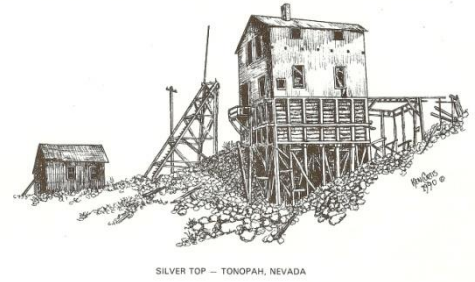


Tonopah Historic
Mining Park
Presents

Tailings



Volume 14-1

Spring 2016

*"If you only look at what is, you might
never attain what could be" –*

May Bradford Shockley

In August 1882, prospectors found silver along Pioche Creek, Sierra County, New Mexico Territory. Seymour Kimball Bradford was one of several mineral surveyors coming into the area. Sometime after Bradford's arrival, he met Sallie Wheeler, proprietress of a small boarding house. Shortly after Bradford's arrival, Sallie Wheeler and



Photo courtesy of UNLV Special Collections

her eight year old daughter Cora May were deserted by Mr. Wheeler. Mr. Bradford and the former Mrs. Wheeler became engaged in January 1884 and later married. Cora May on adoption by Bradford, from then on preferred to be known as May Bradford.

Late 1880's, the Bradford family moved back to the family farm in Missouri and stayed until May's senior year in high school. Seymour Bradford took on a project in the Pacific Northwest and wanted May to join him, on a vacation of sorts. May was a tomboy, a sure shot with a rifle and eager to indulge her fondness for horseback riding in the verdant countryside. But the vacation turned into work and May was determined to attend college. She decided to attend, with free tuition in 1898; Leland Stanford Junior University in Palo Alto, California. May earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Drawing with a minor in Mathematics in 1902. Noting her talents, her professors encouraged her to continue to study art in Paris. Summer 1902, May and her mother made the long journey to Tonopah to visit her father Seymour Kimball Bradford and meet his new business partner, John G. Booker. On return of the ladies to the Bay Area, and her mother becoming ill, May accepted a teaching position in nearby Menlo Park and cared for her mother. Back in Tonopah, John G. Booker and Seymour Bradford founded *Booker & Bradford, Mining Engineers* setting up shop in Tonopah. In 1904 the Butler mining camp changed its name to Tonopah. According to Jim Butler and his wife Belle, who

Continued on page 2

discovered the lode, Tonopah was an American Indian word that denoted a small spring. Tonopah's population hovered at three thousand, with thirty-two saloons, dance halls, two newspapers and two daily stages. By April of 1903 mines in Tonopah were listed on the San Francisco Stock Exchange. A telephone line "metallic circuit" was connected over the entire distance between Carson City and Tonopah. *Booker & Bradford* teamed up for some mining ventures. Business was booming and there was money to be made in trading mining properties. On May 24, 1904, a fire broke out in the *Booker & Bradford* office. The two men lost virtually everything. They dissolved their partnership each going their own way, Booker to Manhattan and Bradford stayed in Tonopah. Bradford was now faced with a mixed blessing. The work was booming but he was left without instruments and equipment. He had nearly completed surveys which had resided only in field books, unfinished maps and calculation sheets, all lost in the fire. Much of the work needed to be re-run in the field, with borrowed equipment and crewmen, paid with borrowed money.

Seymour wrote to May and asked that she come to Tonopah and give him a hand with the business. She was reluctant to come as she knew her father for the nomad that he was. Perhaps he would just move on to the next camp, as he had done in the past. His letters were persistent. He genuinely seemed to be in a difficult situation. At the time, May was in Palo Alto, California teaching school. She finally agreed to come to Tonopah. An arduous trip by train changes and horse drawn stage, May arrived in Tonopah on July 21, 1904. The place had grown since her last visit two years before but it was still a mining camp. Her father's new office, on Brounger Avenue, one door off of Main Street was nearly ready so she busied herself finishing the interior, decorating, setting up the office, ordering desks and drafting tables. She also had a kitchen built on the back of the office where they could bunk and save on rent. Together father and daughter formed a partnership, called "*Bradford and Bradford, Surveyors.*" When the office was ready she went to work checking calculations and drafting. They also continued to produce commercial maps of the area which May drafted.

May's presence in town was noticed immediately and she quickly took on a lot of outside drafting work. Her clients were in a hurry, the normal state in a mining camp, and she charged accordingly. As autumn rolled around the work load held steady and the two partners conceded they could not keep up with the demand. They wrote to Mrs. Bradford now recovered and asked that she too come to Tonopah and help with the business. She obliged the pair and went to Tonopah. She leapt into the work, keeping house, typing location notices, handling the firms' correspondence, recording documents and collecting bills.

May Bradford upon her arrival in Tonopah had neither the time nor the interest in a social life. With her mother now in the traces May felt she could now enjoy a little social life that she had denied herself when they first arrived. The firm also hired a draftsman to work under May's supervision which further eased the workload. She obtained Buck, a pony given to her as a tip by Herman Reischke, a local well-to-do businessman turned mining promoter after doing a drafting project for him. After completing the drafting project for him Seymour Bradford received a lot of work in the process. Later Mr. Reischke sold his mines to the wealthy steel magnet Charles Schwab for a fortune. May joined the Tonopah Riding Club and spent many happy hours riding with the daughters of Tasker Oddie, Nye County District Attorney 1900-1902, State Senator 1903-06 and later Nevada Governor and U.S. Senator for two terms. She became lifelong friends with the future U.S. Senator Key Pittman and his wife Mimosa. She also became fast friends with Marjorie Bowes, niece of Dr. Edward Bowes, secretary to the Little Grey and Mustang Mining Companies. May had many friends, both male and female and a few suitors. She enjoyed a vigorous social life. May felt she had enough experience to apply for an appointment as Mineral Surveyor. There is evidence she took an examination and passed. Soon she received a letter from Nevada Surveyor General Matthew Kyle in Reno, "You are hereby appointed as

requested.” May began performing her own patent surveys immediately. By the summer of 1906 May and her parents wanted a rest. The work load had been demanding, with her father Seymour in particular often working seven days a week. A vacation was in order for the whole family. May applied for a passport listing her occupation as “Surveyor” and her permanent residence as “Tonopah, Nevada.” Her friend, Marjorie Bowes had tried to persuade May to go to Paris and spend a year, working on her art studies; she finally succeeded. May and Marjorie decided to go to Paris together.

Returning to Tonopah and work by June 1907, she surveyed the Desert Rose Lode and the Desert Rose Mill Site for one of her father’s long-time clients, George Wingfield. George, a millionaire by the age of thirty made his fortune by the booms at Tonopah and Goldfield. May wrote the California Surveyor seeking an appointment as mineral surveyor in California. Graham wrote back “In compliance with your application of the 9th district and the recommendation of the honorable Matthew Kyle of the District of Nevada dated August 7, 1907, you are hereby appointed a Deputy Mineral Surveyor for the District of California.”

May resumed her social life in Tonopah and in the process met the multi-talented mining engineer, William Shockley. She cheerfully wrote to her mother, *“I was amazed to find someone in the middle of Nevada who could talk to me about Italian paintings.”* At 52, Shockley was 22 years her senior. May was unconcerned about the age difference. The two dated and then became engaged. They left Tonopah and traveled to the Bay area to introduce Shockley to her father and mother who lived in Palo Alto. They married in San Francisco in 1908. The *Engineering & Mining Journal* noted Shockley’s wedding in its January to June Volume Index. It read *“William H. Shockley of Tonopah, Nevada was married January 20th in San Francisco, California to Miss May Bradford, a young lady having the distinction of being the only woman holding the appointment as a United States Deputy Mineral Surveyor.”* While in the Bay area on honeymoon she resumed her painting. May returned to work in Tonopah. The new Mrs. Shockley wrote to Surveyor General Kyle in Reno advising of her name change. She asked to have future orders for surveys sent in her married name. Kyle wrote back in April of 1908 that he could not comply with her request as her bond could not be transferred in her new name, disqualifying her from more work. However, Kyle ended the letter with grace, *“It gives me great pleasure to wish you a long and happy married life and to congratulate your husband upon having secured for a help mate so capable a woman.”*

May persisted and obtained a new bond, issued in June of 1908 with assurances from the Bankers Surety Company that she could practice surveying for the Land Office, and purchase a new bond under her married name. In Fall 1908, May wrote once again to Matthew Kyle, *“I wish to hand in my resignation as a Deputy Mineral Surveyor for your district as I am leaving Nevada for an indefinite time. Thank you for your courteous treatment and with best wishes for the welfare of your office, as well as yourself. I beg to remain yours sincerely, May Shockley”* With that the newlyweds sailed for London. They had an active social life, making friends with Britons as well as other Americans living there, including the mining engineer, and future U.S. President Herbert Hoover and his wife. In 1910, May and William announced the birth of their son William Bradford Shockley. All seemed good at first, but May’s husband was unable to make enough money to sustain the family’s lifestyle. After a difficult few years in London, the family returned to Palo Alto in 1913. In 1917 he was named Secretary for the San Francisco Chapter of the American Institute of Mining Engineers (AIME). He wrote numerous papers printed in the Institute’s proceedings. May resumed once again her painting and began exhibiting her work in numerous shows around the West, often in one woman shows dedicated to her paintings. She is known for her vivid still life paintings and colorful landscapes.

The Shockley's only child, William was an extremely bright child, earning a Bachelor's Degree in Physics from Cal Tech and his PHD in Physics from MIT. By 1948, he and two colleagues had developed the first successful transistor. In 1956, Dr. William Bradford Shockley and colleagues, Dr. Bardeen and Dr. Brattain were jointly awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics. He earned numerous other honors from universities across the country. It ranks him as one of the most important scientists of the 20th century. Husband, William died in Los Angeles in 1925. Returning to Santa Clara County, May lived to be 97 years old and died in 1977. This fascinating and talented woman was a true pioneer and an example for women everywhere.

Editor's Note: *Connie Jordan (née Bradford), an heir of May Bradford, has donated to the Tonopah Historic Mining Park Foundation artifacts belonging to her grandfather, Herschel Leigh Bradford, for display at the Tonopah Historic Mining Park.*

Credits:

Nanelia Doughty, Historian and Author - Tonopah's Lady Surveyor, The NEVADAN, November 30, 1969,

Dennis McBride, Historian and Author - Director, Southern Nevada State Museum

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Special Collections

Paul S. Pace, Professional Land Surveyor and Author – Miss May Bradford of Tonopah, Deputy Mineral Surveyor, for the Nevada Traverse, Spring 2014

"Blacksmithing at the Tonopah Historic Mining Park"



Eric Kuhlmann enjoys blacksmithing classes at the

"Tonopah Historic Mining Park" 

Designed for those with an interest in learning the fundamentals of blacksmithing, and/or continuing their education, students will learn to light and work with a coal forge to heat metal and use hammers and other tools to forge, bend and twist the hot metal to desired shapes. Students will work hands-on with a coal burning forge and learn to forge iron into useful and decorative items. Classes are designed to the student's skill level. New students are encouraged to attend our Saturday classes first. Our blacksmithing classes are intended for adults. However, responsible and well-behaved youth are invited to participate with adult supervision.

Our 2016 classes are May 21 & 22, June 25 & 26 and July 30 & 31. Go to www.TonopahHistoricMiningPark.com and click on Special Events for class registration forms. Classes are limited to twelve students.

"Blacksmithing at the Tonopah Historic Mining Park"

Like us on 

CHANGES AT THE NEVADA DIVISION OF MINERALS

Geologist Bill Durbin Chief, Southern Nevada Operations Abandoned Mine Lands/Mineral Education Programs will be retiring on June 30th.

After 41 years in mining and mining-related fields and over 26 years with the Nevada Division of Minerals, Durbin said, “I cannot believe my good fortune to have spent my entire working life in my chosen field of geology. Not many folks can say that. The 26-plus years since have been filled with similar adventures, incredible opportunities and best of all, the wonderful friendships and working relationships that I have had the good fortune to acquire.”



Bill began his career as a mining and exploration geologist in the tungsten industry. For nearly seven years he worked on a variety of interesting projects including abandoned mine surveys, mineral resource evaluation and geothermal exploration.

“During the first two years I was on the road inventorying hazardous abandoned mines and conducting land ownership research at county courthouses. I inventoried 1,919 abandoned mine hazards. We estimate 50,000 hazards exist in Nevada. As a geologist and outdoorsman, I was, and still am awed by the geology, the variety and complexity of the mineral deposits, the diverse scenery and the incredible beauty of Nevada.”

“I have been fortunate to work on some great projects, including the Tonopah Historic Mining Park (THMP). At the request of former THMP Foundation Chairman Mimi Rodden, I inventoried 107 stopes, shafts, adits and other mine workings on the Mining Park property in May of 1994. The Nevada Division of Minerals (re-named in 1995) was able to provide assistance to the Mining Park for the installation of fencing and warning signs to secure the Park’s mine hazards. In 2012, after the Mizpah Air Shaft opened up, we assisted in the closure of the shaft, constructing a nine-foot thick polyurethane expansive foam (PUF) plug at the collar. Next to the plugged collar is a descriptive sign with a quick response (QR) code that allows access to a video of the PUF closure project. Fellow staffer Rob Ghiglieri conducted a downhole video survey of the Mizpah Shaft, sending a camera 500 feet down the shaft and producing excellent footage of the shaft from the collar to the 500-foot level. Information assisted Atkinson Construction, engineers and crew who completed an extensive renovation of the collar and top 15 feet of the shaft.”

Durbin thoroughly enjoyed working with the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. “Thanks to the efforts of 163 Boy Scouts (Eagle Scout candidates) and 2 Girl Scouts (Silver Award and Gold Award candidates), 740 abandoned mine hazards have been secured by fencing and several by PUF plugs. These wonderful young people planned and organized their projects, recruited helpers, provided material lists and showed off their management skills during each project. They give me a great deal of hope for our future.”



Bill and Garrett congratulate Eagle Scout Jared Brady on completion of his Eagle Scout Service Project - 2015

Students from the Mackay School of Earth Sciences and Engineering and UNLV were hired as summer interns to assist our Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) program. They investigated and secured abandoned mine hazards across the state.

“The AML program is in its 29th year and to date, over 19,400 abandoned mine hazards have been investigated

and over 15,700 have been secured by Division staff, mining companies, claimants, property owners, land management agencies and contractors. Nevada’s lands host a wealth of opportunities, whether you are a prospector, hiker, photographer, off highway vehicle operator or a hunter, Nevada has it all. The efforts of Nevada’s AML program have helped to make those recreational opportunities safer for Nevadans and visitors alike.”

“An important aspect of the AML program is public outreach and education. Though a great deal of inventory and securing work has been accomplished over many years, it is still extremely important to convey the “Stay Out and Stay Alive” message to the public. We speak about the hazards of abandoned mines during each and every school classroom presentation we make. Annually over 80,000 “Stay Out and Stay Alive” informational brochures are mailed to 4th and 7th graders in every Nevada public and private school. “We urge everyone to remember to “*Stay Out and Stay Alive*” when it comes to abandoned mines and report unsecured mines to the Nevada Division of Minerals.”

“In 1990 I was introduced to my first Las Vegas mineral education teachers’ workshop during spring break. The Division of Minerals partners with the Nevada Mining Association to co-sponsor these annual workshops. Our 27th Southern Nevada workshop takes place in Las Vegas and our July workshop in Reno will be our 32nd Northern Nevada workshop. Over 5,800 teachers have attended these workshops. We give teachers the tools they need to teach future generations about geology and Earth science and the use of mineral resources in our daily lives.”

Bill Durbin has been involved with the McCaw School of Mines since its inception in the 1990s. “It is a one-of-a-kind field trip destination for Clark County School District students. The “Mine” consists of a simulated underground mine building, a visitor’s center and a yard filled with historic and modern mining equipment.

Inside the mine building are four rooms with a variety of displays and hands-on activities. Student visitors have the opportunity to learn how to pan for gold and silver. McCaw was built entirely from private donations of money and materials; not a penny of Clark County School District or general fund tax money was used. This year the 100,000th student will have visited McCaw. I am pleased to be on the McCaw School of Mines Foundation Board and will become a docent at the “Mine” in the 2016-2017 school year.”

Garrett Wake was hired in August and will be taking my position this spring. He has a Bachelor of Science degree in geology and experience in mineral exploration and geo-technical engineering. Garrett served four years of active duty with the U.S. Air Force and is now in the U. S. Air Force Reserves.

“Garrett is a valuable asset to us. He is an excellent communicator with great “people skills”, a skilled writer/editor/researcher, and a competent and safety-minded field person and has a solid command of all the latest technology. There is no doubt in my mind that I will leave the Division’s Las Vegas office in very good hands. He can be reached at (702) 486-3915 and his e-mail address is gwake@minerals.nv.gov. “I hope his time with the Nevada Division of Minerals will be as satisfying and rewarding as my time has been.”

Garrett Wake and Bill Durbin – Simplot Silica Mine Clark County, NV - Feb. 2016

“In conclusion, it has been amazing to be a part of the Nevada Division of Minerals team. I am grateful for the guidance, leadership and support of the members of the Commission on Mineral Resources, especially Fred D.



Gibson, Jr. It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve under three Division administrators: Russ Fields, Alan Coyner and Rich Perry. I am thankful for all of my co-workers, past and present, for their passion and enthusiasm. They have truly been my second family! Together, we have gone through life’s ups and downs and MANY, MANY great times. I will stay in Las Vegas and continue to be a “Mojave Desert Rat”. I plan to stay plugged into outreach and education and will actively support the McCaw School of Mines and the Tonopah Historic Mining Park to the best of my ability and resources. I am also looking forward in retirement to attacking the long list of “round-to-its” that have been stacking up around the house and a little travel on the side. To all of the wonderful people who have been a part of my great journey, I send you a heart-felt THANK YOU!!”

The Tonopah Historic Mining Park congratulates Bill and thanks him for his many years of support and dedication.

New Foundation Members



Neil Prenn has over 45 years of experience as a practicing Mining Engineer performing tasks associated with defining and calculating ore reserves, designing mines, optimizing mine designs, mine planning and scheduling, analyzing capital and operating costs, and managing staff. He has conducted numerous feasibility, pre-feasibility studies and scoping studies. He has prepared technical reports and NI 43-101 reports as a Qualified Person. Mr. Prenn is Mine Development's Principal Engineer. He has been with Mine Development since he founded the Company in 1987. Mr. Prenn has worked with a wide variety of commodities including gold, silver, platinum group metals, copper, cobalt, base metals, molybdenum, limestone, mineral sands, aggregate, bauxite, uranium, and industrial minerals. As well, Mr. Prenn is a lifelong mineral specimen collector, a passion he will bring to the Park and its displays and exhibits.



Carlene Lancaster is a native Texan, born and raised on a ranch in Central Texas. She is a graduate of Texas A&M University with a degree in Environmental Science. Her career spans 25+ years of broad-based environmental permitting, compliance, land management, and regulatory affairs in the fields of coal, lignite, and metals mining, as well as oil and gas exploration. Her work has taken her across the U.S., living in states including Wyoming, Texas, Idaho, Utah, West Virginia, and now Nevada. For the past six years she has been the Environmental Manager for Scorpio Gold (US) Corporation, who operates the Mineral Ridge Mine in Esmeralda County. In that position she has overseen the inventory and mitigation of many complex historic sites within the Mineral Ridge Mining District, helping to preserve the rich history of central Nevada. Carlene is a member of the Women's Mining Coalition. Carlene enjoys travel, hiking, rock climbing, skiing and snowshoeing, kayaking, and just about anything else outdoors. She lives in Spring Creek, Nevada, enjoying the easy access to the beautiful Ruby Mountains, where she can be found most weekends.

Membership Benefits

Park members receive a ten percent discount on all store purchases, blacksmithing classes and coal. Park memberships are great gifts for all occasions. Check out our park store for a wonderful selection of books, jewelry, gems, candy, mining park clothing and more.

Mining Park Memberships

Park Supporter:

\$35 – \$249

Sustaining Copper Member:

\$250 – \$499

Sustaining Silver Member:

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Nelson and Olive Close a Bank and Buy a Mine

Editor's Note: As related in the Spring 2015 issue of Tailings, the launching of a bank in Round Mountain by Nelson Rounsevell and Chester Olive was accomplished in an unorthodox manner. All necessary arrangements to open the bank had been made, except that it had no depositors thus no money to loan out. How the pair attracted the initial funds is told below, along with the demise of the bank a year later.

Stanley Paher, editor

Cashier Van Harlengen of the Bank of Manhattan accompanied me on the 18-mile desert trip from Manhattan to Round Mountain with

a "loan" of \$3000 in gold and silver coin. To outward appearances everything was in substantial cases laden with the money, mostly in silver with just enough gold for a decent showing. But Chester Olive threw up his hands in despair when he saw what a slender bankroll I had produced for him to open a bank with and learned that whatever little *bait* there was for the *trap* had to be returned to the Manhattan bank in three days.



The "bankroll" in the Round Mountain Bank's safe looked innocent enough, but the money spread out on the counter in the morning when the bank opened it looked very respectable. Leaving Chester and Harlengen to look after the cash, Evans and I decided to spend that Sunday night as hilariously as we knew how. We reveled in the dance halls and in the gambling houses all night and showed up at the bank in an unseemly condition several hours after it had opened, to the great disgust of Chester and Van. I was sober enough to take admiring notice of the long line of depositors at the bank window and to note that the \$3,000 had been conspicuously scattered around on the counter and in bulging sacks. But Chet was so displeased with my conduct and appearance that Evans and I repaired to the saloon, where we would be more welcome and find more amusement and feel less in the way.

We would up in a 48-hour poker game, in which I lost, as usual, and Chet always insisted that the first check paid over the counter of the new bank was one given by me, without funds or authorized overdraft, for chips in a poker game. What omen more ill than that could possibly come across the counter of a conservative banker like Chet? In the midst of this conspicuous long poker session in a public gambling house, Chet sent several times for me and eventually came himself to argue that it would ruin the bank's reputation to have its managing director drunk and celebrating the opening in a two day poker session.

At the close of the first day's business, the new bank had \$2,000 in deposits and by Wednesday night, the time set for the termination of my three-day loan, Chet reported \$12,000 in actual deposits, most of which was cash stored in the safe. Thursday morning Evans and I accompanied Harlengen to Manhattan with the original money loaned. As a banker Chet was a wonder. In the face of a constantly tightening financial period he kept deposits increasing almost daily until by the end of July 1907 they amounted to about \$70,000. Less than 50% of this had been loaned out on as good collateral as existed at that time.

Buoyed by this new prestige as community bankers, Chet Olive and I bought the Charles mine, an old silver property in Jefferson Canyon located a few miles above Round Mountain. We financed this through old friends in New York, who bought shares in Round Mountain Alleghany. That mine had an intriguing vein of quartz which carried a high-grade streak of silver. The former owner, Charley Harrison, had followed this vein laboriously for 26

years when he sold the mine to us for \$10,000. We spent a few thousand more cleaning up the old workings, tunnels and inclines, but met with no more luck than had the old man. He deposited the \$10,000 in a Carson City bank which failed the next year. Thus, at the end of 1907 Harrison, Olive and I were all even—that is, broke.

Jefferson Canyon had been the scene of lively mining excitements and big silver production back in the 1870s, and ruins of stone buildings remained to bear witness to the long-gone populous and prosperous days of the old camp. Two survivors of the old excitement had stayed through all those years: Charles Harrison, a Swede, and Charles Kanrohat, a German. These two desert rats lived alone in cabins a few hundred yards apart and between them they had relocated and owned all of the mines, claims and prospects worth having in the canyon. Kanrohat over a period of nearly 25 years had driven more than a mile of tunnel through barren country rock into the side to tap the big vein at depth, always expecting that next round of roles would break into rich ore that would make his fortune. Harrison sold his mine while Kanrohat kept on working until he died many years later, in the same stone cabin in which he spent almost his entire life. The eccentric old chaps had quarreled over the ownership of mining ground in the early days of the camp and, although for more than 20 years they were the only inhabitants for and miles around, they had never become reconciled and did not speak to each other. Both died penniless.



With a general tightening of things financial all over the nation, conditions on the Pacific coast quickly became acute in 1906. San Francisco had been the fountainhead of Nevada money and was the financial capital of the West Coast. The disastrous earthquake and fire that April dealt a fatal blow at the very heart of western mining and cut off the source of practically all capital available to Nevada. Everyone looked for a miracle to save the situation and bring prosperity back, but nothing of the sort was forthcoming and money kept getting tighter and tighter. About August 1 deposits decreased every day. When the books would be balanced at night they would show more withdrawals than deposits for each day's business. Our \$70,000 was dwindling and with it vanished our hopes for

sudden wealth. Sometime in September the blow came, when Nevada's two largest banks—State Bank and Trust Company and Nye & County Bank, with branches in every Nevada mining camp of importance, closed their doors.

There was no Federal Reserve Bank in those days and an institution had to stand on its own legs and sink or swim as fate willed. Since there was no clearinghouse in Nevada, Chet had to meet his depositors' demands with cash or drafts on San Francisco institutions. He kept the bank open for nearly two months after the crash came, while older and stronger western institutions went to the wall by the score. Only three banks in all of Nevada survived and were able to meet all demands: the Washoe County Bank in Reno, the John S. Cook Bank in Goldfield, and the First State Bank in Las Vegas.

Finally, one day in November, Chet sent word to me in Manhattan to come over to Round Mountain and present at what seemed to us the end of the world. Both of us had thrown into the bank every dollar and resource to save the institution and depositors' money, and our credit as well. Chet even cashed in his endowment life insurance policies and borrowed from friends on "honor" obligations. Deposits had been withdrawn until they dwindled to less than \$25,000, and the bank's cash reserves and assets had all been used to meet customer demands. We had a loan for \$26,000 secured by a chattel mortgage on a placer pipeline that had cost more \$60,000, which, had we been able to collect it, would have paid off every depositor in full. But there was the rub, as always in panics—no one could repay their loan.

In the crisis we telegraphed our old friend John Leggett, president of a large New York bank. He made a hurried trip to Nevada to see what we had that might be worth saving, coming across the continent by train and the 80 miles over the desert from Tonopah to Round Mountain by auto. He was a tired, dusty old man when he arrived, and remarked, "If the salvation of all the banks in Nevada had depended on me I would not have made the journey if I had known now what it was like. Leggett could have written a personal check for enough to pay all of our depositors off, but the situation was hopeless, as he soon found out. With his cold banker's judgment, he said the only thing to do was to close the bank and let the losses fall where they may. That sounded the death knell of the Round Mountain Banking Corp. Leggett returned east and we prepared for the worst.



On that fatal day, November 18, 1907, the Crocker National Bank in San Francisco telegraphed us that our credit balance was exhausted and they were therefore protesting a number of our drafts drawn on them. That was the end, and in a few hours a telegram arrived from the State Bank Commissioner instructing us to close the doors and post notice to the effect that the institution was in his charge. Only a few minutes before, I had accepted a deposit from one of my best friends, Bob Robertson, so while Chet was mournfully posting the notice on the door I went to tell Bob of his loss. He and I had been hunting, fishing, drinking and gambling companions, and were for years partners in everything except women and money. He took a calm view of the situation and said, "Well, you have paid your creditors all off by closing the bank and I might

as well pay mine off too by sending them all checks. As fast as he could write them, he pinned them to invoices and rushed them to the post office. He also sent pre-dated checks to all the wholesale houses to which he owned accounts. The subterfuge worked. He lost nothing in the Round Mountain Bank failure and let his creditors worry as to how they would prorate the loss on the amount of his credit balance in the bank.

Bob's sense of humor was too highly flavored to allow him to take any situation seriously for long, and after the checks were mailed, he said, "Well, it's a good thing I didn't take the nickels and dimes out of the register this morning or they would be in your bank too. There aren't enough of them to be of any account for business purposes now, so let's take 'em and go get drunk." Then we proceeded to do, while Chet got things in shape to turn all over to the Bank Commissioner. Many a time afterward Bob proclaimed our bank failure as a blessing, for, he explained, it provided an alibi for his whole financial career up to that time and afforded him an unanswerable argument to his wife's questions about his poker and other gambling losses. "If I had never gambled," Bob reasoned, "and had saved all my money, I would have had it all deposited in the bank and it would have been lost playing poker sooner or later anyway. We were both booked to lose in Nevada. But, we were both winners when we left the state, for we both had shoes then and neither of us had any when we were born."

It was on that and other happy-go-lucky statements that Bob and I rambled and gambled together for many years, taking life as it came and always looking on the bright side, laughing off our troubles and losses and saying "to hell with it!" at times when more serious men would have shed tears and sought means of suicide.

Annual Jim Butler Days Weekend
Nevada State Mining Championships at the Tonopah Historic Mining Park
May 28th & 29th, 2016
www.TonopahHistoricMiningPark.com



TONOPAH HISTORIC MINING PARK

110 BURRO ST, TONOPAH, NV 89049

PO BOX 965, TONOPAH, NV 89049

775-482-9274

Head Frame Restoration Project

The first order of gray bricks with black lettering will be placed around the periphery of the reconstructed collar's apron by Jim Butler Days. Order your engraved brick to help fund the reconstruction of the collar of the Desert Queen and Silver Top head frames. For yourself; for a gift; or for a memorial, this is your chance to have a brick placed around the collar of the famous Mizpah Mine.



Prices:

Small bricks, 4" x 8" with up to 3 lines of
20 characters each - \$100.00

Large bricks, 8" x 8" with up to 6 lines of
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Order forms may be found on our website:
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