascertain the most practicable and economical route for a railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean. John Ebbets, Lt Treadwell Moore, discoverer of the Mono Basin and George Goddard, cartographer, were the leaders of the survey. Ebbets had discovered his pass, now Hwy 4, in 1851. The survey was to begin in Stockton and traverse between the 39th and 37th parallels past the eastern border of California and through the Utah counties of Milliard, Iron and Washington to a junction point in Utah named Las Vegas de Santa Clara. They surveyed over Sonora Pass on the old reviled emigrant trail and when they got to Mason Valley they headed right up and over the Wassuck Ranges to the shores of Walker Lake. The Lake teamed with monster Cutthroats but they had no means to catch them. From Walker Lake they headed out into the desert through Luning, Mina and Sodaville. Beyond Sodaville they ran out of water and feed. Ebbet's diary states,

Friday, October 28; We are obliged to camp at dusk without water and but little grass. We cook no supper. Men as well as mules suffer for water. Issue some Whiskey,....We Intend to make an early start.'

At Columbus the expedition chose not to head East into the sterile lands as planned but Southwest to Boundary Peak and the "Snowy" Mountains. They'd discovered Fish Lake Valley and its healthy ecosystem; Game birds, antelope and deer abounded. After a week they headed south again into the North end of Death Valley and Sarcobatus Flat, suffered, called the expedition a success though 300 miles short of their goal and raced back to California before they starved and froze to death. George Goddard is credited with the best first maps of the region.

Wadsworth and Columbus Freight Road

By Erich Obermayer

The Wadsworth and Columbus Freight Road was a 130-mile wagon road connecting Wadsworth on the Central Pacific Railroad to the Columbus Mining District in the deserts of southwestern Nevada. From 1871 to 1882, freight wagons hauled supplies and mining machinery south to the Columbus District's towns and silver mines and returned loaded with borax from the surrounding salt marshes. The road's brief but busy life illustrated the constantly changing nature of the wagon road network which tied together Nevada's far-flung mining camps and linked them to the outside world. New routes and destinations appeared with every discovery, and old ones disappeared just as abruptly. At the same time, miles of railroad track were being laid across the state, adding yet another way to move people and freight from one place to another. In 1864 silver was discovered in what became the Columbus Mining District. The district had its ups and downs, but by 1871 it included three producing mines in the Candelaria Hills and several mills in the town of Columbus. In the same year, the Nevada state mineralogist reported "the richest and most extensive deposits of the salts of borax yet discovered in any part of the world are found in the vicinity of Columbus. . . [and]. . . will yield an unlimited supply for an indefinite period." It was a matter of time until the transportation network expanded to include Columbus, but exactly how was determined in 1868, when construction of the transcontinental railroad finally cleared the Sierra Nevada. Previously, most freight crossed the Sierra Nevada by wagon road from Placerville, in central California, to Carson City and the Comstock, where it was then distributed to the Nevada interior. This same freight could now be delivered by rail to the east side of the mountains, and transferred anywhere along the line to freight wagons, which would haul it to its ultimate destination. Wadsworth was 130 miles from the Columbus District, but it was the closest station on the Central Pacific. In addition, there were long, north-south valleys between the two points, forming the "thoroughfare" which became the Wadsworth and Columbus Freight Road.

Silver mining in the Columbus District expanded through the 1870s. New towns and mills were built at Belleville, Candelaria, and Metallic City. The Wadsworth and Columbus Freight Road—like other freight roads of the era—carried the machinery, equipment, and supplies that kept the busy district operating. Meanwhile, entrepreneurs such as F.M. "Borax" Smith were transforming borax from an obscure mineral to the popular detergent and disinfectant found today in almost every household. The Columbus District marshes supplied the tons of borax needed to meet this newly created, worldwide demand. For a ten-year period beginning in 1873, Nevada was the world's leading borax producer. This was a boon to the freighters, who would make their deliveries to the mines and towns of the Columbus District,

then stop at the nearby borax processing plants and fill their wagons for a profitable return trip to the railroad at Wadsworth.

The Wadsworth and Columbus Freight Road lasted more than a decade, but just as one railroad brought it into existence, another—the Carson and Colorado—ended it. The Carson and Colorado was built to link the mining districts of southwestern Nevada and eastern California to the Virginia and Truckee Railroad at Moundhouse, which then connected to the Central Pacific at Reno. Construction reached Candelaria just after New Year's Day in 1882, and with that the 130-mile wagon trip to Wadsworth was history. The Wadsworth and Columbus Freight Road's days as a long-haul route ended, but the road was not entirely abandoned. During the 1906–07 Rawhide boom, auto-stages traveled it between Fallon and Luning, and throughout the twentieth century the smaller mining and milling projects dotting the mountains of west-central Nevada used segments.

Carson and Colorado Railroad.

The Comstock glory days were behind them in 1880. Darius O Mills, a founder of the Bank of California and chairman of the Virginia and Truckee Railroad decided to run a line south to tap into all the potential activity in places like Bodie, Aurora, and Candelaria or Fort Mojave at the Southern tip of our Solid State. H. M. Yerington turned the first spade of Earth at Moundhouse in May of 1880. Hawthorne was secretly located at the South end of Walker Lake where investors who owned teamster outfits could access the line. Lots were sold when the C&C reached the secret spot in April 1881. The C&C RR made it as far as Keeler at Owen's Lake in California. In 1883 on a tour of his new train set Darius O. Mills said, "We either built this thing 300 miles too long or 300 years too soon. When the Southern Pacific purchased the C&C in 1900, they abandoned Hawthorne during the gauge change in 1905. In 1931 the Government built a connecting railroad to serve the huge Ammo base. The Southern Pacific abandoned the track south of Mina in 1949 and (railroad direction) East of Thorne in 1986



A lert at the switch, the beginning of the C&C RR at Moundhouse

Rhodes

Rhodes was founded near the salt marsh in 1862. The salt was shipped from Rhodes to Virginia City via camels for use in the mills. However, a closer source of salt was located in Sand Springs in 1863 and business slowed. Rhodes still supplied salt for the mills of Aurora, Belmont, and Belleville. Just south of the Highway Junction, US 95 and Nv 360, is the location of Tonopah Jct. where the Tonopah and Goldfield Railroad split from the C&C. Today, all that remains of Rhodes is the salt loading tower.

Belleville

In 1873, the Northern Belle Mine Company of Candelaria built a 20-stamp silver mill at this location. By 1876, another 20-stamp mill had been built above Belleville. When the C&C reached the town in 1882 its population was 500, and the town was served by a doctor, assay office, express office, telegraph station, livery stable, school, two hotels, restaurants, and blacksmith shops as well as by seven saloons. All of these businesses made their money off the miners working in Candelaria. In 1892, the Northern Belle Mine Company built a pipeline to Candelaria from the White Mountains so it could build a mill closer to the mines. Belleville disappeared. Today you can still see the large mill foundations, several cellars, old residences, and a few graves.

Candelaria

Candelaria is dominated by the Kinross Gold Candelaria Mine on Mt. Diablo. The area first attracted notice in 1863 when Mexican prospectors working the area near Mt. Diablo discovered silver deposits on the northern slopes of the mountain. Candelaria wasn't truly a town, or even a camp, until 1879 and soon became a boomtown. There was insufficient water locally for the use of milling and processing the ore from the mines. The stamp mill in Candelaria had to operate as a dry mill, which spread toxic dust throughout the area. Unlike other camps where a wet milling process was used, Candelaria miners suffered from an extremely high incidence of "miner's consumption." The completion of a spur of the Carson and Colorado Railroad to Candelaria in 1882 helped to ease the water problems, as large tanks of water moved by flatcar could now be brought to the town. With the mine producing an average of one million dollars a year, the mining company started paying its stockholders dividends. \$15 million in silver from its shafts brought to the town two hotels, numerous stores, the ever-present saloons, three doctors (no doubt kept busy treating lung ailments), and lawyers and other professionals. By 1883, the town had a bank, telegraph, school, and newspaper. In 1883, a fire, fed by the constant wind, consumed Candelaria. Due to legal difficulties the following year, the Northern Belle

mines and the Holmes mines merged. In 1885, a summer-long strike by miners resulted in another slow year of production.

In 1893 a financial panic dried up capital and development of the mines ceased, and as a result many of them closed. Soon the town was drained of people, as they moved on to other areas where work could be found, and under more hospitable conditions. Even in its best days, though, Candelaria was a terrible place to live.

Coaldale

In a report paid for by H M Yerington about Coaldale "There has been considerable work done on this deposit but in a careless manner. Some of the coal seams were found to be badly shattered and broken at a depth of 60' where they are cut off by a fault fissure. The bituminous deposits would be considered fair except for the rock, bone and ash." The Tonopah Railroad changed the name from Coal Wells to Coaldale in 1904.

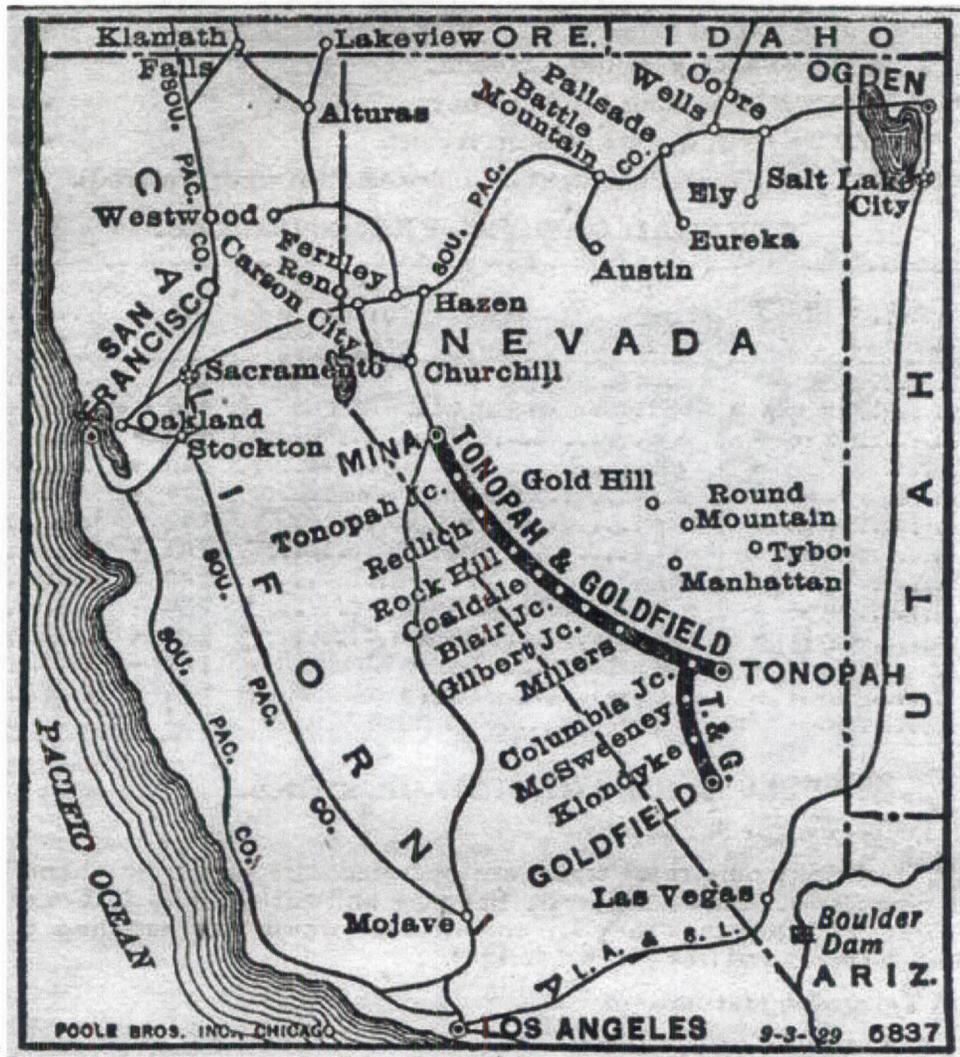
Columbus

A quartz mill for silver was erected at the site in 1865. The Salt Marsh was the only source of water for miles. It's said that people came all the way from Candelaria to get some, until Candelarians laid their own pipeline. Salt was discovered nearby and by 1866 the population had grown to 200. In 1871 borax was also discovered and by 1873 there were several companies at work, scraping, processing and shipping product to Wadsworth. By 1875 there was a school, a post office, an iron foundry and a weekly newspaper, but the Borax played out the same year. The Post Office was abandoned in 1881.

The T&G RR

In 1900 C.P. Huntington purchased the Carson and Colorado Railroad from Darius O. Mills and the V&T. He had no way to know a few short years later a rebellious mule would begin the second big bonanza in Nevada. E H Harriman of the Union Pacific took control of the Southern Pacific in 1901 after Huntington's death. Discovered by Jim Butler in 1900, in three years Tonopah became the most isolated yet desirable address in the country. Mining equipment and provisions were needed in mass quantities a 66 mile ride from the Rails. A huge bottleneck was created at Moundhouse where freight had to be transloaded from standard gauge to narrow gauge equipment. In July 1904 a new Railroad was completed, the Tonopah Railroad, narrow gauge to run from Rhodes Marsh on the C&C to Tonopah. A facility was planned for the good spring water at Sodaville but real estate entrepreneurs pushed old man Harriman too far and he ran a pipe from the Garfield Hills and built his terminal and maintenance station 5 miles North at Mina, named for Ferminia Sarras,

the Copper Queen. In October 1904 the SP began standard gauging the line from Moundhouse, moving the transloading point Southbound as they progressed, completing the work to Tonopah Junction a mile South of Rhodes Marsh in August 1905. The Tonopah RR finished standardizing at the same time. From Mina South the C&C retained its narrow-gauge rail and standard gauge and narrow gauge ran on the same ties from Mina to Tonopah Jct. Most of the yard tracks in Mina had three rails.



Finding the V&T unwilling to sell, Harriman ran new rail from his new station at Hazen, 28 miles South to Fort Churchill and eliminated the Moundhouse V&T connection all together. In September the new line was complete. Pullman service was provided from the Oakland Mole to Tonopah (and Goldfield) nonstop

connecting with the express at Hazen. New discoveries at Goldfield began in 1902 and by 1904 had boomed, Surveys were made by the local syndicate to connect to the Tonopah Railroad and in September 1905 the first passenger train rolled into town on the Goldfield Railroad. It was 28 miles to Tonopah, 271 to Reno and 515 to Frisco. The merger became effective November of 1905 and so begat the Tonopah & Goldfield Railroad. The debt was paid off in 5 years. The T&G was one of few Nevada short lines that made money. Fuel shipments to the Tonopah Airfield kept the company in business until 1946.



Tonopah was a mess in 1904.

Millers

Millers was named for Charles Miller, shareholder and former Governor of Delaware. Water was available here and a mill for the Tonopah Mining Co. ores until a larger facility was built in Tonopah. There was a switching yard to build trains, a roundhouse for locomotive maintenance and a turntable. Foundations still persist. A fire in the engine house in Tonopah was exploited by Goldfield interests to build new structures there in 1910. Millers was abandoned.

Silver Peak Railroad

The Silver Peak was built in 1906 by the Pittsburg Silver Peak Gold Mining Co. from Blair Junction at the South end of the Big Smoky Valley on the T&G RR to a point 2 miles North of Silver Peak, a company town named for John Blair of Jersey who purchased the property in 1870. Trains made the 17 mile run in 45 minutes, the line had virtually no grades or curves. A 120 stamp mill ran in Blair, largest in Nevada at the time. By 1918 the mine was exhausted and Blair was deserted.



Mill at Blair

Silver Peak

By Doc Asher from Wikipedia

“Silver Peak (also Silverpeak) is an unincorporated community and census-designated place (CDP) in Esmeralda County, Nevada, United States. It lies along State Route 265, 20 miles (32 km) south of U.S. Route 6 and 30 miles (48 km) west of Goldfield, the county seat of Esmeralda County. It has a post office, with the ZIP code of 89047. The population of Silver Peak was 107 as of 2010.”

“During World War II, Clayton Marsh was explored strategic minerals including potash and American Potash Corp. leased the marsh. In the 1950s, Leprechaun Mining (Clyde Kegel) picked up the leases and determined that in addition to potassium, lithium was present. Leprechaun Mining reached an agreement with Foote Minerals in 1964 and Foote reconfigured the silver mill and started production of lithium in 1967. In 1988, Cyprus Minerals acquired Foote and became Cyprus Foote Minerals. In 1998, Chemetall acquired the operation - the new company was called

Chemetall Foote Corp. In 2004, Rockwood Holdings acquired the operation. In 2010, the mine was expanded to double the capacity of its lithium carbonate production. The project was funded in part by a \$28.4 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy to expand and upgrade the production of lithium materials for advanced transportation batteries. In 2014, the Albermarle Corporation purchased Rockwood for \$6.2 Billion”“As of January, 2017, the Albermarle Corporation Lithium Operation at Silver Peak is currently the only operating source of lithium in the United States.”

Silver Peak History By Doc Asher from Wikipedia

“Silver Peak is one of the oldest mining communities in Nevada. It was founded near a well in 1864, (three) years after the founding of surrounding Esmeralda County, and one year after silver was discovered nearby and mining began. A 10 stamp mill was built in 1865, and a 20 stamp mill by 1867. The Silver Peak Railroad was built by the Pittsburgh Silver Peak Gold Mining Company after it bought a group of mining properties in 1906 and established a 100-stamp mill at Blair, Nevada, in 1907. Blair's mill closed in 1915, and Blair was a ghost town by 1920. Silver Peak maintained a population, however, even though it burned in 1948.” “In 1939, boxer Max Baer defeated "Big Ed" Murphy of Silver Peak in one round in a fight at Silver Peak.” Max Baer was a one-time heavyweight champion of the world and was the father of actor Max Baer Jr., who played the role of Jethro in the TV sitcom “The Beverly Hillbillies.”



Blair Hotel, Blair, Nevada.

Alkali Spring

By Doc Asher from Wikipedia

Alkali is a ghost town located in Esmeralda County, Nevada. Alkali is the site of Alkali Hot Spring, which was operated as a spa by Geni and Joe Giusti in the 1930's. During Goldfield's peak, the site included an indoor wooden swimming pool with a separate area for children and a large building containing a dining room, kitchen, dance hall and bar. In front of the dining room were tall tamarisk trees and a large picnic table where visitors could either order from the dining room or bring their own lunches. The Giusti residence was at the rear of the dining room. Geni Giusti served young folks grape juice over ice at the bar, which was considered a real treat. Friday and Saturday night dances were attended by Tonopah residents.

The waters of the spring originally appeared as a series of small seeps. In the early 1900's, Consolidated Mines Co. created a 40 foot adit to collect the seeps in to a single flow. At the time, the water was pumped about 10 miles (16 km) to the Combination Mill at Goldfield. The adit entrance temperature was reported to be 140 °F (60 °C). A Goldfield resident stated that the source of the spring is under the defunct powerhouse. The spring is reported to contain lithium, though the surface of nearby Alkali Flat (Alkali Lake) does not. In 2018, RAM Power held geothermal leases near Alkali Hot Spring.

Highway 6

The Grand Army of the Republic Highway, US 6, was one of the original U.S. Highways. From 1936 to 1964 its termini were Long Beach Ca. and Provincetown Ma., 3,528 odd miles away. Today it begins North of Bishop and enters Nevada below Montgomery Pass. At Coaldale it runs concurrently with Hwy 95 to Tonopah. From there it heads to Ely and a junction with the Extraterritorial Highway.

Interstate 11

Beginning with the Mike O'Callaghan-Pat Tillman Memorial Bridge above Hoover Dam the Federal Highway Administration and local commerce tentatively planned a new route to connect Las Vegas, Phoenix and LA in an unholy transportation triangle. The latest apparition is to connect Nogales Sonora to a point east of Reno through various corridors, close to the 95 we love. Hawthornians are perturbed the engineers are considering routes that avoid Hawthorne all together. One proposed route follows the old Wadsworth Columbus Wagon Road.

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.

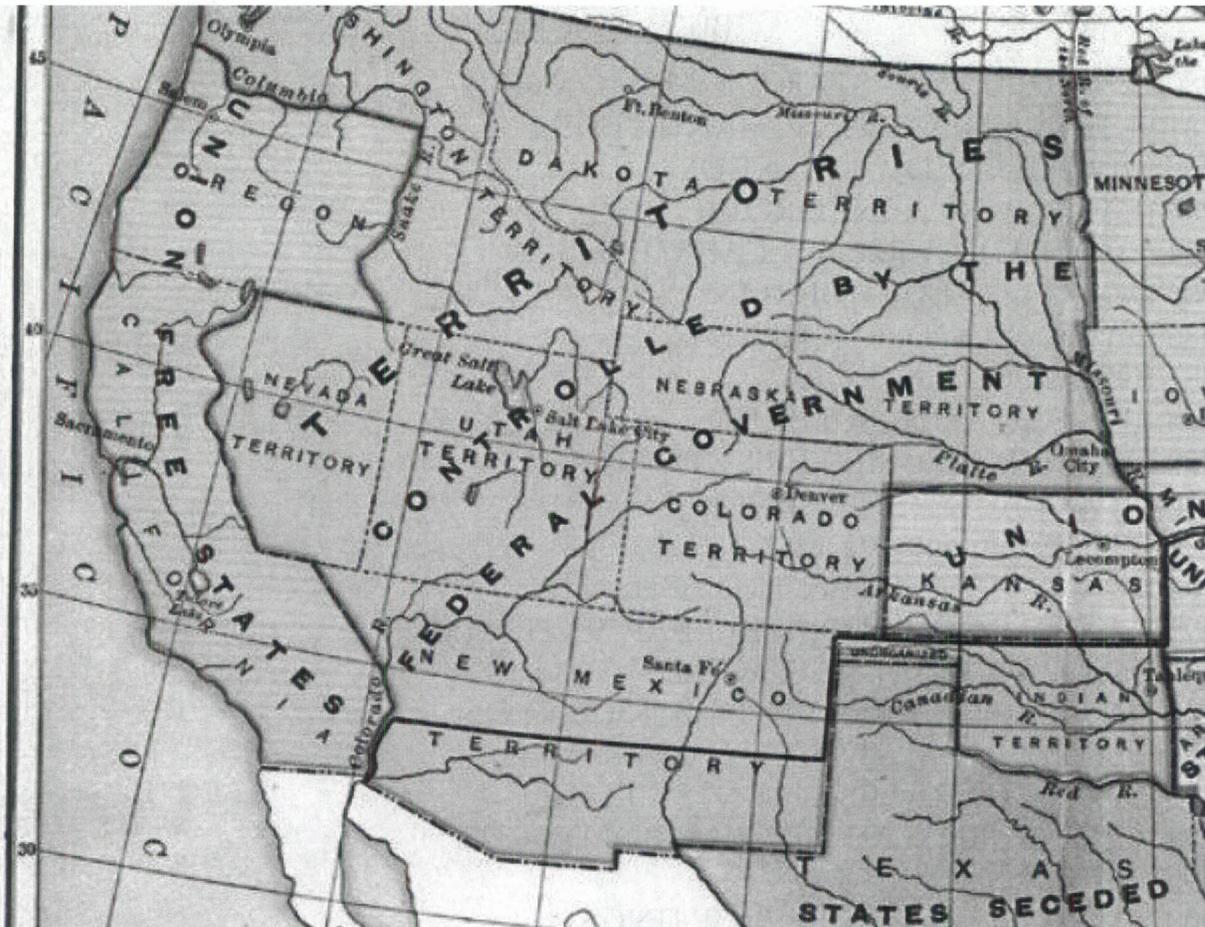
The first shipment of camels was brought to the United States by Lt. Edward Heal within a year, followed by more shipments in 1856 and 1857. These first camels, under the control of the Department of Transportation, were used for exploring and surveying new trails and roads in the Southwest. As official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



Nevada looks funny in 1861

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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 GLEN
- 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

+“Gone to Silver Hills”

