

Early Settlement of Muddy And Virgin Valley Towns

By DELPHINE SQUIRES

Before beginning with the early history of the town of Las Vegas I would like to write a little about the settlement of the towns in the Muddy and Virgin Valleys.

The early settlements in Southern Nevada were originally made for religious reasons. The "Mormons" under the direction of their president, Brigham Young, were encouraged to settle in the parts of the country most accessible to Salt Lake City for the purpose of converting the Indians and the making of homes. With this thought in mind settlements were made along the principal streams in what is now Southern Nevada.

This same idea caused the settlement of San Bernardino and Las Vegas — the building of homes and the protection of their people while traveling from Utah to California.

In 1864 Anson Call established Callville on the Colorado River a few miles north of the Las Vegas Wash, as a point of transfer from river boats to the interior settlements of southern Utah and the Virgin and Muddy valleys. Two boats, the Esmeralda and the Nina Tilden, made occasional trips connecting with the steamships plying between the mouth of the Colorado and San Francisco. Before that time, in 1858, two other boats owned by Captain George A. Johnson, the "Jessup" and the "Colorado," had made journeys on the river and also in that year a Lieutenant J. C. Ives, of the Topographical Corps, had run his boat, the "Explorer" on to a rock during low water and wrecked it in Black Canyon.

Learning of the agricultural possibilities of the Muddy valley emigrants were sent out from Salt Lake City in 1865, under the leadership of Thomas Smith and founded several villages. One was named St. Thomas, in honor of their leader. The site chosen for it was on the Muddy river two and one half miles above the junction of that river with the Rio Virgin. Another settlement, Overton, was about eight miles northwest of St. Thomas and St. Joseph was five miles farther up the river.

St. Thomas was originally divided into 85 one acre residence lots with an equal number of 2 1/2 acre vineyards and 5 acre farm plots. Overton was originally laid out on a low sandy beach on the east side of the river across the valley from its present location.

St. Joseph consisted of a fort with several houses clustered round it. There was also a flour mill and a cotton gin and in 1869 a cooperative mercantile institution was organized there for the entire valley.

During these years St. Thomas maintained precedence over the rest of the villages by reason of its first right to the water of the Muddy river for irrigation and its proximity to the Colorado river boats. The population doubled with another influx of settlers and the Muddy valley flourished as a part of Pah-ute County, Arizona.

In order to take advantage of the great agricultural possibilities it was necessary to find some way to take water from the Muddy river for irrigation so several miles of canals were constructed for each one of the set-

lements. When this was accomplished and the land cleared and drained the valley became very productive and corn and other grains, hay and cotton were easily raised.

In 1869 the settlers subscribed heavily toward the establishment of a cotton mill in St. George, Utah, in order that they might find a market for their cotton and from which they could get cotton cloth in exchange. At that time the West had been deprived of textile goods due to the Civil War.

Each community took great pains with the building of their homes, and in their gardens and orchards. The streets were well laid out with trees bordering the sides. Meeting houses were erected and also used for schoolhouses and good roads were maintained throughout the valley.

When settled the Muddy and Virgin valleys were in Arizona but an act of congress on May 5, 1866 placed these settlements within the state of Nevada. During the 1866 session of the Nevada Legislature this tract of land was incorporated into Lincoln county. The new survey was not included until 1870 and then the Lincoln County authorities began to press the settlers for back taxes covering the period from 1866 to 1870.

Petitions were sent to both the congress of the United States and to the Nevada Legislature asking for redress of their grievances.

To the legislature they cited the fact that they had paid their taxes during the years in question to the state of Arizona. They also mentioned the \$100,000 expenditure of money and labor on their water and irrigation projects; the impossibility of raising the cash demands of the county because there was no ready market for the produce they raised; they also petitioned the legislature to form a new county to be called Las Vegas.

To the congress of the United States the petition pointed to the almost prohibitive cost of importing necessities; to the construction of 150 dwellings; to the planting and cultivation of orchards, vineyards, cotton and farm lands to the extent of 3000 acres. Also that a tax of 3% upon the property and a \$4 poll tax was impossible to meet, and asked congress cede back to Utah and Arizona the portion of land which had been placed under the jurisdiction of Nevada.

Failing to receive any recognition from either of these documents the settlers decided to act in accordance with the advice received from the head of the church and that was to leave the state whose burdens and laws were so oppressive. So in 1871 they all left their homes in the Muddy valley to found new ones elsewhere with the exception of one family — that of Daniel Bonelli who had been the one dissenting voter when the question came up before them. He remained and became the owner and operator of a ferry at the junction of the Virgin and Colorado rivers.

It was a sad exodus for those people who had undergone suffering and privation in their long journey from Salt Lake City to the Muddy valley to found new homes. They had labored incessantly to build houses, break the new land, procure and plant seed and cultivate the crops. Then by order of Brigham Young they left their new homes which were

Hollywood Style Shop to Have New Fremont Building

Paul R. Johnson, owner of the Hollywood Style Shop, who also has extensive realty holdings in Las Vegas, announced Saturday that he has purchased the Walter R. Bracken property, 410 East Fremont street, and plans the erection of a new business block on the site after the war. He states that the old Bracken residence will be removed, and erection of the new structure will start as soon as building restrictions and priorities are lifted.

Johnson states that the new building will accommodate his own establishment and a tenant store.

As one of the most progressive merchants in Las Vegas he has steadily improved his ladies' merchandising establishment since he opened his business here in 1936 and has for some time found the present quarters at 313 East Fremont street inadequate for his constantly growing business.

He announces that his proposed building will have many modern merchandising facilities.

surrounded by flowers and shrubbery, their orchards and the crops growing in the fields to make the weary journey back through the inhospitable desert to Salt Lake. It was an example of great faith and courage.

With the abandonment of the valley by the Mormons southern Nevada suffered for a period of years because of the departure of hundreds of the most stable of her people; the reverting of thousands of acres of developed land to its original state and the decay of homes, vineyards and orchards.

The reconversion of this region began again with the settlement of Bunkerville (named after Edward Bunker) on the north side of the Virgin river a few miles from the Arizona state line. This settlement was organized under the "United Order" a communal system common in the L. D. S. church during its early days. It provided for work among the people according to the ability of the individual. Crops and products of creative art were stored in a common warehouse and the people were to share according to their efforts. The system was not political, just economic in its scope and gave practical example of the thought "those that work not, eat not."

The experiment worked for a time but failed after a few years. A flour mill, a molasses press and a cotton gin were built in Bunkerville and later a cotton press and again the settlers were able to transport their cotton to St. George, Utah, and procure cotton cloth in return.

In 1880 Mesquite was settled on the other side of the river but was abandoned a few years later. In 1895 it was resettled.

A new group of Mormons came to the Muddy Valley in 1888 and again brought into being the old villages which had been abandoned ten years before. The name of St. Joseph was changed to Logan and later to Logandale. It was years before the population of the valley reached the status held before 1871.

When the Colorado river project became a reality and Hoover dam was built the farms in and around St. Thomas were sold to the United States government and the residents of that community moved to other localities. The site of that once lovely little village is now covered with the waters of Lake Mead, as is also Fort Callville.

These Mormons who settled the valleys of southern Nevada were ideal colonists. They were farmers and artisans of various crafts. As a community they were honest, industrious, law abiding, peaceful citizens and under their thrifty management these beautiful valleys blossomed into marvelous productiveness.

Virgin Valley

The Virgin Valley High school girls' day was held Saturday in Bunkerville. Several schools were represented and the day was spent in various kinds of athletics.

Mr. and Mrs. James Pulsipher spent the week end in St. George, Utah at the home of Mrs. Pulsipher's parents, Mr. and Mrs. H. J. Holt.

Mr. and Mrs. Wesley Hughes spent a few days in Salt Lake City on business.

Mrs. Julia Walker returned from Provo, where she had gone for medical treatment.

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Gustin of Las Vegas spent the week end in Mesquite, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Granger.

Mr. and Mrs. Everett Harris announce the birth of a baby daughter, born Monday at the St. George hospital.

Mrs. Florence Burgess left on Wednesday morning for Phoenix, where she will attend the graduation exercises of her son, Air Cadet Leonard E. Burgess, of the United States Army Air Corps. After receiving his "wings" he will accompany his mother home on a short furlough.

Walter Granger who is working in Las Vegas, spent the week end in Mesquite with his family.

The senior ball was held Saturday night in the high school gym. The hall was decorated in an old southern garden theme. The music was furnished by the high school orchestra.

Mrs. Luella Pratt returned to Salt Lake City Wednesday after spending a week visiting relatives.

Mrs. Margaret Jarvis spent Tuesday in St. George, shopping.

Mrs. Berdell Knight, Mrs. Don Lee and Mrs. Vernon Hardy returned from Homedale, Idaho, where they spent the past three weeks.

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Fifth Bond Drive In Legion Hands

The fifth war bond drive will be handled by the state department of the American Legion and be put on in May or June, Mike Leavitt, local chairman, announces. Department Commander T. Miller, Reno, has named Judge J. D. Salter state chairman and four district commanders as chairmen in the territories. The campaign is to be personally conducted by legionnaires of 12 posts in Clark, Lincoln and White Pine counties. Committee personnel and definite dates will be given out later. Cyril Wengert, Las Vegas, possessed of long experience, submitted an outline of proposed activity to the district commander. Jim Powers is to supervise general solicitation, and assistance of experts in the field is already offered the Legion.



(NEA Telephoto) Capt. Richard Bong (right) of Poplar, Wis., who became America's greatest air ace by downing his 27th plane in Pacific war theater, claims his success is due to luck brought him by painting picture of Marjorie Valtendahl (left), Superior, Wis., coed, on his P-38 Lightning.

Throne Heiress Nears Eighteen

LONDON, April 15.—(UP)—Princess Elizabeth, pretty, serious heiress-apparent to the throne of England, emerges next Friday as a full-fledged publicity personality.

The chief tangible result of the event is that the girl who some day may be crowned Elizabeth II of England, now will have virtually a complete household staff of her own. As on every other birthday Elizabeth will receive a pearl from her father to add to a string which will be complete on her 21st birthday.

Legally, of course, Friday's will be the most important birthday in Elizabeth's life. For from then on if her father dies, the princess will succeed to the throne directly as queen.

King George has said he does not contemplate making any changes in Elizabeth's title of "princess." It had been suggested that she receive the title "Princess of Wales."

The once awkward, shy young

girl is a poised, polished young woman now. She displays a quick wit and is a good conversationalist with a thorough grounding in history, literature, languages and music.

She looks like a fresh edition of any American school girl, with out the make-up and glamour touches. Her quick smile makes her face extremely attractive.

Searchlight

Father Barclay Johnson of the Episcopal church from Boulder City, held christening services at the home of Mrs. F. P. Jackson in Searchlight, last Monday afternoon.

Mr. and Mrs. Con Hudgens, pioneer residents of Searchlight, who have resided in Goodsprings for the past several months, have moved back to their home here. Hudgens has leased, and plans to work the "Quartet" mine, famous early-day producer.

Don Schofield, who was suddenly taken ill last week, is in a hospital in Las Vegas, receiving medical treatment.

Mrs. Phillip Lewis has returned from a trip to California, where she visited her husband, Jack, who is employed in a defense plant there. Mrs. Lewis plans to move to California in the near future.

George and Elwin Kent of Las Vegas, spent several days in this community last week, visiting friends.

Word has been received here, by friends, that Ross C. Miles, who is in a Las Vegas hospital, is somewhat improved.

Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Reid and baby daughter, Iris Patricia, of Pioche, visited relatives in this

TO LAUNCH SHIP

RICHMOND, Calif., Apr. 15 (AP)—The first victory ship from the Henry J. Kaiser-operated shipyards here, the Ethiopia Victory, will be launched next Wednesday or Thursday, Clay P. Bedford, general manager of the record-holding Liberty ship yards, said today.

NAPLES RAIDED

NEW YORK, Apr. 15 (AP)—Allied-held Naples was raided by German planes just before dawn today, touching off a half-hour anti-aircraft barrage, a Blue Network broadcast from Italy said.

community, Sunday.

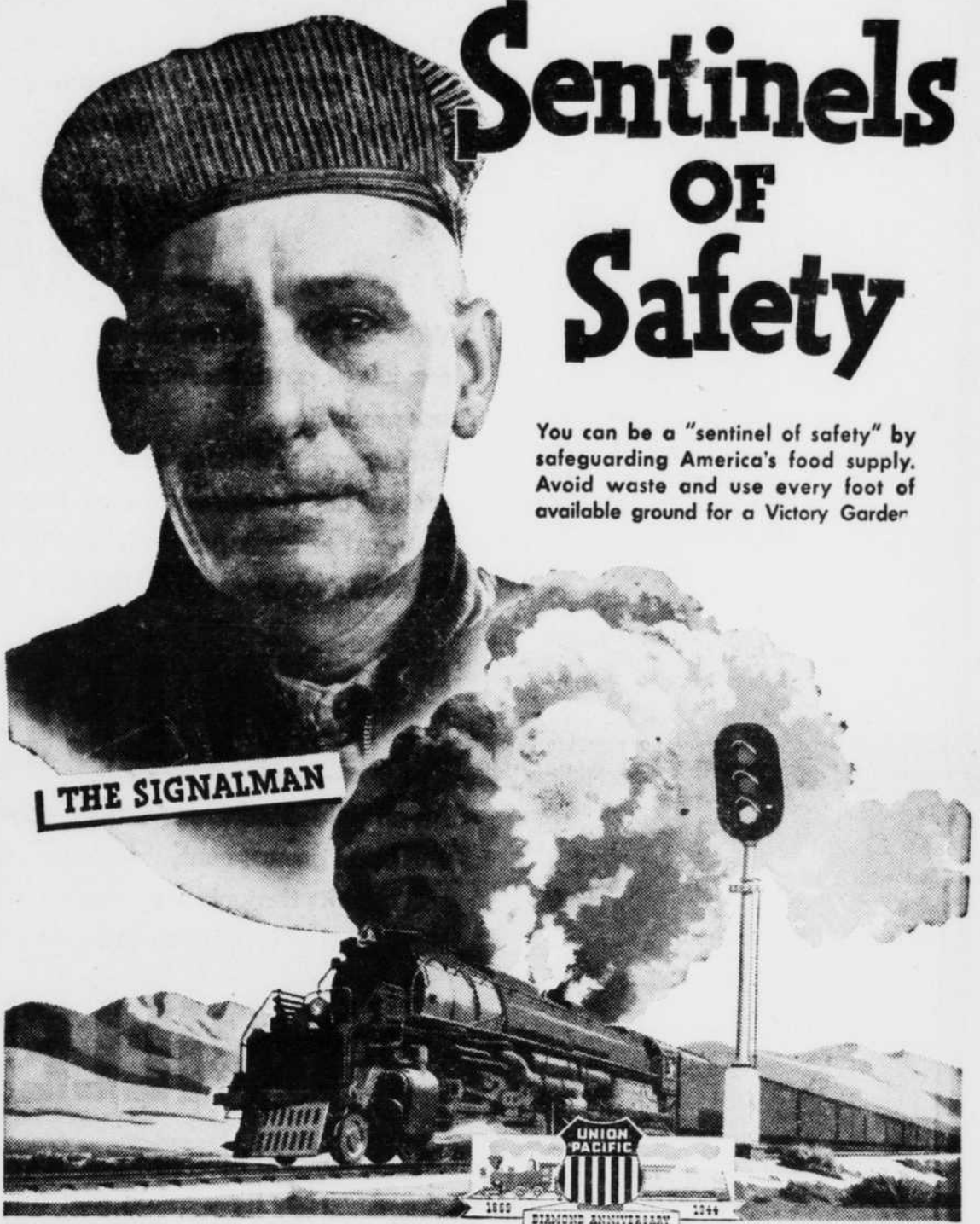
Mrs. Harold Ballinger and children of Las Vegas, spent the week end in Searchlight.

Mrs. Caroline Yetter, teacher in the Searchlight grammar school, entertained her pupils with an Easter party and egg hunt at the school house, last Friday afternoon.

Mrs. Joe Reid of Searchlight has accepted a position with the telephone company in Las Vegas.

Mrs. Erlene Givens and Mrs. Rica Hudgens have opened the dining room of the Nevada hotel in Searchlight.

Mrs. Nellie Douglas has returned to her home in Las Vegas after spending a few days in Searchlight.



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