Examples with Explanation


n15 21 “autobiographical trove”: RM Clark, letter to Carl Heintze, Oct. 29, 1979, Heintze-UNR. It’s possible that the suggestion for Walter to write an autobiographical novel originated from Robert: the narrator, Walt Clark, says that “the idea of telling Tim’s story came up during a conversation with Lawrence Black, years after most of its events had taken place” (Clark, City, 323).

- The italicized numbers preceded by ‘n’ in the column at the left margin mark notes which contain comments of substance over and above source. These italicized note numbers are entered in the index for the purpose of directing the index user to the corresponding notes in this document.
- The unitalicized numbers in the next column mark the page of the book from which comments of substance arise and/or to which sources pertain.
- The bolded words specify the words on a given page to which a given note is linked.

Key to Abbreviations


“A & A” “Arts and Artists” item, Lillian Borghi
Benson Jackson J. Benson
Benson-UNR Jackson J. Benson Papers, 2004-14, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Reno
Buck-UNR Norinne Buck Papers, 2007-04, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Reno
Caples Robert Cole Caples
Caples Archive Robert Cole Caples Archive, Nevada Museum of Art
Clark Walter Van Tilburg Clark
Clark-UNR Walter Van Tilburg Clark Papers, NC527, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Reno
de-L-UNR Joanne de Longchamps Papers, 84-09, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Reno
Doten-UNR Alfred Doten Papers, NC08, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Reno
Emily Robbins Emily Robbins’ files
Joanne Joanne de Longchamps
Heintze-UNR Carl Heintze Papers, 83-15 and 92-25, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Reno
Houghton Samuel G. Houghton
Houghton-UNR Houghton Collection on Robert Caples, 2006-04, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Reno
Laird-UNR Charlton Laird Papers, AC 0284, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Reno.
“Nevada Indian Art” “Nevada Indian Art,” fifteen minute radio interview of Robert Cole Caples by George Herman, probably taped in October, 1975, for broadcast in 1976 in the series “Nevada: One of Fifty,” 97-02/#14, Special Collections, University Libraries,
Notes, *The Nevada They Knew*, by Anthony Shafton

### Key to Abbreviations (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Nevada, Reno</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Bartlett</td>
<td>Margaret Bartlett nearly always included ‘Bartlett’ as her middle name when and after married as Margaret Bartlett Millar and then Margaret Bartlett Thornton.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHS</td>
<td>Nevada Historical Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>NHSQ</em></td>
<td>Nevada Historical Society Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPR</td>
<td>Navy Personnel Records for Robert Cole Caples, 1942–45, National Personnel Records Center of the National Archives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>NSJ</em></td>
<td><em>Nevada State Journal</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“On Learning to Look” Robert Cole Caples Correspondence with Anthony Shafton, 2011-17, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Reno</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Walter Van Tilburg Clark, typed questionnaire prepared for Caples in preparation for “On Learning to Look,” undated but probably early 1964; Robert Cole Caples, handwritten answers to Clark’s questionnaire, Walter Van Tilburg Clark Papers, NC527, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Reno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R Caples Jr</td>
<td>Rosemary Brittain (Rosemary Caples “Junior”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R Caples Sr</td>
<td>Rosemary Caples “Senior”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REG</td>
<td><em>Reno Evening Gazette</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>RGJ</em></td>
<td><em>Reno Gazette-Journal</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM Clark</td>
<td>Robert Morse Clark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbins</td>
<td>Kenneth Robbins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shafton-UNR</td>
<td>Robert Cole Caples Correspondence with Anthony Shafton, 2011-17, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Reno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TE</td>
<td><em>Territorial Enterprise</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thornton-UNR</td>
<td>Margaret Bartlett Thornton unprocessed archive, PS3505.L375 Z485, Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TNTK</td>
<td><em>The Nevada They Knew</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Virginia Letters of Walter Van Tilburg Clark in the Clifton Waller Barrett Library of American Literature, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN Press EAC</td>
<td>University of Nevada Press Editorial Advisory Committee [later Board] minutes, University of Nevada Press Papers, NUC 3/2/1, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Reno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNR</td>
<td>University of Nevada, Reno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>VCN</em></td>
<td><em>Virginia City News</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walton</td>
<td>Richard Guy Walton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walton Papers</td>
<td>Richard Guy Walton Papers and Tapes, Nevada Historical Society, Collection NC 732</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notes, The Nevada They Knew, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 10–18  ●  Indexed Notes n1–n9

10 “socialist orators”: Clark, letter to Donald L. Kemmerer, Nov. 29, 1934, Walter Clark Papers, MISC 0074, Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries.

10 Ten-year-old Timmy: Walter Van Tilburg Clark (1945), The City of Trembling Leaves, Random House, 574.

n1 11 never speak of Jacob: Ibid., ch. 3. Jacob Briaski’s name comes up once (407) when schoolgirl Lucy the Golden Tart of ch. 1, grown up to become a dance hall girl, mentions his sad death to Tim.

n2 12 Eilley Orrum and Sandy Bowers: Clark imagines the couple at their mansion, both disillusioned: Sandy Bowers overdressed and dreading playing host, Eilley Orrum come to realize she was a laughing-stock (ibid., 273).

n3 13 The Death Valley episode: Ibid., 613–45.

14 like a desert Indian (and the quotes in the following paragraph): Ibid., 629, 630.

15 “has faith in time”: Ibid., 436 (italicized in the original).

n4 15 Eilley Orrum and Sandy Bowers: Clark imagines the couple at their mansion, both disillusioned: Sandy Bowers overdressed and dreading playing host, Eilley Orrum come to realize she was a laughing-stock (ibid., 273).


n6 17 Jeff Nicholson: Phone conversation, Jul. 19, 2012 (and another informant, name lost).


n8 17 Brundidge’s: Beginning around 1920, Brundidge’s listed itself at First Street next to the Rialto Theater, 18 W. First, where Virginia St. crosses the Truckee River. They advertised “Art goods,” “Gift Novelties,” “Pictures and Frames,” and “Party Favors, Bridge Prizes, etc.” Beginning in 1935, they were at 3 N. Virginia; and later at 22 W. First. In 1953, Brundidge’s moved to 136 N. Sierra Street.


18 a 1971 letter: Clark, letter to Caples, Apr. 8, 1971, Clark-UNR.
Notes, The Nevada They Knew, by Anthony Shafton  

Notes for Pages 18–22  ●  Indexed Notes n10–n16


n10 18 the most brilliant : David Chism, interview, Jul. 8, 2012. Chism recalled a social occasion when Bob Clark and his friends debated the relative merits of the French, German and English translations of the Iliad – “Just friends discussing a favorite book!”

n10 18 biographer Jackson Benson : Jackson J. Benson (2004), The Ox-Bow Man: A Biography of Walter Van Tilburg Clark, University of Nevada Press.

n11 19 by his own account : Benson, transcript of interview of Charles Brashers, Mar. 31, 2000, 1, Benson-UNR.

n11 19 “terrific young man” : It may have been after a subsequent visit that Robert wrote to friend Sam Houghton about Bob Clark and his first wife, who would die of cancer: “He’s a terrific young man, we like him a lot, and his wife, Betsy, like her name, is New England, and wonderfully good. . . . They’re a splendidly sunlit family” (Capes, letter to Houghton, May 10, 1975, Houghton-UNR).

n12 19 University of Nevada in Reno : Until the late 1960s, when the University of Nevada, Las Vegas received its name, the University of Nevada, Reno was the only state university, known simply as the University of Nevada (or colloquially as the university, the U, or Nevada). For simplicity’s sake, University of Nevada will be used throughout for the Reno institution, regardless of date, except in some citations.

n12 19 eventually would be published : Charlton Laird, ed. (1983a), Walter Van Tilburg Clark: Critiques, University of Nevada Press.

n12 19 his notes : RM Clark, notes from conversations with Caples, late 1972, 9, files of RM Clark.


n12 20 driving trip back West : Ibid., 278–79.

n13 20 “time alone with Robert” : Clark, letter to Barbara Clark, Jul. 5, 1937, Clark-UNR. In Virginia City the friends had separate rooms and usually worked separately, but together walked, ate, drank and explored. On one occasion Robert finished three sketches while Walter read new short stories to him. Walter based the Pyramid camping trip in City on this 1937 trip. He predicted poorly, before the trip, that Pyramid Lake “no longer torments either Robert or me because we have finally decided that it has neither a story nor the possibility of a painting.” They camped at the lake one week not two. Virginia missed the first four days tied up with work.

n14 20 family cottage on Lake Tahoe : The cabin at Cedar Flats on the northwest shore of the lake was “started or obtained” by Walter Senior in the 1930s, according to Bob Clark (RM Clark, letter to Benson, Aug. 25, 2002, Benson-UNR). A Clark nephew says it was “built” by Walter’s mother with the help of John Chism, husband of Walter’s sister Miriam and later mayor of Reno, and Walter’s brother David Clark (Gordon Chism (2010 [2004]), As I Remember: a 1940s Childhood, Avenue Design). The cabin consisted of a single room with sleeping lofts and a stone fireplace. Walter described it in the post-honeymoon cabin passages in City.

n14 20 and more in Reno : Clark, letter to Barbara Clark, Jul. 26, 1937, Clark-UNR.

n14 20 “I still don’t glimpse” : Caples, letter to the author, Oct. 11, 1977 (ellipsis Caples’), Shafton-UNR.

n14 21 Richard Guy Walton : Tape #16, Walton Papers.

n15 21 “autobiographical trove” : RM Clark, letter to Carl Heintze, Oct. 29, 1979, Heintze-UNR. It’s possible that the suggestion for Walter to write an autobiographical novel originated from Robert: the narrator, Walt Clark, says that “the idea of telling Tim’s story came up during a conversation with Lawrence Black, years after most of its events had taken place” (Clark, City, 323).

n15 21 Benson relates the story : Benson, Ox-Bow Man, 25, citing Michael Steiner.


n16 22 About that can of tomatoes : The can of tomatoes as a reliable and portable source of food and especially of fluid already appears in that prototype of the Western, Owen Wister’s The Virginian, set in Wyoming (2010 [1902, -11], Signet Classics, 23); and in Texas cowboy-author Andy Adams’s The Log of a Cowboy (2009 [1903], Digireads.com Publishing, 25); also in The Parowan Bonanza, a Nevada story by Western romance writer B. M. Bower (1923, Grosset & Dunlap, 24); and in Lone Cowboy by Will
Notes to Pages 22–24  ●  Indexed Notes n17–n18

James, whom Nevadans claim but who worked cattle and horses all over the West (1930, Charles Scribner’s Sons, 403). In Conrad Richter’s “Lutie” (1967 [1936], in J. Golden Taylor, ed., Great Western Short Stories, The American West Publishing Company, 304) and Frank Waters’ The Man Who Killed the Deer (1971 [1941], Pocket Books, 207) it is a standard provision of ranch and Pueblo hospitality, respectively. Perhaps City perpetuated the trope of the tomato can, for it shows up again in later novels by Clark’s contemporaries: in George Stewart’s Sheep Rock, his poetic tribute to encounters with Nevada’s Black Rock Desert (1971 [1951], Ballantine Books, 35); and again in an A. B. Guthrie, Jr. Montana mountain man novel, These Thousand Hills (1984 [1956], Houghton Mifflin Company, 307). In Herman W. Albert’s entertaining Odyssey of a Desert Prospector, the can of tomatoes is staple fare for the Basque shepherder and the small miner (1967, University of Oklahoma Press, 163, 235). It shows up again as a shared meal at a reservation trading post in N. Scott Momaday’s House Made of Dawn (Kindle Edition [1968], Harper & Row).

Richard E. Lingenfelter’s anecdotal compendium of Death Valley history (Death Valley & the Amargosa: A Land of Illusion (1986), University of California Press) contains a couple of tomato can tidbits. “Tomato can baths became a thing of the past” at the mining camp of Skidoo when a water shortage was relieved (294). And during a drought at the Greenwater camp they drank anything “that would pour, even making a run on canned tomato puree” (321).


n17 24 anodyne version of the legend: “An old woman, mother of all Indians, first of all people, put tule, sagebrush and secret herbs into a gay-ah-tep (a water jug) and undertook to journey South from Pyramid Lake. At what is now Reno she heard a humming as of bees in the gay-ah-tep. At Washoe Lake (Franktown) she heard small voices crying, “Let us out – Let us out.” She paid no heed. At Eagle Valley (Carson City) the center of the earth, the voices grew stronger and insistent. Here she paused and removed the stopper of desert grass – out flew an Indian, Southeast. He was the Shoshone. The next flew East, he was the Piute. The next flew West he was the Digger. Last, strongest and finest of them all, came the Washoe and he flew to Double Springs.” (Double Springs Flat is in the Washo Allotment at Dresslerville south of Gardnerville.)

Robert’s source for the courthouse mural’s Washo legend can’t have adhered closely to an indigenous recital, to have named the Diggers, for no Digger tribe or nation ever existed except in the prejudiced imaginations of immigrants who perceived the digging stick as a sign of squalid inferiority wherever encountered (Theodora Kroeber (1961), Ishi in Two Worlds, Berkley Books, 18–19). Thus the confusing appearance of the so-called Diggers from the Rockies to the Sacramento valley. Washoes in their own world would not have named a neighbor that. The term acquired some of its pejorative force from its sound-alike, the ‘n’ word.

Robert’s mural would have been more authentic had it pictured the digging stick in the hands of a woman, for women in all of the groups in question did the gathering.

n18 24 Washo-centric version: Other Washo versions of how the tribes came to be can be found in James F. Downs, (1961), Washo Religion, University of California Publications: Anthropological Records, vol. 16, no. 9, 365–86, 366; Grace Dangberg (1968), Washo Tales, Grace Dangberg, Minden, Nevada, 32–39; and Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada [Jo Ann Nevers] (1976b), Wa She Shu: A Washo Tribal History, Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada (University of Utah Printing Service), 3.

Notes to Pages 25–35


Sara Frantz : Conversation, Nov. 16, 2011.

27 most of it from Robert’s studio : In a letter to Walton, Rosemary described surprises she found when straightening Robert’s studio after his death, including artworks (R Caples Sr, letter to Walton, Feb. 4, 1980, Walton Papers). I feel sure some of these didn’t make it to the archive. They included “a panel of Peonies and leaves! A lovely thing. . . . Then there are several portfolios crammed with work that Robert did many years ago. Some fine drawings, with color, of Nevada, a beauty of a room in a Tonopah hotel room [sic], something of San Francisco and many others. . . . I have been going to a framer in Litchfield.”

Tim honeymoons : Clark, _City_, 675.

“*It’s a long upward climb*” : Caples, letter to the author, Jun. 17, 1978, Shafton-UNR. A year later he told the story to Joanne de Longchamps: “I remember a wife of mine, one of the early ones [Virginia or Shirley], who said bitterly once, ‘I’m damned if I ever want to take a back seat to some absurd desert lake’ . . . Imagine!” (Caples., letter to Joanne, Mar. 5, 1979, de-L-UNR).


“*windowless mausoleum*” : Clark, letter to Caples, Feb. 6, 1963, Clark-UNR.

Bob Clark told Benson : Benson, transcript of interview of RM Clark, Oct. 23, 1997, Benson-UNR.


“*He seldom*” : Benson, _Ox-Bow Man_, 332.


“*a long letter, for Lawrence*” : Ibid., 595.


my letter! : Shafton, letter to Clark, postmarked Apr. 24, 1963, Clark-UNR. The second paragraph began, “I’ve been proselytizing my fellow men. . . .” The dated sexism of the phrase is so distracting that I thought better of letting it stand.


anachronistic chapter titles : Clark used the same formula, but without the tender irony, in his master’s thesis poem (“Sword Singer: The Tale of Tristram Retold, with an Introductory Essay Concerning Sources of the Tristram Legend,” Master of Arts Thesis, University of Nevada, 1931). The “Prologue” is “of the birth of Tristram,” Book One, “of his coming to Mark - of his battle with Marhause of Ireland,” etc.

Hubert D. Saal : Letter to Clark, Sep. 13, 1949, Clark-UNR.


another old letter : Carl Heintze, letter to the author, Apr. 17, 1980, author’s files.


Notes to Pages 36–43  ●  Indexed Notes n25–n31

previously contacted Bob Clark about a biography; Bob wasn’t impressed by Heintze’s efforts, he told the Nebraska editor when asked (RM Clark, letters to Charlton Laird, Aug. 18, 1979 and Jan. 29, 1981, Laird-UNR, Box 27).

36 I found my letter: Shafton, letters to Carl Heintze, Jan. 4 and Apr. 15, 1980, Heintze-UNR.


38 Track: Clark (1993 [1949]), The Track of the Cat, University of Nevada Press.


n25 38 surmises Bob Clark: “So if Tony wants to include something about all that [the publishing history of Watchful Gods], he should, indeed, attribute it to me . . . [and] make it clear that it comes from remembered remarks of Dad, circumstantial evidence of various kinds in the papers, and my speculation” (RM Clark, email to Monique Laxalt, Jan. 29, 2017).

n26 39 “hymns of praise”: Clark, City, 130. As one commentator, Arthur Boardman, said, “Tim has the capacity for pure, ecstatic emotion which is common among very young people and which seems dulled, or at least restrained, as they grow older” (“The Muted Horn: A Study of the Prose of Walter Van Tilburg Clark,” MA Thesis, University of Nevada, 1953, 41).

n27 39 Bowers Mansion episode: Clark, City, 277. Then (279) Tim has what narrator Walt Clark calls a vision of the Great Basin and beyond, where “All humanity like one frightened, migratory tribe, filed in a thin dark line across this empty land, bending up into the passes and down into the valleys, into the faint mist of the moonlight over the lakes in the valleys, where they knelt and drank, and turned up their faces to the moon, and then went on, and were gone.” Later (317) Walter again presents the moon as the stimulus of time awareness and consciousness of death.

39 Saal’s big complaint: Hubert D. Saal, letter to Clark, Sep. 13, 1949, Clark-UNR.

40 “Praise the day!”: Caples (1971), The Potter and His Children, Carlton Press, 70.

40 “pray in April?”: Caples, letter to Joanne, Mar. 5, 1979, de-L-UNR.

40 “leaf-broken shining”: Clark, City, 181.

40 “wanderlust of autumn”: Ibid., 328.

40 “bewildering beauty”: Ibid., 265.

40 stars “sink away”: Ibid., 460.

40 disliked to wear a hat: Ibid., 624.

n28 41 ancient-looking desert tortoise: Clark, City, 61. Desert tortoises aren’t native to northern Nevada. So Walter took a liberty here, or else was unaware of the tortoise’s range. There are desert tortoises at Indian Springs – one was kept as a pet at the Caples ranch where the chapter was probably drafted (RM Clark, letter to Benson, Aug. 25, 2002, Benson-UNR). The only turtle possibly anywhere near the site of the episode would have been a pond turtle in the Truckee River “all the way down to the delta at Pyramid Lake” (Richard Tracy, email, May 21, 2014).

41 “grand” singing: Clark, City, 61.

n29 42 world class game fish: Into the twentieth century Lahontan cutthroat trout were still so abundant at Pyramid they were being shipped out by the multiple tons per week by white commercial poachers (Mergen, At Pyramid Lake, 103), one poacher being C. S. Crosby, forebear of the Fred Crosby at whose Crosby Lodge I honeymooned.

42 like an Indian How: Clark, City, 69.

42 Tim and Lawrence’s second meeting: Ibid., ch. 13.

42 “more than a month”: Ibid., 141.

n30 42 three years passed: Ibid., 574. The first meeting took place when Tim was “aged not more than ten,” the second when he was “thirteen” – for he was thirteen at the post office party, which took place before the friends’ second meeting.

42 “come and see us”: Ibid., 68.

n31 43 high-rent Clay Peters Building: “[I]ts tenant directory contain[s] many of the Who’s Who in Reno business and legal circles” (Karl Breckenridge (2005), You’re Doing WHAT to the Mapes? Jack Bacon
Notes, *The Nevada They Knew*, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 43–47 • Indexed Notes n32–n38


43 on Reno’s north outskirts: Clark, letter to Barbara Clark, Jul. 5, 1937, Clark-UNR.

43 on a wander: Clark, *City*, 458.

44 symbolizing, I suppose, the inward life: Ibid., 459.

44 a slope at Pyramid: At Pyramid Lake, there is no range called “the Pyramid Range” (ibid., 27). Walter may mean the mountains on the west shore, the Virginia Mountains, which are by some reckonings an extension of the Virginia Range east of Reno; more likely he means the mountains on the east shore, the Lake Range.

44 “The Tracks of the Turtle”: Ibid., ch. 60.

44 “Here it is, Robert”: RM Clark, letter to the author, Jul. 9, 2012.

44 private language: Benson, *Ox-Bow Man*, 332; Benson, transcript of phone interview of R Caples Sr, Aug. 9, 2000, 2, Benson-UNR.


45 Court Street Quarter mansions: But at least one of them was originally built as law offices, by Francis Newlands (conversation with Renate Neumann (2013), who lives in the converted offices.) Many other of the mansions above the river were built by divorce immigrants (Marilyn Melton, “Marilyn Melton,” 371, in Allison Tracy, Alicia Barber & Gillian Griffith, eds., (2012), *The Cultural Side of Reno*, Oral History Program, University of Nevada, Reno Libraries).

45 working for Dr. Caples: Walton, Tape #18, Walton Papers. “Caples came through town after joining the Navy, probably 1942. And I was to find out that he had suggested to his father, Dr. Byron Caples . . . to consider me for the job of investigator in the venereal disease control program. . . . I accepted that job. . . . We were very close for just about four years.”

45 “a very small man”: Walton, Tape #16, Walton Papers.

45 Others saw him so: E.g., Gordon Chism, *As I Remember*, 99.

45 Even his wife Rosemary: Benson, transcript of phone interview of R Caples Sr, Aug. 9, 2000, 5, Benson-UNR.


45 childhood infirmities: Walter alluded to Robert’s “persistent frailty and frequent illnesses” as a child (“On Learning to Look”).


47 born elsewhere: Of nineteenth century writers, Mark Twain, Dan De Quille and Bret Harte were born in Missouri, Ohio and New York, respectively. Early twentieth century originator of the Western, Owen Wister, was a New England blue blood. Will James came from Quebec. Of mid-century writers: Wallace Stegner and Frederick Manfred, Iowa; A. B. Guthrie, Jr., Indiana; Zane Grey, Ohio; Paul Horgan, New York State; George Stewart and Edward Abbey, Pennsylvania. On the other side of the ledger, Western writers born in the West: Vardis Fisher, Idaho; Harvey Ferguson, New Mexico; Louis L’Amour, North Dakota; Frank Waters, Colorado; John Steinbeck, Jack London and Robert Laxalt, California.

Nineteen of the twenty-two poets selected for Cheryll Glotfelty’s collection of Nevada literature are from elsewhere (Glotfelty, ed., *Literary Nevada*, 552).


Notes, The Nevada They Knew, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 47–49 ● Indexed Notes n39–n43

47 Walter E. Clark: Ibid.
47 regents met his demands: Benson, Ox-Bow Man, 10.
47 more than the governor’s: Benson, transcript of interview of David Chism, Aug. 21, 2000, Benson-UNR, 9.
47 nagging resentment: Benson, Ox-Bow Man, 226–27.
48 creative writing: Clark, “Sword Singer.”
48 cleaned spittoons: Gordon Chism, As I Remember, 9.
48 million dollars: Benson, Ox-Bow Man, 220, 225.
48 accused of improprieties: The improprieties included condoning the requirement that every female student be photographed nude, and then lying that the practice existed at other universities. A hearing at the state legislature mostly cleared President Clark of the various charges, but this very correct gentleman had been publicly shamed (Benson, Ox-Bow Man, 222–23; James W. Hulse (2004 [1991]), The Silver State: Nevada’s Heritage Reinterpreted, 3rd edition, University of Nevada Press, 44–46). Tim’s father’s disintegration after Willis leaves and as his wife sickens (Clark, City, 324–25) perhaps tracks Walter Senior’s after the crash and the scandal. Walter called it “a loss of power.”
48 bungalow: Polk’s City Directory has Walter E. and Euphemia Clark at 524 Cheney St., beginning in 1940. They lived there until his death in 1955. Bob Clark gave a sad description of his grandfather in the reduced elegance of the Cheney Street residence (Benson, Ox-Bow Man, 225), as did another grandson, Gordon Chism (As I Remember, 8). The house at that address today is either a new structure or extensively remodeled. It stands amid other pleasant but modest red brick bungalows all of one style which must resemble the original at 524.
48 “blue-chip stocks”: RM Clark, email to Benson, Dec. 10, 2001, Benson-UNR.
48 “never cooked a meal”: Gordon Chism, As I Remember, 104.
48 cook, maid and butler: Benson, transcript of interview of David Chism, Aug. 21, 2000, Benson-UNR, 3.
48 Eleanor Roosevelt: Gordon Chism, As I Remember, 8.

n39
48 August 3, 1909: A typographical error in Benson (Ox-Bow Man, 4) makes Clark’s birthday August 9.

n40
49 “Western man”: Ibid. When we spoke, Bob Clark remarked that a side of his father embraced the Western ideal of masculinity. So Walter had his “Nevada face,” I quipped in reply, implying a comparison the “Montana face” of Leslie Fiedler’s controversial observation about the West ((1999 [1949]), "Montana; or The End of Jean-Jacques Rousseau," in A New Fiedler Reader, Prometheus Books). Superficially, Clark seemed if anything to renounce and even condemn that ideal, as in Ox-Bow, and particularly in Track. But with the exception of City, the critiques come from within the confines of the ideal (tempting me to make another Great Basin analogy). Bob simply said that for all his critique of it, Clark “internalized” the ideal of the man of the West.

n41
49 Tristram legend: Clark, “Sword Singer.”
49 From Vermont: Clark, letter to Robert and Virginia Caples, Dec. 15, 1933, Clark-UNR.

n42
49 portrait of Walter: The portrait was gifted by Walter’s sister Barbara Clark Salmon to the University of Nevada, where it hangs on the wall in the back room of Special Collections (Donnelyn Curtis,
Notes to Pages 49–52  •  Indexed Notes n44–n46

correction, Jun. 4, 2014). From the 524 Cheney Street address on the backing it appears the Walter
Clark Seniors owned it previously.
49  Ray B. West  : Carl Heintze, “Notes from Ray West Jr. interview in Santaquin, May, 1980,” Heintze-
UNR.
50  Clark family members  : RM Clark, interview, Jun. 27–28, 2012; Barbara Clark Salmon, interview, Jul.
12, 2012; Ross Salmon, interview, Jul. 12, 2012; David Chism, interview, Jul. 8, 2012.
50  Walter’s birth record  : “Record of a Birth” on Aug. 3, certified by Clerk of Orland, State of Maine, on
Aug. 5.
50  denied being a Jew  : Despalatović & Halpern, “Emily Greene Balch,” 47.
50  two hours every afternoon  : Benson, Ox-Bow Man, 14.
50  “I kill a lot of time”  : Clark, letter to John and Joan Kuehl, Jan. 28, 1954, University of Virginia.
51  Robert’s great-grandfather  : Robert’s great-grandfather Robert Francis Caples (1779–1834) had platted
Risdon after he and Robert’s great-grandmother, Charlotte Laffer of Pennsylvania, settled there. When
this great-grandfather died, the artist’s grandfather-to-be Robert Cole Caples (1815–89) was nineteen
and living in Ashland, Ohio, so had already left the family home – there were nine brothers and sisters.
In 1838 or 1839, he decided to study medicine. Until then, he had worked in stores. He spent three years
of apprenticeship in the office of Dr. Marcus Dana in Risdon (later Fostoria), then attended and after
two years graduated from Geneva Medical College in Geneva, New York (now known as Upstate
Medical University, part of the SUNY system). He evidently had a prior connection to Geneva, for his
first wife Ann (or Anna) Wilson, whom he married in 1837 before entering school there, was from that
city. They returned to Risdon, where he practiced for the rest of his life. He belonged to the Methodist
Episcopal Church and was active in Risdon civic affairs, serving at different times as mayor, president
of the board of education, and postmaster. His and Ann’s first child, Robert Francis (named after
Robert’s great-grandfather) died in 1842 in infancy. Their second child, Emma, married an associate in
his practice, Dr. George. L. Hoege, but then died young, in 1873. Ann (or Anna) herself died in 1869. In
1871, he married a second time, to Mary Elizabeth Barber of Medina County, Ohio, Robert’s
grandmother (died 1914). They had two children, Ralph C. Caples, Robert’s uncle, and Robert’s father
Dr. Byron H. Caples. Information in text and above from Michael A. Leeson, ed.(1886), History of
Seneca County, Ohio, Chicago: Warner, Beers & Co., 892; “Death of Dr. Caples,” Fostoria Review,
genealogy, Kaubisch Memorial Public Library, Fostoria, Ohio; Penny Justice, conversation, Apr., 2012.
Following Dr. Robert Caples’ death his wife Mary Elizabeth remarried to a Reverend Selah Brown.
The Caples boys John and Robert knew her as Grandma Brown (John Caples, n.d., holograph notes
51  strict and silent  : John Caples Diary, Feb. 18, 1951.
51  Walter’s father  : Benson, Ox-Bow Man, 2.
51  Walter Senior’s father  : Benson, Ox-Bow Man, 2.
51  died in 1955  : Byron H. Caples, Certificate of Death, Nevada State Department of Health Division,
Division of Vital Statistics, Oct. 6, 1955; “Dr. Byron H. Caples Dies After Long Medical Career;
51  doting sweethearts  : John Caples, n.d., probably 1930s, untitled holograph beginning “My mother lived
with her mother,” John Caples Papers.
51  in restaurants  : John Caples Diary, Jul. 9, 1942, citing Ralph Caples.
51  Byron’s infidelities  : John Caples Diary, May 21, 1930.
51  Oberlin College  : John Caples, partial typescript copy of Byron Caples’ 1949 “Honorary Life
Membership in the American Social Hygiene Association” award, John Caples Papers. Included is a
charcoal portrait head of Byron by Robert, 1930s.
51  born in 1900  : “The young doctor lost his nerve and ran from the delivery room crying out ‘I never lost a
cause before’. Father got an older doctor who got me born. Mother said my birth was slow and painful
because my head was large” (John Caples diary, Aug. 16, 1979; see also ibid, Jun. 14, 1976).
Mrs. Byron H. Caples as Treasurer of the Women’s Graduate Club of Columbia University. Walter
Notes, *The Nevada They Knew*, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 52–54  •  Indexed Notes n47–n51

padded Edith’s credentials, making her “a literary scholar and a teacher at Columbia University” (“On Learning to Look,” 1).

**n47  52 birth certificate**: State of New York Certificate and Record of Birth of Richard Caples. Date of birth: May 1, 1900. Date of report: May 3, 1900. Everything is in good order on Robert’s certificate, where he is said to be Edith’s second child (State of New York Certificate and Record of Birth of Robert Cole Caples. Date of birth: Nov. 26, 1908. Date of report: Dec. 1, 1908).

John’s name is another minor mystery. Most members of the family called him ‘Richard” or “Dick” (Byron H. Caples, telegram to Edith Caples, Nov. 13, 1925 and letter to Richard Caples, Sep. 4, 1930, John Caples Papers; John Caples Diary, Jan. 27 and Apr. 2, 1928, and Mar. 13, 1963). Robert addressed letters to “John” (Caples, letter to John Caples, n.d., 1924, John Caples Papers), and that is how the world knew him. Both his biography and his grandmother’s will gave him the middle name “Richards” (Jessie Richard, Last Will and Testament, filed in Fostoria, Ohio, Jul. 27, 1922). John himself was in the dark about it: “This confusion of names is something my parents started back in 1900 and I have never been able to correct it. They called me by my middle name, Richard. But when I went to college and into business, my associates quite naturally called me by my first name, John” (John Caples diary, Jun. 21, 1963). Yet the name on the birth certificate, which John had seen, is unequivocally just “Richard,” no “John.”

**n48  53 apartment she found inadequate**: John Caples, Jul. 18, 1933, untitled typescript about “giving up the old house,” John Caples Papers. The apartment was east of Broadway and across from where the Jewish Theological Seminary was later built. In a brief memoir son John later recreated Edith’s expressions on the subject of the apartment (n.d., probably 1933, “Moving Day,” John Caples Papers):

“Think of it! Fourteen years in this city and still living in a dirty little flat. I’m sick and tired of it.”

“Dr. Beck said that we live like gypsies. And he is right. We are just camping in that flat. It isn’t a home. It’s just a hole in the wall. Your father has taken the only decent room for his office. And the next best room is the waiting room for the patients. And all day long there’s a lot of dirty patients tramping up and down our hall as if it were a public road. We are just camping by the side of the road, like a troop of gypsies.”


**53 meeting of the two boys**: Clark, *City*, ch. 6.


**53 garden of corn**: Photo, 1940, John Caples Papers.

**53 “I remember once”**: John Caples Diary, Nov. 14, 1944.

**53 “charity patients”**: White, *ADMAN*, 117.

**54 public school**: John Caples, n.d., untitled typescript, “I have a very deep affection for my Father,” John Caples Papers.

**54 Edith rented out rooms**: John Caples, Jul. 18, 1933, untitled typescript about “giving up the old house,” John Caples Papers.

**n50  54 Byron’s indifference to money**: John Caples, n.d., probably 1933, “Moving Day,” John Caples Papers. Said Edith in John’s reconstruction: “That two thousand dollars that your grandmother left your father will be gone if we don’t invest it soon. You know how your father is with money. . . . Your father has the best of intentions but he is not a business man. . . . If we delay, the money will be spent, a little here and a little there.”

It’s hard to credit something else Edith told John, that at times the couple was too poor for proper food and had to leave the children with grandparents in Fostoria (John Caples, n.d., holograph notes beginning “Grandma Brown” filed with 1955 diary pages, J Caples Papers).

**n51  54 Mabel**: John Caples Diary, Jan. 10, 1934. John married Mabel Venonica Watson on June 12, 1931, the summer after Edith’s death (ibid., Jun. 12, 1941). She died in 1956. She had instructed John not to tell her family, Mr. & Mrs. James Alexander Watson, if anything should happen to her. “She left her family back in the 1920s and never introduced me to any of her relatives” (ibid., Dec. 9, 1965).
Sources

n52  Caples Street: Caples Street dead-ends at the diagonal Sandusky Street, the street on which Byron Caples grew up (John Caples, n.d., probably 1930s, untitled holograph beginning “My mother lived with her mother,” John Caples Papers). Sandusky becomes Fostoria-Fremont Road (different from Fremont Street inside Fostoria) going to the town of Fremont twenty-five miles northeast.

At least sixteen states have cities or counties named after Frémont, Ohio being one of the first. The fashion started in Indiana, where a place renamed itself Fremont in 1848. That was well before the colorful self-promoter Frémont became the Republican Party’s first candidate for President, in 1856. Risdon/Rome in Ohio followed suit in 1849, along with locales in Illinois and Wisconsin the same year.

n53  the friends camped onshore: Clark, City, ch. 39. I can document four occasions when Robert and Walter were together at Pyramid Lake. (1) The swim to Anaho Island, in the early 1930s. (2) In 1932, Robert, Virginia and Walter took part in a barbecue at the “Pinnacles” (the Needles) followed by sightseeing, hosted by the Desert Inn (“Barbecue Held at Pyramid Pinnacles,” NSJ, May 13, 1932, 2). (3) Either Walter or Robert, but I believe it was Walter, told me of a time, I surmise in the 1930s, when the two were camping on the east shore of Pyramid. When they woke in the morning, they found an arrow stuck in the ham they’d left out on a cutting board. They took the hint and left. Benson (Ox-Bow Man, 279–80) offers a slightly different version of the story, minus the ham, told to him by Jim Elder. On that two week camp in City, they brought a Virginia ham (Clark, City, 442). (4) With their wives, the two made a valedictory drive to Pyramid, on a day of bad weather and both of them ill, the late spring before Walter’s death on November 10, 1971 (Clark, letters to Caples, May 13 and Jun. 14, 1971, Clark-UNR).

n54  Robert’s Uncle Ralph C. Caples: The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography (1939), James T. White & Co., 573–74; “The Caples House: When Grandeur Was In Style,” Marjorie Fritz, Sarasota Herald Tribune, Mar. 15, 1981, 1-E, 5-E. As an 1898 Princeton graduate and newlywed, Robert’s Uncle Ralph began working his way up office positions at the New York Central Railroad, then at a small Maryland railroad, and then at Willys-Overland the Toledo auto company, until in 1918 he parlayed his expertise by becoming president of an advertising firm in Chicago specializing in transportation and travel. He reorganized the agency as The Caples Co., with branches in New York, Los Angeles and Omaha. Ralph first visited Sarasota, Florida in 1899, when to reach the “remote fishing village” was a four hour trip over muddy roads through swampland. This may have been his honeymoon with Ellen Fletcher Caples, later “considered Sarasota’s First Lady because of her active support of the arts, music, theater and education.” The lavish home which the wealthy, childless couple built there in 1930 as a winter residence was bequeathed by Ellen to New College, later absorbed by the University of South Florida as the Caples Campus for the Arts and Environmental Studies. Ralph died in 1949, Ellen in 1971, at age 98.

In 1976, John Caples “told Robert of the incident when Ralph accidentally shot and killed a girl playmate – how Ralph had a bad name in Fostoria after that – but how he came back later in his own private railroad car to take his mother south” (John Caples Diary, Nov. 26, 1976). So Ralph was a sure-enough “tycoon,” as Walton described him, but not president of a railroad as Walton mistakenly believed (Tape #76, Walton Papers). Robert didn’t care for Ralph, who embarrassed him by shouting at waiters and busboys (John Caples Diary, Jul. 24, 1942).

n55  strongman Thomas Cooke: William L. Slout (2002), Chilly Billy: The Evolution of a Circus Millionaire, Emeritus Enterprise, 13. An entry on ancestry.co.uk mistakenly identifies Thomas Cooke, the founder of the circus lineage, as a baronet, Sir Thomas Cooke of Holkham Hall, Norfolk. However, Holkham Hall is one of the great country estates of England, built for the Earl (not baronet) of Leicester, Thomas Coke (not Cooke).

Thomas Taplin Cooke fathered possibly nineteen children, many of whom created affiliations-by-marriage with circuses in other countries. The company of 130 performers he brought to America included 40 family members. He was an equestrian and tightrope walker, besides being another strongman. He would lie with his chest supporting ten men standing on a platform, the “Tomb of Hercules feat.”


56  **William Washington Cole**: W. W. Cole was an expert and innovative manager, promoter, and advertiser. He took his circus to Australia and New Zealand as well as all across North America. He was never a performer in the usual sense. Early on he did serve as “ringmaster,” and later he would sometimes occupy the lead vehicle in the parade through town, a passive part of the performance. He abhorred personal publicity. Reportedly he would fire any employee who identified him to a member of the public. Long a bachelor, when Cole finally married, it was to a woman outside the circus world who persuaded him to retire on the fortune he’d made from the circus and his investments. In 1885, while in retirement, he bought out Bailey’s interest in the Barnum, Bailey and Hutchinson Show, when P. T. Barnum (who had formed his first circus in 1871, the same year as W. W. Cole did his) more or less forced old Bailey out. He was a manager and part-owner there until the Ringling Brothers absorbed Barnum & Bailey. Cole was consciously proud of his circus heritage, and at different time employed many members of the large clan of circus Cookes. Also his step-father Miles Orton and Miles’s second wife worked for him as circus riders. (Slout, *Chilly Billy*, I, 3, 73, 75, 86–89, 173, 249; May, *The Circus*, 178–79, 268–69.)

56  **between marriages**: Jessie was born the same year or soon after Mary Ann and William Cole separated in 1851.

56  **the facts of Jessie’s birth**: On Jessie Richards’ State of Ohio Department of Health Certificate of Death, Nov. 19, 1924, Robert’s brother John served as informant. Jessie’s daughter Edith, John’s and Robert’s mother, was also with Jessie at the hospital in Toledo when she died on November 18, and so probably were one or both of Jessie’s other two children, William and Edna, then residing in nearby Fostoria. The certificate gives as unknown the names of Jessie’s father and mother. Apparently John didn’t know their names.

A clue to Jessie’s parentage is in her Last Will and Testament, filed in Fostoria, Ohio on July 27, 1922, where Jessie made a bequest to a sister, Catherine Weller, wife of William Weller, of Chicago. According to the 1930 US Census (www.ancestry.com), a Catherine Weller married to William F. Weller was living in Chicago. This Catherine was born in Iowa, and so was Jessie, near Dubuque according to her obituary (“Mrs. Jesse Richards Died This Morning,” *Fostoria Daily Review*, Nov. 18, 1924). Catherine’s parents were both Irish. A Cook County death certificate from later that year for a Catherine Weller (www.ancestry.com) gives her father’s name as John Finn, an Irish name. In the 1930 census, the year of Catherine Weller’s birth was guessed to be about 1861, because on April 14, the date of the census, she was 69. May 8, 1860 was the birth date of the Catherine Weller who died in Chicago on November 9, 1930. If May 8 was the birth date of the Catherine of the census, she would actually have been born in 1860 as well, in order to have been 69 on the date of the census. So the dates from the census and the death certificate are in concordance, and thus Jessie’s father and mother were probably Irishman John Finn and his Irish wife.

Jessie’s name first emerges in circus documents as Jessie Orton, “apprentice Miss Jessie” of the Orton “family.” Here is one source of confusion, for Miles Orton was accustomed to bestowing the family name on some of his unrelated apprentices. But no histories I’ve consulted connect Miles to Jessie as her adoptive father, only to Mary Ann as her adoptive mother.

56  **all-girl orchestra**: Robert’s grandmother Jessie has the distinction of being “the first female leader in the world to organize a complete girls orchestra” (“Richards played both at home and far away,” Paul Krupp, *Review Times* [Fostoria], Apr. 11, 1985. See also Slout, *Olympians*; Slout, *Chilly Billy*, 9, 104, 111, 122; May, *The Circus*, 178). I imagine the orchestra was a vaudeville act created after her husband went into the theater business in Brooklyn. Both Jessie and Al had remained with Chilly Billy’s circus until 1886, when Chilly disbanded and then assumed a top position at Barnum & Bailey. Jessie and Al resided at different time in Fostoria and in Brooklyn, where Al had his theaters. Their daughter Edna, Edith’s younger sister, was born in Brooklyn. So Edith presumably lived there sometimes as well.

56  **Edith Richards**: Slout, *Olympians*. 
Notes, *The Nevada They Knew*, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 57–58  •  Indexed Notes n60–n64

**n60**  57 **After Al’s death**: In 1892, Albert had been testifying under cross-examination for over three hours in his own defense in a civil breach of contract case brought by an orchestra leader when he came off the stand and collapsed from stroke; he died shortly later (Colin C. Kelley, letter to Kaubish Memorial Library, Fostoria, Ohio, May 3, 1978, enclosing an unidentified newspaper clipping; “Former Resident Dies in The West,” *Fostoria Daily Review*, May 19, 1930, 1, 4; “Mrs. Jesse Richards Died This Morning.” *Fostoria Daily Review*, Nov. 18, 1924).

Jessie and her son Will, Edith’s younger brother, were both back living in Fostoria in 1915 when Jessie’s brother W. W. Cole, Chilly Billy, died in New York, leaving to Jessie and Will “at least $1,000,000” of his $5,000,000 plus fortune (“1,000,000 Bequeathed to Fostorians.” *Fostoria Daily Review*, Mar. 22, 1915, 1). The 5 million dollar fortune W. W. Cole left from his circus, hippodrome, and managerie, and his share in Barnum & Bailey, does not include his New York real estate holdings (Slout, *Chilly Billy*, I, 2). Jessie’s total assets were down to about $140,000 in 1924, when she died in a Toledo hospital.

**n61**  57 **Babs’s reaction**: Barbara Clark Salmon, phone conversation, Jul. 7, 2012.

**n62**  57 **no trace of any of this**: Walter might well have alluded to it when in the course of editing the Alf Doten journals he learned that in the summer of 1884, in Robert’s haunt Austin, posters for Cole’s Circus “delighted” the local Paiutes. The show was disappointing, because the circus hadn’t been able to transport its “major attractions over the narrow-gage railroad from Battle Mountain” (Clark, *Doten*, 1530).

W. W. Cole first took his circus to the West Coast by rail in 1873 (Slout, *Chilly Billy*, 86–89). En route they performed for Brigham Young in Salt Lake City, next somewhere in Nevada. That was of course before Robert and Walter’s time. Robert and Walter must not have discussed the Cole circus’s Reno engagement in 1917 (“Cole Bros.’ Circus Is Coming To Reno.” *NSJ*, Apr. 9, 1917, 6), which eight-year-old Walter may well have seen – recall that Tim Hazard in his boyhood took in circuses at the race track across from the Hazard home (Clark, *City*, 9). But I wonder if Robert at least made the connection with his family when the Cole circus was in Reno in 1929 (“Animals to Feature Big Circus in Reno,” *NSJ*, Sep. 8, 1929, 2). An inquiry to Rosemary Brittain, Robert’s step-daughter from his last and longest marriage, sparked a memory of something, but nothing specific (R Caples Jr, interview, Jul. 8, 2012).

**n63**  57 **Edith’s brother Will**: Just days before his death Robert told his brother John something he didn’t know, that their Uncle Will Richards, Edith’s brother, “used to go to [the] Players Club” – one of John’s clubs, along with the University, the Century and the Dutch Treat – “when he was financing shows” (John Caples Diary, Nov. 8, 1979). As late as 1918, Will was promoting his “United States Million Dollar Motorized Circus.” Also a musician and band leader, Will occasionally sat in with the band of his sons Jimmy and Bill Richards (“Richards were very well-known musicians,” Paul Krupp, *Review Times* [Fostoria], Mar. 28, 1985).

**n64**  57 **circus stories**: John Caples Diary, Apr. 2, 1945 and Aug. 30, 1970. Jessie told John that the circus traveled west each year in covered wagons until Indian arrows began to fall in their camp, then they turned around. She was in love with a daring young trainer of horses; he rode boldly out toward the Indian ambush one day, to show he wasn’t afraid. A flight of arrows fell. The young man died, said Jessie moist-eyed, with eighteen poisoned arrows in his body. So she married Al Richards, by then an Indian ambush one day, to show he wasn’t afraid. A flight of arrows fell. The young man died, said Jessie.

Jessie’s reaction is probably 1930s, untitled holograph beginning “My mother lived with her mother,” John Caples Papers).

**n65**  57 **a telegram**: Caples, telegram to Edith Caples, Nov. 18, 1924, John Caples Papers; Byron H. Caples, telegram to Edith Caples, Nov. 16, 1924, John Caples Papers.

**n66**  58 **Powell and Pressberger**: *A Canterbury Tale* (1944), with Sgt. John Sweet, USO.

**n67**  58 **Mouse Series**: Bob Clark holds *Let Heaven and Nature Sing* and another in the series, *Mice in the Morning*. Two drawings (titles?), each 3 x 5 inches, are held in Houghton-UNR. Samuel G. & Edda Houghton also owned the following from the Mouse Series, which cannot be located: *3 Mice Talking; Ancient Mouse in Rocking Chair; Ancient Mouse with Cane; Mouse With & Without Coat hanger; Mouse on Tightrope; Mouse Scolded by Another; Mouse in Nightshirt; Mouse with Psychiatrist; Mouse King; Mouse King with Young Female Mouse Approaching; Mouse-Birth; Musical Mouse; Samson & Delilah, Act II; Schizophrenic Mouse; The Presentation; The Listener; and Vain Mouse*. Not on this list.
Notes, The Nevada They Knew, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 59–61 • Indexed Notes n65–n70


At the university Scott had been assigned John’s “classic” Tested Advertising Methods, written when John was only 32.

n66 59 halls of fame: In 1973, John was elected into the Copywriters Hall of Fame, in 1977, the Advertising Hall of Fame (inducted with George Gallup), and in 1982, the Direct Marketing Hall of Fame.


60 discussed Robert’s future: John Caples diary, May 24, 1930 (see also May 21, 26 and 29, 1930).

60 he once conceded: John Caples Diary, Jun. 8, 1929.

60 In his seventies: John Caples Diary, Jul. 6, 1972. John speculated that his younger brother “would have done well,” say, at an arts publisher, were it not that “Business and industry seemed to be a frightening mystery” to Robert. He had once compared Robert’s esthetic ambitions to a Reno lawyer becoming expert in marine law (ibid., Jul. 18, 1928).

60 commercial and fine art: John Caples Diary, May 29, 1930.


60 Edith had once dreamed: Ibid., Mar. 6, 1930.

n68 60 In high school he developed: John Caples, n.d., untitled typescript, “I have a very deep affection for my Father,” John Caples Papers. John himself offered no explanation for his transfer from prestigious Horace Mann middle school to the public system for high school when he wrote: “Father wanted me to go to a private school. . . . He said that in going past public school doorways he had often noticed a bad odor – the odor of hundreds of sweaty, not-too-clean children. He liked Horace Mann School. He liked the clean, modern classrooms, the potted ferns, the fine pictures on the walls, the high-bred teachers, the well-dressed children who came to school in automobiles with their governesses.” John conceded that his class standing slid even before leaving Horace Mann. “There were the times mother took me out of school for trips to Fostoria. She always said, ‘You can catch up.’ I never did” (John Caples Diary, Feb. 27, 1963).

60 Columbia: White, ADMAN, 20.

n69 60 reached Annapolis: Loren Granville (1990), “The John Caples Story: How a 12-year-old loner became an advertising legend,” Direct Marketing, 62, 64; White, ADMAN, 20, 22–24, 78–79; John Caples, n.d., untitled typescript, “I have a very deep affection for my Father,” John Caples Papers. At the Naval Academy he completed his public speaking assignment so high on gin that he couldn’t remember it afterward (White, ADMAN, 21–22). During WW II John returned to the Navy where he applied his skills to recruitment. He left service a Commander (= Lt. Colonel).

The one poem I came across in the John Caples Papers – “A poem I wrote about 1932, not accepted by magazine” – is a clever enough piece of doggerel, “The Two-Gun Man.” Its eighteen stanzas begin:

| It happened out in Montana, |
| Where they dig for silver and gold, |
| That a tough galoot became Sheriff of Butte |
| In the hardboiled days of old. |

n70 60 “Wouldn’t it be wonderful”: John Caples Diary, Oct. 7, 1951 and Dec. 12, 1951. John thought Robert “more social.” From boyhood, John was in awe of authority. He wasn’t the sort either to rebel or to reach the top. He would retire as BBDO’s oldest vice-president.

61 underlying psychology: White, ADMAN, 33.

61 showed his mother: Ibid., 35.

61 “illusion”: Ibid., 130.

61 “He has learned”: Ibid., 117.
Notes to Pages 61–63

61 several major charities: Ibid., 133.
61 “of service”: Ibid., e.g., Jan. 19, 1963.

n71 61 editors he knew at Harper: John Caples Diary, Nov. 7, 1963. Ordway Tead and Richard McAdoo didn’t think the novel would sell. Ironically, John did become a “famous writer” (White, ADMAN, 101–2). In the 1960s and 1970s the so-called Famous Writers School offered a correspondence course for would-be writers. It was direct marketing of the type John had perfected. The “guiding faculty,” who happened also to be stockholders, comprised such stars from various areas as Bennett Cerf, Bruce Catton, Max Shulman, Red Smith, Rod Serling, and copywriter John Caples. The stars provided their names and faces only. “Some people thought that the picture and advertisement implied that students might have contact with these very writers,” reported John’s biographer. “This was questioned by some as fraudulent.” John no doubt rationalized the presentation as a matter of constructive illusion.

n72 62 A man of rules: As is apparent from numerous entries in the John Caples Diary (e.g., Jun. 7, 1955 and May 20, 1963), throughout his life John sought explicit rules or formulas to live by. It was something he noticed about himself. “I’m interested in formulas. Here’s one: Action leads to more action” (ibid., May 15, 1956). He was attracted to folk sayings and platitudes. Here as elsewhere, John had a divided consciousness. He could amuse himself “making up a revised set of commandments which are more in tune with human nature. For example, Thou shalt not steal from people who keep watchdogs” (ibid., Feb. 27, 1944). But when in the diaries he prayed, he actually prayed to be given rules.


n74 63 His parents’ marriage: John Caples diary, Aug. 16, 1979. Closer to the event (ibid., Aug. 30, 1929) John placed the beginning of the affair between Byron and Mrs. Noland in his eighth year.

63 Mrs. Noland: John Caples Diary, Sep. 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7, 1929.


n75 63 downtown apartment: Caples, letter to Joanne, Apr. 24, 1974, de-L-UNR. The Manhattan City Directories for 1920–21 and for 1922–23 still have listings for Byron at the family home. The former also lists a “Capes B H Capt” with a residence at 18 Gramercy Park. Byron spent one year as an Army doctor with a rank of captain beginning just before the end of World War I.

n76 63 or more probably 1923: “Dr. Byron H. Caples Dies After Long Medical Career; Private Funeral is Planned,” NSJ, Oct. 8, 1955, 2. In 1963 (John Caples diary, Nov. 29), John gave Robert for his birthday an album of old photos of their natal family he’d had copied. “We laughed at the photo of father looking serious and sitting on the running board of a 1916 Buick. I said: ‘He is planning to leave town.’ Robert said: ‘He is wondering if he can make it to Reno in that car.’”

Notes to Pages 63–67 • Indexed Notes n77–n82

63 **She died of uterine cancer** : Nevada State Board of Health Death Certificate for Edith Jessie Caples, May 16, 1930.
63 **unable to breastfeed** : Ibid.

77 64 **A private nurse** : Ibid. “One day an iron scale with a basket on top of it was placed near the baby’s crib. ‘We are going to weigh Robert every day,’ said the nurse. Thus I learned his name.” The crib was in Edith’s separate bedroom.
64 **Robert was Byron’s favorite** : John Caples diary, Mar. 6, 1930.

78 64 **Robert “said ‘Papa’”** : John Caples, n.d., “Robert’s First Words,” typescript, John Caples Papers. If John’s recollection is accurate, that Robert was already two at the time and these really were his first words, then Robert was behind schedule for age-appropriate speech. That his first words came out as a sentence sorts with Robert’s remarkable and idiosyncratic verbal aptitude.

79 64 **Edith gave affection** : John Caples Diary, Mar. 6, 1930. John wrote that his mother told him “all sorts of interesting and sometimes intimate things. She talked to me as if I were a grown up and this flattered me.”

Suggestions of the effects of Edith’s mothering on Robert come from the year of his death. In 1979, Joanne de Longchamps sent him a big heart for Valentine’s Day. He answered with a memory of his mother from age five (letter to Joanne, J-de L-UNR): “Now, as I race into age, my thoughts drift back to earliest days – they said it would happen – and my memories of paper hearts [are] very clear. I used to cut them out of Dennison red and throw them out of my top floor window, watching them as they circled and swooped on their way down to the street, four floors beneath. Some would sail past my mother’s window immediately beneath. I think she never saw them – though prompted, she would smile, pat my five-year head, and say, ‘Of course!’ I wasn’t much taken in by ‘of course’ – even in those days.”

80 64 **“When Robert Was Three”** : John Caples, “When Robert Was Three,” holograph, n.d., John Caples Papers (ellipses and rearrangements not indicated, punctuation modified). John wrote that he was eleven at the time. That would make Robert three or a little less. Three is old for a high-chair.

65 **“colored maid”** : John Caples Diary, Sep. 6, 1929.

81 67 **earliest artwork** : Mentioned in Miriam Chism, copy of plans for the 1972 “Retrospective Exhibit of works of Robert Cole Caples” (Caples Archive) is a work described as “Early portrait of little girl, done when Caples was sixteen, 1924.” I own a Caples pencil drawing of an old woman in a cap, dated 1927. See also Our Tree of 1927.

Listed below – here only because the Caples Archive has been mentioned, not because they are early – are Caples artworks which exist as photo reproductions, in many cases snapshots, in the Caples Archive, and which are mentioned nowhere else in the text or endnotes. It is possible that some items in the following list duplicate works mentioned elsewhere. Items not italicized are my descriptions. *A.R. of New York, #1* (date unknown); *A.R. of New York, #2* (date unknown); *Apple Blossoms* (date unknown); *Desert Image* (date unknown); *Early Spring* (date unknown); *Early Town* (date unknown); *Evening Tree* (date unknown); *grasses* (date unknown); *houses* (date unknown); *houses and mountains* (date unknown); *houses with false fronts* (date unknown); *Morning Hills* (date unknown); *mountains, calligraphic* (date unknown, probably mid-1950s); *mountains, distant, under cumulus clouds* (date unknown); *mountains with dunes in foreground* (date unknown); *old timer with jenny, date unknown; still life with bottles, date unknown; street light, date unknown; sun rays through clouds, date unknown, probably 1953 or before; *Susan Holland* (date unknown); *Transparent Night* (date unknown, mid-1950s); and *tree and moon, date unknown*.

67 **It was Edith** : Caples, “Nevada Indian Art.” The interview was recorded for later broadcast.
67 **unique radio interview** : “Nevada Indian Art,” fifteen minute radio interview of Robert Cole Caples by George Herman, probably taped in October, 1975, for broadcast in 1976 in the series “Nevada: One of Fifty,” 97-02/#14, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Reno.

82 68 **department’s contribution** : The venue for the 1964 retrospective was the Church Fine Arts Building on campus, designed by famed architect Richard Neutra, opened in 1960. Sheppard had written to Caples
Notes to Pages 68–72

and received his consent and pledge of cooperation in 1963.

68 To be aware: Questionnaire, 6.


n83 69 making it more decisive: “On Learning to Look.” Besides other edits of Robert’s language, none of them really necessary, he changed “looked differently at things” to the loaded “looked differently at things.”


69 undemonstrative: Ibid.


69 “Drawing from the Antique”: Quotes in this paragraph from “On Learning to Look,” 2.


70 “possessed”: Quotes in this paragraph from “On Learning to Look,” 2.

70 “clumsy and inadequate”: Caples, letter to Edda Houghton, Mar. 29, 1978, Houghton-UNR.

n84 71 “Poor Bo”: John Caples Diary, Nov. 21, 1928. And “Gosh, I remember Robert’s coughing. Every spring he would ‘tune up’ as we used to say” (ibid., Apr. 13, 1928).

n85 71 tuberculosis: John Caples Diary, Nov. 21, 1928. He may have been on the “verge of” tuberculosis, if that’s a medically legitimate thing to say (Edda Houghton, hand- and typewritten notes on talk by Miriam Chism for docents for the 1972 Caples retrospective exhibition, Houghton-UNR).

n86 71 truth Walter already possessed: “On Learning to Look,” 2. Robert gave Rosemary to understand that his health figured in his parents’ decision (Benson, transcript of phone interview of Rosemary Caples, Aug. 9, 2000, 2).

n87 71 canoeing with John: John Caples Diary, Jan. 25, 1928 and Mar. 28, 1929. A friend of John’s, Harold Wacker, was with them (John Caples Diary, Jun. 6, 1963).

n88 71 “Society” column reported: “Society” item, NSI, Sep. 12, 1924, 4. Robert is mistakenly supposed to have come to Reno first at age sixteen in all publications to date, including my own first publication about him (Shafton (2014), “Robert Caples: Teaching us to see Nevada,” in Geoff Schumacher, ed., Nevada: 150 Years in the Silver State, Stephens Press, 199–96). Robert was still in New York when his grandmother Jessie died in Toledo on November 18 (Caples, telegram to Edith Caples, Nov. 18, 1924, John Caples Papers). If he did reach sixteen before his permanent relocation, then the second journey west came after his November 26 birthday but before the end of 1924.

n89 71 Dwight: At that time the Dwight School was located at 72 Park Avenue. Edith gave 349 W. 121st Street as Robert’s permanent home address (Dwight School application for Robert Cole Caples submitted by Mrs. Byron H. Caples, Sep. 26, 1924, John Caples Papers).

n90 71 “awestruck”: Caples, the writer,” Velda Morby, RGJ, Feb. 17, 1980. In another context Robert did generalize that he was “simply awestruck at this vast wilderness as it was then” (Linda Hale (1976), “A sense of place,” Nevada Magazine 4).

n91 71 Mullen Pass: Mullen Pass is named for a cattleman who squatted on land there in the 1860s (Mergen, At Pyramid Lake, 97).


72 Walter’s daughter Babs: Barbara Clark Salmon, interview, Jul. 12, 2012.


n92 72 eleventh grade: At the Reno High alumni website (www.renohighalum.com), Robert’s name doesn’t appear as a member of any feasible class, 1925, -26 or -27. His separation papers from the Navy indicate that he finished three years of high school, while his application for enlistment has his last year completed as only “2nd.”

72 summer session courses: Heather Turk-Fiecoat, personal communication, Jul., 2012.

72 “unfailing manner”: Clark, City, 343.

72 “so polite”: Clark, letter to Barbara Clark, Aug. 9, 1937, Clark-UNR.

72 Walter admiringly described: Clark, City, 143–44.

n93 72 Byron’s house at 241 Ridge Street: Information about residence and office addresses comes chiefly from Reno telephone directories and Polk’s City Directory for Reno. Already by early 1923 Byron was prominent enough for his purchase of a house to be a news item (“Dr. B. H. Caples Buys Knowles Residence,” REG, Feb. 5, 1923, 8.). In 1923, Byron lived at 118 Island Avenue, on the south bank of
the Truckee River a little east of the island of Wingfield Park. In 1924, he was at 546 Virginia, just south of California Avenue, then in 1925, at 241 Ridge Street. Walton (Tape #16, Walton Papers) fondly described that house as he knew it in the mid to late 1930s: “We had many wonderful afternoons on Dr. Caples’ lawn over on Ridge Street, where he had the two-story house, which was a gracious place. Those were the years that he was married to Hazel Caples. In the living room there, Dr. Caples had the chess set. It was a very moody place, in the rich kind of English manor way. . . . And the great old piano. . . . And Dr. Caples used to like to play certain simple nostalgic songs there.”

72 “amazing recall”: Caples, letter to Robbins, Mar. 28, 1979, Emily Robbins.
72 gas tycoon: REG, May 13, 1932, 2.
72

74 two thousand acres: REG, Sep. 29, 1924, 8. The present owner of the painting, Mary Gray (interview, Nov. 5, 2014), says she was told by her husband, lawyer/journalist Les Gray, that the portrait was of the son of the first lavender farmer in Washoe Valley, whose name she didn’t know, and that the boy was killed in World War II. Ralph Elsman, Jr. did serve as a very young man in that war, but was killed at age 26 in the Korean War (REG, Apr. 16, 1951, 11). A photo of him as a boy in an article about his parents’ child custody case resembles the boy in the Caples portrait (REG, Dec. 4, 1930, 1, 8). I can’t say whether Elsman, Sr. ever grew lavender on his large acreage. The family was Jewish, to go by the menorah in the portrait.

Decades later when Les Gray told Robert that he’d rescued the work from the clearing out of the Elsman Washoe Valley home, Robert asked for a chance to rework it, but on Walter’s sound advice, Gray refused.
72 “Reno boy”: NSJ, Apr. 2, 1927, 8.
73 The “Society” column marked: “Society” item, REG, May 14, 1927, 4.
73 Panama Canal: John Caples Diary, Jan. 26, 1928.
73 back to New York: John Caples Diary, Jan. 14, 1929.
73 Fletcher: Fletcher was a printmaker as well as painter. Robert described him as “a cool Englishman, so academic that he found almost everything ‘incomprehensible’” (Questionnaire).
73 “best break ever”: Questionnaire, 5.
74 keeping track of Robert: “A & A,” REG, Oct. 1, 1938, 10 and Nov. 12, 1938, 8. Borghi, who reported on Walton as well as Caples, misspelled the teacher’s name as ‘Taubus’ and made him Austrian instead of Polish; he did study in Austria. Taubes wrote The Mastery of Oil Painting and a dozen other how-to books on art. The item appeared on the occasion of a visit to Reno by Robert.
74 just one week: Walton, Tape #18, Walton Papers. Walton, who misdated the seminar to 1937, said of it: “He [Robert] said that he and Shirley had arranged to have Taubes with them in Santa Barbara, and to give them a special seminar. And Bob said he saw no reason why I shouldn’t join in on the seminar. And that it might be uncommonly helpful in my struggle with the oil medium. . . . Bob and Shirley would sponsor all expenses, and I’d be a guest in their home. . . . I was gone for a week.”
74 teachers and mentors: “On Learning to Look,” 5; Questionnaire. Robert misremembered Haytor’s name as William Stanley Haytor, but valued the instruction received from him in etching technique. Another was William Gaskin, whose “oriental simplicity and suggestion,” as Walter put it, made an impression on Robert.
74 California School of Fine Arts: Questionnaire. Robert called it the San Francisco School of Fine Arts.
That was a common misnomer. The institution’s name changed to the San Francisco Art Institute in 1961.

74 **Art Students League** : Stephanie Cassidy, email, Jun. 15, 2015; “On Learning to Look.”


75 **“teach me how to think”** : Denny Lake, phone conversation, Jul. 19, 2012.

75 **Yet Robert insisted** : This is in Robert’s late letters, but I’ve lost the citation.

75 **copious notes** : Caples, n.d., work notes, Clark-UNR (some punctuation added). See also Caples, 1958 and n.d., notes on procedures and experimental protocols, Caples Archive.


76 **Sara Frantz** : Email, Jan. 5, 2012.

77 **to Ken Robbins** : Caples, letter to Robbins, Jun. 20, 1979, Emily Robbins.

77 **small, well-provided bookcase** : Only one title is legible: *The Stag at Eve*, Henry C. Wilkinson, 1931.

78 **“pocket copy of Buddha”** : Clark, *City*, 435 (italics omitted).


79 **Ursa Major** : Caples, letter to Galen and Joanne, Mar. 14, 1975, de-L-UNR. About two months earlier he’d written to Joanne about this interest (Jan. 24, 1975, de-L-UNR), declared he shouldn’t bore her with it, but was apparently helpless. He wrote: “I got to digging around and (as usually happens) came up with a lot more than anyone could possibly want to hear. You know how it can be with easily worked-up people, they get hold of something, worry it to death, and then want to share the kill, bone by tiresome bone, with innocent friends. I’ll try not to do that to you.” But he did.


79 **a principle different from** : John at one time seemed to recognize this, when himself fifty years younger, he reflected on nineteen-year-old Robert’s letters from Reno: “Robert’s letters are always packed with interest. Again and again they sparkle with real cleverness” (ibid., Jan. 26, 1928).

79 **Santa Barbara** : Caples, letter to Joanne, Sep. 11, 1976, de-L-UNR.

80 **Re-Wa-Ne** : Clark’s copy of Re-Wa-Ne, Yearbook of Reno High School, 1926, Clark-UNR.

81 **through their fathers** : Benson, transcript of phone interview of R Caples Sr, Aug. 9, 2000, 2. Babs assumes that is how they met (Barbara Clark Salmon, interview, Jul. 12, 2012). Walter’s sister Miriam Chism (Babs’s aunt), prepping docents for a Caples retrospective in 1972, innocently exaggerated, I would say, when she told them that Walter and Robert were “close friends” since 1925 (Edda Houghton, hand- and typewritten notes on talk by Miriam Chism for docents for the 1972 Caples retrospective exhibition, Houghton-UNR). The notes say, “Walter & Robert close friends since Miriam was 10.” Miriam was born in 1915.


81 **school away somewhere** : Clark, *City*, 147.


81 **“Harolds Club or Bust”** : A reliable secondary source attributes the slogan to “a vice president of Harolds Club” (Barbara Land & Myrick Land (1995), *A Short History of Reno*, University of Nevada
made the papers for sports: In high school young Walter Clark (or Walter Clark, Jr.) made the papers on nine occasions that I could find, excluding many redundant items (usually because both city papers covered the same story, but also because one paper sometimes covered a story more than once). Four were for sports (tennis, basketball, and track) (“Reno Junior Tennis Tourney Is Planned,” *NSJ*, Aug. 27, 1924, 5; “Nevada Champs Leave For East,” *REG*, Mar. 26, 1926, 8; “Cinder Artists Of Reno At Practice,” *NSJ*, Apr. 10, 1926, 5; “Form of Net Stars Shows Increasing Improvement,” *NSJ*, Jun. 2, 1926, 5). Thus Walter the athlete did actually attain what Tim in *City* considered the “Valhalla” of upperclassmen, “the inky fame of the sports pages” (Clark, *City*, 93). Two of the other notices concerned Reno High assemblies, a Columbus Day speech he made (“Columbus Day Observed Here,” *REG*, Oct. 12, 1925, 6) and a humorous debate (“Debate Students Give Performance,” *NSJ*, May 1, 1926, 7). Another concerned an amateur theatrical staged at the Rialto Theater, next door to Brundidge’s art store (“17 Boys Take Part In Close Contest On Bicycles,” *REG*, May 1, 1924, 3). Two concerned the Christmas dance (“Society” item, *NSJ*, Jan. 1, 1924, 4) and the family vacation, to La Jolla (“City Briefs” item, *NSJ*, Jul. 1, 1924, 2).

When Robert made the papers: At age 17, Robert was at a Bartlett family party at a café welcoming son Donald back after a year working in New York (“Society” item, *NSJ*, Apr. 23, 1926, 4), then was one of ten guests at a country club dinner celebrating an engagement, along with Dorothy and Margaret Bartlett (“Society” item, *REG*, May 7, 1926, 4). In these early days, Robert’s name would come at the end of the guest list for such occasions, as the youngest one present. In the fall of 1926, Robert received two more social notices (“Society” item, *REG* Oct. 25, 1926, 4; “Elks Formal Dance Enjoyable,” *NSJ*, Dec. 19, 1926, 6).


character of Judge Cooper: Vanderbilt, *Reno*.

ruled against “the King of Nevada”: “Maude Wingfield Given Divorce From Banker Here Today,” *REG* May 16, 1929, 14. For “the King of Nevada,” see C. Elizabeth Raymond (1992), *George Wingfield: Owner and Operator of Nevada*, University of Nevada Press. George Bartlett was already renowned for his parties, “the toast of Tonopah” when he and Wingfield were making their names and fortunes in that city’s boom days (Michael J. Ybarra (2004), *Washington Gone Crazy: Senator Pat McCarran and the Great American Communist Hunt*, Steerforth Press, 49, 55). As were such figures as Tasker Oddie, Key Pittman, George Thatcher, and to an extent Pat McCarran.

1972 obituary of Dorothy: “Dorothy Bartlett, Member of Prominent Family, Dies,” *NSJ*, Jan. 9, 1972, 47; “Dorothy Bartlett, daughter of late Reno jurist, dies,” *REG* Jan. 10, 1972, 2. The Bartlett home on Court Street was sold in 1969 and demolished around the first of November in 1970 (“Art in the Silver Circle” item, *NSJ*, Nov. 15, 1970, 18). Dorothy moved to the Arlington Towers. She died a bit more than a year later. Her obituary, identical in the *Journal* and the *Gazette*, was certainly submitted by the family.

232 Court Street: Next door to 240 lived Roy Frisch, Riverside Hotel cashier believed assassinated by orders of Graham and McKay to prevent his testimony against them (Land and Land, *A Short History*, 39). Both addresses are now commercial locations.

Notes to Pages 83–85  ●  Indexed Notes n118–n123

in the Silver Circle” item, Velda Morby, NSJ, Oct. 29, 1972, 12; Miriam Chism, copy of plans for the 1972 “Retrospective Exhibit of works of Robert Cole Caples,” Caples Archive. Caples works were still on display at the Nevada Art Gallery at Fifth and Ralston the following year (“Art in Reno,” REG, Aug. 28, 1973, 4).

Works listed in the Miriam Chism document (see above) not otherwise mentioned in TNTK or earlier endnotes are as follows: Adam (1952); Bamboo (date unknown); Blue Mountain (1953 or before) (photo in Caples Archive); Circus Ponies (1954); The Gambler (early 12950s); Ladyslipper (date unknown); Magic Mountain (date?); Portrait Head of a Woman (1948); and Zodiac (date unknown).

n118 3 knew the judge : Clark, letter to Margaret Bartlett Thornton, Sep. 26, 1947, Thornton-UNR.

n119 83 Tom Wilson : Walton, Tape #18, Walton Papers. Wilson was an administrative officer.

n120 84 “Our Tree” : Thornton-UNR.


shady gambling associates : Town House owner Charles Rennie lost the business due to pressure from Bill Graham and Jim McKay.


“the Center of the Universe” : Clark, City, 148 (italics omitted).

called sentinel poplars, in front of the Hazard home; and the ubiquitous poplars. ‘Poplars’ at that time in Reno usually meant Fremont cottonwoods, which lined many streets and which are still permitted on private property, but prohibited on city rights-of-way, along with Lombardies, because of the damage their aggressive roots do to sidewalks and sewers – so Reno is no longer a city of trembling leaves. By ‘poplars’ Walter usually means the Fremont cottonwoods, as when their leaves fall in Wingfield Park (150); but in places Walter means Lombardies by ‘poplars’, when “lofty” (272) or with “spires” (277), and when juxtaposed to cottonwoods (31, 48, 617). I’m guessing that Walter’s inconsistency reflects common usage in his day.

n122 84 “two Renos” : Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr. (1929), Reno, Macaulay Company, 31. Vanderbilt himself during the 1920s owned a Reno divorce ranch, the Lazy Me, as well as a regular dude ranch near Pyramid Lake (Glotfelty, Literary Nevada, 277; see also William McGee & Sandra McGee (2004), The Divorce Seekers: A Photo Memoir of a Nevada Dude Wrangler, BMC Publications, 384–87). There are even suggestions, if no more than that, of Clark’s profound attachment to nature in the numerous other Reno-exploitation novels of the era. These have been rescued from oblivion by University of Nevada critic-historian Ann Ronald ((2003 [1979]), “Reno: Myth, Mystique, or Madness?” 33–34, in Ann Ronald, ed. (2003), Reader of the Purple Sage: Essays on Western Writers and Environmental Literature. University of Nevada Press).

n123 85 Ox-Bow : Interview, Apr. 29, 2013. As we together regretted City’s present obscurity, even relative to Ox-Bow and Track, I optimistically predicted to Raymond that as long as there is youth there will be new readers to be swept along by Clark’s haunting, ephemeral harmonies of change. But Raymond, who has daily contact with today’s youth at the university, lamented that students don’t seem able to catch its spirit. They “access information differently” from Clark’s verbose, expansive style; they’re not attuned to the long form of the novel – especially such a very long form; we agreed it would have benefitted from more editorial management. Nevertheless, City, she believes, will outlast Ox-Bow
Notes to Pages 85–87  ●  Indexed Notes n124–n127

and Track, simply for its strength as a document of the place and the epoch. Time will tell if City survives on either count, as sociocultural document, or as prose symphony of youth.

As for editorial management, Walter’s editor at Random House, Saxe Commins, who wasn’t completely in love with the novel, would suggest places to cut back (RM Clark, interview, Jun. 27–28, 2012). Walter would attempt a desired edit, but sometimes would end up making the text longer. There was one segment, Bob Clark learned from Robert, which Walter “rewrote and came out one hundred and two pages longer” – the figure being literal or hyperbolic, Bob Clark wasn’t certain which.

The British publisher brought out a 319 page edition of City under the title Tim Hazard ((1951), William Kimber & Co., Ltd.). The “Prelude” is gone, along with Book Two in its entirety. Walter must have signed off on that. Many readers have thought City should have been two books (I don’t agree), and one reader, Walter’s protégé Robert Laxalt, who considered City a “spectacular” novel, nevertheless actually told Walter that it should have been three books (Monique Laxalt, interview, Jul. 5, 2012). Laxalt’s critique perhaps reflected his own proclivity, for as he conceded in another connection, “I write short books” (Warren Lerude (2013), Robert Laxalt: The Story of a Storyteller, Center for Basque Studies, University of Nevada, Reno, 249).

n124 85 Mr. Hazard reamed them out : Clark, City, 305–8. Clark demonstrated his hometown savvy further in an essay (Clark (1949), “Reno: The State City,” 43, 53, in Ray B. West, ed. (1949), Rocky Mountain Cities, W. W. Norton), where he insisted that a typical Renoite knows all about the famous Reno and its vices: “He knows all about them. His friends know all about them. They bore everybody.”

n125 86 “house literally on the hill” : RM Clark, interview, Jun. 27–28, 2012. Bob Clark added that “I’ve never thought Dad managed to make Tim’s supposed working class beginnings very credible.”

86 Mrs. Hale : Clark, City, 212.

86 Cadillac-driving father : Ibid., 109.

86 “he was thinking the chess board” : Caples, letter to the author, Oct. 11, 1977, Shafton-UNR.


87 After high school : RM Clark, “Chronology,” 276.

87 drive truck : Clark, n.d., ca. 1950, typescript carbon copy, autobiographical note circulated by Random House, University of Virginia.

87 Bob said he didn’t think so : RM Clark, interview, Jun. 27–28, 2012.

87 “father’s educational notions” : RM Clark, email, Dec. 6, 2013. See also Benson (Ox-Bow Man, 28).

n126 86 Barbara Morse : At Oberlin, according to their registrar’s office, Barbara completed two years at the music conservatory and a third year at the college. Benson (Ox-Bow Man, 43) notes the eccentricity of Barbara’s choice to study music, she being tone deaf. Bob Clark (“Chronology,” 276) says she came to Nevada “for her senior year.” However, the 1929 Artemisia, the university yearbook, pictures her as a member of the junior class. The registrar’s office says she enrolled for three semesters, the first ending December, 1928, then those ending in May and December of 1929. She graduated December 21, 1929.

n127 87 Walter’s name appeared : Through Junior year, his name appeared if anything a little less frequently than during high school: for a sorority dance (“Society” item, REG, Sep. 29, 1928, 4), basketball (“Nevada ‘Hoop’ Hopes Growing,” REG, Dec. 18, 1928, 6), a party (“Society” item, REG, Jan. 31, 1929, 4), a summer auto tour with a college friend (“University Pair On Tour of U.S.,” NSJ, Aug. 4, 1929, 6; Walter’s companion was Neil Lamb (Benson, transcript of interview of RM Clark, Oct. 23, 1997, Benson-UNR)), along the way visiting Barbara at summer school in Montana, not reported (RM Clark, “Chronology,” 276), academic honors (“University Honor Roll For Term Announced,” REG, May 24, 1930, 14), and a theatrical (“Underworld Play For Campus Cast,” REG, Nov. 29, 1930, 8). But he came into his own during his senior year and graduate school. For those years I found four items for social events (“Society” item, REG, Mar. 26, 1931, 4 (Walter’s name listed first among dozens of young men present at a dance); “Society” item, REG, Apr. 18, 1931, 4 (a formal sorority dinner dance at the Riverside Hotel); “Society” item, REG, Oct. 8, 1931, 4 (another sorority dance); “Barbecue Held at Pyramid Pinnacles,” NSJ, May 13, 1932, 2), four for tennis (“Reno Net Tourney Players Advance,”
Notes, The Nevada They Knew, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 87–90 ● Indexed Notes n128–n134

NSJ, Apr. 26, 1931, 3; “Reno Tennis Club Plans Tournament,” NSJ, Jun. 29, 1931, 2; “Tennis Tourney Nearing Finish,” REG, Sep. 7, 1931, 3; “Drawings Friday For State Tennis Tournament Here,” NSJ, Aug. 15, 1932, 7), two for campus drama (“Campus Players To Give Play,” REG, Oct. 11, 1931, 12; “25 Students Given Honor,” REG, Jan. 23, 1932, 12), six for academics (“128 Nevada University Students Awarded Their Degrees Today,” REG, May 11, 1931; “Fallon Youth Given U. Of N. Medal Honor,” NSJ, May 12, 1931, 1; “11 Expected to Win Diplomas at U.N. Next Friday,” NSJ, Dec. 12, 1931; “Social and Personal” item, NSJ, Dec. 2, 1931, 4 (Walter had the highest grade point average on campus that semester); “Annual Banquet Is Held by Phi Kappa Phi,” NSJ, May 8, 1932, 5; “Society” item, REG, Sep. 6, 1932, 4), one for speaking at a pre-graduation event (“Seniors Visit Campus Scenes,” REG, May 7, 1931, 12), four for literary presentations before clubs such as the Twentieth Century (“Society” item, REG, Apr. 13, 1931, 4; “Plans Outlined By Club For Busy Year,” REG, Sep. 10, 1931, 2; “Social and Personal” item, NSJ, Dec. 2, 1931, 4; “Holiday Program Attracts Scores To Century Club,” NSJ, Feb. 13, 1932, 5), and one for the publication of poetry (“U. Of N. Student’s Verse Is Published,” NSJ, Apr. 26, 1931, 6 (a poem selected for a Harper anthology of college verse); previously poems of Walter’s had appeared “in collegiate magazines” (RM. Clark, “Chronology,” 276)).

88 a few months earlier: “Barbecue Held at Pyramid Pinnacles,” NSJ, May 13, 1932, 2 (punctuation corrected).

n128 88 “The Desert Inn”: The Willows, built by James Sutcliffe at the site of the present village of Sutcliffe, was renamed The Desert Inn after this guest ranch had passed through several hands (Mergen, At Pyramid Lake, 105). (Not to be confused with the Willows at Big Canyon further north on the lakeshore, nor with the Willows roadhouse in Reno, nor with the Las Vegas Desert Inn.)

n129 88 rail line: In 1914 the Southern Pacific, successor to the Central Pacific, built a spur through the reservation to the lumber forests of Lassen County, California. The Fernley & Lassen Railroad was closed and its rails sold for scrap in the 1970s due to competition from trucking (Mergen, At Pyramid Lake, 97). The raid bed is still a conspicuous feature on the west side of the lake.

90 didn’t want to compete: Barbara Clark Salmon, interview, Jul. 12, 2012.

n130 90 he would draw pictures: Barbara Clark Salmon, phone interview, Jul. 16, 2012. Likewise, Robert’s stepdaughter, Rosemary Junior, told me that Robert never played physically with her or her brother Denny (R Caples Jr, interview, Jul. 15, 2012).

n131 90 Robert was “unathletic”: RM Clark, interview, Jun. 27–28, 2012. Columnist Karl Breckenridge (phone conversation, May 24, 2014), who as an early teen knew Robert when he would have been in his forties, said they “shot baskets” together. “What?” I exclaimed. “I’d heard he was unathletic.” “He was,” said Karl. “He didn’t shoot baskets well?” “No.” Breckenridge knew Caples at the home of then U. S. Attorney, later Federal Judge Bruce R. Thompson and his wife Ellen in 1954–1955, where he also knew Walter Clark. (The US Courthouse and Federal Building in Reno is named after Judge Thompson.)

n132 90 compulsive punster: Examples: “the ‘World Serious’” (Caples, letter to Robbins, Nov. 15, 1975, Emily Robbins); “Jesus swept while Mary dusted” (Caples, letter to Joanne, Jul. 19, 1977, de-L-UNR); “She never responded, not so much as a single Word’sworth” (Caples, letter to Morrie Jellett, Aug. 27, 1976, Caples Archive); “Many are cold but few are frozen” (Caples, postcard to Houghton, Jan. 20, 1971, Houghton-UNR); “Oh, Sam, was Moses to the Manna born?” (Caples, card to Houghton, n.d., 1970s, Houghton-UNR).

90 ‘back’ground of incandescent pain: Caples, letter to Robbins, Aug. 6, 1974, Emily Robbins (text excerpted and slightly rearranged for continuity).

n133 90 rode to the hunt: R Caples Jr, interview, Jul. 15, 2012. She was still taking dancing classes and performing in a small way into her seventies (John Caples Diary, Jun. 14, 1978) – “a ballet nut,” as Clark nephew David Chism characterized her (interview, Jul. 8, 2012). Well after Robert’s death, “when she was eighty-one,” Rosemary Junior told me (op. cit), “her friends were in their twenties . . . horse people.”

90 raked leaves: Caples, letter to Houghton, Apr. 18, 1974, Houghton-UNR.

n134 90 on the bicycle either: Another letter to Ken (Caples, letter to Robbins, Jan. 28, 1974, Emily Robbins) described bicycling with Rosemary “around Waramang Lake, stopping for a sheltered lunch, patterned
Notes to Pages 91–94  ●  Indexed Notes n135–n141

cloth and all, and a bottle of champagne.” Waramang Lake State Park, which contains “our local lake” (Caples, letter to Houghton, Oct. 9, 1974, Houghton-UNR), comprises 95 acres in total.


91 climbed part of the way: Clark, letter to Barbara Clark, Aug. 19, 1937, Clark-UNR.

91 square dance group: Caples, letter to Robbins, May 7, 1974, Emily Robbins.

91 “No, he didn’t smile”: Barbara Clark Salmon, interview, Jul. 12, 2012.


n135 91 a sage from Nevada: David Chism, interview, Jul. 8, 2012; Nikki Chism, emails Jan. 9 and 10, 2014. Earlier, a sage had been sent by David Chism’s parent’s, Walter’s sister Miriam and her husband John (Sessions S. Wheeler, “Robert Cole Caples 1908–1979,” n.d., draft of “an introduction to the proposed Caples’ portfolio,” Stremmel Gallery files): “When John and Miriam Chism sent him a live sagebrush plant, he [Robert] wrote [to the Chisms], ‘And here in my own corner of the barn is my rooted sage, the treasure of the year. I filled an immense pot with carefully selected measures of earth and sand, a sort of alchemy in absentia, trying to rebuild the magic of Nevada soil – and there were certain incantations as well, a sort of overtone of Indian grunts and signs....So, if loving care, morning sun, precise allowance of water and murmured prayers are equal to the event, the sage will grow.’”


On heads Robert put the wedge-shaped outline of the state over the university’s ‘N’ surrounded by sage. Dots, or “spots,” were intended to represent the university’s 100 years, as Robert explained in a letter to Samuel G. Houghton (Oct. 31, 1974, Houghton-UNR): “I tell you, it took some doing to arrange those hundred spots so that they would dwell comfortably in the state’s shape – I’m at a total loss to know why the one hundred count was abandoned. I’m wondering if they even so much as troubled to count them when they came to rework the design.” “They” would be the technicians at the Franklin Mint. Robert was mistaken: the 100 are there on the coin. He must have done his counting on a centennial brochure, for the 100 are not all there on the version printed as a logo on centennial literature. So no blame attaches to Franklin Mint. Robert’s initials ‘RC’ were also removed from the print version.


n137 93 Robert wrote his friend Ken: Caples, letter to Robbins, Jan. 28, 1974, Emily Robbins. The wording “when I first signed up for classes there” is misleading: there is no record of Robert ever having signed up for University of Nevada classes again after these “special courses” (Questionnaire). Around the same time he also slightly padded his resume for his artist bio connected with the centennial medallion: “Robert Caples, who once attended classes at the University before proceeding on to art school in California” (Caples, letter to Jack McAuliffe, Dec. 19, 1973, files of Michael McAuliffe).

n138 93 classes Robert signed up for: Heather Turk-Fiecoat, personal communication, Jul., 2012. The session ran from mid-May to mid-August.

n139 93 Masonic Building: It occupies the former site of Myron Lake’s grist mill, styled Alhambra Hall (NHS Docent Council, Early Reno, 18).


n140 93 old friends of some degree: Thornton, “Foreword,” viii. Anderson was one of several notable early twentieth century American writers who also painted, others being John Dos Passos, E. E. Cummings and William Carlos Williams (Eunice Clark Jessup, (1959), “Writers as Artists,” Art in America, 7, no. 2, 55, 57).

Notes, *The Nevada They Knew*, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 94–97 ● Indexed Notes n142–n150

cocktail lounge (John Caples Diary, Feb. 5, 1972).

94 **Room 406**: In one place Robert wrote “405” (*Caples, Questionnaire*, 4).


n142 94 **“actually a closet”**: Walton, Tape #18, Walton Papers. Walton was born in San Francisco in 1914; he moved to Reno with his mother and sister in 1929 when his mother divorced. After studying art in San Francisco and Los Angeles, he returned to Reno in 1936 to work for Robert and the FAP (“Nevada – from artist’s viewpoint,” Phillip I. Earl, *RGJ*, Aug. 31, 1986, 2E). He arrived with a letter of recommendation from his teacher at the Chouinard Art Institute in Los Angeles, Phil Paradise, who knew Robert. Paradise called Walton someone “who has quite some considerable talent,” which struck Walton as damning with faint praise, and so he never delivered the letter (Walton, Tape #16, Walton Papers).

94 **“Bob liked the view”**: Walton, Tape #16, Walton Papers.

n143 94 **full-page portraits**: Bessie Davie (ibid., Oct., 1928, 8) had recently starred in a Campus Players production; Evelyn Turner (ibid., Dec., 1928, 8) had been voted the most beautiful coed by drama students.

n144 95 **josh drinkers**: *Desert Wolf*, Dec., 1928, 16–17. The third is an uncaptioned man on a whisky barrel. Also definitely or possibly by Caples in *Desert Wolf* are the following woodcuts: *Demon Speed* (Apr., 1929, 20); *The Worm that Turned* (Apr., 1929, 32); and lovers in a parked car (Dec., 1929, 8).

95 **advantage men have in marriage**: Ibid, 16.

n145 95 **career doing society portraits**: Clark, “A Note on the Artist,” Clark-UNR. From “On Learning to Look” in final form Walter cut the thought that this phase of Robert’s career was “the most steadily successful, perhaps, in the sense of demand and payment.”


n146 96 **attractive coeds**: More nuanced is the fine portrait of Dean Leach (*Desert Wolf*, Apr., 1929, 12).

n147 96 **Tom Wilson the advertising man**: Wilson was at different times on the art board or assistant or associate editor or editor-in-chief of *Desert Wolf*. He provided cover art and inside illustrations for it as well and continued to do so after graduating, including one cover February, 1933, where a pipe-smoking upperclassman neglects his studies to daydream about good-looking women – a subject prefiguring the naked pin-up calendars Wilson later styled for Harolds Club as advertising.

96 **stories Clark submitted**: Wilson, “Reminiscences,” 77.

n148 96 **literary editor**: For the March and May, 1928 issues of *Desert Wolf*, “Walter Clark, Jr.” served on the “Art Staff.” It’s quite possible that Walter contributed one or more of the numerous anonymous and pseudonymous short items that were the mainstay of all issues.

n149 96 **two poems**: “The Ballad of Bloody Bill” (*Desert Wolf*, Feb., 1931, 14–15) is a conventional take-off on the Western ballad with a twist that falls flat. It immediately reminded me of John Caples’ Western ballad “The Two-Gun Man” written about the same year (EN ). John’s rhythm and rhyme are actually sharper and more consistently regular, a virtue in such works, than Walter’s, but Walter’s is far better observed: he describes a hitching post as “the nibbled rail,” and says a bystander to a confrontation “laughed in fear.” John gives his narrative a simple if ironical twist: brutality is rewarded, and that’s the West; whereas Walter’s twist leaves the reader puzzled: Bloody Bill was ready to kill the greenhorn for messing with his girlfriend, so then why does he run away in fear because the greenhorn knew Bill deserted his wife, when killing the greenhorn would prevent his being given away?


96 **“For the Love of Sal”**: Clark (as Walt Clark) (1930a), “For the Love of Sal” [or “All for the Love of Sal”], *Desert Wolf* 8, no.1, 14–15, 28, 30–32.


n150 97 **privately published**: Clark, *Hjalsen* (“verse and cover design copyrighted by Walter Van Tilburg Clark”). Some 200 or 250 copies were printed (Clark, letter to J. E. Reynolds, Sep. 11, 1950, University of Virginia). That Walter gave a copy to Robert can be inferred from the presence of a photocopy of
Notes, *The Nevada They Knew*, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 97–100 ● Indexed Notes n151–n157

Hjalsen which Robert sent his friends Samuel G. Houghton and/or his wife Edda (Houghton-UNR).

97 **“It’s hard,” says the wise stranger** : Clark, *Hjalsen*, 17–18. That Walter meant the figure to embody Christ is betokened by the single capitalization of the pronoun ‘His’ (23).


99 **or much else about Elsa Bandler** : Byron married Elsa on Jan. 12, 1924. She was born in New York in 1892 (1930 Census on www.ancestry.com), and had divorced in Reno on April 1, 1923 (Byron H. Caples, Affidavit of Application for Marriage Licence with Elsa W. Bandler, No. 9172, State of Nevada, County of Washoe, Jan. 12, 1924), was still living in Reno under the surname Caples in 1930 (1930 Census), and the same year attended a society wedding performed by Judge Bartlett (“Reno Aviator and Princess Married Here,” *REG*, Aug. 27, 1930, 12).

99 **distantly affectionate relations** : DEAR EDITH, began a November 13, 1925 telegram (John Caples Papers), when Byron wired ANOTHER HUNDRED TOWARD THE HOUSE, with another hundred to follow. ROBERT IS WELL AND JOINS ME IN LOVE TO YOU WILL WRITE SOON BYRON. In June of 1927, Byron telegraphed (ibid.) MY LOVE AND BEST WISHES FOR A HAPPY BIRTHDAY. Robert, who was in New York with Edith for the summer, would, Byron added, be giving her their mutual present, and Edith should take Robert out to dinner on him, Byron.

99 **She visited Reno** : John Caples Diary, Aug. 9, 1929.


99 **Then in December** : John Caples Diary, Dec. 19, 1929.


99 **“For two months”**: Ibid., May 26, 1930. Edith’s nurse told John much the same: “Father was wonderful to her, although unknown to her he spent some time with a lady friend [Margaret Slater] near by.” Additional information in this paragraph from ibid., May 18 and 27, 1930.

99 **a day too late** : On the eve of Edith’s surgery in January, Byron had to telegram John urging him to send his mother a message of love (John Caples Diary, Jan. 13, 1930). When John was booking tickets following Byron’s urgent telegram, he discovered he could save on the train fare by departing a day later. He missed seeing Edith alive by that one day.

99 **Edith attempted to keep up** : Ibid., May 26, 1930.

99 **she asked the nurse** : Ibid., Oct. 8, 1955.

100 **At the time, though** : Ibid., May 18, 1930. While still in Reno, though, John wrote: “I really think I loved her more than any of them” (ibid., May 22, 1930). He had been growing apart from his mother, possibly because, having been tied to her apron strings more than he realized, he felt smothered by her possessiveness now that he had a serious love interest in Mabel Watson. “Mother kept me from marrying as long as she lived.” John’s attitude toward his mother had turned decidedly negative. When Edith began complaining of being seriously ill, before Byron took her in, John thought she was crying wolf for attention (ibid., Dec. 15, 1928 and Oct. 16, 1929). The day before her departure for Reno on December 16, 1929, John ripped her, “‘You selfish pig’” (ibid., Dec. 17, 1929). While he still appreciated Edith’s “good qualities” when younger and “more loveable” (ibid., Feb. 14, 1930), he had come to view her as a “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” personality: “It seems as if an ugly underneath had been exposed. . . . The intense calculation to get the thing she wanted – the hypocrisy – the lying – the complete and amazing selfishness” (ibid., Jan. 13, 1930). But three years later he addressed his dead mother in a diary entry, “Sweetheart, it’s your birthday” (ibid., Jun. 14, 1933). He had recurring dreams about her dying and himself grieving (ibid., Feb. 5, 1934).

100 **“unexpressed mystical outlook”**: “On Learning to Look,” 1.

100 **“to be profoundly grateful”**: Caples, letter to Joanne, Jun. 5, 1978, de-L-UNR. Robert was writing to Joanne de Longchamps that he owed his life to the obligation internalized from his father to be a compliant medical patient: “Lo, I breathe.” Then referring to the 1930s or 1940s, he continued, “The other obligation (laid somewhat later) was to be profoundly grateful for the gift of morning.” The
fatherly Potter, the creator of man in Robert’s fable *The Potter and His Children*, says “‘Praise the day!’” (70). Another reminiscence about his father: “Who among us,” Robert asked with a rhetorical smile in 1976, “remembers BHC singing: ‘But when old age came creeping in, old age with all its qualms, King Solomon wrote the Proverbs and David wrote the Psalms.’ Well, I do” (Caples, letter to Margaret Bartlett, Nov. 18, probably 1976, Thornton-UNR).

100 “deeply religious”: John Caples, n.d., untitled typescript, “I have a very deep affection for my Father,” John Caples Papers.

100 something his father once said: John Caples Diary, Feb. 12, 1963.

100 couldn’t “bear to stay with her”: Ibid., May 19, 1930.


101 with her when she died: John Caples Diary, May 26, 1930. Byron and Edith’s hometown paper said she died in the home of her son Robert, which was technically correct (“Former Resident Dies in The West,” *Fostoria Daily Review*, May 19, 1930/1;4). They wrongly assumed or had been misinformed that ex-husband Byron still lived in New York. Both papers in Reno got the residences right (“Illness Is Fatal to Mrs. Caples,” *NSJ*, May 17, 1930, 1; “Death Takes Mrs. Caples,” *REG*, May 17, 1930, 8).

101 Edith’s funeral: John Caples Diary, May 20, 1930.

101 “carrying on with Mrs. Slater”: Ibid., May 27, 1930. See also May 28, 1930.

101 “fascinated, almost enslaved”: John Caples Diary, May 23, 1930.


101 “refined high-class attention”: John Caples Diary, May 23, 1930.

101 “so few attended”: Ibid., May 27, 1930.

101 “one of these women”: Ibid., May 23, 1930.

101 “colored chauffeur”: Ibid., May 26, 30. John had earlier picked up from Byron’s lawyer Hester Mayotte that Mrs. Slater “was very sweet on her half-colored chauffeur not long ago” (ibid., May 23, 1930). During the civil rights era black citizens would brand Nevada the Mississippi of the West (Michael S. Green (2004), “The Mississippi of the West?” *Nevada Law Journal*, vol. 5, no. 57, Fall, 57–70).

101 black lawn jockey: Thornton-UNR.

101 the human comedy: John Caples Diary, May 21, 1930: “Robert came home from Mrs. Slater’s dinner last night about 9:30. He left father and Mrs. Slater there. . . . Mrs. Slater’s child embarrassed them terribly – The kid said, running into the room, ‘Oh Uncle Don (father) I’m going to come in here to the couch tomorrow morning and wake you and Mama up.’ Robert said the kid kept insisting on it and that it was terrible.” There’s no way Robert wasn’t amused when he told John this story.

Here is another Caples name mystery, Byron going by ‘Don’. Miriam Chism, Walter’s sister, knew him as Don (Edda Houghton, hand- and typewritten notes on talk by Miriam Chism for docents for the 1972 Caples retrospective exhibition, Houghton-UNR), as did Margaret Bartlett (“Foreword,” viii), Sherwood Anderson (*Letters*, 453), and Byron’s third wife Hazel, as well as Byron’s brother Ralph (Walton, Tape #82, Walton Papers) – while back in Fostoria he had been known as “Bunny” (Caples, letter to Walton, Jun. 23, 1978, Walton Papers).

101 self-convicted of racism: In 1931, John didn’t grasp the objection to a GE commercial he’d written comparing today’s electric motors to the human slaves of the past (White, *ADMAN*, 126). In 1933, John wrote to Robert about putting the old Caples house at 349 W. 121 W Street on the market, but never mailed the letter because his wife Mabel (Rabbit) “thought it sounded too discouraging.” I expect she was tactfully preventing John from exposing himself, knowing Robert would be revolted by John’s blatant prejudice. The letter said: “The reason we moved was of course, the colored invasion. . . . All the benches along the park were clustered with ‘black birds’” (Nov. 18, 1933, John Caples Papers). In 1944, John proved what a regular fellow he was by pronouncing pork chop “‘Poke chop’” to other BBDO executives at lunch. This pleased one of the executives, who repeated “‘Poke chop.’” Then John used the ‘n’ word. “This delighted” the executive (John Caples Diary, Jan-31-44). Not surprisingly there are expressions, though none so egregious, of antisemitism in the diary as well (John Caples Diary, Oct. 24, 1928, Nov. 29, 1941, Aug. 18, 1942, Jul. 15, 1963, and Jun. 13, 1965).

102 dancing until 2 AM: John Caples Diary, May 24, 1930.

102 The next night: Ibid., May 25, 1930.

Notes to Pages 102–105

Indexed Notes n162–n168

n162 102 meaning to marry her: Walton, letter to Caples, Mar. 11, 1978, Walton Papers. Walton’s mother was a friend of Mrs. Slater’s.

n163 102 Slater was killed: “Mrs. Slater Dies from Injuries Received in Wreck,” REG, Aug. 16, 1930. The report said that Mrs. Slater had been in Reno from Toronto for six months with her three small children for a divorce, which had apparently not yet been decreed.

n164 102 John first learned: Byron H. Caples, letter to John (Richard) Caples, Sep. 4, 1930, John Caples Papers. Byron’s shoulder was injured badly enough that he was hospitalized for two weeks and he expected to have to turn over his practice for up to a year. Byron also told John he planned to visit Margot’s elderly parents in Ottawa (not Toronto) to console them. He made no mention of Margot’s three young children. I don’t know if he ever made the trip.


n166 103 They drove to the Sierras: John Caples Diary, May 20, 1930.

104 several long talks: Ibid., May 21, 24, 26 and 29, 1930.

n167 103 the lot Byron had given him: John said Robert was trying to sell the lot, supposed to be worth $600, for $400 (John Caples Diary, May 24, 1930). The house at 1110 Codel Way now sits on the lot in the University District. Robert sold the property to one Philip Kauffman on August 19, 1930 (Washoe County Recorder, Deed Book 84, Page 260–61).

n168 105 Virginia Palmer: Virginia moved to San Francisco from Wellesley, Massachusetts, where the Eddys lived, before coming to Reno. Robert and Virginia married on May 16, 1931. A different Caples portrait, also said to be of Virginia, passed from Robert’s friend David Vhay to his son David L. “Tink” Vhay. The two portraits may or may not be of the same woman. Information in this paragraph and note from www.ancestry.com; “Caples Portrait Displayed Here,” NSJ, Apr. 11, 1931, 2; “Virginia P. Eddy to Wed R. Caples,” REG, May 15, 1931, 16; Caples, Affidavit of Application for Marriage Licence with
Notes, The Nevada They Knew, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 105–108 • Indexed Notes n169–n172


105 Caples Portrait Displayed Here: “Caples Portrait Displayed Here,” NSJ, Apr. 11, 1931, 2 (paragraphing omitted).


105 reading or publishing verses: “Society” item, REG, Apr. 13, 1931, 4; “U. Of N. Student’s Verse Is Published,” NSJ, Apr. 26, 1931, 6.

105 formal dance: “Society” item, REG, Apr. 18, 1931, 4.


105 speaking on the university campus: “Seniors Visit Campus Scenes,” REG, May 7, 1931, 12.


n169 Sam Dibitonto: Phone conversation, Aug., 2013. Sam Dibitonto thought Ginny-Lou Caples a “sharp friendly sort.” She was, he mentioned, “a top skier in high school and college.” Sam introduced her to her second husband, Mark Tett, whose father George co-founded the Mt. Rose Ski Lodge.


106 Mr. Black’s house: Clark, City, 353ff.

106 “pink-coated fox-hunters”: Clark, City, 436 (italics omitted).

n170 107 well-to-do Virginia: Robert acknowledged recognizing “a simplified version of Virginia in Helen in City as she first appears,” say Bob Clark’s notes of a conversation with Robert (RM Clark, late 1972, notes from conversations with Caples, 3, files of RM Clark). The resemblance of the Helen of Beverly Hills to Shirley Robert’s second wife was perhaps too obvious to require comment.

Virginia was a successful member of Reno society in her own right. A few months after their divorce in 1938 (“Divorce Suits Filed,” NSJ, Feb. 8, 1938, 2), Virginia Caples starred in Personal Appearance with the Little Theater at the Civic Auditorium (“Little Theater Presents Play,” REG, May 20, 1938, 2). Her buying trips for the dress shop in the Riverside Hotel made the papers (“Mrs. Caples on Visit to Market,” NSJ, Jul. 30, 1939, 2; “Mrs. Caples Leaves For New York Visit,” NSJ, May 31, 1944, 5). Virginia bought the Riverside Dress Shop, where she had been employed, with Cynthia Ross in 1939 (“Reno Revue” item, Gladys Rowley, NSJ, Mar. 18, 1939, 14). A large paid ad announced her becoming sole owner of the shop in 1941 (“Virginia Caples” etc., ad, NSJ, Mar. 26, 1941, 9). She and Robert got to be on good enough terms for her to sell Robert’s paintings in her shop (TN TK, 84). In 1946, Virginia married her third husband, Donald Stevenson, recently returned from China, the representative of an aviation company (“Church Ceremony Unites Couple in Marriage,” REG, Feb. 1, 1946, 12).

107 Walter based the dissolution: Clark, City, chs. 56ff.

107 the first tensions: Clark, City, ch. 38.

n171 107 in the Peavine cabin: The Reno City Directory has Robert at 1045 Bell Street in 1933, with Byron in 1934–36, then again on Bell in 1937, with no listings 1938–40. The Reno Telephone Book, on the other hands, shows Robert’s address and phone number as identical to Byron’s right up through 1940. It seems that for professional purposes Robert kept a phone listing at his father’s house (first on Ridge St., then John Fremont Dr., then Plumas St.) even after he moved away from Reno. The City Directory, which shows Virginia also living at Byron’s address between the two listings on Bell Street, establishes that the couple did move back in with Byron for a time.

Mt. Peavine is the northernmost peak of the Carson Range, named for a small vetch that grows on its higher slopes (Mary Webb (2000), A Doubtful River, University of Nevada Press, 327, selection reprinted in Glotfelty, ed., Literary Nevada.)

107 I witnessed the infighting: Walton, Tape #16, Walton Papers.

107 cashier’s job: Clark, City, 430.

108 “the best years”: Clark, City, 8.

n172 108 Byron told John: John Caples Diary, Feb. 16, 1933. Robert married Virginia in mid-May, 1931. If they lived with Byron for over a year just as Lawrence and Helen did with Mr. Black, then the earliest Robert
Notes, *The Nevada They Knew*, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 109–112  ●  Indexed Notes n173–n175

and Virginia (and Ginny-Lou) could have moved to Bell Street would have been June, 1932. The 1932 city directory for Reno has Robert at Byron’s address, the 1933 directory on Bell Street. Walter spent most of the summer of 1932 with his family in Carmel, the scenic basis for the Carmel chapters of *City* (RM Clark, notes for an essay on *The City of Trembling Leaves*, 1, Laird-UNR, Box 28), then left for Vermont in September. So at most the friends met up on the odd occasion, June to September, 1932, even if Robert had already by then rented the Peavine cabin.

Dick Walton, who first met Robert in 1936, described the place (Tape #16, Walton Papers): “Now over at Bell Street, on the hill, . . . he had a little house behind the landlord’s house. . . . It was about three rooms. I remember you’d enter through the kitchen, actually the front room was kind of a den, and perhaps there was a bedroom, I don’t remember seeing those other rooms, three or four rooms there, little ones.”


n173 110 two wives and with other friends: Robert used to lodge at Harry Drackert’s Pyramid Lake Guest Ranch at Sutcliffe, sometimes for weeks at a time with fifth wife Rosemary and her children before they moved to Connecticut. Robert sent a card from Connecticut to his Reno friends Sam and Edda Houghton almost surely evoking old times with them at Pyramid (Mar. 21, 1966, Houghton-UNR). Walter, of course, also had other associations with the lake. Thus in boyhood he camped at Pyramid with Walter Senior and family (Benson, *Ox-Bow Man*, 12). Then in the late 1940s, Pyramid was the “spiritual place” for outings of the whole Clark clan (Gordon Chism, *As I Remember*, 82).


110 as much as five years: Robert would have been about 17 (Wheeler, “Caples,” 1).

111 Lawrence buries himself: Clark, *City*, 435 (italics deleted).

111 “what he thought WC expected”: RM Clark, late 1972, notes from conversations with Caples, files of RM Clark.


111 Mt. Rose Quarter: Clark, *City*, 5.


112 shaped “teleologically”: RM Clark, notes for an essay on *The City of Trembling Leaves*, 1–2, Laird-UNR, Box 28.


n174 112 psychological realism: RM Clark, interview, Jun. 27–28, 2012. Walter’s other two published novels, *Ox-Bow* and *Track*, have conventional third person narrative voices. In both, the style is only quasi-realistic but really allegorical and thematic, and certainly not slice-of-life or autobiographical.

112 Hjalsen on the mountain: Or Robinson Jeffers, Walter’s early idol, in his stone house.


n175 112 some early reviewers: Stegner, “A confusion”: “It is hard to concentrate on Tim’s painter friend, Lawrence Black, as an individual, because one keeps hearing him too steadily as a counter-theme, an antiphonal noise on a solitary flute. And this is a shame, because Lawrence is one of the most interesting people in the book.” Clark placed great weight on the “symphonic structure”; he was “irked” by the lack of critical interest in it (RM Clark, letter to Charlton Laird, Apr. 3, 1979, Laird-UNR, Box 28). Stegner wasn’t taken by the symphonic structure, deeming it “static.” The *New York Times* critic Orville Prescott found the characters “real enough, but only as representatives of various reactions to life” (quoted in “Clark’s Second Novel Has Reno Background,” *REG*, May 31, 1945, 5). Like Stegner, Prescott observed the effect of idealization without recognizing its cause.

Regarding Walter’s narrative choices, he put himself in a bind by making “Walt Clark” his narrator: some information normally conveyed by a first person narrator about her/himself, or else by an
impersonal third person narrator taking the character’s point of view, or by an omniscient narrator, becomes off limits when the narrator is, as here, himself a character in the story – for how can “Walt Clark” know so much about Tim’s interior life unless Tim tells him? Walter tells things about Tim to the reader by having Tim, a private person, disclose himself to “Walt Clark,” notably in the scene on the raft on Lake Tahoe (Clark, City, 166–67). Tim then, to remain in character, has to wish he hadn’t divulged so much. The solipsism that Tim has no one to expose his personal life to (not even Lawrence) except “Walt Clark” – essentially himself – tracks with Walter’s “self-sufficiency.”

Engaged readers of City will forgive Walter for not flawlessly managing his narration; he couldn’t have, and didn’t have to, in a novel as interior and at the same time as overflowing as this. One scarcely notices Walt Clark more or less fading away over the course of the novel as the narrative point of view gradually becomes more conventionally omniscient, until suddenly Walt comes on stage again for the “Postlude” like a Shakespearean Chorus.

Bob Clark, who studied the manuscript of City at the Library of Congress, thinks the oddities and inconsistencies of the narrator Walt Clark are due in part to his father’s efforts to comply with the recommendation of his editor at Random House, Saxe Commins, who asked him to bring down the overall length of the novel. The device worked “better,” Bob believes, before the cuts (RM Clark, interview, Jun. 27–28, 2012).

Why, given the complications, didn’t Walter dispense with Walt Clark? For good reason, I think: by creating the semi-detached perspective of a narrator who knows the protagonist’s and other characters’ life stories, Clark the storyteller gave himself a standpoint from which to range over lifetimes without disembedding his characters, especially Tim, from the immediacy of time present. So while a character is firmly situated in the now with all its limitations on point of view, Walt Clark the narrator’s point of view makes the stages of Tim’s life, of all their lives, interactive with each other, because the narrator makes the connections.


n176 113 exceptionally close: Walter was “very private life” (Lee, Clark, 6); he never told “very personal stories” about himself (Benson, transcript of phone interview of Tom Massey, Dec. 19, 2000, Benson-UNR); when he talked about his sister, is was only “because she was a good tennis player (Benson, transcript of interview of Hugh Gallagher, Jul. 6, 2000, Benson-UNR).


113 Robert recalled: RM Clark, late 1972, notes from conversations with Caples, files of RM Clark. 7.

n177 113 uncompleted doctoral dissertation: RM Clark, n.d., notes for uncompleted PhD Dissertation, files of RM Clark. Bob Clark revealed to Robert (letter to Caples, Oct. 19, 1972, Caples Archive) that Walter in his final months had been suggesting to him that he do his PhD dissertation on his father’s body of published and unpublished works. “I’m sure he had in mind the obvious advantages for me,” that is, the material no one but Bob had access to. Bob is (or was) convinced that his father “genuinely wanted [him] to do the dissertation” (RM Clark, letter to Charlton Laird, Mar. 17, 1972, Laird-UNR, Box 28); Babs, however, remembers Walter urging her to talk Bob out of it (Barbara Clark Salmon, interview, Jul. 12, 2012). Her husband Ross Salmon (interview, Jul. 12, 2012) thinks it was Robert Harvey, Bob’s supervisor in the University of Nevada English Department, who persuaded Bob to do his thesis on his father. And that Bob couldn’t complete the thesis because “he found it difficult to criticize his father.” Harvey himself (phone interview, Jul. 25, 2012) conjectures that “maybe he came to realize – I’m not sure – that he didn’t need to compete with his father.” In that connection, Bob told me he was well-known for going on at great length in writing, without explicitly making the comparison to his father’s long-windedness (RM Clark, interview, Jun. 27–28, 2012). (Their handwritings are similar also, Bob’s, from what I’ve seen, even smaller and less legible than Walter’s.) Bob’s explanation to me was that he never formulated the structure and focus required for a dissertation. That may have been because of what he’d earlier told Carl Heintze (RM Clark, letter, Oct. 29, 1979, Heintze-UNR), that he’d dropped the thesis “mainly because of constantly tangling up with the biographical interpretation that City lends itself to, or almost does.” Bob was “sure that coming to terms with that work, both as literary work and autobiographical trove, is a key to any sustained biographical effort.”

113 Robert remarked: RM Clark, late 1972, notes from conversations with Caples, files of RM Clark. 7.
Notes, The Nevada They Knew, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 113–117  •  Indexed Notes n178–n183

113 Luigi’s bar scene: Clark, City, ch. 63.
113 based on a trip: RM Clark, notes for an essay on The City of Trembling Leaves, 1, Laird-UNR, Box 28.
113 Walter was sure: RM Clark, late 1972, notes from conversations with Caples, files of RM Clark, 1, 4.
115 “I don’t think there was that”: Barbara Clark Salmon, phone interview, Jul. 16, 2012.
115 a story Walton repeated: Walton, Tape #16, Walton Papers.
115 Robert favored Walton: Ibid.
115 the “master dictum”: Clark, City, 436 (italicized in the original).


n179 Caples the artist: Robert’s portrait of Virginia (“Caples Portrait Displayed Here,” NSJ, Apr. 11, 1931, 2); his design for a new quarter (“Caples Designs Model for Coin,” REG, Sep. 17, 1931, 2); his part in founding the Sierra Nevada Arts Association (“Art Association Launched Here,” REG, Oct. 30, 1931, 16); his portraits on exhibition (“Exhibition...,” paid announcement, NSJ, Nov. 8, 1931, 4; “Caples’ Pictures Exhibit Is Held,” REG, Nov. 9, 1931); his sketching and drawing class (“In The Biggest Little City . . .” item, NSJ, Dec. 20, 1931, 9), which he advertised (“Announcing Evening Art Class,” ad, REG, Nov. 7, 1931; “Announcing Evening Art Classes,” ad, NSJ, Nov. 8, 1931, 4).

n179 The overlap: “Drawing,” NSJ, Nov. 26, 1931, 8. The store was probably Brundidge’s.

n180 hanging by the door: Walton, Tape #82-E, Walton Papers.

n180 in Reno for his divorce: Miller, Reno, 13. Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr. accused Arno of alienating one of his seven wives (Mergen, At Pyramid Lake, 113). Robert may have met the famous New Yorker cartoonist Peter Arno at the George Bartlett home, where Robert’s friend Tom Wilson met him (Wilson, “Reminiscences”).

n181 young artist, Bob Caples: “In The Biggest Little City . . .” item, NSJ, Dec. 20, 1931, 9 (edited, with paragraphing and orthography altered). The columnist thought he was on to a good thing, for two weeks later he took the same line: “Bob Caples, divorcees portrait artist, who always wears a black sweater, had to get himself all dressed up for dinner the other night because Virginia, his wife, just got back from New York” (ibid., Jan. 3, 1932, 7).

n182 to draft an introduction: Wheeler, “Caples” (spelling corrected). Another copy of Wheeler’s introduction resides in Houghton-UNR. On the front page, Edda Morrison (formerly Houghton) wrote: “Buck Wheeler brought me this copy July 23, 1987.” On October 4, 1986, Morrison at his request had sent Wheeler her comments assessing Caples as an artist, which she asked to be quoted as “a friend” (copy of letter, Oct. 4, 1986, Houghton-UNR). This letter dates the University of Nevada Press second third portfolio project to 1986. On Feb. 5, 1987, Morrison wrote to Wheeler with excerpts from 15 Caples letters, marking the passages she “especially like[d].” She told Wheeler that Rosemary had offered through Edda to read Wheeler’s draft when ready and possibly supply additional materials (Houghton-UNR).

Wheeler evidently had access to Robert’s letters to the Chisms. John, of Chism Dairy and Chism Trailer Park, was also Mayor of Reno 1970–72. Miriam was Walter’s sister. Bob Clark (RM Clark, interview, Jun. 27–28, 2012) thinks his Aunt Miriam, who exhibited artwork herself at least once in a group show (“New on the Hill” item, VCN, Jun. 11, 1949), when young had a crush on Robert. As an afterthought, to avoid giving the wrong impression given Robert’s proclivities, Bob said he didn’t think anything came of it. But he didn’t say positively. Miriam also befriended artists Craig and Yolande Sheppard and others teaching in the Art Department while taking art classes at the university (Gordon Chism, As I Remember, 73, 94).

Twenty years after City appeared, Wheeler chose the surname Black for the best friend of his protagonist in his one and only novel, Paiute (1965), The Caxton Printers, Ltd.), where Wheeler fictionalized the early Comstock and the Paiute War of 1860.

n183 socially ambitious: Walton, Tape #76, Walton Papers. He himself “was always hostile to classism,” so he avowed; but Walter deemed him a “Name dropper!” (Walton, letter to Caples, Aug. 24, 1978, Walton
Notes, The Nevada They Knew, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 117–119  ●  Indexed Notes n184–n187

Papers). Once when Walton misremembered a story about an Ohio forebear of Dr. Caples’ eaten by hogs after falling asleep on a fence, Dr. Caples, offended, corrected him: it was an uncle’s hired hand, no relation. Walton recorded the story elsewhere with variations (Tape #82-A; letter to Caples, Mar. 11, 1978, Walton Papers).

118 “old Cadillac”: Clark, City, 436.

n184 118 Byron’s hand-me-down: “Two Constant Companions Separated When Terry, Nine-Year-Old Boston Bulldog Dies; Owned by Dr. Caples,” NSI, Oct. 11, 1935, 2. “Terry, nine-year-old Boston bulldog, no longer will ride around Reno, seated next to Dr. B. H. Caples in the doctor’s open Cadillac touring car. The doctor, bareheaded, black pipe in his mouth, with the dog sitting next to him . . . were familiar figures around Reno.”

118 John had learned: John Caples Diary, Sep. 21, 1951.

n185 118 and married four!: I haven’t been able to determine when Byron married Mrs. Hazel W. Francis for the first time, but it can’t have been long after Edith and then Mrs. Slater died, for Byron and Hazel had already obtained a divorce in Minden during the summer of 1931, before they remarried in November 1932 (“Dr. Caples Reweds His Former Wife,” REG, Nov. 8, 1932, 2) – after a June, 1932 marriage licence application had been allowed to lapse (Byron H. Caples, Affidavit of Application for Marriage Licence with Hazel W. Francis, No. 31513, State of Nevada, County of Washoe, Jun. 24, 1932). I can’t entirely reconcile what I’ve been able to piece together from other documentation with the version of their first two marriages which Hazel gave to John when they lunched in New York in 1934 (John Caples Diary, Mar. 7, 34). She told John that she and Byron had known each other for about a month when, after drinking, Byron proposed on impulse. They got Judge Bartlett to marry them, Hazel told John, with two of their friends as witnesses. Then after a month of fighting, Byron said they’d better divorce. “So very sadly they got Judge Bartlett and the same two witnesses and opened up the court at night and got a divorce. Then the judge said ‘Let’s all have a drink.’ In the car father and Hazel were holding hands and feeling sad. So instead [of] separating they took the car next day and went to Lake Tahoe for a wonderful 4 day honeymoon. But after that Hazel came back to N.Y. and stayed 3 months. . . . Then Hazel went back and they were married again.” Records show that they divorced a second time in October, 1935 (Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Decree, Hazel Willis Caples vs. Byron H. Caples, in the Second Judicial District Court of the State of Nevada, in and for the County of Washoe, Case No. 51165, Oct. 18, 1935. In this instance, George Bartlett was Byron’s attorney). Soon they remarried once again, in February, 1936 (Hazel’s filing for divorce on Mar. 10, 1948, Washoe County Recorder’s Office), and continued so until their third divorce, decreed in March, 1948 (Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Decree, Hazel W. Caples vs. Byron H. Caples, in the Second Judicial District Court of the State of Nevada, in and for the County of Washoe, Case No. 116614, Mar. 10, 1948. George Thatcher was Hazel’s attorney). Two months later they were again applying for a marriage licence! (Byron H. Caples, Affidavit of Application for Marriage Licence with Hazel W. Francis, No. 31513, State of Nevada, County of Washoe, May 14, 1948). By that time the bride had resumed a former married name picked up along the way, Hazel Willis de la Guardia. Byron and Hazel then managed to avoid divorce until he died in 1955.

Thus Byron married six time, once more than son Robert, but to a mere three wives – four times to the last, Hazel.

118 John on a trip to Reno: John Caples Diary, Sep. 21, 1951.
118 the dark region: Clark, City, 437.

n186 119 Washington head quarter: Robert didn’t win, but it can’t have hurt the twenty-three-year-old “Reno artist and sculptor” to receive page two coverage in the Gazette (“Caples Designs Model for Coin,” REG, Sep. 17, 1931, 2) about his plaster model for the coin, temporarily on display in the window of Brundidge’s, at a time when he was looking for portrait commissions.

119 1931 was also the year: McGee & McGee, Divorce Seekers, 327.

n187 119 a new club: The Town House offered food, drink and gaming, though not roulette (Faith Baldwin (1940),
Notes to Pages 119–123  ●  Indexed Notes n188–n194

*Temporary Address: RENO, P. F. Collier & Son, 267*).


n188 120 easy pickings: A great majority of divorce-seekers were women, whether of their own volition or sent by their busy husbands.

n189 120 and on postcards: Both the cartoon and the map on the postcard are initialed R. C. C. Only on the postcard did he Anglicize the spelling: “the Towne House.” The artwork of The Riding Lesson of the newspaper ad (“The Towne House,” ad, *VCN*, Apr. 17, 1948.), the matchbook, and the chip follow Robert’s design but were executed by a different artist or artists, possibly Lew Hymers.


That December, immediately above the gossip item about Robert and his black sweater (*TNTK*, 116), appeared this: “Belle Livingstone announced yesterday she just got word that her ex-husband in Cleveland has willed her $800,000. Belle says that she has always been too poor to afford an intriguing young boy friend” (“In The Biggest Little City . . .” item, *NSJ*, Dec. 20, 1931, 9).


n191 122 Wingfield’s shady associates: Al W. Moe (2008), *The Roots of Reno*, Kindle Edition; Dwayne Kling (2000), *The Rise of the Biggest Little City: An Encyclopedic History of Reno Gambling, 1931–1981*, University of Nevada Press, 137). The same year Charles Rennie opened the Town House, 1932, the Willows (*TNTK*, 102, 115) burned down, never to be reopened. Three years later, in 1935, Charles Rennie opened The Country Club, at the time Reno’s fanciest night spot, adjacent to the Washoe County Golf Course on Plumas — directly across from where Robert later lived with his father. A few years after that Rennie was muscled out of The Country Club by the associates of George Wingfield who had owned the Willows, Graham and McKay. Rennie went back to the Town House full time. When The Country Club burned down in 1936, Rennie was suspected. Soon the Town House went into receivership and closed, later to reopen under different ownership.


n193 123 gave himself a plug: And Robert may well have been ribbing Walter when on the Carlisle map he gave the music store the caption, “Have you the fire music from Tristram and Isolde?” Walter had just earned his Masters with a thesis retelling the Tristram legend in verse (Clark, “Sword Singer”).

n194 123 interview Craig Jackson: Interview, Jul. 1, 2012. Craig is the son of John and Nancy Jackson, for each a second marriage. Nancy earlier had an affair with Robert. She collected his works, which Craig inherited – I purchased from him a small Caples lithograph, which Heather Becker’s Conservation Center (*TNTK*, 113) refurbished for me. Craig’s father John was the twin brother of Nick Jackson who acquired Newman Silver Shop at 120 W. Second Street and there exhibited Robert’s works in the gallery space. Nick was close enough to Robert to name his son Cole, after Robert’s middle name.

Brownie Jackson, Nick and John Jackson’s mother, was first married to a man named Spellman in New York City, then to Dave Jackson of Fernley after her Reno divorce. Robert was friends with Brownie and Dave. So there are a lot of connections between Robert and the Jacksons.

Through his mother, Craig inherited Brownie’s guest book. When he showed it to me, I assumed “Peck” to be a playful pseudonym, perhaps a reference to Peck’s bad boy. Later, when leafing through *Desert Wolf* at Special Collections looking for works by Robert, I came across quite a number of images signed Peck, and others signed Peckham. At the time I took Peck’s to be works by Robert, on the strength of the signature on Brownie’s map. But in looking at the map more closely, I became troubled by the graphic style, which is closer to that of the Peck drawings in *Desert Wolf* than it is to either of the two maps certainly from Robert’s hand. I confess I had earlier been troubled by the stylistic differences between the images in *Desert Wolf* which can definitely be attributed to Robert and those signed Peck.
Notes, The Nevada They Knew, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 124–127  •  Indexed Notes n195–n199

(see esp. Oct., 1929, 18–29 and Dec., 1931, 18–29). But at the time I dismissed my doubts. Now I no
longer believe that Peck is Robert.

In addition to the matter of graphic style, two other considerations weigh toward doubt. One is that
no other image of Robert’s I’ve run across carries “by” before his signature. The other, more compelling
consideration is that during the time Caples contributed to Desert Wolf, there was one student
contributor with the surname Peckham, and another student listed on the editorial staff with the surname
Peck, both of whom are identifiable individuals. Would Robert have chosen a pseudonym resembling or
identical to the names of other contributors? Peckham furnished drawings to Artemisia, the university’s
yearbook, as well as to Desert Wolf. The 1928 Artemisia (335) identifies him as “Mr. Dorlon Peckham,”
a “former Nevada artist.” So works signed Peckham are certainly not by Robert. Peck was Edward Peck,
class of 1928, in charge of Desert Wolf circulation for the four issues of 1927, and presumptively the
illustrator who signed himself Peck. I reluctantly conclude, therefore, that it was probably Edward Peck
and not Robert who charmingly illustrated Brownie Jackson’s guest book, tipping his hat to Robert and
his popular conception.

Craig Jackson, made acquainted with these facts and conjectures, replied: “What I can say is that he,
Bob, Brownie and Dave were all very close friends. And that map was his with their special add ons by
Bob” (email, Jan. 27, 2014).


n195 125 the Stanhope : The Stanhope is where Charlie Parker died in the suite of Nica de Koenigswarter in 1955.
It was Rosemary and Robert’s custom to have family parties at the Stanhope the night before embarking
and the night of returning from their European trips (e.g., ibid., Aug. 25, 1964). I’m not certain if
Rosemary rented a room or suite as needed or if she maintained a hotel apartment there. Rosemary
Junior’s wedding reception was held in the Stanhope’s Prince Ranier Suite (ibid., May 30, 1965). The
hotel later became condos.

125 titled “Manta” : Caples, “Manta The Earthmaker,” n.d. (1934?), Caples Archive. Russ Lindsay, co-
author of the 2009 catalog, dates “Manta” to 1934 (Robert Cole Caples: Rooted in Nevada,
127 The old Caddy : Based on Clark, City, 433–34 and “On Learning to Look,” 4.

n196 127 routinely gave away works : Edda Houghton, hand- and typewritten notes on talk by Miriam Chism for
docents for the 1972 Caples retrospective exhibition, Houghton-UNR. Walter’s sister Miriam Chism,
according to these notes, said of Robert: “Has destroyed hundreds of things which he felt he had
outgrown. Would sometimes try to get them back from owners because he was deeply dissatisfied with
what he had produced. . . . [G]ave his pictures away or charged ridiculously small sums for them – has
been known to trade them for such trifles as a pair of stockings or a toy stuffed kangaroo.” It’s the view
of Reno art dealer and Caples friend Peter Stremmel that this pattern of behavior so limited Robert’s
“total output” as to prevent his becoming “a major twentieth century artist” (Wheeler, “Caples”).

n197 127 three times : In addition to the hecatomb of portraits, Lawrence quickly discards experiments during a
transitional phase (Clark, City, 438–39) – this is typical Robert; then Helen tells Tim that Lawrence
defiantly burned all the canvases she urged him to sell through her effete, commodifying friend Mr.
Hule (591) – I don’t know if there is a counterpart in Robert’s life.

n198 127 a trash can : What was “a trash can” in 1964 (“On Learning to Look,” 4) had been “a big wire waste
basket” in 1945 (Clark, City, 434). The discrepancy suggests that Walter didn’t refresh his memory by
consulting his first version, composed twenty years closer to the event, when composing his second.

127 “I don’t remember” : Caples, letter to Clark for “On Learning to Look,” n.d., probably early 1964, Clark-
UNR, 1–2.

n199 127 Barbara Vucanovich : The congresswoman’s daughter, Reno author-journalist Patty Cafferata, thinks
Hazel “didn’t think much of” Robert (phone conversation, Apr. 10, 2013). Her friend Patricia Klos put
it that Hazel “hated” Robert (interview, May 9, 2013). Other works left in the Plumas basement included
a utility pole (the same one existing in photo reproduction in the Caples Archive?) and a landscape.
These got distributed in the Vucanovich family.
Notes to Pages 127–129  ●  Indexed Notes n200–n210

n200 127 **friend Betty Bliss** : In June, 1966, Bliss stopped by at the Dayton house. Apparently no one was living there, because she unscrewed the hinges on Robert’s studio shed, where she found a folio of Robert’s whose contents she forbore from looking at out of respect for his privacy, together with a painting of what she described as locust leaves and another with unidentified subject. She also salvaged a “mural” of a “lizard sharp, clear and rampant” with “archers” – Indian bowmen surely – from where it was leaning on a fence and placed it near the door where Robert had hung it. Bliss reported her doings in Dayton to Robert (letter to Robert and Rosemary Caples, Jun. 6, 1966, Caples Archive).

In 2014, I bought the painting of leaves (not locust, in my opinion) from a dealer selling it on behalf of Walter McNamara, a Reno painter, to whom Bliss gave it as a Christmas present in 1979. She scrawled across the backing: “This is one of Robert Caples ‘experimental’ things which he gave me when I rescued some stuff from his Dayton studio. Betty Bliss”

n201 127 **Peter Stremmel chivvied him** : Peter Stremmel, letters to Caples, Jan. 31 and Feb. 16, 1977, Stremmel Gallery files; Caples, letter to Peter Stremmel, Feb. 4, 1977, Stremmel Gallery files. An unnamed gallery owner quoted by Sessions Wheeler (“Caples”) said of Caples, “He was a perfectionist, and too frequently destroyed his works because he felt [they] did not measure up to his high standard. And when perfection was not achieved he became emotionally and physically ill. However his ‘imperfections’ sold if we could get our hands on them.” This was Peter Stremmel again (email to Turkey Stremmel, Feb. 4, 2014, forwarded to the author).

128 **Rosemary used to save** : Benson, transcript of phone interview of R Caples Sr, Aug. 9, 2000, 2, Benson-UNR, 4.

n202 128 **It takes me ages** : Wheeler, “Caples,” 4. The letter is probably from the early 1950s. The quote continues: “It is a ghastly happening. I had a landscape give up the ghost in Virginia City last fall, it took three hours to subside. I have never known a picture to hang on so long. One small mountain with a bit of sun on it kept stirring long after the surrounding territory had grown stone cold. I finally painted the wretched area out with three or four quick strokes of the brush, it was the merciful thing to do. It was like putting a bullet through an injured animal.”

n203 128 **Alice LaVonne** : Phil Elcano, conversation, Apr. 7, 2014. A successful big band singer in San Francisco, Alice was so averse to coming to Reno that she had her agent ask the Inferno Club, run by Phil Encano’s grandfather, for double the usual rate, which the club paid. She married Phil’s father, Paul Elcano, and would sing and MC there on Center Street for some years.

n204 128 **Triadic Fish** : As of Jan., 2013, the work was on loan at the Nevada State Museum in Carson City (Sue Ann Monteleone, conversation, Jan. 31, 2013) from Ladd Coates, son of Palgrave (Paul) Holmes and Rosemary Coates, who told me the story (emails, Feb. 2, 2013). Also from Coates in the NSM collection is a Caples of Virginia City Buildings, 1950.

n205 128 **experiment in color** : Another Caples fish, Adventurous Fish (1948), which I’ve seen in a private collection, is also colorful. The work is reproduced in black & white in 1964 retrospective.


“ha[d]n’t done any portraits” : Clark, City, 432.

n207 129 **closing his studio for good** : “Everything else in the studio was piled up neatly. . . . It took two trips to get all the things down. On the second Lawrence pulled the studio door shut, with the lock on” (ibid., 434).

n208 129 **still there in 1937** : He was there in 1935, by the evidence of the Town House map (TNTK, 121 fig.), and in 1936, when Dick Walton returned to Reno (Walton, Tape #16, Walton Papers).

n209 129 **Robert kept the studio** : “When they were all in the can, he took it back down and set it in the alley again. Then he returned and opened the windows in the studio. He felt much better. He has never done another personal portrait since” (“On Learning to Look,” 4).

n210 129 **handsome Harry Drackert** : Craig Jackson and the Art Collection, UNR both hold this image – I’m not
Notes to Pages 130–135  ●  Indexed Notes n211–n221

sure which if either is the original, or if both are prints. Jackson also holds a Caples drawing of rodeo star and actor Casey Tibbs, 1950s.

130  Angela : “Up & down ‘C’ St.” item, VCN, Nov. 4, 1950, 1.

n211 130  last new work to reach the public : In Joanne de Longchamps (1975), The Schoolhouse Poems, West Coast Poetry Review. Robert’s painting Winter Moon would, in 1977, be used as cover art on another book of poetry (M. B. Thornton (1977), Winter at Noon, Great Basin Books). However, the painting was done years earlier in Nevada. The author was Margaret Bartlett Thornton.

n212 130  “women’s portraits” : “Robert C. Caples’ Portraits to Be Exhibited Today,” NSJ, Mar. 15, 1933, 3. The show also included a charcoal, Reno Roofs, which in January had been displayed in the Palace of the Legion of Honor in San Francisco as part of an exhibition of Western paintings. In the Caples Archive is a second sketch of a black man.

130  “Federal Art Project” : Questionnaire, 1.
133  “delicate charcoal women” : Clark, City, 355.

n213 133  of Renoites : Dick Walton (Tape #16, Walton Papers) mentioned one of Bill Berry, husband of Frances Berry, at whose house Walton’s sister “used to party” in Reno.

n214 133  of families : Tom Wilson (Reminiscences, 35) remembered “a beautiful portrait” Robert did of the wife and child of a prominent Reno judge, Ralph Ellsman. Was he thinking of the oil painting of Ralph Elsman, Jr. (TNTK, 73), or another work? Ralph Elsman Senior was not a Reno Judge.

n215 133  of men : Walter owned three arresting male portraits, now belonging to Bob Clark, the dashing man with moustache, another man with moustache, and a man with wrinkles; Judge Bartlett’s archive at Special Collections holds the one of the business or professional man in glasses, and another, Sherwood Chapman; and Craig Jackson inherited a portrait of a cowboy from Nancy Jackson.

133  “walking Commercial Row” : Clark, City, 355.
134  Walton’s claim : Walton, Tape #76, Walton Papers. (See. p. [ ]).

n216 134  Bar Sinister : Hands at the Bar “was first exhibited under the title ‘Bar Sinister,’ a title that proved too bookish (and, I suppose, too foreboding to find acceptance)” (Caples, letter to Norinne Buck, Sep. 10, 1976, Buck-UNR). I’m not sure when it and Chessmen at Midnight were created. Twenty-One, similar to the former, dates to 1935.

n217 134  “his best known” : “Reno Artist Wins Coast Recognition,” NSJ, Dec. 25, 1934, 9. Some of Robert’s charcoals of Indians for the FAP were exhibited at Gump’s at the same time.

134  “the desire to draw Indians” : Ibid.

n219 134  “Longfoot” : Caples, letter to Margaret Bartlett, Nov. 14, 1975, Thornton-UNR. “Warren Toby, an older and entirely cordial Indian,” was how Robert described the mocassin-maker.

135  white canvas sneakers : Caples Archive.
135  “I was being welcomed” : Caples, “Nevada Indian Art.”

n219 135  about a year and a half : Work on the courthouse mural, Washoe Indian Legend of Creation, was underway in Robert’s Clay Peters Building studio in April 1935, when the portraits went up at the Clark Memorial Library; then the mural was installed in July (“Mural Completed by Robert Caples,” NSJ, Jul. 17, 1935, 3).


n221 135  a susceptible young man : Floyd Lanier Graham was born in 1940 (John Caples Diary, Sep. 15, 1971).
John described Lanier as “tall and good-looking” (ibid., Apr. 19, 1965). He gathered Lanier was two years older than twenty-three-year-old Rosemary, had attended Kenyon College and was getting his master’s degree in art history at Columbia, hoping to become a museum curator, which he did.

Robert thought: Questionnaire, 1.

Charles F. Cutts: Marcia Growdon (2009), “Charles F. Cutts,” Online Nevada Encyclopedia. The Nevada Art Gallery was in Cutts’ home at 643 Ralston, with Cutts’ personal collection as its foundation. The gallery later moved to Court Street as the Sierra Nevada Museum of Art, then to Liberty Street as the Nevada Museum of Art.

Robert’s account: Caples, “Nevada Indian Art.”

PUBLIC WORKS OF ART PROJECT: This designation is correct. The Public Works of Art Project existed for the years 1933–34, to be supplanted by the Federal Art Project which existed August, 1935 to September, 1939.

the Gazette announced: “University to Get Indians Portraits,” REG, Feb. 17, 1934, 12.

“broke all previous records”: “Campus Chatter” item, NSJ, Feb. 23, 1934, 6.


old Clark Memorial Library: Named for Alice McManus Clark, wife of William Clark, a mining tycoon.

first name mentioned: UN Press EAC, Oct. 26, 1967. Also considered were rubbings of Basque tree carvings.


deep and vibrant: None of the four Indian portraits in the 1964 retrospective exhibition were originals of the eighteen reprinted in the two portfolios. I have found no indication that Robert was involved in the decision to exclude those originals from the exhibition, an unfortunate decision insofar as it prevented those familiar with the prints from comparing them to the originals. Also in the catalog is a portrait, Indian Man (1934).

I was enormously pleased: Caples, letter to Norinne Buck, Aug. 3, 1979, Buck-UNR. There is an image from Land magazine in the Caples Archive of a drawing of Robert’s of an Indian in a war bonnet holding a pipe. Another Indian in a war bonnet by Robert is held by the NHS, as is a drawing of Indian weapons.

He used to make field trips: Walton, Tape #16, Walton Papers.


“What did the Indians come to you?”: Caples, “Nevada Indian Art.”

“It became a game”: Questionnaire, 1–2.

composite images: A related aspect of Robert’s compositional method for the Indian portraits is what Dick Walton asserted (Walton, Tape #16, Walton Papers), that Robert borrowed from George B. Bridgman, author of many widely circulated books for artists on anatomy and drawing from life: “He was very familiar with Bridgman, in fact many of his Indian heads were transposed from a Bridgman anatomy book. Well, he transposed very well, because he romanticized on top of these positions, these poses. And no one would ever think that they were transpositions.” Walton didn’t say whether this were something he heard from Robert or surmised himself. It’s conceivable that Bridgman crossed Robert’s path when teaching at the Art Students League of New York during the young Robert’s brief stint there in 1924–25 (Stephanie Cassidy, email, Jun. 15, 2015).

the old Indian: “Nevada Indian Art.”

was not that day wearing: Ibid. The rabbit-skin robe was an inspired adjustment. About two years later, University of Nevada historian Effie Mack saw Jigger Bob for the first time, shortly before his death, “squatting on the ground with a rabbit-skin robe around him – the only time that I ever saw an Indian wear one. . . . I could hardly see his face hunched in the robe.” (Ruth Hermann (1972), The Paiutes of Pyramid Lake, Harlan-Young Press). Mack is the historian instrumental with President Armstrong in bringing the Doten journals to the University of Nevada (RM Clark, (1973a), “Acknowledgments,” vi, in Clark, Doten).

traditional roles: The first portfolio, The Desert People: A Portfolio of Nevada Indians (1970, University of Nevada Press), contains the following nine drawings: Arrow Maker, Blind Weaver, Burden Carrier, Cooking Woman, Fire Maker, Hunting Lesson, Rock Painter, Story Teller, and Young
Notes to Pages 140–145

Indexed Notes n231–n234

Brave. The second portfolio, People of the Silent Land: A Portfolio of Nevada Indians (1972, University of Nevada Press), contains the following nine: Blind Shaman, Bow Maker, Camp Watcher, Cradleboard Weaver, Seed Grinder, Tribal Elder, Tule Bearer, Watchful Hunter, and Water Carrier.

The four of the total of twenty-two drawings eventually excluded from the portfolios include two with artifacts not indigenous to the Great Basin (war bonnet, and man drilling jewelry with a pump drill) (Catherine S. Fowler, email, Feb. 20, 2014), and two straight portraits (Indian boy, and Jenny Crow) (but included in the second portfolio are two other straight portraits, Blind Shaman and Camp Watcher).

Blind String Maker (date unknown, probably between 1933 and 1935) is an Indian subject in the Caples Archive. Also in the Caples Archive are the following, similarly dated: Flour Maker; Indian basketmaker in spotted head scarf; Indian man painting pot; Indian woman in head scarf; Indian woman scrutinizing something; Indian woman with scarf over her eyes; Indian mortars and pestle; Old Indian man; another Old Indian man; and Old Kowhee, Shoshone. These works exist in photo reproduction.

wasn’t “pragmatically minded”: Caples, letter to Norinne Buck, Aug. 3, 1979, Buck-UNR.

Ralph Burns also: Phone interview, Feb. 25, 2014. Ralph Burns was born in 1944. His grandfather Pete Winnemucca, who died before Ralph was born, was not, Ralph told me, of the original Winnemucca family, but “got his name working for” the Winnemuccas. There were a lot of Winnemuccas around then, as Ralph remarked, but probably the employer was Harry Winnemucca, standing to his right in the photo. (Robert’s drawing of Chief Johnny Smith was reproduced in the Nevada WPA Report for 1936–37.) Other Winnemuccas claim descent from Numaga, called Young Winnemucca, leader during the 1860 Paiute Wars (Linda McCauley, phone conversation, Mar. 17, 2014).

Harry was a nephew of Jigger Bob (Hermann, Paiutes), as well as great-grandson of Numaga, himself grandson of Chief Truckee.

“might have been”: Caples, “Nevada Indian Art.”

Caples “did some nice work”: Catherine S. Fowler, email, Oct. 16, 2012.

We spent half an hour or so: Catherine S. Fowler, interview, Dec. 11, 2012.

braiding: A relative, Linda McCauley of Wadsworth on the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation, identified the cradleboard weaver as Herma Winnemucca McCloud, the mother of Avery Winnemucca (TNTK, 161) (phone conversation, Mar. 17, 2014). Herma married Louis McCloud after Avery was born. Herma may have worn her hair braided at the time Robert drew her, said Linda McCauley.

women in head scarves: Blind Weaver in the first series, Camp Watcher, Seed Grinder and Tule Bearer in the second. ‘Maggie’ Shoshone Indian Reservation Duck Valley wears a different style head scarf in a red chalk portrait not of the 22 for university. The original is in a private collection, a reproduction in the Caples Archive.

Robert himself: Caples, “Nevada Indian Art.”

“an ancient and proud people”: Caples, letter to Norinne Buck, Aug. 3, 1979, Buck-UNR.


Robert’s general practice: Caples, “Nevada Indian Art.”

confirmed my suspicion: Catherine S. Fowler, email, May 27, 2013.


references to Indians: The reference to soul theft is at Clark, City, 205. Elsewhere Clark mentions only briefly that the Indians’ deities are “wonderfully present” (28); that Indians dried fish at Pyramid Lake.
The Nevada They Knew, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Page 145  ●  Indexed Notes n235–n238

(60) and guided for fishermen there (67); that “Indians are subtle in their perceptions of natural qualities” (165); and that they created petroglyphs (310). Walter’s Lawrence draws no Indians, but Lawrence looks to Tim like “a thin Indian” when they meet as boys at Pyramid (61), and like “a desert Indian” at the well in Death Valley (629).

n235 145 mustang stallion: ibid., 178–95. Clark himself was never a competitive runner (RM Clark, interview, Jun. 27–28, 2012); however, in his forties he ran four miles every morning (Benson, Ox-Bow Man, 194). The following passage describing adult Tim’s joyous state of mind strongly suggests to me that Walter like Tim loved running as a child: “In the streets of the city of trembling leaves, which were everywhere now, he was a boy running and running under the arc-lights toward joy” (Clark, City, 544).

n236 145 Both Paiutes and Washos: Hunting: fast runners located game such as antelope and drove them into corrals, then ran them in circles to tire them for the kill (Kelly, Ethnography, 84; Catherine S. Fowler, compiler and editor (1989), Willard Z. Park’s Ethnographic Notes on the Northern Paiute of Western Nevada, 1933–1944. University of Utah Anthropological Papers, no. 114, vol. 1,16, 17; see also Margaret M. Wheat (1967), Survival Arts of the Primitive Paiutes, University of Nevada Press, 9, 11, 14; Whiting, Paiute Sorcery, 15, 28).

Warfare: fast runners went out as scouts (Fowler, Park’s Ethnographic Notes, 137).

Sport: long-distance runs (up to 35 miles) and sprints, a cross-country team ball game, and games resembling soccer and field hockey (Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins (1994 [1883]), Life Among the Piutes, University of Nevada Press, 13; Downs, The Two Worlds of the Washo, 13, 108; Fowler, In The Shadow of Fox Peak, 203–5; Kelly, Ethnography, 169ff; Emory Strong (1969), Stone Age in the Great Basin, Binford & Mort, 162).

Rites of passage: puberty, both female (Harnar, Indians, 24) and male (Kelly, Ethnography,162); new fatherhood (Kelly, Ethnography, 160; Harnar, Indians, 24).

Prayer: for hunting luck; to shorten winter (Kelly, Ethnography, 153–54).

Fitness: adolescent girls ran when gathering firewood, to build stamina and industry (Kelly, Ethnography, 162).

And of course running accomplished simple transportation. In his novel Paiute (1965, 107), Sessions S. Wheeler has the Paiute leader Numaga, “running easily and steadily,” beat horsemen making a three-hour ride from a Virginia Range pass to the Washoe Valley. This is not preposterous in view of historical reports cited by Peter Nabokov ((1981), Indian Running: Native American History & Tradition, Ancient City Press). In the context of information Nabokov gathered, running in the Great Basin is in keeping with wider Native American traditions, if not as highly developed into communal ceremonials as is some groups such as the Pueblo (see also Waters, The Man Who Killed the Deer, 91, 204–6).

n237 145 “the very central character”: Clark (1983), “On The Track of the Cat” [an unsent, previously unpublished letter], in Laird, ed., Critiques, 185. The theme as well as the plot of Track, down to many details, first germinated in a longish narrative poem Walter wrote in the early 1930s while a graduate student at the University of Vermont, published posthumously with Bob Clark’s permission because of its bearing on the novel. Bob Clark thinks his father took an early stab at turning the poem into a novel, even before he wrote Ox-Bow (RM Clark, “Remarks on ‘Strange Hunting’ and The Track of the Cat,” undated transcript of a talk to a graduate seminar, Laird-UNR, Box 27; RM Clark (1985), “Foreword,” in Clark, Strange Hunting, Black Rock Press; Clark (1973), “Strange Hunting,” South Dakota Review 11:3, 6–22).

The old Indian in “Strange Hunting” who becomes Joe Sam in the novel is also a “Piute,” named “Cardo.” So it happens that Walter and Robert were making an old Paiute a central character at about the same time.

n238 145 “Joe Sam”: Walter may have taken the likeness of Joe Sam from a real person, John Nevers, a Washo carpenter and handyman in Washoe Valley while Walter was living and writing Track there. The John Nevers/Joe Sam identification was made by law professor, peace activist and sometimes Washoe Valley resident Homer Angelo, according to his son Alex Angelo (phone conversation, Apr. 25, 2013). Nevers’ daughter JoAnn Nevers has no knowledge of a connection with Clark, but told me her father may well have been working in Washoe Valley during the late 1940s (phone conversation, May 13, 2012). Beginning in the mid-1950s Nevers worked as caretaker for friends of Homer Angelo in the Valley,
political and environmental activist Maya Miller and her husband John, then head of the Nevada State Museum. Possibly it was from them that Homer Angelo learned about Clark and Nevers. But Kit Miller, the Millers’ daughter, hadn’t heard the story (email, May 11, 2013).

When Walter chose the name Joe Sam, did he realize that Robert’s first FAP subject, the old Arrow Maker at Topaz Lake, had the surname Sam (Caples, “Nevada Indian Art”)? His full name was Harry Sam. Sam, however, wasn’t an uncommon surname among Paiutes then. Sam would have been Harry’s father’s given name. There were Sams living on the Pyramid Reservation as well (Pancho Peterson, “Vital Statistics, Nixon, Nev. 1919–1966,” NC707, Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno Libraries).

And when Walter gave the novel its title, did he consciously mean to echo “The Tracks of the Turtle,” the chapter of City where Tim hunts for his elusive friend Lawrence Black in Death Valley?

n239 145 the allegorical net: In tracing the development of the novel, Bob Clark made the illuminating argument that where Track is a tragedy, the narrative poem in which it originated, “Strange Hunting” (n237), is like a morality play insofar as there is no increase of awareness within the story (RM Clark, “Remarks on ‘Strange Hunting’ and The Track of the Cat,” undated transcript of a talk to a graduate seminar, Laird-UNR, Box 27).

n240 145 his best novel: Max Westbrook, who wrote the first book-length treatment of Clark (Walter Van Tilburg Clark), is one who thinks Track Clark’s best work. Bob Clark, an incisive literary scholar, once implied his agreement (“Strange Hunting and The Track of the Cat,” 1980 draft of a seminar paper, 1, Laird-UNR, Box 27).


Jung: C. G. Jung (1964 [1930]), “The Complications of American Psychology,” in The Collected Works of C. G. Jung, vol. 10, 510. Not just the white man, the psychological structures of all immigrants, Jung believed, are modified over time by “the air” and “the soil” wherever they happen to settle. Superficially universal in application, Jung’s thoughts about assimilation of the “spiritus loci” (Jung, “Complications,” 511), the spirit of place, reflect the world of imperial Europe in which they arose. His unsubstantiated speculations about “infection by the primitive” ((1964 [1927]), “Mind and Earth,” in Collected Works, vol. 10, 47), “the childlikeness of the Negro” (46) and so on have in later days landed him in trouble as a racist. Really he seems to conflate the spirit of place and “contagion” by human contact (“Complications,” 507). Even the assimilation of the Indian hero ideal by Euro-Americans he branded a “sinking” of level (“Mind and Earth,” 48–49).


One commentator: Chester E. Eisinger (1963), Fiction of the Forties, University of Chicago Press, 308, 310.


“given up faith in man”: Eisinger, Fiction of the Forties, 310.


147 In 1946: RM Clark, “Chronology.” 281.

147 attracted to native cultures: Benson, Ox-Bow Man, 128.

148 “Helen”: Clark, letter to Helen, Feb., 1946, Heintze-UNR.

149 He was born north: Fowler, Park’s Ethnographic Notes, xxiii.

149 Frémont’s guide: Miller, Reno, 166.

Notes, The Nevada They Knew, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 149–151 • Indexed Notes n244–n251


n245 149 after sketching: Robert’s initial sketches of Jigger Bob were displayed in the window of Brundidge’s (“Oldest Piute Indian Dies, Believed 110,” NSJ, Oct. 10, 1935, 5).

n245 149 full nickname: Hermann, Paiutes, 187.

n245 149 itinerant cowhand: Fowler, Park’s Ethnographic Notes, xxiii.


n245 149 unoccupied Symonds Ranch: Hermann, Paiutes, 185.

n245 150 patrolman: Ibid., 181–87; Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada, Life Stories, 4.

n245 150 ethnographer Willard Z. Park: Fowler, Park’s Ethnographic Notes, xxiii.

n245 150 spry old man: Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada, Life Stories, 4.

n246 150 Jigger Bobb Canyon: Decisions on Geographic Names, 14. The bottom of Jigger Bobb (or Jiggerbob) Canyon, formerly Smith Canyon, is just south of the old fifty-acre Whittey Ranch near a feature now called The Willows on that spring-fed creek (not Willows Station), an early name for the town of Sutcliffe further south on the western shore of Pyramid). What’s labeled Whittey Ranch on the “Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe Map & Brochure” was earlier known as Symonds Ranch. The ranch was first owned by two men Woods and Symonds; the daughter of the latter married a man named Whittey (“Stage Road and Mine Created First Settlements on Pyramid Lake Shore,” Basil Woon, NSJ, May 30, 1954, 8). I don’t know if anyone lives there, but last time I was up at that end of the lake, the ranch was being worked.

n247 151 an historical interlude: A “Pah-ute Indian” stands on the tallest peak overlooking a large and splendid lake, his people’s home where they have hunted, fished, and defended against traditional enemies for time out of memory. He espies white men arriving at the lake. Somehow he realizes his bow and arrow will be no match for their weapons, that life henceforth will change.

n248 151 an Indian acquaintance: Johnny Coffeepot directs the artists to the mountain home of Jigger Bob and his wife Silent Ida. A portrait Silent Ida is picture #59 in 1964 retrospective. In Robert’s story, Silent Ida for some reason replaces Judy Bob, Jigger’s wife in 1933 and at his death. Judy, it could be, was away that day and Ida was there to watch over Jigger and the grandchildren. Silent Ida is correctly dated to 1933. Walter incorrectly dated it to 1934 in his draft for the catalog essay (“A Note on the Artist,” 10).

n249 151 animal shapes: Surprisingly, one of Robert’s totem animals, the lizard, is not among the animals created in the story. Yet it seems to have some kind of special status, for Jigger Bob singles it out when he says that when Manta began to make the world, “[e]ven the lizard was not here then” (“Manta the Earthmaker,” 10). Jigger says the same in Robert’s next version of the myth (“Here Is the World,” n.d., 1937 or 1938, typescript of David Malcolmson’s second rewrite, Caples Archive, 8).

n250 151 laid out the title: On the envelope containing the manuscript, a piece of the old title still clings to the new: “Manta – Here Is the World,” it says, with the notation: “David Malcolmson’s Re-write 2nd Version.” Was it Malcolmson, then, who wanted “Manta” dropped from the title to make it punchier? Malcolmson wrote children’s books about dogs and nature, and was also a literary critic. In the Santa Monica Library Image Archives is an evocative 1972 photo of “David and Esther Malcolmson, prominent writers in Pacific Palisades.” Malcolmson’s address on the envelope in the Caples archive is 544 Rustic Road, Santa Monica. Were the Malcolmson’s also film writers? Their architecturally significant house is on at least one movie tour. Of Malcolmson’s personal connection with Robert I know nothing else. Malcolmson died in 1978.

n251 151 1937 or 1938 revision: Caples, “Here Is the World.” I don’t know Malcolmson’s relationship with Marjorie Forrey, but the house at 544 Rustic Road, designed by architect Richard Neutra of the Church Fine Arts Building, for the elderly Forrey, is known both as the David Malcolmson House and the Marjorie Forrey House. It was completed in 1937. So this version of the fable dates no earlier. The manuscript bears Robert’s “406 Clay Peters Building” address, so must date no later than 1938, the last year Robert maintained his Clay Peters studio.
Notes, The Nevada They Knew, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 152–157 ● Indexed Notes n252–n258

n252 152 **Manta got so angry**: Here Robert borrowed from Paiute and Washo legends, in which combative siblings precipitate the division of humanity into tribes by their distraught parents.

n253 152 **drawing titled Numah**: In the Caples archive at the Nevada Museum of Art there is a copy of another drawing, without a title, of a little Indian girl who may be Numah’s sister Teha, even though no space is designated for a drawing of her in the manuscript. The two drawings are a matched set.


n254 153 **ethnographically correct**: There are no indigenous hats in Margaret Wheat’s Survival Arts of the Primitive Paiutes. The pictured sagebrush bark cap, Paiute but of uncertain provenience, is held at the University of Nevada’s Anthropology Research Museum.

153 **from California tribes**: Hermann, Paiutes, 112.


153 **blue army jacket**: Zanjani, Sarah Winnemucca, 95.

153 **A pensive photo**: Hopkins, Life; Ellen Scordato (1992), Sarah Winnemucca: Northern Paiute Writer and Diplomat, Chelsea House Publishers.

n255 153 **into California**: “The Piutes . . . have always been great travelers and as early as in the days of the mission fathers were in the habit of crossing the Sierra Nevada Mountains and visiting the Pacific seaboard every summer” (De Quille, The Big Bonanza, 192).

154 **with Frémont’s force**: Hermann, Paiutes, 91.

154 **optimistic version**: Sally Zanjani (2001), Sarah Winnemucca, University of Nebraska Press, 14.


155 **Wovoka’s father fought**: Ferol Egan (1972), Sand in a Whirlwind, Doubleday & Company, 278.

n256 155 **polar bears**: Robert called this animal “White Bear” not “Polar Bear.” Some American Indians have white bear stories, but that Robert had the polar bear in mind is clear from the fact that he designated Greenland as “White Bear.”

155 “a likeness of the mountains”: Caples, “Manta the Earthmaker.”

n257 155 **We killed some rabbits**: Inter-Tribal Council, Life Stories, 4. Carl Tobey, a relative, it must be, of the mocassin-maker Warren Toby (as Robert spelled it) who gave Rosemary the name “Longfoot,” was a native craftsman, artist and informant to Ruth Hermann for her book about the Pyramid Lake Paiutes, where she reproduced an oil portrait Tobey did of Jigger Bob (Paiutes, 46). We see the same features Robert drew, from the same perspective, with the same long hair and wearing a rabbit-skin robe. Tobey’s homage to Caples and to Jigger wears a double strand of bone beads made by Tobey himself.


157 **no woman in the Winnemucca family**: Ralph Burns, phone conversation, Mar. 17, 2014.

n258 157 **“advanced shamanic initiation”**: Lanier Graham, email, Jul. 31, 2012 (see also Graham, “The East-West Spirit”). Hopi snake ceremonies are not shamanic, that is, not curative, but rather are performed to assure that rain and sun bring an abundant corn crop. Initiations into the Snake Clan involving pits or darkened rooms with snakes exclude outsiders. However Robert may have been present at a snake washing, a less restrictive ceremony prior to the public dance when the priests of the snake clan sit in the same room with the snakes (rattlers and others), which slither among them (Jesse Walter Fewkes (2000 [reprint of nineteenth century articles]), Hopi Snake Ceremonies, Avanyu Publishing; Mark Amaru Pinkham (1997), The Return of the Serpents of Wisdom, Adventures Unlimited Press, 179).

The Paiute rattlesnake shaman inherits his or her power and undergoes no initiation (Laurence M. Klauber (1997 [1956]), Rattlesnakes: Their Habits, Life Histories, and Influence on Mankind, University of California Press, 1183; L. Daniel Myers (2004), “Great Basin Hunters and Gatherers,” in Mariko Namba Walter & Evan Jane Neumann Fridman, eds., Shamanism: An Encyclopedia of World Beliefs, Practices, and Culture, vol. 1. ABC-CLIO, pp. 292–96). But to actualize the power, the shaman might need to seek a dream or vision in a sacred cave (Fowler, In the Shadow, 177; Willard Z. Park, 1934, “Paviotso Shamanism,” American Anthropologist vol. 36, no. 1, 98–113, 103; Kelly, Ethnography, 190; Myers, “Great Basin Hunters,” 292–93). The shaman’s chief power, which is to cure those bitten, can also be used to cause bites (Park, “Paviotso Shamanism,” 107, 108). By one account (Whiting, Paiute Sorcery, 39n1), the rattlesnake specialist isn’t strictly a shaman, for while his...
Notes, The Nevada They Knew, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 157–159  •  Indexed Notes n259–n262

power is supernatural, what he treats, rattlesnake venom, is not.

158  A small Indian boy: Questionnaire, 4.

n259 159  “Spirit of the Heights”: Clark, City, 437. Tim sees Helen, that is Shirley, in the carving, but doesn’t elaborate (439). “Heights” alludes to the Winnedumah legend, which Robert recounted to Lillian Borghi (“A & A,” REG, Jan. 24, 1942, 7), how the chief singlehandedly routed invading “hordes” of “awestruck Digger” Indians when the Great Spirit turned him into a pillar of stone – the 80-foot monolith still to be seen near Hwy. 395 not far from Death Valley. By other versions of the legend, Winnedumah was a shaman. Borghi didn’t mention, and probably Robert hadn’t, that the legend is Southern Paiute, a distinct ethnic group.

n260 159 developer and political operator: Biltz’s interest in Washo themes coexisted with his drive to develop their homeland of Lake Tahoe for gain. As for the Paiutes and Pyramid Lake, Mergen (At Pyramid Lake, 67) singles Biltz out as “Reno’s own sovereign of economic growth” in the course of chronicling attempts to bring development to the lake while also chronicling the complex of causes which happily for the most part have thwarted development. Biltz was one of a consortium proposing to build “thousands of acres of hotels, casinos, vacation and retirement villages, churches, schools, medical facilities, shopping malls, museums, and golf courses” at Pyramid Lake.


not really a Paiute creation legend: The Nevada State Museum’s documentation attributes the legend to the Washo. Robert’s source is a mystery, for according to experts I consulted, Ralph Burns (phone conversation, Mar. 17, 2014) and Eugene Hattori (email, Mar. 19, 2014), the name Hy-Nan-Nu is neither Paiute nor Washo, nor is the legend. Figures Robert drew on the story page link Hy-Nan-Nu back to “Manta the Earthmaker,” an Indian story Robert mostly invented, so perhaps this one was invented, too.

In an original world of water, so the tale of Hy-Nan-Nu goes, Wolf God with his helper Coyote created land and then the Indians, first among them their guardian Hy-Nan-Nu, son of Dove and the Rattlesnake god. Hy-Nan-Nu proceeded to give the arts of hunting and basketry, and the art of happiness, “to the young and vigorous Paiute race.” In the upper left corner of the “Hy-Nan-Nu” story page stands the same schematic figure as the Manta on the Rand McNally map that goes with “Manta the Earthmaker,” a story Robert certainly elaborated if not entirely invented. That original Manta stands beside the rescued Moon; whereas on the “Hy-Nan-Nu” story page the figure’s companion is a very doggie-like Wolf God. But when I look again, the same terrier-like canine accompanies Manta on the cover sheet of the “Manta the Earthmaker” manuscript. Neither Wolf nor Coyote, nor for that matter Dog, appears in that story. I don’t know what to make of it, except to say that for Robert there had to be a thread connecting these stories and visual self-expressions.

Between Hy-Nan-Nu and The Potter and His Children, Robert assayed one other creation legend. This one exists as an undated two-page illustrated typescript in the papers of Robert’s friend Harry Drackert (Harry Wilmot Drackert Papers, 19-49, Series 5, Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno Libraries). I conjecture that Robert created it for Rosemary’s children while staying at Drackert’s Pyramid Lake Guest Ranch during the late 1950s. In this version, Coyote advises the first Indian man and women to send two of their feuding children east, to become the Shoshone, while the other two remain at Pyramid Lake to become the Paiutes.


Fleischmann, heir to the yeast company, was one of the dozens of millionaires recruited to the Reno/Lake Tahoe area by promoter and developer Norman Biltz, earlier an associate of George Wingfield, who thereby enhanced his own projects (Land and Land, A Short History, 59–60; Raymond,
Notes to Pages 159–161  ●  Indexed Notes n263–n272

George Wingfield, 214). Fleischmann, no idle heir, during his career was president of Nabisco (Breckenridge, the Mapes? 101).


n263 159 Indian Images, an oil panel: A note in the Caples Archive names, or more likely describes, this work as the “Chamberlin panel.” This work has twice been used as cover art, once on the second portfolio’s envelope, reproduced in desert earth tones, then with its original warm red background on the cover page of the “Education Guide” for the 2009 touring exhibition (Lindsay, Rooted in Nevada). It is held by the Art Collection, UNR.


n264 160 Variants of such images: Variants not mentioned in the text, all probably from the mid-1950s, include at least four untitled works with reproductions in the Robert Caples archive (bowmen, dancing figures, and two or more with petroglyphic symbols); one reproduced in Lindsay, Rooted in Nevada (see the next paragraph); Petroglyphs (1954) in 1964 retrospective; and one owned by Barbara Clark Salmon (Shadow and Substance).

The following Caples works not otherwise mentioned in TNTK or the index are either reproduced or listed in the Lindsay, Rooted in Nevada (works italicized bear what I take to be Caples’ titles, while the other titles, I’m guessing, were supplied for the exhibition): Indian symbols, mid-1950s; landscape (mountains and clouds), 1950s; landscape (Pyramid Lake), date unknown; Lizard Hall (1958); mountains, 1950s; mountains, 1950s; Mountains, 1950s; and Virginia City, 1930s.


n266 160 Coyote Summons the Animals: In 1977, Robert recalled the piece as “Coyote Calling the Animals” (letter to Edda Houghton, Jan. 26, 1977, Houghton-UNR).

n267 160 David Vhay: Of the Reno firm Vhay & Grow.

160 third, very much shorter manuscript: Caples, 1945 [date written in pencil by Caples on the cover page], “The Potter and the Lizard,” illustrated typescript, Caples Archive.

161 “Behold, the World!”: Caples, Potter, 214.

n268 161 “very fine, indeed”: Robert Laxalt, letter to Caples, Nov. 18, 1970, Caples Archive. The royalties amounted to $500, or “[t]en percent of retail price after 250 copies.” So the portfolios were priced at $20. Robert’s sense of propriety may or may not have been reinforced by American Indian activism, which around that time was becoming vocal about the ‘commodification’ of native cultures.

n269 161 American Women’s Voluntary Services: Wheeler, “Caples.” Nellie Shaw Harnar, who later wrote a history of her Pyramid Lake Paiute band (Harnar, Indians), administered the funds, allocating them to travel grants, scholarships and such (“Caples, the writer,” Velda Morby, RGJ, Feb. 17, 1980). Royalties for the second portfolio, of 1972, were used at least until Robert’s death by Flora Smith of the Tribal Council at Pyramid “for that ‘blood-mobile’ project of hers” (Caples, letters to Robbins, Aug. 1, 1977 and Jan. 19, 1979, Emily Robbins; John Caples Diary, Apr. 22, 1973).

n270 161 Phyllis Walsh: Walsh, “From Lorgnettes.”

161 Comstock heiress: The Art Collection, UNR holds a Caples artwork of the Marye Mansion, Virginia City (date unknown).

n271 161 S Bar S: Thomas purchased the 319 acre S–S Ranch, situated near a one-time stage stop, from the Gardella family in 1939 (Walsh, “From Lorgnettes,” 9). Today the place is back in the hands of the tribe.

161 a regular visitor: Walton, Tape #82, Walton Papers.

n272 161 Avery and his three sisters: Avery’s sisters were Dorothy, Viola and Flora (Linda McCauley, phone conversation, Mar. 17, 2014).


161 the Shoshone: “Coincidence: Nixon Indian Model Present as His Picture Is Cleaned,” NSI, Oct. 20,
1948, 18.


162 **University of South Dakota**: From the university’s yearbook for 1923, online at Dead Fred Genealogical Photo Archive.


*n273* 162 **New Yorker articles**: Liebling, *Dateline – Pyramid*. Ralph Burns (phone interview, Feb. 25, 2014) said Avery had “a fine voice,” spoke English well, and sometimes acted as spokesman for the tribe in its contacts with the surrounding society.


*n274* 162 **But is it plausible**: Ben Aleck, phone conversation, Feb. 24, 2014; Ralph Burns, phone conversation, Feb. 25, 2014. Ben Aleck, however, who is somewhat younger, admitted to possessing one or two points, without remembering how he came by them.

*n275* 163 **Abe and Sue Abraham**: William “Abe” Abraham and Susie “Sue” Mauwee Abraham, a Nez Perce, had “the first Indian-owned store at Nixon” (1946–70), selling “groceries, ranch supplies, and hardware” (Rusco, “Introduction,” xxii). Every time I returned to the lake in those days I was flattered to be remembered by Abe, an outgoing, talkative man. A. J. Liebling (*Dateline – Pyramid*, 27–28, 95) described him in 1955 as “unique – a Paiute full of business zeal.” The Episcopalian minister on the reservation complained to Liebling that Abe and Sue were “Mormon emissaries.” Abe worked in the building trades in Reno to save money for the store, which he called his “air-condition teepee. (Paiutes have never had teepees.)” Sessions S. Wheeler ((1969), *The Desert Lake: The Story of Nevada’s Pyramid Lake*, The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 113), who misspelled the name as “Abrahams,” included a photo of Abe and Sue in front of their “Indian Trading Post” and post office. Earlier signage said simply “Abe & Sue’s Grocery.”

163 **he learned from Walton**: Walton, letter to Caples, Sep. 8, 1978, Walton Papers.

*n276* 163 **he wrote to Joanne**: Caples, letter to Joanne, Mar. 5, 1979, de-L-UNR. Artist and art historian Jim McCormick related to me (interview, Jul. 19, 2012; email, Jan. 23, 2013) how in 1983, not long before her death, Joanne de Longchamps read him this letter. Was that the same occasion when the ill Joanne handed her cat over to Jim’s wife Loretta Terlizzi, the only other person the cat got along with? (conversation, Feb. 18, 2014).

*n277* 163 **Lovelock Cave**: The cave had 4,000 years of occupation and favorably dry conditions for preserving artifacts such as the tule frame of the decoy, which when deployed would have been fitted with a feathered duck skin. Conceivably Robert knew that the first systematic dig at the cave had been initiated by the same Alfred Kroeber who studied Ishi. By legend, the Paiutes trapped the giants, the Si-Te-Cah, then built fires in the cave entrance. Sarah Winnemucca placed the extermination of the “Side-Okahs” in her own great-grandfather’s time, unless that’s a locution meaning long ago (“The Pah-Utes” (1882), in *The Sagebrush Anthology: Literature from the Silver Age of the Old West* (2006), Lawrence I. Berkove, ed., 339).


*n279* 164 **the Hermitage**: Documents, Caples Archive. After reading his letter about “Lo and Mrs. Lo” would Joanne de Longchamps have expected to see a snapshot of a room at Turtle Hill with the hand of Rock Painter and the intent face of Cooking Woman exhibited on a book stand? (But what is the book?)

*n280* 165 **Robert’s Virginia City**: The nearly-same view, inherited by Bob Clark from Walter, also painted in 1948, has the buildings converging more or less upward, and to a St. Mary’s positioned higher in the picture, a composition privileging the town at the expense of space and distance. One more (Growdon, *Artist and the Man*, 7), said to be from the 1930s but seeming to belong to the same set, does even less with the perspective, unless you know the place and let yourself imagine the distances concealed by its nocturnal
spaces. Lane also owned *Virginia City* (1949), a view of C Street buildings, shown in 1964 retrospective. (A similar work in the catalog in *Old Buildings, Virginia City* (1949).)

**n281 165 proprietor Gordon Lane**: In “Bea & Sherman” (14): “Gordie, the bartender, told me [Caples] had lived upstairs and paid his rent with the canvas.” I’m not sure that’s factual.

Walter was unhappy to discover that same year that WW II submariner Lane and his wife were “ardent Goldwaterites” (Clark, letter to Caples, Aug. 5, 1964, Clark-UNR; Walton, Tape #82, Walton Papers).

165 **“He was a perfectionist”**: Anonymous, conversation, Apr. 1, 2014.

**n282 165 another St. Mary’s steeple**: RM Clark, late 1972, notes from conversations with Caples, files of RM Clark, 2. There are two works titled *St. Mary’s in the Mountains* in 1964 retrospective, one from 1939, one from 1950. Several others are mentioned elsewhere in these notes, and one more I’ve seen in the Reno home of a political figure.

165 **“see [it] burned”**: In “Bea & Sherman” (Shafton, unpublished manuscript, 1964, 54), I accurately had Robert say of the *Virginia City* in the Union Brewery, “I don’t like that painting very much,”” for that same year, 1964, he singled it out for Walter as one of “a few [pictures] that I’d like to see burned” (Caples, letter to Clark for “On Learning to Look,” n.d., probably early 1964, Clark-UNR, 2).

166 **“That was Austin, all right”**: Clark, *City*, 604.

**n284 166 Then, one day**: Questionnaire, 1; “On Learning to Look,” 4. The earliest rendering by Robert of Virginia City I’ve encountered other than by mention is *Virginia City Houses* (1935) in 1964 Retrospective.

**n285 166 Cézanne**: The Metropolitan acquired Cézannes at the Armory Show. Stuart Davis and Max Weber also exhibited at the Armory.

166 **National Academy of Design**: Robert’s abortive class there was “Drawing from the Antique” (“On Learning to Look,” 3).

167 **taught at the Art Students League**: Robert was later in contact with an old ASL instructor of his, Robert Hall (John Caples diary, Sep. 13, 1963), about whose work I haven’t discovered anything.


**n286 167 drawing such portraits**: In the Bartlett archives at Special Collections are several more of Robert’s portraits of the kind, including another of Margaret, here without her helmet, and two of young women in the Bartlett circle, an unidentified woman, and socialite “Sister” Marston. “Sister” Marston lived with her family at the corner of Hill Street (“In Old Reno . . .,” Dorothy Bartlett, *NSJ*, Nov. 5, 1964, 6), long since demolished along with other Court Street mansions between Arlington Avenue and Virginia Street.


168 **“The day is not far off”**: Caples, “Manta the Earthmaker,” 3.

168 **[Jigger Bob’s] face**: Caples, “Nevada Indian Art.”

168 **“And thank you”**: Caples, letter to Joanne, Jul. 19, 1979, de-L-UNR.

169 **Second Federal Art Project**: Questionnaire, 2.

**n287 169 appointed supervisor**: Robert was promoted by Nevada director Harriet Spahn (Walton, Tape #16, Walton Papers).

169 **Also taught art classes**: I’ve come across the names of two Reno artists who in years to come claimed Robert as a teacher, Cliff Segerbloom (“To Be Featured . . .,” photo caption, *REG*, Nov. 30, 1951, 8) and Phoebe Higgins (“Nevada Artists Exhibit,” *NSJ*, Mar. 31, 1967, 5).

**n288 169 Index of American Design**: www.nga.gov/collection/iad. The Index of American Design was a program under the Federal Art Project of the Works Progress Administration. The National Gallery of Art has no record of a Nevada unit and holds no materials from Nevada, nor does it contains anything about Caples in its general files (Jean Henry, email, Apr. 16, 2014).


**n290 170 Job and His Comforters**: Lawrence (Clark, *City*, 355) kept Blake’s *Job* open at his Peavine cabin bedside, a reference to the panel. The theme must have intrigued Caples, but there is no direct influence from Blake detectable in the style or composition of Robert’s *Job*. 
Notes, *The Nevada They Knew*, by Anthony Shafton

**Notes to Pages 170–171 ● Indexed Notes n291–n299**


*n292 170*  **a score of other Caples works**: Walter said “twenty or thirty” (Clark, letter to Barbara Clark, Jul. 5, 1937, Clark-UNR).

*n293 170*  **arrange for destruction**: Robert “terribly upset” Edith Holmes, a Caples collector and friend helping Craig Sheppard select works for the retrospective, by requesting that she organize the destruction of the two panels he had come so to detest. Walter, called upon to resolve the crisis, appealed to Robert to send poor Mrs. Holmes a “word of release and absolution,” while also assuring him that the new university buildings didn’t have room to hang these works (Clark, letter to Caples, Apr. 8, 1963, Clark-UNR; Benson, *Ox-Bow Man*, 333). Walter was wrong.

*n294 170*  **“these same dead horses”**: Caples, letter to Walton, Jul. 27, 1979, Walton Papers. The “loomers” had been chosen by the university president for his office walls, a choice that struck many as strange given the somber subject matter, especially of *Job* (Robert E. Blesse, interview, Jul. 10, 2012). The president was probably N. Edd Miller in 1973 or before, but could have been Max Milam in 1974 or 1975. Robert would be pleased to know that they were taken down (presumably by the next occupant), then became temporarily mislaid. In reply to a 1990 letter from Edda Morrison (formerly Houghton) on behalf of the university’s Art Department, asking whether Rosemary knew the whereabouts of the two panels, Rosemary replied that Robert had destroyed them – “I am certain,” she insisted, “knowing Robert” (Oct. 29, 1990, Houghton-UNR). Knowing, that is, how those works made him shudder. Rosemary was of course mistaken. As I write, they’re stored in the basement of the Church Fine Arts Building. However, the General Services Administration is making noises about repossessing them in a general sweep of WPA property and could still resurrect them (Paul Baker Prindle, conversation, Mar. 18, 2014). The FAP labels say “property of the United States Government” and “loaned.” Much WPA art which the government held was “liquidated” – that’s Dick Walton’s inflammatory term – under Truman (“Grand Old Man,” Sandra Macias, *RGJ*, Apr. 4, 1993, 7C). Walton, ever conscious of his personal history, could state half a century later that while with the FAP he completed 132 watercolors, 170 oils, and 248 drawings (“Nevada – from artist’s viewpoint,” Phillip I. Earl, *RGJ*, Aug. 31, 1986, 2E).

*n295 170*  **the hands are typical**: Surprisingly Robert told Jack McAuliffe, who recruited Robert for the university’s centennial medallion, that hands were the part of the anatomy he had the most trouble with. For that reason, Jack requested and Robert had made for him a print of *Hands at the Bar in 1973* (Michael McAuliffe, conversation, Mar. 28, 2014).

*n296 170*  **“hot and close without pity”**: Clark, Letter to Barbara Clark, Jul. 5, 1937, Clark-UNR.


*n298 170*  **establishment of an art gallery**: “Establishment of Reno Art Gallery Now Is Proposed,” *NSJ*, Mar. 19, 1937, 6. This would be Reno’s first permanent commercial art gallery, in the basement of Brundidge’s art supply store. Dr. James Church, co-founder the Nevada Art Gallery in 1931, served on the aforementioned committees with Robert.

*n299 171*  **Walter told Barbara**: Clark, Letter to Barbara Clark, Jul. 5, 1937, Clark-UNR.


*n299 171*  **hands playing Twenty-one**: Just before or at the very beginning of the second project he did an oil of hands playing *Twenty-one* much resembling *Hands at the Bar*. It appears number 1 in the retrospective catalog because it hung nearest the entrance. During the course of the show, Jim McCormick told me (conversation, Feb. 18, 2014), it was lifted by someone on their way out and has never been recovered.
Notes, *The Nevada They Knew*, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 171–172

- **Indexed Notes n300–n307**

  n300  171  **Virginia & Truckee**: *V & T RR Bridge* is at the Nevada Historical Society.

  n301  171  **flower still life**: A “still life with fruit” is mentioned in *REG*, May 4, 1940.

  n302  171  **Biblical-Christian themes**: *Amen* (1964 retrospective; Art Collection, UNR); *Adam* (Miriam Chism, copy of plans for the 1972 “Retrospective Exhibit of works of Robert Cole Caples,” Caples Archive); *Iscariot* (Robert Morse Clark); *Jonah* (“‘Chemichromes’ to Be Shown in Reno,” *NSJ*, Nov. 16, 1941, 9).

Crucifixion is my title for a study from the mid 1930s, the time of *Job* and *Last Supper*, of five heads, three men and two women who appear to be aghast at the suffering, preserved as a photo in the Caples Archive.

Robert’s *Sermon on the Mount* (lost?) and an otherwise calendar-like *Head of Christ* but with riveting eyes (Bob Clark inherited it from Walter), both go back to the first project; done in 1934. The Christ was later reproduced one Easter by the *Gazette* (“A & A,” *REG*, Apr. 12, 1941, 9). A Chi Rho (a symbol of Christ) and a cross with light, stylistically similar to one another, date to the 1950s, judging from the signature on the former (photos in Caples Archive).


Of Lawrence Walter wrote: Clark, *City*, 355.

n303  171  **the pose of meditation**: The reviewer in the *Journal* recognized this or had his attention drawn to it by Robert: “His hands [are] shown in the meditative Yoga symbol of eternal life” (“New Version of Famed Painting on Exhibit,” *NSJ*, Jan. 3, 1937, 7).

n304  171  **cartoon of Walter’s sister**: Today the cartoon of Euphemia hangs on the wall of a relative, who also owns *Ladyslipper* (1930s), and a painting of houses and mountain, date unknown.

n305  171  **humorous wedding present**: I surmise it was a wedding present, since it was made in April, the month of Euphemia’s wedding (Nikki Chism, email, May 8, 2014).

The older son of the marriage, also James (JD), who became a congressman and later a lobbyist, wrote to Joanne de Longchamps from Washington in 1976, when moved by her dedication of *The Schoolhouse Poems* to “my uncle Walter Van Tilburg Clark and my mothers [sic] life long [sic] friend Robert Caples” (James D. Santini, Letter to Joanne, Apr. 26, 1976, de-L-UNR).

James’ brother, Walter Clark Santini, was possessed by “the [Walter] Clark mystique,” according to Bob Clark (RM Clark, interview, Jun. 27–28, 2012). Clark Santini was known for bringing up his relationship to his famous uncle in and out of season. Monique Laxalt (interview, Jul. 5, 2012) said, “He adored his uncle. Whenever I saw him, he would immediately launch into talking about his uncle and his writing.” David Chism (interview, Jul. 8, 2012), who is Walter’s other sister Miriam’s son, said of his cousin, “He tilted an infinite number of windmills, until he tilted the right one,” meaning Rancho San Rafael Park, the beautiful Reno city park and arboretum Clark Santini was instrumental in creating. In 1996, he committed suicide on the bank of the Truckee River when failing from throat cancer. Monique Laxalt surmised he chose Wingfield Park because of *City*; possibly, but he was found about three blocks upstream from the park. An obituary article by Virginia Kersey, his ally in the San Rafael Park campaign, said, “He was one of the world’s characters” (“Clark Santini dead at age 54,” Phil Barber & Susan Voyles, *RGJ*, Nov. 25, 1996). David Chism gave this example: Once when brother James D. Santini was being installed as District Attorney or Congressman, Clark showed up with his guitar and began singing an inauguration ditty composed for the occasion, and basically had to be given the hook. His cousins somewhat unfairly regard him as having been an eccentric ne’er-do-well.

n306  171  **family’s doubts about Santini**: RM Clark, interview, Jun. 27–28, 2012. Walter expected not to like him, but did when he met him on his trip West in 1937. “His talk is so quiet you forget about him, but he’s not negative” (Clark, letter to Barbara Clark, Jul. 5, 1937, Clark-UNR).

n307  172  **Vassar scholarship**: The scholarship was awarded by Vassar for Euphemia’s essay, “Relation of Chemistry to Agriculture and Forestry,” in a national competition (*Re-Wa-Ne*, Yearbook of Reno High School, 1927, 71).


did the same thing: Benson, transcript of interview of Barbara Clark Salmon, Nov. 3, 1998, Benson-UNR, 4.
n308 172 **Her nephew David Chism**: Interview, Jul. 8, 2012. David characterized Euphemia’s marriage to Jim Santini this way: Jim died in 1955, when their boiler blew up in his face, killing him instantly; Euphemia didn’t find him for three days. “Drink?” I asked. Chism shrugged his shoulders as if to say, that wasn’t the half of it. Another nephew, Gordon Chism, wrote that Euphemia “was academically brilliant, but was overwhelmed by children and housework and never seemed to get a handle on domestic life” (Gordon Chism, As I Remember, 16). Rare Clark family gatherings at her house “were almost always disasters” (David Chism, transcript of letter to Benson, Aug. 12, 2002, Benson-UNR).


n310 172 **Venereal disease program**: “Caples Named Program Head,” NSJ, Apr. 30, 1937, 1. When he took the position, Byron planned a clinic offering free diagnosis and emergency treatment, as well as ongoing free treatment for the indigent. With a brief intermission he held the position until 1952 (“Dr. Byron H. Caples Dies After Long Medical Career; Private Funeral is Planned,” NSJ, Oct. 8, 1955, 2. See also “Women Denied Aid in Washoe Hospital Here,” NSJ, Aug. 24, 1938, 1; “Second Charge Against Woman,” REG, Oct. 7, 1942, 2; “Venereal Control Director Resigns,” REG, Jun. 25, 1945, 2; “Drive to Keep Vice Houses In Reno Closed Is Delayed Until After Holiday Season,” NSJ, Dec. 14, 1946, 12; “Reno Is Divided On Vice Question,” NSJ, Mar. 18, 1949, 10). In 1949, Byron was the person the Journal went to for a quote from the opposition when the measure legalizing prostitution in the state passed the legislature without public hearings (“Vice House Closing Now Up To Counties,” NSJ, Apr. 15, 1949, p. 8). He probably also had some involvement in the weekly medical exams given women working Reno’s famous prostitution ghetto, or compound, the “Stockade,” which closed during World War II under federal pressure.

Byron also served as President of the Nevada Public Health Association (“Remember When . . .” item, NSJ, Apr. 25, 1948, 31) and as member of Reno’s Board of Health (“Enforcement of City Law Regarding Milk Demanded,” REG, Mar. 6, 1943, 2).

n311 172 **Brundidge’s**: “Brundidge’s Wish to Call Attention to a Window of Pyramid Lake Studies by Robert Cole Caples,” ad, NSJ, Apr. 7, 1938, 5.


172 **“often in San Francisco”**: Ibid., 5.

172 **overawed by Rivera**: Ibid., 5.

n312 173 **ceased to be a topic**: There had already been a drop-off of social items about Robert in 1933–34: “Social and Club Events” item, NSJ, Jul. 22, 1933, 10; “Miss Souter Honored At Garden Party,” NSJ, Sep. 2, 1934, 14.


n314 173 **a reception**: “Mr. L. P. Latimer Honored at Reception,” NSJ, Oct. 19, 1937, 4. Latimer founded the Latimer Art Club in Reno, a long-time venue for mostly amateur landscape artists. So arguably this was an arts item.

n315 173 **divorce from Virginia**: “Divorce Suits Filed,” NSJ, Feb. 8, 1938, 2.

n316 173 **marriage to Shirley**: “Reno Review” item, Gladys Rowley, NSJ, Apr. 30, 1938, section 2, 1.


175 **“Caples’ polo ponies”**: Walton, Tape #16, Walton Papers.

175 **St. Francis Hotel**: Andria Daley, Beebe & Clegg, unpublished manuscript, files of Andria Daley, 30, citing Walton.

175 **from her third husband**: Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Decree, and Transcript of Testimony, E. Shirley Hardie vs. Walter S. Hardie, in the Second Judicial District Court of the State of Nevada, in and for the County of Washoe, Case No. 58,825, Mar. 14, 1938. Walter Hardie and Shirley were wed on December 7, 1935 (“Reeve Schley’s Niece to Be Married December 7,” Bernardsville News, Nov. 21, 1935, 2), not December 8 (“Mrs. Evelyn Frost in Far Hills,” New York Times, Dec. 8, 1935), in Far Hills, New Jersey, by a Supreme Court justice. The 1940 U.S. Census places her in Potterville (should be Pottersville), New Jersey, six miles from Far Hills, in 1935. Walter Hardie, from a
Notes to Pages 175–177  ●  Indexed Notes n318–n330

New Orleans family, a Harvard graduate (“Reeve Schley Announces Troth of His Niece,” Bernardsville News, Oct. 3, 1935, 1), was in the insurance business in Boston when Shirley divorced him. When marrying Robert, Shirley used her married name, Evelyn Shirley Hardie. She used her current married name for all her remarriages (Caples, card to Kenneth and Emily Robbins, n.d., 1973 or after, Emily Robbins; “Reno Review” item, Gladys Rowley, NSJ, Apr. 30, 1938, section 2, 1).


fourth of five marriages: Shirley’s first three husbands were Sherman S. Rogers, Reginald Radcliffe Frost, and Walter S. Hardie (“Mrs. Evelyn Frost in Far Hills,” New York Times, Dec. 8, 1935); then Robert, then Sanford (Sandy) Griffin. Maureen Dane Benjamin of Indian Springs, born there in 1940, told me (phone interview, September 15, 2016) that Shirley married the artist colony’s ranch foreman, named Peterson, before Sandy Griffin.

girl Eve: Eve is her name on the 1940 US Census. Her full name given in the divorce proceedings (see above) was Evelyn Schley Hardie. Both the Evelyn and the Schley honor Shirley’s mother, Evelyn Baker Schley Behr (Leonard, History, 887).

first in Santa Barbara: On Walter’s questionnaire (2), Robert stated inaccurately that he and Shirley “went south via San Francisco to Santa Barbara.” City directories place them first in Santa Barbara, then in San Francisco, the latter not until 1940.

happy in art school: Caples, letter to Joanne, May 24, 1966, de-L-UNR. Shirley’s first husband Sherman S. Rogers had a home in Santa Barbara.

Santa Barbara County: The Santa Barbara County Recorder has no record of Cricket’s birth in 1938 or 1939 (Santa Barbara County Clerk, Recorder and Assessor Certifications of No Public Record, Oct. 9, 2012 and Jun. 5, 2014). Neither does the County Clerk of San Francisco (Certificate of No Public Record, Jun. 25, 2015).

April 21, 1938: Caples, card to Kenneth and Emily Robbins, n.d., 1973 or after, Emily Robbins.


instruction in oils from Taubes: Just a few months after the wedding, Robert invited Dick Walton down to Santa Barbara to take advantage of a week of oil painting instruction from Frederic Taubes with himself and Shirley (Walton, Tape #82, Walton Papers).


the same trip: It was also during the spring and Robert was “experimenting with iodine” (“Recalling Days of Friendship,” Roberta Childers, NSJ, Dec. 25, 1974, 20–21). Robert recalled that the boy “was sad to see me drive off” – so it was a “hiking trip” (“A & A,” REG, May 13, 1939, 10) in the sense that Robert hiked from his car.

Golden Pony: The image was painted over a gold leaf foundation, a technique perhaps inspired by Asian screens Robert saw on the coast, and which he would use later in the 1950s in paintings of leaves.

2070 Vallejo Street: Polk’s City Directory for San Francisco and the 1940 U.S. Census.

Robert exhibited several times: A one-man show at the Reno Art Center of FAP works where Walton gave a talk (“A & A,” REG, Jan. 27, 1940, 7); a subsequent group show with Walton and Meyer-Kassel at the same venue (“A & A,” REG, Mar. 23, 1940, 7); pastels and watercolors on display at “a local art store” (“A & A,” REG, May 4, 1940); and two group shows in late 1940 shortly after the move to Indian Springs, one in Reno (“A & A,” REG, Nov. 30, 1940, 9), one with Walton in Elko (“Exhibit Held For Art Week,” NSJ, Dec. 1, 1940, 14).

He would cross the Sierras: The family spent a week in Virginia City (“Many Visitors on Comstock,” REG, Jan. 22, 1940, 12). The Nevada Historical Society has photos of a visit to Byron’s Reno home on Plumas Street, probably in 1940 (Photographs Bio-C-619 at NHS, “c 1940”). Robert was in Reno again
Notes, The Nevada They Knew, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 177–180

Indexed Notes n331–n338


179 Austin, which Shirley despised: When Walter’s biographer Benson (Ox-Bow Man, 22) came to draw a picture of Indian Springs more than sixty years later, he got a couple of things wrong. It wasn’t like Austin, not an old mining town that appealed to Robert for its dereliction and derelicts; and Robert didn’t spend several months there in the 1950s (ibid., 26. Benson quoted what he said was a 1950s letter from Robert to Walter, supposedly from Indian Springs, which instead is a passage from the 1964 questionnaire response written from Connecticut). But Benson may possibly have been right that Indian Springs was one of Robert’s old haunts.

which Shirley despised: Clark, City, 591.

freight wagon stop: The stop was between Las Vegas and Beatty. Then, in 1905, it became a place to take on water for a new rail line to booming Tonopah. Eventually Ira and Alice McFarland of Goldfield bought it, from the first white settler Charles Towner, as a farm provisioning Las Vegas. By the 1920s, the McFarlands had improved the buildings and were hosting vacationers.


the few businesses: There were a gas station, store, tourist cabins and a state highway department office on highway 95, which got paved in 1934. Today there are more residences, old families plus Creech Air Force Base families, I imagine, a post office of its own and a senior center. The businesses there as of 2016 got bought up and bulldozed by the Air Force, to increase security for Creech (Ellen Sargent, phone interview, September 15, 2016).

Las Vegas post office: Clark, letter to the editors, Accent, Oct. 6, 1941, Walter V. T. Clark Folder, Box 23, RS: 15/7/30, University Archives, University of Illinois.


Bob Clark wrote: RM Clark, “Chronology,” 280.


the Lizard: Forerunner of Robert’s shed studio at Lizard Hall in Dayton, not to be confused with it. Photos of it and Shirley’s pottery studio, the Turtle, are in Caples Archive.

made by Shirley: “A & A,” REG, Dec. 13, 1941, 9. In January, 1942 these works by Shirley were on
display in the Co-Arts gallery in Reno, while Robert was working in Virginia City (“A & A,” REG, Jan. 17, 1942, 7). Shirley, so Borghi reported, had studied at the Art Students League in New York. Being extremely wealthy, a graduate of Miss Porter’s toney prep school in Farmington, Connecticut and a member of New York’s exclusive River Club (“Frost-Hardie,” New York Times, Oct. 2, 1935) don’t preclude serious artistic aspirations, of course, but there is no reason believe she ever did become more than a dilettante.

181 **his second and successful attempt** : Benson, Ox-Bow Man, 105.

On the 1964 questionnaire: Questionnaire, 2. Robert continues by expressing gratitude to Haytor for instruction in etching, and mentions his teacher Taubes who was also a guest at the ranch, but doesn’t mention Varda.

“**his Turtles**” : Clark, City, 438 (italics omitted).

“**a book of thirty four turtles**” : Caples, “a book of thirty four turtles,” n.d., probably 1941–42, illustrated handwritten manuscript in three-hole binder, Caples Archive. It is conceivable that Robert was already calling his investigations “turtles” on Bell Street in 1933, or when Walter spent time in Nevada with Robert in 1937, but the undated “thirty four turtles” book itself certainly came into being later.

**catalog of the 1981 exhibition** : Marcia Cohn Growdon (1981), Robert Cole Caples The Artist and the Man, catalog for “An Exhibition Organized by the Sierra Nevada Museum of Art December 12, 1981 – January 17, 1982,” 4. The catalog text explains that “the ‘Turtle Book’” was “so named because the page numbers are circled by small drawings of turtles.” Better to say the numbers are inscribed on the backs of turtles to signify that the book’s contents were Robert’s “turtles.” Also, not each page but each procedure – each “turtle” – has a number. But overall this catalog, produced under the guidance of the then curator and acting director Marcia Growdon, gives the best idea of any catalog of the range of Robert’s work.

The following Caples works not otherwise mentioned in TNTK or the notes are either reproduced or listed in the 1981 exhibition catalog (works I’ve placed in italics bear probable Caples titles, while the other titles, I’m guessing, were supplied for the exhibition): desert mountainscape, 1950s; February Fish (date unknown); Hour of the Morning (1948); houses, Virginia City (1948); leaves, 1950s; mountain, date unknown; mountains, date unknown; Nevada Indian [seated woman], early 1930s; Reno (1950s); Rock and Sky (1961); Time of Stillness (1960); trees on mountain, date unknown; Union Square, San Francisco (1947); Virginia City, 1930s.

182 **Fish Goddess** : Caples, “thirty four turtles,” on a page by itself behind turtle 17.

**several other works** : Jack of Diamonds (ca. 1941) was formerly in the collection of Samuel G. & Edda Houghton. Their daughter Linda Houghton says her mother hated the piece because it reminded her of everything about Reno she detested (conversation, Jan. 30, 2014). (Also in 1941, Robert and Shirley traveled East together, where they visited Shirley’s friends (“New Chester,” Gettysburg Times, Jul. 5, 1941, 2.) Desert Light, also owned by the Houghtons, has “circa 1941” written on the torn paper backing in someone’s hand not Robert’s. Another painting using this technique was posted on artnet.com. *Mine in the Sierra Hills* could have been made coming or going to or from Austin. For once Robert used his middle name in the signature. A St. Mary’s in the Mountains purchased by the Houghtons in 1955 seems to use a similar technique.

182 **“black over-wash”** : Clark, City, 592.


**without a camera** : “A & A,” REG, May 10, 1941, 9; “A & A,” REG, Oct. 18, 1941, 9; “Chemichromes’ to Be Shown in Reno,” NSJ, Nov. 16, 1941, 9. In the last the following works are mentioned: Chemichromes: Arrangement for Light; Arrangement for Silence; Caesar’s Penny; Garden Thrust; Seasonal Basket; and Gay Fragments. Photographs: Jonah; Autumn Patterns; Desert Tree; and Bronze Fish.


**Kirlian photography** : There is a second Kirlian image of hands and also a heliograph of a hand in the Caples Archive.

**Nevada and California** : Robert exhibited in Reno in the Riverside Hotel dining room (“A & A,” REG, May 10, 1941, 9), at the university (“A & A,” REG, Oct. 18, 1941, 9), and at the Lyon Building (“Chemichromes’ to Be Shown in Reno,” NSJ, Nov. 16, 1941, 9); in San Francisco at the Courvoisier
Notes to Pages 184–189 • Indexed Notes n346–n352

Galleries (“A & A,” REG, May 10, 1941, 9), known for first exhibiting Disney drawings as fine art.


glint of sun off a car: Clark, City, 440.

etching of mountains: Bob Clark holds another etching of mountains, date unknown. Three other works held by him not mentioned elsewhere are as follows: portrait of a fit aging man, date unknown, probably 1930s; skeletal man (date unknown); and Bob Clark as a boy, late 1940s – though Bob isn’t quite sure himself he’s the subject.

Southwestern buttes: The better of the two is Red Mountain, which has been reproduced several times, in an exhibition catalog (Growdon, Artist and the Man), in a journal article (Growdon, “Robert Cole Caples”), and in a book (William L. Fox (2002), Playa Works: The Myth of the Empty, University of Nevada Press, 14). Both are striking pictures, if they don’t come up to the level of Robert’s later mountains. The style derives from the “cubist realism” of Maynard Dixon, as pointed out by the author of the book in question, William Fox (of the museum which owns and occasionally exhibits Red Mountain). Fox explains Dixon’s cubist realism as “a somewhat realistic, if graphic, treatment of the foreground, a tendency to distill landforms into large structural blocks, and the organization of the background into geometry.” A different “Pastel landscape in the region of southern Nevada” is poorly reproduced in REG, Apr. 27, 1940, 14.

Dixon painted in Nevada through the 1920s and exhibited at the Riverside Hotel in 1928 (Peter Stremlen (1990), “Maynard Dixon (1875–1946),” NHSQ, vol. 33, no. 2, 108–12, 110). Maureen Dane Benjamin of Indian Springs told me (phone interview, September 15, 2016) that one day her grandfather, Mr. Dane, saw a painter working at an easel at McFarland Avenue and the highway. The picture was of the closest mountain. Mr. Dane admired the work and offered fifty dollars, which the artist accepted. He was Maynard Dixon. The family still owns the painting. The date of the event is uncertain, but the possibility is raised that Dixon came the Indian Springs ranch during the Caples years.

Robert’s “celebration of new morning” comment is from a letter to Edda Houghton, Jan. 26, 1977, Houghton-UNR.

thumb-tacking scraps of paper: Clark, City, 437–38.


renaming the National: Clark, City, 349, 459. Located at Union Street and B Street, Virginia City’s first International Hotel, built in 1860, was by different accounts “a substantial frame building of twelve rooms” (“Famous International Hotel,” VCN, Jul. 26, 1947, 1) or “little more than a log cabin” (www.carsonpedia.com/International_Hotel). I suspect the latter preceded the former. When the owners built a three-story brick structure at Union and C, the frame structure was taken apart, shipped to Austin and reassembled there to serve the new mining district. The next, six-story International Hotel was Virginia City’s largest building and most luxurious accommodation. It was a center and symbol of wealth, a locus of political speeches and rallies as well as the target of labor demonstrations (Clark, Doten, 811, 839). It burned down in 1914. The structure reconstructed in Austin had a fire just before Robert moved away to Connecticut (“Historic Structure Burns In Austin; Was Once On Virginia City’s C Street,” TE, Sep. 12, 1958, 1, 16). Most of what burned was an addition. The substantial and elaborate woodwork of the Virginia City bar survives today in a bar and café that no longer rents rooms.

would become his “scraps and scrabbles”: Robert began accumulating these notes in “1951 or so in Virginia City” (Capes, letter to Clark for “On Learning to Look,” n.d., probably early 1964, Clark-UNR, 7).

citizens’ groups: The Madame Robert Caples on the committee selling tickets for a USO charity entertainment at the Civic Auditorium in Reno, set for June 5–7, 1941, was undoubtedly the first Mrs. Caples, Virginia (“Stetson to Talk at USO Session,” NSJ, May 27, 1941, 14).

The poster was reproduced: “Artists Draw Fine Posters to Aid China,” NSJ, Sep. 14, 1941, 7.


also a member. So were Dorlan Peckham, Robert’s former fellow cartoonist at Desert Wolf, “western theme” artist Ted Drummond (www.onlinenevada.org/articles/ted-drummond, Jim McCormick, Mar. 20, 2009), and Lilian Borghi the artist/columnist.


Mercury : The turnoff to Mercury, gateway to the Nevada Test Site, is just twenty miles up the road from Indian Springs.

Some time after Pearl Harbor : I say after, on the evidence of the winged Hirohito clutching a bomb in the upper right while heiling his European senior partners. The image exists nowhere as far as I know except in the photo of it Robert kept, now in the Caples Archive.

Jim McCormick : Email, Apr. 7, 2014.

fall, 1941 : RM Clark, “Chronology,” 280. Walter arrived at Indian Springs no later than October 6, 1941, the date of a letter he wrote from there to Accent (Oct. 6, 1941, Walter V. T. Clark Folder, Box 23, RS: 15/7/30, University Archives, University of Illinois).

parable about the dangers : Lee, Clark, 22. Walter’s colleague Charlton Laird would later describe Ox-Bow in a memorial essay as “a sort of fable of fascism” (Laird, “Walter Van Tilburg Clark”).


Southern lynchings : Walter once answered when a defensive South Carolinian young woman questioned why Ox-Bow’s villain Major Tetley had to be a Southerner: “It was those rebel sons-of-bitches who were the worst” (Robert Harvey, phone interview, Jul. 25, 2012).

the fate of the Jews : Benson, transcript of phone interview of John Christgow, Jun. 1, 2000, Benson-UNR, 7. Christgow was Clark’s student at San Francisco State.


It was rejected : RM Clark, “Chronology,” 278.


by the time he shelved it : Ibid.; RM Clark (1976), “Walter Van Tilburg Clark’s Jason White: Excerpts from an Unfinished Novel, in Paher, Bicentennial Book, 513–19; RM Clark & Charlton Laird (1983), “The ‘Silent’ Period,” in Laird, ed., Critiques. I can’t quite reconcile the time lines and titles given for the later versions of Water by these sources, in all of which Bob Clark had a hand. There were at least two more working titles, Jason White and The Dam.


“a kind of emulation” : Benson, Ox-Bow Man, 332.

burned his first try : RM Clark, “Chronology,” 279.


three short stories : RM Clark, “Chronology,” 280. Bob Clark doesn’t mention “Personal Interview,” published in the New Yorker in 1942 (Dec., 12, 23–26), which I suppose was, like “Between Joseph and God,” written earlier, then bought in 1940 (279). The latter was never published.


the big picture” : In his poem “Something Walter Clark Said,” William Stafford quoted Walter, “‘Things end that were good; | the big picture is always sad’” (RM Clark, “Voice,” 262). The story
Notes, *The Nevada They Knew*, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 192–198  •  Indexed Notes n363–n371

goes that Walter invited Stafford, who had recently lost his son to suicide, to Reno to give a reading. Walter picked him up and asked how the flight was. The poet said, “All right, but it’s always so melancholy flying into Reno” – or, in another version, that the shadows of the hills around Reno made the approach that evening melancholy. In both versions, Walter replied, “Yes, the big picture is always sad” (Andria Daley, phone interview, Mar. 6, 2012; email, Mar. 13, 2012; Beebe & Clegg, unpublished manuscript, 33).


192 satirical mode: RM Clark, “‘Voice,’” 257.

192 a formative escapade: Clark, *City*, 504–16.

n363 193 Greek artist Jean Varda: Elsewhere at about the same time Walter again spelled a name with a -polus ending, identified by him as Greek (Clark, “Moment Notes,” n.d., 1942, Clark-UNR). Bob Clark (RM Clark, interview, Jun. 27–28, 2012) several times told me that his father’s penchant for spinning “fables” such as the Fenderson yarn had been influenced by Varda. I think Bob Clark meant that Walter was impressed enough by Varda to emulate him as a storyteller.


n364 193 “Pesticopolus”: Clark, “Moment Notes,” n.d., 1942, Clark-UNR: “Pesticopolus – The Greek who was no good because he would not talk politics – becomes hero during German occupation by refusing to accept – throwing back – bread scornfully tossed to him – then revealing when his health is noted that he has used his old skill in theft – others begin.” The Axis invaded Greece in April, 1941.

n365 194 Mussolini: Clark, *City*, 587–88, 601. In July, 1939, papers around the country picked up an Associated Press story with the photo of a middle-aged Italian in his undershirt leaping through a “flaming hoop” and over a hedge of bayonets. It was the second year that Mussolini forced his flabby subordinates to prove their fitness with that and other stunts. Mussolini himself didn’t participate. The Gazette (Jul. 19, 1939, 11) ran the story without the photo. But Walter would have seen the story in an Eastern paper. He fabulated Mussolini’s role and the leggy heiress.

195 “Sargasso Sea”: Here and below based on, quoting and reimagining, Clark, *City*, chs. 57–59, the “Sargasso Sea” chapters.

n366 195 all but San Francisco: Clark, letter to John and Joan Kuehl, Oct. 9, 1954, University of Virginia. Walter made an exception of San Francisco (letter to Joan and John Kuehl, Mar. 31, 1957, University of Virginia), “[t]he only city that has ever excited me whenever I saw it, instead of depressing me” (letter to John Kuehl, Jul. 4, 1953, University of Virginia).

n367 196 fine clothes he loves: According to the conservative John, Robert was already a “flashy dresser” in his teens (John Caples Diary, Jan. 27, 1928).

196 the very room: Clark, *City*, 349.


197 Weston: Walton, Tape #16, Walton Papers.

197 the money issue: Ibid.

n369 197 his current domesticity: Caples, letter to Clark for “On Learning to Look,” n.d., probably early 1964, Clark-UNR. “This place is going to fill up in a couple of hours like Pablum Alley – Denny and his wife, Sherry and their offspring (little girl) are arriving. . . . Also, I imagine, Rosemary [Junior] – the mother Rosemary left before noon to pick them all up in N.Y. – there will be hellos and drinks and all the confusion that goes with unpacking a baby."

197 “muttering about” Shirley: RM Clark, late 1972, notes from conversations with Caples, files of RM Clark, 6–7.


n371 198 brother David: David Chism, interview, Jul. 8, 2012; Benson, transcript of interview of David Chism, Aug. 21, 2000, Benson-UNR, 10. David Chism showed me a book he himself had printed at Kinko’s
from David Clark’s war diary which he found after his uncle’s death. *Notes from the Guadalcanal
Diary* records his experiences as a doctor in the famous WW II battle, where the Americans on the air
strip above were unsure if help were coming when 50,000 Japanese landed on the beach. With the wonder it
well deserved, Chisman summarized his uncle’s account of how, when about to receive bombing, they
would pull the tent poles to collapse the canvas over the man they were operating on and jump into
foxholes, then when the bombardment was over return to see if the patient were still alive.

David Clark returned to Reno to live in 1947, where he became head of surgery at the VA hospital.
After the war David learned to fly. Nephew Gordon Chism flew with him to Washoe Valley while
Walter lived there writing *Track*. All the Walter Clarks came out and waved. In 1948, he built a house
Walter would later live in, with a good view of the Virginia Range. When built it was in the sage desert;
the location now lies within the McCarran Boulevard ring road (Gordon Chism, *As I Remember*, 39, 74,
77; Benson, transcript of interview of Barbara Clark Salmon, Nov. 3, 1998, Benson-UNR, 3; David
Chism, transcript of letter to Benson, Aug. 12, 2002, Benson-UNR; Benson, transcript of interview of
David Chism, Aug. 21, 2000, Benson-UNR, 10).

In the mid-1950s, David Clark moved with his wife Marge to Albuquerque and private practice,
specializing in difficult abdominal surgeries thanks to his war experience. Marge died at the age of 102
on May 1, 2014, the last of that generation (Nikki Chism, email, May 8, 2014).

198 his son reports: RM Clark, “Chronology,” 280.
n372 198 exhibited at Co-Arts: Without mentioning his place of residence, Lillian Borghi reported four times on
Robert during the months between Indian Springs and the Navy: an exhibition at Co-Arts (“A & A,”
REG, Mar. 7, 1942, 9); sketching in Virginia City (“A & A,” REG, Apr. 25, 1942, 9); the Kodachromes
and a walking trip through Death Valley (“A & A,” REG, May 2, 1942, 9); and “The Gifts of Hy-Nan-

n373 199 “untroubled flat walls”: Caples, letter to Clark for “On Learning to Look,” n.d., probably early 1964,
Clark-UNR. The architects were John Crider, Ray Hellmann, Graham Erskine, and he should have
included David Vhay.

n374 199 senior of the two: The first question on the questionnaire was, “1. Date & place of birth. (NYC - Oct. 26,
1909? You are secretive.)” Robert corrected the date to “Nov. 26 1908.” Walter replied (Clark, letter to
Caples, Aug. 12, 1964, Clark-UNR) that “in spite of the way I feel, you are nearly 9 mos. older than I
am. And here I’ve been thinking all this time that you were nearly 3 mos younger.”

199 that’s all Robert had to say: Questionnaire, 6. Robert registered for the draft in Las Vegas. This and
many particulars about Robert’s service record below are from NPR.
n376 201 what he knew: Walter also had to rely on memory for the description of Robert’s boyhood home, the
brownstone on 121st Street, which occupies much of the opening pages (ibid, 1–2); and for the account
of Robert’s life at Carson Hot Springs in the 1950s, in the draft (Clark, “A Note on the Artist,” 19) but
not the final essay.

201 One friend was brother John: For John’s early history with the Navy see White, *ADMAN*, 21–22 and
n69. During WW II John applied his advertising skills to morale building. He left service after the war
with the rank of Commander (*ADMAN*, 78–79). Less likely to have influenced Robert was Byron’s
minor military record at the tail end of WW I (New York, *Abstracts of World War I Military Service,
1917–1919*; John Caples, partial typescript copy of Byron Caples’ 1949 “Honorary Life Membership in
the American Social Hygiene Association” award, John Caples Papers). Byron entered service about
three weeks before the armistice. After training in Georgia he was assigned to the newly opened huge
military hospital at Fox Hills on Staten Island, where he served with the rank of Captain for about a year
until his discharge. Byron may have joined to get away from a wife, as did his son Robert.

201 she was in Reno: John’s diary first mentions Barbara Schubart as Robert’s “recent Reno friend” (John
Caples Diary, Jul. 11, 1942).
201 and he divorcing Shirley: On his enlistment papers, initiated on August 7, Robert indicated “Single.’
n380 201 to live with her: 14 E. 96th Street (However, Robert gave the Navy John’s 277 Park Avenue apartment as
Notes, The Nevada They Knew, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 201–204  ●  Indexed Notes n381–n393

his local address (John Caples Diary, Jul. 10 and Sep. 1, 1942)). This and other details from NPR supplement information here and below about Barbara’s family and marriage to Robert which comes principally from Barbara’s daughters Mallory Schubart Pred (emails, Jan. 1 and 11, 2013) and Linda Kay Schubart (emails, Dec. 30 and 31, 2012, May 31 and Jul. 29, 2014, and Apr. 23 and 24, 2015).

n381 201 Portuguese Jew: Barbara’s father Theodore Harold Joseph became a member of the Empire State Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, through descent from Benjamin Mendez Seixas, born in Lisbon in 1747 (www.ancestry.com).

n382 201 from her mother: John Caples Diary, Apr. 28, 1943. Barbara’s mother Sylvia Joseph died in 1937.

n383 202 he wanted them out of the public system: The schooling in Connecticut paid by Theodore Harold Joseph began in 1947, after Robert and Barbara had divorced.

n384 202 different story: John Caples Diary, Jul. 29 and Aug. 6, 1942. Robert with his usual low self-esteem as an artist worried that his limited training hadn’t prepared him for what might be asked of him.

n385 202 visited Walter in Cazenovia: RM Clark, late 1972, notes from conversations with Caples, files of RM Clark, 5; John Caples Diary, Aug. 13, 1942. During a subsequent visit, presumably while Robert was on leave, Walter said nothing about what he was working on, as Robert later recalled. Two more meet-ups followed. Within weeks of his discharge he and Barbara traveled to Cazenovia again. On another occasion they socialized with Walter on the farm of mutual friends the Downers near Woodstock. Linda remembers taking home a kitten that Walter had “named ‘Virginia Dare’ after the wine cork she played with.” This was no later than January, 1946, since Walter was in Taos from early February to September, then moved to Washoe Valley (RM Clark, “Chronology,” 281; Clark, letter to Ray B. West, Jan. 24, 1946, Benson-UNR).


On the same page is an item on Dr. Caples as the “prime mover” behind legislation requiring premarital medical exams (“Politics,” REG, Jan. 13, 1945, 5). He represented the Nevada Medical Association before the legislature (Rene Watt Lemaire, 1967–70, “Recollections of Life in Lander County, Nevada; Battle Mountain Business; and the Nevada State Senate,” Oral History Program, University of Nevada, Reno, Libraries, 183).

n387 203 lunch with Shirley: John Caples Diary, Aug. 26, 1942. When Robert met up with Dick Walton in New York after the war, Robert told Walton a story about the marriage to Shirley which Walton passed on to historian Andria Daley, and she to me (email, Mar. 13, 2012): “Capes said that he knew the marriage was over, when he was stationed, during the war, near a beach and he’d hear a shorebird, forlorn, lament: ‘Pappa Pete, Pappa, Pete.’ That call reminded Caples of the [Indian Springs] Ranch, and his foreman, that the children called Pappa Pete. He knew that the marriage to Shirley was ‘no longer.’” Robert must have meant that “Pappa Pete” marked a psychological passage, since he and Shirley were already divorced. Or, he may have had gotten word of a liaison between Shirley and “Pete,” the foreman Peterson (Maureen Dane Benjamin, phone interview, September 15, 2016).

n388 203 John learned: John Caples Diary, Aug. 15, 18, 24, 26, 27, 28 and 29, 1942. Reardon was the officer advising John.

n389 203 “swearing in date”: Ibid., Sep. 10 and 11, 1942. One document in NPR mistakenly gives Robert’s enlistment date as Sep. 9.

203 further efforts: John Caples Diary, Oct. 12 and 14, 1942.

n390 203 Annapolis: Walter mistakenly said Bethesda, the National Naval Medical Center, where Robert would be hospitalized later.

203 believed he was dying: Linda Kay Schubart, email, Dec. 30, 2012.

n391 203 Hydrographic Office: Walter called it the Hydrographic Bureau.


n393 204 that April: Entries in John Caples Diary (Mar. 18 and Apr. 13, 1945) date Robert’s first return to Reno
for treatment to April, prior to which, John recorded, Robert said he had been at Bethesda Hospital for 5½ months.” If Hazel Caples’ letter to Margaret Bartlett Thornton, dated Jan. 15, 1945, is accurate, then Robert was also in Reno earlier, staying with Byron and her at 2400 Plumas (Thorton-UNR, Box 7, Hazel Caples folder). Other references to the Plumas address have it as 2100. At present there is a 2100 but not a 2400.


n394 205 “killed all his anti-bodies” : Clark, “A Note on the Artist,” 19. The illness or medication also caused hair loss, whereupon Robert, who had always had abundant hair, began shaving his head and did so for the rest of his life, a la Yul Bryner – or at least so said Rosemary (Benson, transcript of phone interview of R Caples Sr, Aug. 9, 2000, Benson-UNR, 5). But it’s not so: in a 1947 photo, he still has a full head of dark hair, and in 1955, merely a receding forehead. In later photos he’s bald on top with short side-hair.

205 Rosemary said: Benson, transcript of phone interview of R Caples Sr, Aug. 9, 2000, Benson-UNR, 5.

205 can weaken the heart valves: Thanks to Drs. Thomas L. Pitts and Richard Bebb for consults.

205 “Dave didn’t believe” : RM Clark, email to Benson, Dec. 10, 2001, Benson-UNR.

n395 205 “disconnected from nature” : RM Clark, interview, Jun. 27–28, 2012. On the other hand, David Chism believes the Hazard family was patterned after Walter’s sister Miriam, her husband John and their first three children – David Chism was the fourth (Benson, transcript of interview of David Chism, Aug. 21, 2000, Benson-UNR, 5).

n396 205 For over two year: Clark, letter to Mr. Quinn, Accent, Sep. 4, 1944, Walter V. T. Clark Folder, Box 23, RS: 15/7/30, University Archives, University of Illinois. During those two and a half years he wrote just one short story.


Some of these favorable reviews faulted the novel for its length at the same time, e.g., “A Life’s Awakening to Music,” Jennings Price, New York Herald Tribune Weekly Book Review, May 27, 1945, vol 6, no. 4; Mari Sandoz, “The City of Trembling Leaves,” Atlantic Monthly, 1945, Jul. One critic spoke of “page on page of beautiful writing interspersed with tedious passages” (Gordon Bryce Kiefer, “Walter Van Tilburg Clark’s Fiction: A Study in Structure,” PhD Dissertation, Texas Tech University, 1979, 30, quoting Norah Piper, “More Books of the Week,” Commonweal, Jun. 29, 1945, 267). In a nuanced review, public intellectual Clifton Fadiman worked Clark over pretty well in the course of praising him ((1945), “The City of Trembling Leaves,” Book-of-the-Month News, Jun.). Where Ox-Bow was mature, “The same cannot be said for Clark’s second book. It is subjective, rambling, diffuse, polytoned, tentative. Intellectually it spreads all over the map. And yet it strikes one as the work of an original and vigorous writer. It is emphatically recommended. . . . This is an unsatisfying, sometimes irritating, generally stimulating novel.” Clark “will write all the better” for having got this one “out of his system.” If only. To reviewers who thought City read like an immature young writer’s first pass at a novel that he took out of a drawer to publish after the success of Ox-Bow, Clark responded, “I did make several bad passes at something like The City before I wrote Ox-Bow – but the book that was printed was a complete reconception, and no part of it was written before Ox-Bow.” (Westbrook, Walter Van Tilburg Clark, 68).

A noteworthy review capturing the sympathetic reader’s experience was penned by none other than Walter’s mother Euphemia. Mrs. Walter E. Clark (“City of Trembling Leaves’ – Review of Book About Reno,” NSJ, Jun. 3, 1945, 6). She deemed her son’s second novel “an honest and detailed report of a life that is struggling to keep in touch with universal meaning. . . . The book will recreate for you a thousand incidents of your own experience, feelings you had forgotten, or never felt with that intensity. You will borrow the author’s incredibly sharp perceptions, his copious and accurate memory for living detail, his clairvoyance, and believe, for a while, that your own senses and mind are like that. . . . [T]he
The author has shown you what life is all about, if you can just catch the sense and feel of it and hold on to it.”

“She knew what he wanted,” Bob Clark insisted when I described the review (RM Clark, interview, Jun. 27–28, 2012). If so, it doesn’t detract from the skill with which she delivered. Bob’s sister Babs thinks her grandmother was sincere, that she also had an artistic soul (Barbara Clark Salmon, interview, Jul. 12, 2012).


His weight alarmingly reduced: RM Clark, “Chronology,” 281.

possibly suffering from TB: Benson, Ox-Bow Man, 109.

“he was mustered out”: “On Learning to Look,” 7.

Washoe County Court: Case 103,716, Aug. 15, 1946.

under the doctor’s care: There is no evidence in Robert’s service records that he entered a Naval hospital after separation, as Walter misremembered.

The course Robert had to drop: On the questionnaire Robert erred in saying he enrolled at the ASL in 1945, his year of discharge; he didn’t enroll until 1946 (Art Students League of New York registration records for Robert Cole Caples). Also, Dick Walton dated to 1946 the brief visit he and his wife Marie Jeanne Etcheberry had with Robert in New York when “Bob was about to enter the Art Students League and be there for a while, on the G. I. Bill” (Walton, Tape #82-A, Walton Papers; for Marie Jeanne Etcheberry being with them, see Walton, letter to Caples, Jul. 18, 1978, Walton Papers). About the visit, Walton told Andria Daley (phone interview, Mar. 6, 2012) that he and Robert were walking down the street when a limo drove by splashing them with puddle-water. Robert said, “That was my brother.”

a national art show: “Caples to Exhibit At Pasadena Show,” REG, Feb. 23, 1946, 14.

third creation legend: Caples, “The Potter and the Lizard.” The title page mysteriously carries the address 101 West 56th Street, which matches no known address of Robert’s, Barbara’s, or his brother John’s. Manhattan city directories, address directories, and telephone directories shed no light. So there is no way to know whether Robert began “The Potter and the Lizard” while still in the Navy.

Agama: ‘Agama’ is the Sanskrit word for ‘scriptures’ in Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism, as well as the name of a genus of African lizard.

two Eastern concepts: The opposites in “The Magic Flower” are represented by Aga (in Arabic, military commander) and T’ai Fung (the Mandarin phrase from which comes English ‘typhoon’). You could make a case that they parallel Manta and Snake. They in their interaction comprise the creative force of a universe which initially is “a curious and formless place, the Land of Beginning” (ibid., 10) – more or less the condition of things in “Manta” before the creation. The ordered universe in which the Potter and his realm exist comes about thanks to these principles.


His works from 1946: An exception is Exploration, shown in the 1964 retrospective exhibition. Two other works from 1946 reproduced in 1964 retrospective are Seated Clown and Flight from the Garden, human subjects with some of the freedom of line of Exploration, though the heaviness and darkness of Passage (as far as can be judged from the black & white reproductions). Small Bird from the next year, 1947, is on the ground but ready for flight.

“fight like cats and dogs”: Clark, City; 592.

always “knifing” her: Clark, City; 431, 435 (italics omitted).

passive aggressiveness: Walton, Tape # 59, Walton Papers.

“humiliating a person”: Walton, Tape #16, Walton Papers. As for Robert in later life, Rosemary illustrated his “command of English” by saying “he could put one down with just one word. He was not a frightening person but he knew exactly the word to use” (Benson, transcript of phone interview of R
Notes, *The Nevada They Knew*, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 210–213 • Indexed Notes n407–n415

Caples Sr, Aug. 9, 2000, Benson-UNR, 7).

210 Once when a neighbor: Mallory Schubart Pred, email, Jan. 11, 2013.

210 “erotic feelings toward men”: Ibid.


n407 211 already heavy-set: In 1963, John Caples learned from Dorothy that Robert was “taking on weight – heavy around the neck. Rose is afraid to tell him” (John Caples Diary, Feb. 3, 1963).

n408 211 “The cave of [Lawrence’s] being”: Clark, *City*, 445. And later in the novel (598–99): “He was sure of the big desires in Lawrence, the desires which established a direction and couldn’t change. Whatever the differences in their combination, weren’t they also his own desires?” Those desires, as Walter parsed them in answer to his own question, pertained mainly to a shared artistic agenda: “Lawrence would always desire, above all, to record these desires greatly, to oppose them, like established truths, against the dark wilderness.” But in between the question and the answer, Clark posed another question: “Wasn’t the mutual recognition of these desires, which was always immediately present, making a single something, a love and an alliance greater than the sum of the desires, and needing no words, when he and Lawrence met and shook hands after a day or after a year?” This question is posed, touchingly, as an incomplete sentence, lacking a predicate. “Wasn’t the mutual recognition of these desires” what?


n409 211 he again invoked Fiedler: RM Clark, email, Feb. 27, 2013. Bob Clark was referencing Fiedler’s *Love and Death in the American Novel*, which doesn’t discuss *City*.


n410 212 single, younger females: There were girl students Walter played tennis with at Cazenovia, where he was regarded as “a ‘hunk’” (Benson, transcript of interview of Glen Black, Jun. 12, 2000, Benson-UNR). A fellow teacher there commented to Benson, “Let me tell you, the girls he played tennis with, he wasn’t particularly democratic there, they were all good looking” (Benson, transcript of phone interview of Robert P. Moon, May 28, 2000, Benson-UNR). Likewise there were unmarried mixed doubles partners in Reno and then Mill Valley when he taught at San Francisco State (Bob Clark names a few in Benson, transcript of interview of RM Clark, Oct. 23, 1997, Benson-UNR, 16).


n411 212 Peter Kraemer, lead singer: Phone interview, Jul. 11, 2012. Andrus was vexed with Robert especially over one friend, a “fragile” woman who gained local fame as a miniaturist, who remained “hung-up” on Robert.


212 No one was sorry: Mallory Schubart Pred, email, Jan. 1, 2013.


213 “why be ashamed?”: Questionnaire, 6.

n412 213 John’s diary: Also, John took a break from journaling for the years surrounding Robert’s moved East (1957–62).

213 And Walter in his essay?: “On Learning to Look,” 9. Walter followed this succinct chronology with an assurance that Caples had found himself, then with a selection of Robert’s “off-the-wall” notes, a change of pace leading into an upbeat coda about Turtle Hill and *Potter*. The coda, drawing on personal knowledge supported by Robert’s letter accompanying the questionnaire, closes with one more repetition of Walter’s organizing theme of Robert’s learning to look.


n414 213 a Chinatown: In fact the settlement was called “Chinatown” before it became Dayton, on account of the Chinese brought in as laborers in connection with mining. The hub of Chinatown was down the street from 175 Silver Street at the intersection with Railroad Street, before Hwy. 50 came between them.

n415 213 emigrant trail: Purkey & Garside, *Geologic and Natural History*, 73. Spafford Hall’s over-priced store on the Overland California emigrant trail was near present Dayton. Carson City’s Major William Ormsby, the imprudent vigilante commander killed in the first 1860 Pyramid Lake Indian war, had...
Notes, The Nevada They Knew, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 213–217  •  Indexed Notes n416–n428

previously bought Spafford Hall’s Station as one of his investments (De Quille, The Big Bonanza, 9).


n417 213 **Pony Express**: www.xphomestation.com/nvsta-dayton.html.

n418 213 **Sutro’s tunnel**: The entrance of Adolph Sutro’s ambitious tunnel for drainage and transport from the Comstock is not far to the east. Sutro, later mayor of San Francisco, owned a mill in Dayton.

n419 213 **Old Virginia**: De Quille (The Big Bonanza, 42) attributed the story of the naming of Virginia City after James Fenimore from Virginia, alias James Finney, to Henry Comstock, whom he quoted: “‘Old Virginia’ was out one night with a lot of the ‘boys’ on a drunk, when he fell down and broke his whisky bottle. On rising he said – ‘I baptize this ground Virginia.’” This was in 1861.

n420 213 **Chief Truckee**: Hermann, Paiutes, 106. Truckee died in 1860 shortly before the Pyramid Lake Indian war.

n421 213 **his descendants**: Scordato, Sarah Winnemucca, 48–50; Clark, Doten, 805. Dayton lies within the territory of the Paiute band the Grass-nut Eaters; (Fowler, In the Shadow, 27); and the pinyon orchards of the Pyramid Lake Kooyooee (Coo-yú-ee; Cui-ui) Dukaddo (Eater band) were located in Brunswick Canyon of the Pine Nut Range near Dayton to the southwest (Hermann, Paiutes, 196).


n423 213 **Russ Lindsay**: Russ also prepared a preliminary inventory of the Caples Archive. He was most helpful to me in the early stages of research for this book.

n424 213 **“most workable studio”**: Clark, letter to Roger Butterfield, Sep. 6, 1958, University of Virginia. When Robert lived there, I later learned, the house was “painted bright pink with green trim.” Also, “there was a sign by the doorbell with the image of a lizard created by Caples.” In 1981, an addition to the back of the house added 989 square feet to the tiny 539 of Robert’s day (Russ Lindsay, Nevada Register of Historic Places Registration Form for Lizard Hall, Dayton, submitted to Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs, May 28, 2006).

n425 213 **the greenery**: Walter recollected Lizard Hall as dappled by trembling leaves, “a house with a green blossoming patio, with large cottonwoods overhanging it, breaking up the sun with moving, leafy shadows, and an orchard behind it” (“On Learning to Look,” 9).

n426 213 **He would later tell Joanne**: Caples, letter to Joanne, Jan. 8, 1973, de-L-UNR.


n428 213 **Bettna Blythe Brower**: Born August 5, 1913. Father: Herbert Henson Brower, from New Jersey; mother: Elsie Helen Green (ancestry.com).

n429 213 **engagement or brief marriage**: A marriage license was issued to Guglielmo Cini and Bettina (“Vital Statistics” item, NSJ, May 1, 1943, 6).

n430 213 **Robert’s nurse at St. Mary’s**: Barbara Clark Salmon, interview, Jul. 12, 2012; Ross Salmon, interview, Jul. 12, 2012.


n432 213 **Mapes Sky Room**: Photo in the files of the Stremmel Gallery.

n433 213 **between Nevada and “the city”**: A Christmas card (Caples, Christmas card to Samuel G. & Edda Houghton, Dec 19, 1948, Houghton-UNR) places Robert and Bettina in San Francisco for the winter of 1948, residing at 640 Turk Street. Neither the city directories nor phone books list Robert or Bettina in San Francisco for 1947 or 1948, their years there, because of their many moves presumably.

n434 213 **“draughtsman’s position”**: Questionnaire, 6. The “in-law architect” wasn’t Henry Schubart, Barbara’s first husband, who became a prominent California architect of homes, but didn’t get his license until the 1950s (Linda Kay Schubart, email, Dec. 31, 2012). If it wasn’t Barbara’s father, for whom Barbara’s ex-husband, at that time an artist like Robert, went to work at his factory in the South, putting “electric wiring into ships” (John Caples Diary, Apr. 28, 1943), it had to have been a relative of Bettina’s.
Notes, The Nevada They Knew, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 217–222  ●  Indexed Notes n429–n438

n429 217  And Varda came to see Robert: Walton, Tape #18, Walton Papers. Varda also came to Virginia City to see Zoray Andrus.

n430 217  Lanier Graham: Graham, “East-West Spirit.”

surrounded by T’ang horses: The Asian art was acquired, Graham supposes, with Rosemary’s money and Robert’s splendid eye (Lanier Graham, email, Jul. 31, 2012). That may be unfair: Rosemary considered herself a connoisseur of antiques (John Caples Diary, Feb. 13, 1963).


“a few inches at a time”: Graham, “East-West Spirit.”

during the later trips: Robert and Rosemary visited Walter and Barbara a couple of times in Mill Valley when they went over to stay on Varda’s houseboat during 1957 (Benson, transcript of phone interview of R Caples Sr, Aug. 9, 2000, Benson-UNR). It would have been between 1956 and 1958 that Rosemary Junior and brother Denny with Robert and Rosemary Senior visited a Greek who “looked like Santa Claus” on a houseboat (R Caples Jr, interview, Jul. 15, 2012). Rosemary Junior brought this up in response to a question about Robert’s interest in Asian philosophy. Though when I asked if he’d “been into Zen” when she and her husband Lanier Graham saw Robert in Connecticut, she answered, “Not so much.”


in City: Clark, City, 435, 455.

“would always talk about” Robert: Benson, transcript of phone interview of Tom Massey, Dec. 19, 2000, Benson-UNR.

“colonial originals”: RM Clark, late 1972, notes from conversations with Caples, files of RM Clark.

fig tree: Caples, letter to Joanne, Sep. 25, 1974, de-L-UNR.


what Rosemary said: Benson, transcript of phone interview of R Caples Sr, Aug. 9, 2000, Benson-UNR, 4, 5, 8.

n432 221  “the summer months”: “Godfrey’s Shop’ To Open Soon,” VCN, Jun. 19, 1948, 1. The name soon settled as Godfrey’s Desert Museum Shop. Godfrey himself was named after some cartoon or literary dog character I haven’t succeeded in identifying. The partner was M. B. “Beck” Young.

small house on D Street: Andria Daley, Beebe & Clegg, unpublished manuscript.

Godfrey’s Dog Bar: “Up & down ‘C’ St.” item, VCN, Jul. 9, 1949, 5. Later Reno’s Gazette sent a reporter and photographer to cover the Dog Bar (“Dog Days Good Days on Comstock,” photo caption, REG, Aug. 6, 1949, 14). Godfrey’s Dog Bar was still going strong the following spring (“Just Joshing” item, VCN, Apr. 22, 1950, 1).

“Authors’ Day on the Comstock”: “Authors Day Plans Completed,” VCN, Sep. 17, 1949, 1; “Virginia City Literati,” photo caption, REG, Sep. 19, 1949, 11; “Up & down ‘C’ St.” item, VCN, Sep. 24, 1949, 4. Participants were folklorists Duncan Emrich and his wife Marion Vallat Emrich, editor and history writer Roger Butterfield, poet Irene Bruce, and co-authors Lucius Beebe and Charles Clegg.

Robert the prankster: “Virginia City Authors In Sellout Performance,” Reno Reporter, Sep. 15, 1949, 5.

Next summer: RM Clark, “Chronology,” 282. First the Clarks had rented the old Chollar Mine office on D Street.

After closing their shop: In fall Robert and Bettina closed their shop (and Godfrey his dog bar) (“Up & down ‘C’ St.” item, VCN, Nov. 5, 1949, 3) and had borrowed the home belonging to Roger Butterfield and his wife Margaret. Bettina, who besides helping out at Robert’s shop and trying to establish a lending library (Andria Daley, Beebe & Clegg, unpublished manuscript), had also “assisted the rebuilding and redecorating” of the Best & Belcher mine office for the Butterfields (“‘C’ Street Beat” item, TE, Mar. 8, 1968, 11).


In Virginia’s papers: “Authors Day Plans Completed,” VCN, Sep. 17, 1949, 1. I found 20 items
Notes to Page 222  ●  Indexed Note n439 (cont’d)

corresponding Robert in the Virginia City papers from the announcement about Godfrey’s Desert Museum Shop (“Godfrey’s Shop” To Open Soon,” VCN, Jun. 19, 1948, 1) through Robert’s move to Dayton ("Comstock Vignettes" item, TE, Nov. 18, 1955, 4), a span embracing the years he lived at Carson Hot Springs and elsewhere but socialized in Virginia.

Seven items including the one just cited concerned either Godfrey’s shop, Godfrey’s Dog Bar or Godfrey the dog himself: “Up & down ‘C’ St.” item, VCN, Jun. 19, 1949, 8; “Up & down ‘C’ St.” item, VCN, Jul. 9, 1949, 5; “Authors Day Plans Completed,” VCN, Sep. 17, 1949, 1; “Up & down ‘C’ St.” item, VCN, Nov. 5, 1949, 3; “Just Joshing” item, VCN, Apr. 22, 1950, 1.

Six including some of the above in whole or part concerned Robert’s social life: “New on the Hill” item, VCN, Jul. 23, 1949, 8; Up & down ‘C’ St.” item, VCN, Mar. 31, 1951, 1; “Comstock Vignettes” item, TE, Aug. 8, 1952, 2; “Comstock Vignettes” item, TE, Feb. 3, 1956, 11.


Walter resided in Virginia City off and on from 1949 until his death in 1971. This longevity in part explains why I found more items concerning him in the town’s papers than Robert, 62 in total. Allowing for 9 articles in more than one category, 40 mention social matters, 17 concern Walter as writer, and 11 as teacher, with 3 about his illness and death.


Teaching: “Well Known Author Is Teacher In Virginia City Schools,” VCN, Sep. 16, 1950, 1; “Comstock Vignettes” item, TE, May 1, 1953, 2; “Walter Clark Out In Campus Fracas,” TE, Jun. 12,
The Nevada They Knew
by Anthony Shafton

Notes, The Nevada They Knew, by Anthony Shafton 66

Indexed Notes n440–n446


who actually resided there: None more than Clint and Nell Salmon (the Virginia Market, parents of Ross Salmon, who married Walter’s daughter Babs) and Bad Water Bill (perennial tourist snapshot subject on C Street). Others: Ole Hart and Clint Andreassen (The Sazerac) (later owned by Carl Discher); Gordon Lane (Union Brewery) and his wives Leone “Old Pancake,” then Carroll, then Anne; Eddie Colletti and Johnny Zalac (Delta Saloon); Denny & Mary Copp (Washoe Club Saloon); Maxine Wallace (Sawdust Corner Saloon); Florence Edward (Silver Dollar Hotel); Emmy Pentz (Piper’s Opera House); Hanna Salzman (The Silver Stope); Roy “Buffalo Bill” Shetler and Wife Annie “OK Lee” (the Mark Twain Museum); and Lynn Leong (Sharon House, a Chinese restaurant that Walter frequented).

crowded new Sazerac: Walter’s son-in-law Ross Salmon says it was crowded like that every night (Ross Salmon, interview, Jul. 12, 2012).

Union Brewery: Benson, Ox-Bow Man, 154.


Lane approvingly affirmed: Benson, transcript of interview of Gordon Lane, Aug. 18, 2000, Benson-UNR, 2. “You could never tell how much he had drunk, he drank steadily but just always the same. When he left he looked exactly as when he came in.” By his own report (Clark, “The Writer and the Professor, 75), Walter didn’t drink until he’d finished his day of writing. Whether completely true or not, he evidently wasn’t one of those writers like Christopher Hitchens and Faulkner who lubricate themselves in order to write.


“I used to live”: Caples, letter to Robbins, Oct. 4, 1974, Emily Robbins.

In 1958, he complained: Clark, Letter to Roger Butterfield, Sep. 6, 1958, University of Virginia.

Butterfield had by then returned East to live. In 1953, Walter had still appreciated life in Virginia City as “a large part of a reason for being, by itself” (Clark, Letter to John and Joan Kuehl, Jun. 14, 1953, University of Virginia).

Clark and Beebe detested: “Clark detested Beebe” (Andria Daley, Beebe & Clegg, unpublished manuscript); “Beebe couldn’t stand” Clark (Shaun Griffin, interview, Jul. 16, 2012).


extreme reactionary: Beebe deplored airplanes and unions, digit dialing and women’s suffrage, and worried that if California were to undermine Nevada by legalizing gambling, the state would “revert overnight to the witless Diggers and Piutes who originally owned it” (Beebe, Beebe, 57, 141).

eastern upper crust types: McGee & McGee, Divorce Seekers, 147ff.

on the word of Robert Laxalt: Andria Daley, phone interview, Mar. 6, 2012. This seemed right to Jim McCormick (interview, Jul. 19, 2012). Jim then put Beebe and Clegg in the context of the live-and-let-live attitude in small Nevada towns, which “tend to protect their individualists.” You could find a coexistence of Western men and homosexuals—so Virginia City may have grown into a magnified case at a certain epoch, but it wasn’t a unique case as I’d imagined. Jim cited Eureka, a small mining town in the middle of the state, where a cross-dresser became head of the town commission. Was he talking about Wally Cuchine? No (email, Jan. 23, 2012), but Wally was director of the Eureka Opera House at the time, the late 1990s or early 2000s.
Notes, The Nevada They Knew, by Anthony Shafton 67

Notes to Pages 224–226  •  Indexed Notes n447–n455

224 celebrated heavy drinking: E.g., “Survey Shows Virginia City to Be Drinkingest Town in Entire U.S.,” TE, Mar. 6, 1953, 1.

n447 224 both were driven writers: Beebe first made a name with his syndicated gossip column “Café Society” in the New York Herald Tribune. Beebe “ coined and copyrighted” the term (Daley-Taylor, “Broadway Bon Vivants,” quoted by McGee & McGee, Divorce Seekers, 147). He was also a drama critic, he published poetry and a history of his hometown Boston, and he wrote numerous magazine articles on food and wine, history, and his particular hobby horse, trains. He with his partner Clegg authored a series of train nostalgia books (Andria Daley Taylor (1998), “Girls of the Golden West,” in Ronald M. James & Elizabeth Raymond, eds. (1998), Comstock Women: The Making of a Mining Community, University of Nevada Press. 267).

224 falsifying facts for effect: Gruber, Lucius Beebe, 6.

n448 224 drew the line: Andria Daley, phone interview, Mar. 6, 2012. Walter he didn’t allow his low opinion of Beebe to stand in the way of the good deed of volunteering once a week as life guard and swim instructor for Virginia City boys at Beebe’s private swimming pool, the only one in town. This was in the summer of 1957 (Robert M. Hodesh, letter to Carl Heintze, Jan. 10, 1980, Heinte-UNR; “Comstock Vignettes” item, TE, Aug. 23, 1957, 2).

224 Restoration Campaign: Benson, Ox-Bow Man, 246.

n449 224 American Lit: A student of Clark’s that year, Germaine Polikalas (interview, Aug. 24, 2016), insists that the course she took from him as a junior was creative writing, and her evidence – the textbook he used, an international short story collection; his teaching method; and the older student body including a lawyer and a novelist – supports her contention. This is significant only insofar as it makes the sacrifice Clark made by resigning all the greater.

n450 224 Walter’s “moral fierceness”: RM Clark, “Voice,” 258. Several other characters in this story were also on the right side of the issue: Charlton Laird, Robert Gorrell, Russell Elliott, and Dr. Fred Anderson. The first three were also faculty members, but did not as did Clark resign. Anderson acted first as one of the “Friends of the University,” subsequently as an elected regent (J. Dee Kille (2004), Academic Freedom Imperiled: The McCarthy Era at the University of Nevada, University of Nevada Press, 32). The so-called Wittenberg papers, produced by the Friends after the affair as a record of events, are thought to have been Walter’s work.


n451 225 Les Gray: “Sun Mountain Silver” item, Leslie B. Gray, TE, Sep. 3, 1969, 4. Gray later walked that accusation back (“Sun Mountain Silver” item, Les Gray, Virginia City Legend, Dec. 2, 1971, 5). One other indicator of Beebe’s animus toward Clark: When Track was bought to be made into a movie, Beebe’s social columnists the Two Katies reported the fact, but with a noticeable lack of enthusiasm, given their usual boosterism (“Comstock Vignettes” item, TE, May 21, 1954, 4). Katie Best and Katie Hilliard were a lesbian couple and a nationally successful writing team in their own right.

225 “cataracts of tourist trash”: Beebe, Beebe, 146.

n452 225 “Tourist of the Week”: The cartoons toned down their outsiders-are-stupid premise a bit when Bob Richards took them over.

n453 225 sold the Enterprise: Beebe and Clegg remained on the masthead as contributing editors for some time after. The paper would occasionally pick up Beebe’s columns from the San Francisco Chronicle Feature Syndicate.


n455 226 “collector’s item”: “Rumblings Are Being Heard on the Comstock This Spring and New Things Are Happening,” Basil Woon, NSJ, Apr. 12, 1953, 7. The sketch wasn’t purpose-made, as Woon supposed: Lane used an old drawing. The Enterprise (“Comstock Vignettes” item, TE, Jan. 23, 1953, 2) reported the facts: “Two years ago Bob Caples sat back at the poker table in Gordon Lane’s Union Brewery
Saloon with sketch book and pen. [Several patrons in the sketch are named, including] Bettina, the then Mrs. Caples, and dog Godfrey. You can see them now, and perhaps yourself, immortalized by the delightful sketch Bob did of the scene.”


n456 cubistic work: See also Virginia City Braquesque (my title) from the same period, preserved as a photo negative in the Gus Bundy Collection, P85-08, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Reno.

227 “another St. Mary’s steeple”: RM Clark, late 1972, notes from conversations with Caples, files of RM Clark, 2.

n457 “long, long board” : Peter Kraemer, phone interview, Jul. 11, 2012. Andrus, who was “good friends” with Bettina and regarded Robert as a philanderer, believed he “got a whole lot more attention as an artist than he was deserving.” Once when she took over the social column for the Enterprise, as she occasionally did, she reported with a hostile nuance that Robert was “being lionized in Las Vegas” (“Comstock Vignettes” item, TE, Jan. 9, 1953, 2.). Andrus was ambitious, another Virginia City self-promoter (Andria Daley, Beebe & Clegg, unpublished manuscript, 40). It could be that the personalities of the two painters clashed.


n458 Bill Bliss: Interview, Jul. 13, 2012 and conversation, Jan. 25, 2013. The Carson Range forming Lake Tahoe’s eastern wall is sometimes considered a spur of the Sierra Nevada, sometimes the most westerly of the Great Basin ranges. Lake Tahoe has only one outlet, the Truckee River, which terminates in Pyramid Lake.

Another artist, Robert’s friend Betty Bliss (no relation to Bill), the woman who rescued works of Robert’s from his shed studio in Dayton, said much the same thing as Bill without directly saying mountains (letter to Robert and Rosemary Caples, Jun. 6, 1966, Caples Archive): “Robert, you gave us wonderful things to see in this country through your sensitivity and perception and unflagging effort.”


n460 with fellow locals: Names include Craig Sheppard, Richard Guy Walton, Hans Meyer-Kassel, Gus Bundy, Zoray Andrus, Betty Bliss and Nancy Bowers.

n461 out-of-state exhibit: “Capes Displays in Artists West,” REG, Feb. 23, 1951, 20. Of thirty items, two-thirds concern Reno activities, the rest mostly Carson City, also Virginia City and Las Vegas.


228 benefit for St. Mary’s Hospital: “St. Mary’s Guild Sponsors Gala Cherry Blossom Ball,” NSJ, Apr. 28, 1957, 17.

228 In other stories: “Thousands Flock to Carson For Admission Celebration,” REG, Oct. 31, 1949, 9; “Reno Social Calendar” item, NSJ, Mar. 14, 1951, 5; “Tickets Go on Sale Monday For Miss Nevada
Notes, The Nevada They Knew, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 228–231 • Indexed Notes n463–n475


n463 228 American Institute of Architects: Robert wrote a letter to the editor of the Gazette complaining of being misquoted on matters of art in the coverage of his address to the AIA (“Letters to the Editor: Painted On The Wall,” REG, Jun. 18, 1954, 4).

n464 229 Bettina spent a month: “Up & down ‘C’ St.” item, VCN, Mar. 31, 1951, 1; John Caples Diary, Mar. 4, 1951.

n465 229 surprised Robert: “Decrees Granted,” NSJ, Apr. 7, 1951, 7. John’s impression from Robert’s letter was that he seemed “shocked but not knocked out” (John Caples Diary, Apr. 24, 1951).


n467 230 about two years: Three according to Walter’s retrospective essay (“On Learning to Look,” 9), more accurately 2 according to the hand-written draft (Clark, “A Note on the Artist,” 19).

n467 230 Virginia City artist: “Comstock Vignettes” item, TE, Jan. 9, 1953, 3; The Enterprise continued to treat him as such in items from following months.

n467 230 above a grocery: Benson, transcript of phone interview of R Caples Sr, Aug. 9, 2000, Benson-UNR, 9.

n467 230 then in Washoe Valley: Architect Ray Hellmann’s widow, Ann (phone conversation, Mar. 23, 2014) and his son M. Boone Hellmann (phone conversation, Mar. 23, 2014) both remember Robert living then in Washoe Valley – Boone used to walk east from “Bob’s” place to the western shore of Washoe Lake.

n470 230 Reno’s western outskirts: This from David L. Vhay (interview, Jul. 3, 2014), who visited Robert in a house there with his parents, architect David Vhay and Mel Vhay.


n474 231 Homer Angelo: Alex Angelo, phone conversation, Apr. 25, 2013. At one time Homer practiced law with Paul Laxalt in Carson City.

n475 231 Red Cross swimming class: “Comstock Vignettes” item, TE, Aug. 22, 1952, 2.

n475 231 Robert’s layered life: For one obscure example of Robert’s varied activities, he “amusingly illustrated”

231 “a bit of the Ritz” : Basil Woon, quoted by *McGee & McGee, Divorce Seekers*, 82. Guests passed the word, and references were required. No children were allowed without Emmy Wood’s special dispensation (Donnelyn Curtis, written comment, May 28, 2015).


231 Nancy Jackson : *McGee & McGee, Divorce Seekers*, 265; Craig Jackson, email, Mar. 5, 2012 and interview, Jul. 1, 2012. Nancy’s Johnson subsequent marriage to neighboring rancher Johnnie Jackson didn’t prevent them all going on as friends and drinking buddies. Johnnie’s brother Nick Jackson was also a good friend of Robert’s, enough so to name his son Cole Robert. Nick bought Hoot Newman Silver Shop in Reno, where he exhibited Robert’s paintings. Nancy wrote the article on dude ranches for a popular collection on Nevada history and culture (Nancy J. Jackson (1981), “Dude Ranches in Nevada,” in Pahe, ed., *Nevada Towns & Tales*).

231 “this wild tendency toward divorce” : Caples, letter to Nancy Jackson, Mar. 31, 1979, files of Craig Jackson. To illustrate, Robert then dissected the marriage and divorce of Lanier Graham and Rosemary Junior.

232 glamorous divorce resident : Barbara Clark Salmon, interview, Jul. 12, 2012. I’m not sure the biographical dates support Babs’ belief about the father being Douglas Fairbanks, Jr..

232 woman named Jane : Possibly Jane Gallagher (Margaret Bartlett Thornton, letter to Robert and Rosemary Caples, Feb. 7, 1968, Thornton-UNR, Box 7). After Robert had moved East, Jane fantasized aloud about how wonderful it would have been to marry Robert. Not if you mean stability and security, Babs told her (Barbara Clark Salmon, interview, Jul. 12, 2012).


232 contact with Nancy : Nancy gave artist Jeff Nicholson (phone interview, Jul. 19, 2012) a Roman coin Robert had once given her. I surmise that the coin was something he picked up abroad in his travels with Rosemary, just as he once sent me the gift of a small earthen oil lamp from Egypt; and that therefore he was still in contact then with Nancy.


232 unfaithful to her husband Galen : Portraitist Patty Atcheson Melton (conversation, May 10, 2013), daughter-in-law of Marilyn Melton, was a neighbor and confidante up to Joanne’s death. Joanne told Patty that Caples and she had been lovers. Patty now lives in the same house, by coincidence, she told me, belonging to Bill Fox, now with the Nevada Museum of Art, when he was publishing de Longchamps’ books of poetry and collage.

232 long obsessive letter : Caples, letter to Galen & Joanne de Longchamps, Friday, Mar. 14, 1975, de-L-UNR.

233 Norman Mailer : Caples, letter to Joanne, Jan. 8, 1974, de-L-UNR.


233 how she and Robert met : Benson, transcript of phone interview of R Caples Sr, Aug. 9, 2000, Benson-UNR, 3.


234 I was told : Confidential conversation.


Notes, The Nevada They Knew, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 235–238


235 several weeks each summer: Three or four (R Caples Jr, phone conversation, Jan. 16, 2014).


n486 235 Drackerts’ ranch on Pyramid Lake: R Caples Jr, phone interview, Feb. 21, 2012. Ledgers from the Pyramid Lake Guest Ranch show they stayed there from July 2 through 23, 1956 (Ledgers and guest books of the Pyramid Lake Guest Ranch, Mary Bean Collection, Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno Libraries).


n487 235 under whose influence: Rosemary Junior and Denny were under strict orders never to enter Robert’s shed studio. Of course she had to sneak a look. There she saw “awesome art” (ibid.).


n488 235 Dorothy Bartlett: Denny Lake, phone interview, Jul. 19, 2012. As to Dorothy Bartlett being Byron’s friend, she may have been, but I think Denny was told a white lie. When Dorothy wrote to Robert about Potter in the early 1970s (n.d., letter to Caples, Caples Archive), she addressed him, “Robert Darling.” Not that “Darling” is dispositive.


235 “father lost the will to live”: Ibid., Oct. 8, 1979.


235 visits with Walter: Benson, transcript of phone interview of R Caples Sr, Aug. 9, 2000, Benson-UNR, 5.

235 four came that year: Clark, letters to Caples, Mar. 3, Jul. 23, Aug. 16 and 31, 1956, Clark-UNR.

n489 235 more often than not: The pattern, Robert told Bob Clark, was “only 1 in 4 planned visits to materialize” (RM Clark, late 1972, notes from conversations with Caples, files of RM Clark, 8 (Bob Clark’s paraphrase)).

235 “Pyramid glimmers afar”: Clark, letter to Caples, Jul. 23, 1956, Clark-UNR.


n490 235 in Virginia City: Clark, letter to Roger Butterfield, Sep. 6, 1958, University of Virginia. Walter stayed first with his mother in Reno until he rented a place in Virginia City (RM Clark, email, Jul. 21, 2014).

n491 235 wrote to Barbara: Clark, letter to Barbara Clark, Jul. 23, 1957, Clark-UNR. Walter also told Barbara that Walter’s in-law Clint Salmon gave him a case of whisky for Robert, saying it was “the only way I can give Robert even a token for the pictures” – more evidence of Robert giving away his work.

n492 235 stayed with Robert: RM Clark, late 1972, notes from conversations with Caples, files of RM Clark, 7. The wordings “‘Caples, I couldn’t’” and “a curtain of sound” quote Robert; “left rather abruptly” is Bob Clark’s paraphrase of Robert (RM Clark, email, Jul. 21, 2014).


n493 237 making up words: Undated notes, Caples Archive.


238 three packs a day: Denny Lake, phone interview, Jul. 19, 2012; Benson, transcript of interview of David Chism, Aug. 21, 2000, Benson-UNR.

238 David Chism repeated: Benson, transcript of interview of David Chism, Aug. 21, 2000, Benson-UNR.

I will take the occasion of Robert leaving Nevada as an opportunity to list my best information regarding all of his artworks from Nevada I’m aware of, which, for one reason or another, aren’t mentioned elsewhere. In some cases, such as the works once owned by Robert’s friend John Crider and some other collectors, I’ve carelessly lost track of my sources of information: abstract, 1958 or before, oil on drafting board, once held by John Crider; Byron Caples at the piano, ca. 1930, drawing, once owned by Hazel Caples; Dark Mountain, date unknown, oil, once owned by Thayer Bigelow; Death Valley at Dawn (1955–56), mixed media, once owned by Russell Thayer; desert, date unknown, drypoint or lithograph, in a private collection; Desert Mountains (1958 or before), oil & casein, once owned by Donald & Pat Soli; Earth and Sky (1951 or before), REG, Feb. 23, 1951, 20; fish, 1958 or before, print, once held by John Crider; flower, date unknown, in a private collection; flowers, date unknown, owned or once owned by Clair Vogt; flowers, date unknown, owned or once owned by Clair Vogt; Hills Beyond Thursday (1948), held my Mary Gray; horse, date unknown, in a private collection; horse, between 1940 and 1942, in a private collection; houses and mountains, date unknown, in a private collection; leaves, 1958 or before, mixed media, with white dribbles, once held by John Crider; ‘Man, Where Is Your Star?’ (1958 or before), mixed media, once held by John Crider; portrait, early 1930s, once owned by Helen Steinmiller; tilted rock faces with brush, date unknown, deaccessioned by NMA; Tina (1940s), oil & casein, once owned by Beverly Linnecke; and Virginia City Dealer (between 1948 and 1950), charcoal, once owned by Len Haffey.

In 1950 Robert also produced the dynamic Day of the Big Dust, depicting a storm at Pyramid Lake (reproduced in 1964 retrospective). In 1975, accompanying a handwritten letter (Caples, letter to Edith Holmes, May 13, 1975, Caples Archive), Robert sent the painting’s owner a typed page (description of Pyramid Lake for Edith Holmes, n.d., May 13, 1975, typed, Caples Archive):

This, “a moment of little dust,” offered to Edith Holmes to affix (if she so desires) to the back of her painting, DAY OF THE BIG DUST, a work done at Pyramid Lake, Nevada, in middle August of 1950, following a day of steep north winds and apocalyptic skies. Above that paragraph Robert had composed a description of Pyramid Lake on ordinary days:

A wide cathedral calm surrounds this place. The lake is large. On still days the water is intensely blue, but, on windy days, is sometimes a strange and wonderful green. And the mountains are big – so big that should some gigantic stone be tumbled from an eastern [Lake Range] peak it must fall nearly a mile to reach the water, and there, where the water is deepest, plunge down a thousand feet more to absolute bottom. Yet the lake is so wide, the measure of its serenity so deep, that no ripple of the event would cross to the opposite shore, no audible echo come from the eastern hills: only the path of dust on the highest mountain – and this soon lifted to nothingness in the desert air. Well, that’s Robert being not “pragmatically minded,” as he put it (Caples, letter to Norrine Buck, Aug. 3, 1979, Buck-UNR): the lake then and today reaches about 350 feet at its deepest, while on the other hand the Lake Range ridge is three horizontal miles and more from the water in many places.

On the copy of this note in the Caples Archive is written, “And now, Robert’s ashes are scattered in this lake. His soul’s shelter. Rosemary 1980.”
Notes, The Nevada They Knew, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 242–246 • Indexed Notes n496–n505

242 “the little man in the boat”: Clark, letter to Caples, August 15, 1971, Clark-UNR; Barbara Clark Salmon, interview, Jul. 12, 2012.

242 “arrowed by light”: Caples, letters to Joanne, May 13, 1972 (ellipses Robert’s) and Mar. 5, 1979, de-L-UNR.


242 “Ranges of mountains”: Mrs. Hugh Brown, ibid., 141–42.


n496 243 three of which: Advancing Day (1951), Full Moon (1952) and Moment of the Moon (1951).

n497 243 variants of Rockcandy Mountain: Other examples from the 1950s: Untitled (mountains in yellow), in a private collection; Upthrusting Ridges (date unknown, late 1950s) and Untitled (like Upthrusting Ridges) in private collections; see also Ridgerock (1958) in 1964 retrospective; and Calico Mountain, Tang Mountain, and three more Untitled (like Rockcandy Mountain), in the Caples Archive as photo reproductions, mostly snapshots.

n498 244 Hans Luginbuehl: Caples, letter to Robbins, Mar. 3, 1978, Emily Robbins. Rockcandy Mountain – Upainished was bought by David and Mel Vhay. The Luginbuehl embossed foil sticker, which I saw on the back of a different painting, was a coat of arms separating Lugin and Buehl, with the motto below, APPOINTMENTS FOR GRACIOUS LIVING.

The Lugin-Buehls (name here hyphenated) contributed five works to the 1964 retrospective. It is noteworthy that they, who were selling Caples works when he departed Nevada, still had in their collection some of his earliest: Geronimo Mirabel (1927), Descending Mallards (1929), and Amen (1936). They also contributed Evelina (1951) and Moment of the Moon (1951).

244 third, non-Indian portfolio: Caples, letter to Robbins, Feb. 27, 1978, Emily Robbins.

n499 244 Don and Pat Soli: Steve Soli, phone conversation, Jul. 8, 2014. In Search of the Mountain is one of four pictures (including Passage) contributed to the 1964 retrospective by Margaret Bartlett under her married name Thornton. Her note to the Solis was inscribed on the last page of Walter’s essay in a copy of the 1964 catalog.

n500 244 Robert’s scallops: In addition to those mentioned, there are six works in this style preserved as photo reproductions in the Caples Archive: one of mountains with black peaks, preserved in color, plus Blue Mountain and four of mountains, untiiled, all 1953 or before.

n501 245 Some include clouds: Also Landscape - Black Rock Desert (date unknown, mid to late 1950s), Art Collection, UNR; Sudden Hills and one of sun rays through clouds, both probably 1953 or before, preserved in photo reproductions in the Caples Archive; and a beautiful painting of mountains and clouds which Robert gifted to the First National Bank of Ely when he installed the mural they commissioned in 1956.

n502 246 This mural: John C. Gianoli, email and phone conversation, Apr. 23, 2013. This bank is not affiliated to the Reno First National. On September 7, 1956, Robert was paid $900 for the 52’ by 6.5’ mural. Robert also provided the painting of mountains and clouds mentioned in the previous note, which still hangs in the bank, probably at no charge since it isn’t mentioned in the record of payment.

While texturally different, this abstract treatment of mountains follows from the mountains in the earlier Sketch for Mural (1954). There, a single petroglyph symbol, displaced to the ground beneath the horses, represents the sun, which in the Ely mural, devoid of Indians and animals, looms foretelling a day of arid desert heat. A painting in much the same style carries the appropriate title, Abstract Landscape. It belongs to Patty Melton, Joanne de Longchamps’ neighbor and confidante. Like Abstract Landscape as well as Stone and Sky is an untitled work preserved in a snapshot in the Caples archive, where the formations are more three-dimensionally pyramidal.


n504 246 Stone and Sky: Compare also Calico Hills (1953), in 1964 retrospective and Native Hills (date unknown, mid 1950s) preserved as a photo reproduction in the Caples Archive.

n505 246 one of several drawings: Compare a photo of From an Old Etching in the Caples Archive.
Notes to Pages 247–255  •  Indexed Notes n506–n511

n506 247 **properties of calligraphy**: See also Sahwave Mountains (1956) in 1964 retrospective. This range is the second east of the Winnemucca Lake playa.

n507 248 **“the wind that blows”**: Caples, *Potter*, 213.

n507 248 **procedural papers**: Also among the procedural papers and so dating also to the mid 1950s is a cubistic sketch of houses.

n508 249 **did study Plato**: Growdon selected for reproduction in the 1981 catalog (*Growdon, Artist and the Man*, 10) an off-the-wall note of Robert’s concerning “Plato on geometric form”: “These things are beautiful not in relation to something else, but naturally and permanently beautiful.” The unattributed quote is from Plato’s *Philebus* 51c. In letters to Morrie Jellett elucidating *Potter*, Robert connected a cave in *Potter* to Plato’s Parable of the Cave (Caps, letter to Morrie Jellett, Jan. 18, 1974, Caps Archive) and stated that “The Potter represents Plato’s Demiurge . . . a power intermediate between God and man” (Caps, letter to Vivian and to Morrie Jellett, Sep. 1, 1975, Caps Archive). Cave and Demiurge are from *The Republic* and *Timaeus* respectively.

n509 249 **“anything pursued to centrality”**: Questionnaire, 7.

n509 249 **a previous book**: Shafton (2002), *Dream-singers: The African American Way with Dreams*, John Wiley & Sons. Recently I picked up Plumpp’s *Blues Narratives* (1999, Tia Chucha Press), where in an afterword (“Sterling Plumpp’s poetry”) by novelist John Edgar Wideman, whom I had also interviewed for *Dream-Singers*, Wideman made this observation (71): “The highly subjective, personal focus on telling one’s story – directly, simply – so it stands for, invites, the collective drama as echo, affirmation.”

n510 251 **“the inner glow”**: “Art, Artists, Artisans” item, Your Pal-Ette B, *NSJ*, Apr. 19, 1953, 10 (ellipses and punctuation as printed).

n510 252 **“the sound left out”**: Caps, letter to Joanne, May 8, 1976, de-L-UNR.

n510 252 **“A sense of ‘rightness’”**: Questionnaire, 5–6 (ellipsis and punctuation Robert’s).

n510 252 **“Subjective naturalism”**: Caps, n.d., notes on duality attached to an extra copy of notes on centrality, Clark-UNR.

n511 255 **Such questions**: In one of the stronger passages in his little book on Clark (*Walter Van Tilburg Clark*, 9–10), Max Westbrook posed the strong form of the question during Walter’s lifetime, then didn’t really attempt to answer it. People were “puzzled,” Westbrook began, “by the fact that he has produced almost nothing of significance since 1950. Such questions seem unfair to the author, seem to invite easy-chair conjectures, sometimes smell slightly morbid, and certainly constitute an external approach to problems
Notes to Pages 255–256  •  Indexed Notes n512–n517

which, if legitimate, ought to be available for study in the literature itself. Still, though we may feel guilty for having come upon the question for suspicious reasons, there is often an uneasy feeling that the problem raised does have a legitimate, intrinsic existence. Thus we may snort righteously at men who raise the question and yet find our holy selves interested in deriving an answer. What did happen to Walter Van Tilburg Clark?”

n512 255 **As early as 1952**: Letters quoted in Benson, *Ox-Bow Man*, 197. This was just the first of increasingly self-flagellating confessions to Barbara of an agonized frustration (ibid., passim).

n513 255 **also articles and reviews**: In addition to those mentioned below, a Clark bibliography published in 1965 lists half a dozen more reviews and essays after 1950 (Richard Etulain (1965), “Walter Van Tilburg Clark: A Bibliography,” *South Dakota Review*, vol. 3, no. 1, Autumn, 73–77). The Special Collections guide to Clark’s papers lists only two manuscripts probably or definitely published after 1965, one a review, the other the 1968 “Introduction” to Brown, *Lady in Boomtown*. Walter also published a popular history article in *Holiday* magazine (Clark, “Nevada’s Fateful Desert,” and the introduction to a “new souvenir booklet,” *Historic Virginia City*, distributed by the Bucket of Blood’s Don McBride (“Comstock Vignettes” item, *TE*, Jun. 5, 1953, 4).


255 **three novels**: Manuscripts in Clark-UNR: *Admission Day*: NC527/1/4; *The Man in the Hole*: NC527/1/5; *Way Station*: NC527/1/6.

255 **“a Western epic”**: Benson, *Ox-Bow Man*, 263, 269.

255 **unrelentingly honest critic**: For Walter’s critiques of student work, see Clark, letter to John Kuehl, Jul. 4, 1953, University of Virginia; and Clark, letter to Jim Folger, 2002-04, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Reno; for critiques of award submissions, see Clark, Nominations and comments for the Hopwood Awards in Fiction, 1963 and 1967, both in Hopwood Awards Collection, AMSHW, University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library).

n515 255 **submissions to Random House**: “[A]ctually, I think he did try some things out on Saxe [Commins], and then Saxe said no, don’t do it” (Benson, transcript of interview of RM Clark, Oct. 23, 1997, Benson-UNR, 19). Laird stated that during the dry years Random House rejected a novella, *The Queen Is a Powerful Piece* (Carl Heintze, “Notes from Laird Interview, Jul. 1980,” Heintze-UNR). Actually the novella was written and rejected in 1947, before Clark began writing *Track* later that same year (RM Clark, “Chronology,” 281).

255 **clearly posthumous releases**: RM Clark, letter to Charlton Laird, Mar. 17, 1972, Laird-UNR, Box 28.

255 **as Walter’s literary executor**: RM Clark, letter to Charlton Laird, May 9, 1979, Laird-UNR, Box 27.

n516 255 **Bob explained to Robert**: Letter, Oct. 19, 1972, Caples Archive. Bob Clark’s ambivalence arose only from the fact that Walter hadn’t destroyed certain works as he had so much else. He went on to tell Robert that he was currently reading *Water*, which he later told Benson was “pretty unreadable” (Benson, transcript of interview of RM Clark, Oct. 23, 1997, Benson-UNR, 18).

Bob Clark did, however, later look favorably on the idea of a posthumous collection of Walter’s short works, to include unpublished stories. A former student of Walter’s, Charles Brashers, took the idea to Nick Cady at the University of Nevada Press, who approved. Bob Clark withheld permission, Brashers told Benson, because he wanted to edit such a book himself. He never did (Benson, transcript of interview of Charles Brashers, Mar. 31, 2000, Benson-UNR, 1).

n517 256 **Bob Clark studied the manuscripts**: RM Clark, letter to Rosemary Caples, Jan. 31, 1973, Caples Archive. David Chism (interview, Jul. 8, 2012) had heard that as a boy his cousin Bob Clark had been required to type up the manuscript of *City* from Walter’s holograph, written in his small, difficult script in blue pencil on yellow unlined paper, of which there was always a pile on hand. But apparently not. In his letter to Rosemary Caples just quoted, Bob added, “It was a little spooky to look at all that handwriting and imagine him at work, with myself around the same premises paying no attention to what I now go 3000 miles to see.”
Notes, *The Nevada They Knew*, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 256–258  ●  Indexed Notes n518–n522


n519 256  **Way Station**: RM Clark, typescript with the hand-written heading “Leslie B. Gray,” 4, Laird-UNR, Box 27.

n519 257  **his tendency always**: Walter himself described some of the poems he sent to Robert and Virginia for Christmas in 1933 as “devilishly didactic” (Clark, letter to Robert and Virginia Caples, Dec. 15, 1933, Clark-UNR). As mentioned in my chapter “Nevada Desert Wolf,” when Bob Clark and I traded thoughts on the problem (RM Clark, interview, Jun. 27–28, 2012), he brought up *The Man in the Hole*, with its over-planned seven-day plot scheme based on the New Testament – something, as I said, Bob finds “curious,” since “the Gospels never meant anything in particular” to his father. I asked Bob if he’d read Vardis Fisher’s *City of Illusion* ((1982 [1941]), Ace Charter (Grosset & Dunlap)), like *The Man in the Hole* a Comstock novel in which a man is trapped down a mine shaft. Bob hadn’t. Fisher treats historical characters Eilley Orrum and Sandy Bowers as a warning of the folly of ambition, and John Mackay as an exemplar, if not of renunciation then of service. Fisher’s man down the hole is Luff, an invented character, an alcoholic whose conspicuous indifference to wealth is founded on existential emptiness. Under social pressure he finally makes an unskilful bid for wealth, which ends disastrously. But he undergoes a transformation. He has fallen into the same treacherous mine shaft as a goat, toward whom he experiences as death approaches a transcendent kinship healing his despair. My point was that Fisher achieved in a couple of pages what the stymied Walter was striving for with his whole over-elaborated Biblical schemata. (Many on the Comstock kept goats for milk. Goats are attracted to caves, and some ended up at the bottom of abandoned shafts (De Quille, *The Big Bonanza*, 101.).

n520 257  **discarded first pass**: Information in this paragraph from Laird, “Gospel,” 159 untilted; ibid., undated and unattributed fragment of a draft, Laird-UNR, Box 27; ibid., “Strange Hunting and The Track of the Cat,” 1980 draft of a seminar paper, 1, Laird-UNR, Box 27.

n520 257  **A falseness creeps in**: Clark, *City*, 419 (italics omitted). Cf. also 574.

n520 257  **essay in semi-dialogue form**: Clark, “The Writer and the Professor.”


n520 257  **as it proved to be**: Friend Ray B. West (Carl Heintze, “Notes from Ray West Jr. interview in Santaquin, May, 1980,” Heintze-UNR) remembers Clark when he was already ill, 1968 or after, being expansive late into the night about his plans for new fiction. But this was very much the exception to reports from other associates, such as Walter’s friend since Taos in 1946 and his eventual office mate in Reno, Charlton Laird, who said Clark seldom spoke about his work, apart from occasionally offering “that he had ‘it’ going again,” but that was all (Carl Heintze, n.d., “In Search of Walter Clark,” manuscript, Heintze-UNR).

n520 257  **Max Westbrook**: Walter Van Tilburg Clark, 9–10.


n521 258  **wasn’t one to dwell**: RM Clark, letter to Charlton Laird, Apr. 3, 1979, Laird-UNR, Box 28.

n521 258  **fall victim to the perfectionism**: Stegner, “Walter Clark’s Frontier,” 68.

n521 258  **said everything he had to say**: Lee, *Walter Van Tilburg Clark*, 37.

n521 258  **Bob Clark said much the same**: RM Clark, interview, Jun. 27–28, 2012.

n521 258  **times passed him by**: Carl Heintze citing Stegner, letter to the author, Apr. 17, 1980, author’s files. See also Carl Heintze, n.d., “In Search of Walter Clark,” manuscript, Heintze-UNR, 10.


n522 258  **‘splendour in the grass’**: RM Clark, interview, Jun. 27–28, 2012. Walter was “romantic,” said Bob, he ran out of the juices of youth. Walter and Robert both “should have died at thirty-eight,” he said, meaning that neither was able to ripen his youthful passion to maturity. Bob is wrong about Robert, who peaked as an artist well into his fifties, and as a human being beyond.
Notes to Pages 258–261

**Indexed Notes n523–n527**

258 over four hundred of his students: Benson, transcript of interview of David Chism, Aug. 21, 2000, Benson-UNR, 1.


259 “I am kept so busy”: Clark, letter to John and Joan Kuehl, Jan. 28, 1954, University of Virginia.

259 “while I’m teaching”: Clark, letter to Joan and John Kuehl, Jul. 24, 1956, University of Virginia.


259 “to clubs”: Clark, letter to John and Joan Kuehl, Mar. 31, 1957, University of Virginia. Back in 1946, before he got into the swing, he declined an invitation from future friend Ray West to speak at a conference, on the grounds that “I’m really no kind of a public speaker; have a rather deep resistance to the art” (Clark, letter to Ray B. West, Jan. 24, 1946, Benson-UNR).

259 compulsive talking: Clark, *City*, 198–99, 310 passim.

259 Tim in his twenties: Ibid., 351.

259 “Everything was considered”: James McCormick, interview, Jul. 19, 2012.


259 “never knew when to stop”: Benson, transcript of phone interview of Richard Scowcroft, Sep. 28, 2000, Benson-UNR.

259 “to the point of absolute boredom”: Benson, transcript of phone interview of Walter Brown, May 26, 2000, Benson-UNR. The only time Laird ever saw Walter at a loss was in the presence of Robert Penn Warren, who was “a lot more facile talker” (Carl Heintze, “Notes from Laird Interview, Jul. 1980,” Heintze-UNR).

259 more ‘exhaustive’ than lively”: RM Clark, late 1972, notes from conversations with Caples, files of RM Clark, 1. Bettina told John that “Clark talks constantly and when he stops, his wife starts talking about horses” (John Caples Diary, Mar. 5, 1951).

259 William Appleton Williams: Letter to Carl Heintze, Dec. 28, 1979, Heintze-UNR. Williams added (paragraphing omitted): “But the truly fascinating thing about it is this: he said he was going to publish it as a novel. And of course many of us waited and waited and waited. But it did appear as a novel by Oakley Hall title *Warlock*. I was outraged because Hall did not do it in print nearly as well as Clark had done it orally. I once heard, much later, that Clark had been asked about it all and had replied with a shrug to the effect that the bones of the tale were in the public domain. Ah, so.” *Warlock* appeared in 1958.

Walter’s University of Nevada colleague Robert Harvey (phone interview, Jul. 25, 2012) witnessed Walter run a fifty-minute talk to three hours without losing his audience. “It was one of the most extraordinary experiences I ever had.”


261 The University of Nevada purchased: The journals surfaced after a San Francisco rare books dealer John Howell bought them from the estate of a Doten son in 1958 (“New Chapters Are Uncovered in Virginia City History,” *TE*, Jul. 18, 1958, 1, 16). In 1959, they received national notoriety with a *Life* cover story (Robert Laxalt, letter to Clark, Nov. 13, 1961, Doten-UNR). A Doten grandson died after adding further documentation but before fulfilling a contract with Howell to prepare a book based on Doten’s California years (RM Clark, 1973, “Preface,” in Clark, *Doten*, xi–xx, xiii). The university paid Howell $55,000, with $20,000 from the state and $35,000 from the Max C. Fleischmann Foundation (Donnelyn Curtis, conversation, Jun. 4, 201; Charles J. Armstrong, letter to Julius Bergen, the Max C. Fleischmann Foundation of Nevada, Mar. 21, 1961, Doten-UNR). The university got in ahead of New York publisher Holt Rinehart, who then approached the university (which made the purchase, not the new University of Nevada Press) with the offer of a collaboration. It wasn’t uncommon in those days for small universities to make publishing arrangements with larger houses. Initially Director Robert Laxalt
envisioned publication by the University of California Press, but under the Nevada imprint, something he persuaded President Armstrong was important to give the new press a running start (Robert Laxalt, memo to members of the University Press Advisory Editorial Board, May 1, 1963, Doten-UNR; Robert Laxalt, memo to President Charles J. Armstrong, Nov. 27, 1961, Doten-UNR). In the end the press handled the whole job. Nick Cady came on in 1965 as in-house editor. The State Printing office did the manufacturing, with typesetting done there and by a jobber (Nicholas Cady, phone interview, Jun. 24, 2013). An English Department graduate student did the index (Nicholas Cady, email, Mar. 21, 2014).

Requests to the Fleischmann Foundation later in 1961 for further funds to complete the project were turned down (Robert Laxalt, memo to President Charles J. Armstrong, Dec. 5, 1961, Doten-UNR; Lester D. Summerfield, letter to Charles J. Armstrong, Mar. 16, 1962, Doten-UNR). In 1968, as the project dragged on and the Foundation again refused further assistance, Robert Laxalt solicited support from philanthropists Molly Magee Knudtsen, Samuel G. Houghton, Helen Marye Thomas and Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr. (Robert Laxalt, letter to Chancellor Neil D. Humphrey, Aug. 13, 1968, Doten-UNR; Neil D. Humphrey, letter to Robert Laxalt, Aug. 16, 1968, Doten-UNR).

Not all phases of the progression of the Doten project are transparent, because the University of Nevada Press didn’t carefully preserve records from those years.


It had been Armstrong: Robert Laxalt, letter to Clark, Nov. 13, 1961, Doten-UNR.

two books: The plan for two books was endorsed by friendly directors at the Stanford and University of California Presses when Laxalt as a neophyte book publisher conferred with them in Nov., 1961 (Robert Laxalt, memo to President Charles J. Armstrong, Nov. 10, 1961, Doten-UNR). On the same trip Laxalt, who had already sent a letter of proposal to Walter, tried but failed to meet up with historian and author Bernard DeVoto, either wanting his advice or as an alternate should Walter decline. But Walter accepted, in January, 1962 (Benson, Ox-Bow Man, 320).

July 1, 1962 through 1963: Robert Laxalt, memo to President Charles J. Armstrong, Nov. 27, 1961, Doten-UNR.

Writer In Residence: Clark, letter to Margaret Robb, Nov. 6, 1962, Walter Van Tilburg Clark and Margaret Robb Correspondence (MS 187), Special Collections, University of Colorado at Boulder Libraries. Later Walter taught part-time (Clark, letter to Caples, Aug. 5, 1964, Clark-UNR).

no other duties: Clark, letter to Arno L. Bader, Oct. 18, 1962, Hopwood Awards Collection, AMSHW, University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library).


“A batch of excerpts”: Barbara M. Clark, letter to Roger Butterfield, Dec. (?) 22, 1963, University of Virginia (spelling corrected). Barbara called this the press’s proposal, but it may not have been the press’s original proposal. Walter said in a 1963 prospectus, when the University of California Press was still collaborating, that he meant to concentrate on “the height of the Comstock period” (Clark, “Prospectus of Proposed One Volume Treatment of Materials from the Alfred Doten Collection at the University of Nevada,” prepared for the University of California Press, 1963. Copies attached to Robert Laxalt, memo to members of the University Press Advisory Editorial Board, May 1, 1963, Doten-UNR).

a nonfiction biography: Benson, Ox-Bow Man, 333–34.


Bob Clark’s take: RM Clark, 1973, “Preface,” in Clark, Doten, xi–xx, xiii. Bob writes that an early effort of Walter’s carried the tentative title The Pilgrim on the Mountain. The second idea was for a “speculative autobiography-biography” at first titled The Delegation from Spunkville.
In the 1970s, Laxalt would talk to Bob Clark about a possible position at the press as editor of a Great Basin Series; then in the 1980s Bob would apply for the post being vacated by Ken Carpenter as head of Special Collections (RM Clark, letter to Charlton Laird, Jan. 29, 1981, Laird-UNR, Box 27). So Bob wanted to return to Reno and the university, but didn’t obtain the requisite employment.


already well behind schedule: As of August of 1963, April of 1964 was the new but overly optimistic date (Robert Laxalt, memo to members of the University Press Advisory Editorial Board and University Chancellor Neil D. Humphrey, Aug. 5, 1963, Doten-UNR).


Editor Nick Cady: Nicholas Cady, email, Jul. 6, 2013.

nearly 10,000 transcript pages: Russell R. Elliott, memo to Robert Laxalt, Dec. 17, 1962, Doten-UNR; Nicholas Cady, “Doten Journals,” fifteen minute radio interview by George Herman, broadcast in 1976 in the series “Nevada: One of Fifty,” Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno Libraries, Collection 97-02/#16. Departmental secretary Mary Ann Jaffe did the typing. Between Doten’s and Walter’s difficult handwritings, copying errors on successive typescripts, and Walter’s own copying errors, there were “an estimated 10,000 minor discrepancies,” a nightmare for Nick Cady that further delayed publication (Nicholas Cady, email, Jul. 6, 2013).

Laxalt had been warned: The warnings came from the friendly press directors at the University of California and Stanford (Robert Laxalt, memo to President Charles J. Armstrong, Nov. 27, 1961, Doten-UNR).
Notes, The Nevada They Knew, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 263–267 • Indexed Notes n540–n544

UNR).

263 law suit over the delay: Donnelly Curtis, conversation, May 24, 2013; Nicholas Cady, email, Jul. 6, 2013.


263 didn’t have the desired effect: Clark, letter to Caples, Aug. 13, 1970, Clark-UNR; Clark, letter to Caples, Jan. 30, 1971, Clark-UNR; Clark, letter to Caples, Feb. 23, 1971, Clark-UNR.

n540 263 contours of “classical tragedy”: RM Clark, 1973, “Preface,” in Clark, Doten, xi–xx, xiv, quoting “an informal progress report to the University Press” by Walter. There had been some glory, followed by loss of “everything”: newspaper, employment, house and virtually all possessions, the respect of his children, the marital bed (Clark, Doten, 1308).

263 “materializing in 1864”: Clark, letter to Margaret Robb, Nov. 6, 1962, Walter Van Tilburg Clark and Margaret Robb Correspondence (MS 187), Special Collections, University of Colorado at Boulder Libraries.

263 “windowless mausoleum”: Clark, letter to Caples, Feb. 6, 1963, Clark-UNR.

263 “walking dust of Alf Doten”: Clark, letter to Caples, Dec. 25, 1966, Clark-UNR.

263 Doten as a Virginia City character: Clark, letter to Caples, Aug. 15, 1969, Clark-UNR.

263 how it was with his father: RM Clark, 1973, “Preface,” in Clark, Doten, xi–xx, xvii.

265 “Tim’s great single love”: Clark, City, 5.

265 Tim grabs a print: Ibid., 274.

265 Rachel’s graduation picture: Ibid., 292.

266 Marian Lowes Cheney: She was born Marian Dickenson in California (1920 Census). Hylda her English mother remarried Everett Cheney (“Cheney Returns,” REG, Sep. 30, 1927, 8; “Campus Chatter” item, Virginia Olesen, NSJ, May 1, 1947, 2).

n541 266 an actress: MarIan got some dramatics training in San Francisco (“Society” item, REG, Oct. 29, 1927, 4), played leading roles at the University of Washington after transferring from Nevada (“Society” item, REG, Jan. 8, 1929, 4; “Society” item, REG, Nov. 25, 1929, 4), and later studied drama in New York (“Social and Personal” item, NSJ, Jan. 3, 1934, 4) There I lose her trail.


266 coat with a fur collar: Clark, City, 149, 219.

266 fur-trimmed dress: Ibid., 243–44.

266 gray dress: Ibid., 259.

n542 266 mixed doubles: Ruth was an even better tennis player than Walter – she may already have been state junior champion (“Form of Net Stars Shows Increasing Improvement,” NSJ, Jun. 2, 1926, 5; Clark, City, 177) when in the parallel universe of City Rachel rebuffs Tim’s invitation to be his mixed doubles partner. But Ruth and Walter did eventually compete together in mixed doubles, just as did Rachel and Tim (“Busey Ranked As State Premier Tennis Singles Player,” NSJ, Nov. 19, 1926, 5; Clark, City, 228). Ruth went to Stanford, where she became the university’s top tennis player as a freshman (“Ruth Thatcher Is Tennis Champ,” REG, May 31, 1927, 6).

266 yearbook staff: Clark, City, 263; Clark’s copy of Re-Wa-Ne, Yearbook of Reno High School, 1926, Clark-UNR.

n543 266 Court Street Quarter: “Society in and around Reno” item, NSJ, Feb. 20, 1927, 8. The Thatchers lived in fashionable Newlands Heights, in the Newlands mansion no less.

266 they divorced: Clark, City, 171.

266 left Reno for college: Ibid., 274.

267 Rachel “nearly killed herself”: Ibid., 360.

267 send-off party for Ruth: “Society” item, REG, Jan. 31, 1929, 4; “Society” item, REG, Aug. 24, 1929, 4

267 When Bob Clark asked Robert: RM Clark, late 1972, notes from conversations with Caples, files of RM Clark, 8.

267 “Save for Walter”: Thornton-UNR.

267 “wild, shy eyes”: Clark, City, 163.

267 born in 1908: August 15, 1908.
267 partnered with George Bartlett: Elizabeth Raymond, interview, Apr. 29, 2013.

267 close friend and lawyer: Raymond, George Wingfield, passim. Thatcher and Wingfield were so closely tied that the law firm and Wingfield shared the same reception area and phone number in Wingfield’s Reno National Bank at 204 N. Virginia Street – another Frederic DeLongchamps design. Thatcher and Woodburn represented Wingfield’s business interests. Thatcher was the Democrat, Woodburn the Republican in a partnership designed to deal with Nevada’s political interbreeding. Thatcher was also Wingfield’s divorce lawyer.

Thatcher was a member of the Nevada Ku Klux Klan. Wingfield was not, but was aware of his lawyer’s affiliation (Elizabeth Raymond, interview, Apr. 29, 2013).


267 “the lady side of the problem”: Clark, n.d., 1932, letter to Donald L. Kemmerer, Walter Clark Papers, MISC 0074, Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries.


267 married by the bride’s father: Benson, Ox-Bow Man, 44.

267 “more or less vamp[ed]”: RM Clark, email, Dec. 6, 2013.


267 She was smart: Gordon Chism, As I Remember, 39; David Chism, interview, Jul. 8, 2012.

267 playing a cautious defense: RM Clark, n.d., 1997, transcript of letter to Benson beginning “I’ll be happy to answer things,” Benson-UNR.

267 she wrote “a bit”: Clark, letter to Donald L. Kemmerer, Nov. 29, 1934, Walter Clark Papers, MISC 0074, Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries.

267 mystery stories: Benson, Ox-Bow Man, 44, 47, 239.

267 took pride in volunteering: RM Clark, n.d., probably 2002, transcript of letter to Benson beginning “I know I asked the question,” Benson-UNR.

267 She was the practical one: RM Clark, n.d., 1997, transcript of letter to Benson beginning “I’ll be happy to answer things,” Benson-UNR.

267 “She was not as good-looking”: RM Clark, n.d., 1997, transcript of letter to Benson beginning “I’ll be happy to answer things,” Benson-UNR.

267 “Nobody could ever figure out”: Benson, transcript of phone interview of Walter Brown, May 26, 2000, Benson-UNR, 3.

267 both were alcoholic: Peter Kraemer, phone interview, Jul. 11, 2012.

267 “fun-loving, high-spirited”: RM Clark, in Benson, Ox-Bow Man, 44.


268 “between wives”: RM Clark, email, Feb. 27, 2013; RM Clark, interview, Jun. 27–28, 2012. At dinner with the Robert and Wendy Clark in Helena, she asked him if Caples had been his godfather. When Bob scoffed at the religious implication, Wendy said she meant as someone designated as Walter and Barbara’s surrogate should anything happen to them. Bob found this even more ludicrous: Barbara would never have heard of it, and probably not Walter.

268 Robert didn’t much like her: Clark, letter to Barbara Clark, Jul. 5, 1937, Clark-UNR.


269 letters of his: For example, there’s one from Iowa (Clark, transcript of letter to Barbara, Apr. 25, 1952, Benson-UNR) expressing deep remorse for insensitivities and presumptions over the years, where he seems sincerely adoring and grateful, and desirous as well. He misses her terribly, with “rather frequent flights into downright erotic panting.” And yet, there’s something extravagant about the tone of his lengthy mea culpa, as he acknowledged by admitting it “sounds exaggerated.” Was he again idealizing?


270 “[W]omen were always chasing him”: Benson, transcript of phone interview of Walter Brown, May 26, 2000, Benson-UNR, 2.
Notes to Pages 270–272  ●  Indexed Notes n548–n554

270 “faithful in word and deed”: Carl Heintze, “Notes from Laird Interview, July 1980,” Heintze-UNR.

270 I raised the question with Babs: Barbara Clark Salmon, interview, Jul. 12, 2012.


270 not to “touch her”: Clark, City, 401.


n549 270 the singer Eileen: Clark, City, ch. 53. Eileen was modeled on a girl Walter knew during a summer vacation at La Jolla with this natal family (RM Clark, interview, Jun. 27–28, 2012). In Track (247), condemnation of sex comes from “the mother,” causing resentful guilt in Harold her son for embraces and kisses imbued with loving desire. Walter later showed Harold and Gwen expressing a sweet and loving sensuality apart from the context of sexual union, a kind of counterpart to the swim on Mt. Rose.

n550 270 “Victorian mores”: RM Clark, interview, Jun. 27–28, 2012. In his graduate school retelling of the Tristram legend, Walter didn’t make the lovers chaste, but in the introduction he did complain about the “coarse conception of love” in historical versions (Clark, “Sword Singer,” xiv), and even blamed Victorian poet Tennyson for debasing “tragic . . . devotion” into “lewd . . . dalliance” in “Idylls of the King” (xxxviii).

n551 270 “locker-room talk”: Wilner, “Complicated Simplicity,” 36. The only levity about sex on Walter’s part that I’m aware of, in or out of print, is in, of all places, Doten. While Doten’s notebooks were still in the hands of his heirs, one of them misguidedly made a start at erasing anything he or she deemed prurient or too physiologically explicit (RM Clark, 1973, “Preface,” in Clark, Doten, xi–xx, xii). Walter made a running joke out of it with such annotations as, “AD [Doten] . . . achieves another erasure” (Clark, Doten, 196).

270 incapable of a possible affair: RM Clark, late 1972, notes from conversations with Caples, files of RM Clark, 8.

270 “He wasn’t a stud at all”: Benson, transcript of phone interview of Walter Brown, Sep. 25, 2000, Benson-UNR, 1.

271 “I have got Walter”: Benson, transcript of phone interview of Walter Brown, May 26, 2000, Benson-UNR, 2.

271 “for my wife alone”: RM Clark, late 1972, notes from conversations with Caples, files of RM Clark, 10.

271 “any third person”: Ibid., 6.


n552 270 “unattainable love”: Clark, “Sword Singer,” i. In case anyone wonders, the song of Tristram in City (126) was not lifted from “Sword Singer.”


271 Rachel as Isolt of Ireland: Clark, City, 127.

271 the “old friend”: Ibid., 463.

271 “as much out of fear”: Clark, “Sword Singer,” xxxvii.

n553 272 “agonizingly dull”: RM Clark, notes for an essay on The City of Trembling Leaves, 1, Laird-UNR, Box 28. Lest there be any doubt that Walter meant to represent his own family in the novel’s happy ending, Bob Clark himself (RM Clark, email, Feb. 29, 2012) emphasized the fact by calling attention to the children’s names. The Hazard children are Lawrence and Mary. Young Lawrence Hazard was named after Lawrence Black, just as he, Robert Clark, was named after Robert Caples; and little Mary Hazard was named after her mother, just as Babs Clark was after hers. Bob also said that the constellation of Tim composing while Mary exists in the background corresponds to his parents’ pattern (RM Clark, interview, Jun. 27–28, 2012).

n554 272 I’m hardly the only one: Wilson, “White Peaks,” 75; “‘The City of Trembling Leaves,’” M.-C. R., Sunday Star [Washington, DC], Jun. 10, 1945; “Talent and Feeling in ‘The City of Trembling Leaves,’” Miami Daily News Record, Jun. 17, 1945, 9. The last, comparing City to Maugham’s Of Human Bondage, published nine years earlier, may have been riposting the opinion of critic Sterling North, who had “seldom been so moved since reading ’Of Human Bondage’” (“Reno, but Romantic,” Sterling North, New York Post, Jun. 7, 1945, 18). Wallace Stegner (“Walter Clark’s Frontier,” 61, 64) treated the
ending kindly, in line with his view that civilization was Walter’s major theme: “he has dared to suggest that there is a possible reconciliation among serious art, the ordinariness of a little western town, and the primal gods of the earth. It is something I should like to believe.” Walter’s student and friend the novelist Herbert Wilner (“Complicated Simplicity,” 47) implicitly endorsed the ending by summarizing City as “a Bildungsroman in which a youth of sensitivity and talent progresses toward a unified artistic view, gradually suppressing his yearning for unachievable romantic ideals as he moves toward a more limited and unified sense of the necessary without surrendering the impulses of the ideals.”

272 I was disappointed: Hubert D. Saal, letter to Clark, Sep. 13, 1949, Clark-UNR (paragraphing omitted).

272 Walter planted glimpses: Clark, City, 468. See also, e.g., 215–16.

273 Tim’s proposal: Ibid., 611–12.

273 Of course she doesn’t: Ibid., 640–41.


273 the elevated mood at Bowers Mansion: Ibid., 272ff.

n555 273 the elation of reconnecting with Eileen: Ibid., ch. 53. Other examples: after triumphing over his rival for Rachel in a track race, Tim deflates when he sees he only succeeded in crushing Red’s spirit and worrying Rachel (ibid., 197); the uplift of the swim on Mt. Rose leads into “a dull heaviness that would last forever” (ibid., 407). A big exception to the pattern is the tie-up scene, where the exhilaration of the contest induces not depression but Tim’s first experience of “the nuclear” (ibid., 105).

273 “clarity, calmer and more enduring”: Ibid., 526–27.

273 another high/low of creativity: Ibid., 574–75 (see also 460–61).

273 a former way of being: Ibid., 576, 579.


274 “marriage creating a third person”: RM Clark, late 1972, notes from conversations with Caples, files of RM Clark, 6.


275 “I have got Walter”: Benson, transcript of phone interview of Walter Brown, May 26, 2000, Benson-UNR, 2.

275 “The big picture is always sad”: RM Clark, “‘Voice,’” 262.

275 “He has faith in time”: Clark, City, 436.

277 We live at what was once: Caples, letter to Robbins, Mar. 8, 1973, Emily Robbins.

n558 277 “den of foxes”: Caples, letter to Robbins, Oct. 28, 1976. John was under the impression that they found out in 1968 that someone else’s undeveloped acreage separated Turtle Hill from the state park (John Caples Diary, May 26, 1968).

277 five terraces: Caples, letter to Joanne, Jul. 19, 1979, de-L-UNR.


n559 277 former horse pond: Shafton, “Bea & Sherman,” unpublished manuscript, author’s files, 16. Sara Frantz
of the Nevada Museum of Art saw the pond in 2001 (conversation, Nov. 16, 2011), but no trace of it shows up now on Google maps.


n560 277 Electric lighting was restricted: David Chism, interview, Jul. 8, 2012. Abstinence mustn’t always have been observed quite so strictly, since on Thanksgiving in 1968, with Robert’s son Cricket and brother John as guests, they watched TV for an hour like a typical family (John Caples Diary, Nov. 29, 1968).

278 “We have that memory in common”: David Chism, interview, Jul. 8, 2012.

n561 278 In my novella: Shafton, “Bea & Sherman,” unpublished manuscript, author’s files, 11–12. Nearly the same time as I was there, John registered his own impression of Turtle Hill (John Caples Diary, May 17, 1964): “R & R’s place is beautiful, with apple blossoms, lilacs and many other flowers. Robert mixed drinks at a table on the lawn – white iron furniture, all very artistic.”

n562 278 he sometimes worried: John Caples Diary, Apr. 29, 1967. John learned this from Dorothy Dickes, his partner since 1957 and eventually his second wife, who had it from Rosemary (ibid., Mar. 5, 1979).

n563 279 Rosemary Junior advised me: R Caples Jr, phone interview, Feb. 21, 2012; Barbara Clark Salmon, interview, Jul. 12, 2012; RM Clark, interview, Jun. 27–28, 2012. It’s very unlikely that Rosemary was aware of the precedent set by Idah Meacham Strobridge. Known as “the first woman of Nevada Letters” (pace Sarah Winnemucca), Strobridge lived the ranching and mining life in north-central Nevada until illness swept away her husband and all their children. Devastated, she moved away to Southern California, where she became part of a bohemian scene that included Robinson Jeffers, Walter’s early role model. Strobridge herself became a bookbinder and an author in her own right, publishing three books about rural Nevada. She remained in Southern California, but like Caples never lost the imprint of the desert. “I cannot give it up entirely,” she told a reporter in 1904, “and so I have furnished in fitting manner the ‘Wickiup,’ my substitute for the desert, down on the breakwater at San Pedro” (Richard A. Dwyer & Richard E. Lingenfelter (1990), “Introduction: The Woman and Her Works,” in Idah Meacham Strobridge, Sagebrush Trilogy: Idah Meacham Strobridge and Her Works, University of Nevada Press).

279 “he would go [there]”: Lanier Graham, emails, Jan. 15, 2013.

279 “dePreston, disConnecticut”: Caples, letter to Norinne Buck, Sep. 10, 1976, Buck-UNR.


n564 279 not only for Rosemary’s sake: Monica doesn’t remember Robert, but does “the skull in a sandbox” (Monica Houghton, conversation, Jan. 30, 2014). In a letter to the Houghtons, Robert wrote, “Edda, how good it was of you to walk down to the smallest of deserts with me. That was a space of time measured in moments – and yet it will never cease existing for me” (Caples, letter to Samuel G. & Edda Houghton, Nov. 20, 1970, Houghton-UNR).


281 “painting until the end”: Benson, Ox-Bow Man, 27.

1959–62: 1964 retrospective is subtitled “1927–1963.” Actually the exhibition contained no works from 1963, nor from 1964, but 1 from 1959, 4 each from 1960 and 1961, and 6 from 1962. A dozen or so additional works not in the exhibition conform to this pattern.

works I’ve actually seen: Not mentioned in the text is The ‘Turtle Book’ Collection, undated but probably from the early 1960s. I had been planning to include one of these works in the text, but the owner grew unnecessarily uneasy about retaining copyright if the image were published in a book, so I withdrew it. This set – not to be confused with “a book of thirty-four turtles” from Indian Springs – comprises four similar mixed media works on notebook paper. One of them is reproduced in Potter. In form they resemble Robert’s painting of particularly luminous mountains, with yet more of a Chinese esthetic. When Jim McCormick viewed “magnificent fog-shrouded, spiked limestone peaks” on the Li River in China, they evoked simultaneously Sung Dynasty watercolor landscapes on silk and “certain of Caples’ Nevada landscapes” (James McCormick, interview, Jul. 19, 2012 and email, Jan. 23, 2013) – none more than this collection surely.

Among Robert’s Connecticut works, there are three known to me by title only:

1. King Lear (mountain peak in Ruby Range) (1959) (Miriam Chism, copy of plans for the 1972 “Retrospective Exhibit of works of Robert Cole Caples,” Caples Archive; Ken Miller, Nevada Art Gallery inventory list of loaned Caples works for the 1972 retrospective exhibition, Oct. 11, 1972, Caples Archive. There was probably no catalog for the 1972 exhibition (Pamela Paterson, email, Sep. 30, 2014)).


3. Yang (1962), singled out by Robert in his letter to Walter concerning the 1964 retrospective to exemplify his forgetfulness about his works once completed (Caples, letter to Clark for “On Learning to Look,” n.d., probably early 1964, Clark-UNR): “I was just looking at the list of paintings I sent west – I mean the ones you’ve listed. On my list is one called ‘Yang’ 22 x 32 – 1962 – I haven’t the slightest idea what painting this is. Maybe it wasn’t sent – but it’s not around here. (There’s one called ‘Yin.” But where’s Yang?)”

styles and subjects from Nevada: An exception is A Study of Objects (1961), a not especially interesting exercise which has affinities with some of Robert’s geometric mountains and townscapes, but otherwise seems to be an outlier in his body of work. Daffodils (1960) is another outlier as far as its old master atmosphere (comparable only to Robert’s earliest surviving oil (1926), the portrait of Ralph Elsman, Jr.) but not its subject, for Robert occasionally painted flowers in Nevada such as orchids in a vase. These oils are #4 and #43, respectively, in 1964 retrospective.

“Design built from drawing”: Stremmel Gallery files. The document continues, “Oil & turpentine on heavy card... (Under heavy spray lacquer – no need for glass).”

Remembered Country: Oil on panel, 22 x 30 inches, courtesy of the artist. (Information in this format here and in following endnotes, from 1964 retrospective.) This work was then owned by the Solis (Steve Soli, phone conversation, Jul. 8, 2014), owners of In Search of the Mountain, who probably bought it at Newman Silver Shop after the 1964 exhibition. Robert definitely authored the title (Caples, letter to Robbins, Mar. 3, 1978, Emily Robbins).

aerial perspective: a good example is mountains, aerial perspective, date unknown, mid 1950s, held by the Art Collection, UNR, and viewable online.

The Remembered Mountain: Oil on panel, 22 x 30 inches, on consignment to Nick Jackson of Newman Silver Shop following the 1964 retrospective, with possibly as many as 33 other works, to go by the numbering (Newman Silver Shop documents, Caples Archive). The following artworks are named in these documents as either shipped back to Robert or still on consignment there in December, 1964 and January, 1965: Ambient Planet (ca. 1949); Anatomy of Space (ca. 1949); Archon (1962); Bird Palace (date unknown); Communications (date unknown); Holiday Leaves in Red (1953); Indian Dancers (date unknown); Invention (1962); Katha Upanishad (1950); Leaves in Dusty Light (date unknown); Monotype leaf print - Spring ’48 (1948); Nesting Bird (date unknown); Red and Brown Leaves (date unknown); Remembered Country (1959); The Remembered Mountain (1962); September Mood (1957);
Notes, The Nevada They Knew, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 282–283  ●  Indexed Notes n572–n574

Starry Space [Starblock] (1961); and Yellow Desert (date unknown). And, in addition to Archon and Invention, the following works are mentioned in accounting from Better Browsing forwarded by Nick Jackson to “Mr. & Mrs. Robert Caples, September 13, 1967”: Invention 7 and Watermelons.

n572 282 wavelike, snow-capped mountains: In the collection of the Nevada Museum of Art.

n573 283 high contrast flat planes: These all develop Mountains (1953), #18 in 1964 retrospective. Desert Land (1960), oil on panel, 22 x 30 inches, owned by Mr. & Mrs. Ray Hellmann, #20; Iron Hills (East Jackson Range) (1960), oil on panel, 22 x 32 inches, owned by Nick Jackson, #32; Stones of Drogio (1961), oil on plywood, 22 x 20 inches, #28, courtesy of the artist, then owned by Walter, now Bob Clark. Iron Hills closely resembles the earlier casein, Mountains (1953), in 1964 retrospective, #18.


n574 283 “I can’t think of another painting”: Clark, letter to Caples, Aug. 12, 1964, Clark-UNR.


Dark Range (1962): Oil on panel, 14½ x 20 inches, courtesy of the artist, now owned by the author. I’ve also thought Robert may have been influenced in it by abstract expressionism, particularly the calligraphic black and white paintings of Franz Kline. I tried the idea out on William fox the first time I met him (personal communication, Nov. 16, 2011): “Abstract, yes, but not expressionism,” Bill objected. “If you mean,” I replied, “that the brushwork isn’t spontaneous?” When Bill nodded, I went on: “I agree it’s not. The application of the oil is very controlled. But still the spirit of abstraction is akin to the action painters.” Bill, who is the art expert, just continued looking down at the image on my phone, unpersuaded. I got no further with another expert, Lanier Graham (email, Aug. 7, 2012): “I assure you he had no interest in Klein [sic] or any of the other egomaniacs of the Ab Ex or post Ab Ex generations. ‘All form – no content’ Robert would say. I did not agree, as you would see in my 1987 book [The Spontaneous Gesture].”

Workshop Study (1961): Mixed media, 22 x 30 inches, courtesy of the artist, #26 in 1964 retrospective; Invention, oil on panel, 15 x 20 inches, Newman Silver Shop, #24; Invention 7, oil on plywood, 22 x 32½ inches, courtesy of the artist, #22; Inscribed in Black, oil on plywood, 21 x 42 inches, courtesy of the artist, #23; Notation on Wood, oil on heavy panel, 23 x 28 inches, courtesy of the artist, #25. One more in the series appears in a Polaroid sent in a letter to the Drackerts by Rosemary after she returned to Turtle Hill from Robert’s Reno memorial service (Harry Wilmot Drackert Papers, 19-49, Series 5, Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno Libraries). Against the similarity of Notation on Wood to the others, the word ‘notation’ suggests that Robert really had in mind a stringed instrument rather than linearly abstract mountains and sun or moon, an interpretation supported by the fact that, in 1977, Robert donated the work to a fund-raising concert and auction for the Reno Philharmonic (Caples, letter to Peter Stremmel, Mar. 31, 1977, Stremmel Gallery files; “Serious Setback For New Symphony,” Mark Oliva, NSJ, Nov. 24, 1977, 27). In 1967, Notation on Wood was on consignment at Better Browsing (Nicholas Jackson, accounting from Better Browsing forwarded to Mr. & Mrs. Robert Caples, Sep. 13, 1967, Caples Archive), but must not have sold, since ten years later Mrs. Marion Wells – wife of architect Hewitt Wells, a younger partner of Frederic DeLongchamps – received it and only it from Robert in response to her over-reaching request for “four smallish works” to auction. It seems the auction never took place. I heard from Peter Kraemer (phone interview, Jul. 11, 2012) that one day a woman came into the gallery in Virginia City which he had fixed up for his mother Zoray Andrus, wanting to sell the work. The woman had solicited it from Caples for a benefit of some sort, she explained, but it ended up in her garage. Peter bought it and resold it for $600. This seems really to have been a different painting and a different benefit, however, for in 1997, Mrs. Wells herself, alluding to a silent auction which never took place, sold Notation on Wood to Italo Gavazzi, someone who had known Caples. Gavazzi sold it to Stremmel Gallery in 2011 or 2012 (Marion Worthington Wells, letter to Italo Gavazzi, Jun. 15, 1997, files of Claudia Cormier). Turkey Stremmel showed it to me there, already resold and ready for delivery.

Notes, The Nevada They Knew, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 284–285

Indexed Notes n575–n583

284 Einstein’s minuscule autograph: Walton, Tape #82, Walton Papers.

n575 284 Einstein’s birthday: Caples, letter to Robbins, Mar. 15, 1979, Emily Robbins. When I first noticed the several pictures of Einstein in Robert’s archive in 2011, I didn’t make much of them until I came across a note of Robert’s, a sort of ballad (Caples, n.d., probably 1960s, note in an envelope labeled “Potter,” Caples Archive; I’ve standardized Robert’s line breaks, but the word corrections are his):

Oh, time is space and space is time
and Sing E is energy!
Sing M for mass and c for Light,
all squared for to Light’s Velocity!

E = mc²

284 “all the moon shots”: Benson, transcript of phone interview of R Caples Sr, Aug. 9, 2000, Benson-UNR, 5.


n576 284 subject of the cosmic series: Different in composition but comparable in theme is This State, date unknown, probably between 1945 and 1947, existing as a photo reproduction in the Caples Archive.

n577 284 Dragon Nebula (1960): Oil and lacquer on panel, 20 x 30 inches, courtesy of the artist, #15 in 1964 retrospective. On the 1972 retrospective list the contact for the work was E. H. Fitz, an officer at the First National Bank of Nevada, Reno, which then owned it (Miriam Chism, copy of plans for the 1972 “Retrospective Exhibit of works of Robert Cole Caples,” Caples Archive). Dan Ruby, director of Fleischmann Planetarium, suggested that the title Dragon Nebula is an invention, since the closest thing to it is the Dragon’s Head Nebula not visible from the northern hemisphere (phone conversation, Sep. 29, 2014).

In the Caples archive is a snapshot of another painting of a celestial subject from the early 1960s, similar to Starblock but with lines representing, I suppose, force fields.

n578 284 Starblock (1961): Oil on plywood, 20 x 30 inches, courtesy of the artist, #16 in 1964 retrospective. Also later owned by the First National Bank of Nevada (see above). As mentioned elsewhere, if Starblock had any forerunner, it would have to be Robert’s 1940 “Push-Me–Pull-You” Cow, his cosmic joke with its galactic rings. After Dragon Nebula and Star Block (as it is spelled there), Miriam Chism’s list for 1972 intriguingly mentions “2 others in a similar vein.” One of these two or Starblock itself was consigned at Newman Silver Shop after the 1964 retrospective under the title Starry Space. ‘Star block’ is a term familiar to quilting enthusiasts, but not to astronomers (Dan Ruby, phone conversation, Sep. 29, 2014).


n579 285 leafy branch with daisies: The owner in Reno also owns a lotus flower by Robert.

n580 285 many renderings of leaves: Bob Clark made a point of the many renderings of leaves he saw during a visit to Dayton in the late 1950s (RM Clark, interview, Jun. 27–28, 2012). Another of the same kind is in the 1981 catalog. Bill Bliss owns another of leaves, and there’s a photo of yet another in the Robert Caples archive. The leafy branch with daisies, possibly from Turtle Hill is, to my eye, the most advanced of the sequence. At first sight the daisies seem to float in the air around the branch, above a non-perspectival gold background reminiscent of a Chinese screen; or else the branch seems to be lying on the ground amid the daisies, which look not Chinese but folk American. Next you may see two superimposed perspectives, one looking down at the daisies, the other looking forward or up at the branch. This ostensibly conventional, even derivative painting surreally conveys two spaces and two cultures interacting, to great effect. (I’m not sure why William Fox (Playa Works, 32) and Jeff Nicholson (conversation, Jan. 25, 2013) both regard the space of Caples mountain and desert landscapes as “surreal,” unless it is Robert’s ability to make space itself an independent element of composition.)


n582 285 pool at Bowers Mansion: There were three pools, fed by a hot spring, of progressively cooler temperature (Gordon Chism, As I Remember, 83).

n583 285 in the 1964 catalog: The larger of the two in the catalog is the one and only work Robert requested
Notes to Pages 285–288  •  Indexed Notes n584–n590

returned: “it looks well here, we sort of miss it.” He must have been referring to Panel of Leaves, since Holiday Leaves (titled Holiday Leaves in Red) appears on a Newman Silver Shop document in the Caples Archive, and was therefore put up for sale. All the rest of those he sent to the show, including all of the mountains, he wished out of his life by being sold in Reno after the exhibition (Caples, letter to Clark for “On Learning to Look,” n.d., probably early 1964, Clark-UNR, 11).

n584 285 *Dark Galaxy*: A photo of the print with this title is in Thornton-UNR, Box 4.


286 *arranged a show*: David Chism, interview, Jul. 8, 2012.

286 “well known in New York”: “A Loose Leaf” item, NSJ, Feb. 28, 1932, 1.

n585 286 *I wonder, did I ever tell you*: Caples, letter to Robbins, Mar. 3, 1978, Emily Robbins. If he were to attend the 1964 retrospective, Walter urged him at the time (Clark, letter to Caples, Aug. 5, 1964, Clark-UNR), the collection would tell Robert “a lot about where you’ve been that you may have forgotten, and prove the time was well spent on the way.” Walter was right, but not as far as Robert was concerned.

286 “[for the last two years]”: “On Learning to Look,” 10.

n586 286 “I did not want to confess it”: Caples, letter to Clark for “On Learning to Look,” n.d., probably early 1964, Clark-UNR, 3–4. Robert didn’t realize that Walter had already gotten wind of Potter the year before, from Monte Bartlett (Margaret Bartlett, letter to Clark, Jun. 20, 1963, Thornton-UNR). Robert continued to Walter: “Two years. Eleven times the first page. That sort of thing. I mean typed eleven times. And I don’t type. The bill. And the time. And the days of oh my Lord. So the pictures are a lot easier. And faster. . . . The title. ‘The Potter and His Children.’. . . I’d say it was a book that took eighteen months to unwrite.”


n588 287 *ingenious chess sets*: Two sets are pictured in Growdon, Artist and the Man, 5, one of them deployed on a chess board and also assembled into a single cube. This latter one is apparently identical to one shown in a photo in the Caples Archive, on the back of which Robert wrote, “The ‘Kaba’ Chess set (print for Lanier)” (after the holy site of the Hajj inside the al-Masjid al-Haram mosque in Mecca), except that in the photo the white pieces are of clear plexiglass, while in Growdon they are white. In the Caples archive I found no record of the manufacture of these sets. But designs for five chess sets, copyrighted by Robert in 1967, will be found there: “The Chess ‘Egg’ (in enameled tin)” (pawns fit inside the assembled egg); “A ‘Pocket’ Chess Set, the ‘ Cyclops’” (all pieces fit, nest, and telescope together into a compact cylinder); “The ‘Cellini’” and “The ‘Crusader’” (both like the non-Kaba one pictured in Growdon); and “The ‘Camelot’” (a rectangular variation on the preceding).


n589 287 *Star Passage*: Margaret Bartlett Thornton owned it when exhibited in a small Caples exhibition staged by the Nevada Historical Society at the Sparks library in 1971 (“Special Sparks Library Show Features Indians,” NSJ, Apr. 9, 1971, 21).

n590 288 *a portrait, but unlike*: Jim McCormick (written comments to the author on this book, April, 2015): “Caples’s 1975 portrait of Joanne for The Schoolhouse Poems came to me after her death, passed on to me at Joanne’s request by Pauline, her loyal and constant caregiver during her last years (did you ever interview her?), and the drawing remained a highly cherished part of our collection until I donated it to Special Collections after the Post-war Bohemians exhibition in the Knowledge Center – in May 2012 to be exact.”

Other relatively late portraits by Caples are Portrait Head of a Woman (1948), mentioned in Miriam Chism, copy of plans for the 1972 “Retrospective Exhibit of works of Robert Cole Caples” (Capes Archive); and Evelina (1951) and Mona (1951) (1964 retrospective).
Miller’s old publicity photos: Richard C. Miller is well-known for his images of Marilyn Monroe, James Dean and others. Joanne probably came to Miller, his daughter Margaret suggests, through Emmeline Snively’s Blue Book Modeling Agency, the first to book Monroe. The photo Robert chose to use once appeared on the cover of a Hollywood film magazine. Joanne, who had ambitions to be a starlet, nevertheless turned down a Warner Brothers contract to marry Galen DeLongchamps after he was smitten, so the story goes, when he chanced to see that cover (Margaret Miller, personal communication, 2014; www.unr.edu/nwhp/bios/women/delongch.htm (written by Pat Kloss, revised by Nancy Oakley); Patty Atcheson Melton, conversation, May 10, 2013). Galen later became a high school math teacher (Beattyanne Rasmussen, conversation, January 10, 2017).


Robert sent Potter revisions: Clark, letter to Caples, Dec. 25, 1966, Clark-UNR; John Caples Diary, Apr. 29, 1967. In his retrospective catalog essay (“On Learning to Look,” 10), Walter wrongly stated that the concept “haunting [Robert] for years” had always carried the same title, The Potter and His Children. Walter had left Nevada by the dates of the two “Manta” stories, and the first “Potter” was written in New York. So it’s possible that the book Potter is the only version Walter actually saw.


the honest critic: Clark, letter to Caples, Dec. 25, 1966, Clark-UNR. If anything, the approval Walter gave a month later to Robert’s revisions of Potter only proves he pulled his punches with his first praises (Clark, letter to Caples, Jan. 30, 1967, Clark-UNR).

Robert Laxalt and Joanne de Longchamps: Monique Laxalt, conversation, Jan. 23, 2013. Robert Laxalt showed Walter the manuscript of his fictional A Man in the Wheatfield. As Laxalt’s daughter Monique paraphrased what she heard from her father, Walter told him, “You don’t need to write about such scary creatures as snakes; you can write about house cats as effectively as a lion.” This from the man who wrote The Track of the Cat, about a man-killing mountain lion. You have to wonder if it wasn’t envy that prevented Walter, mired in non-productivity, from doing what an objective advisor should, accept the writer’s central concept and go from there. Laxalt told Clark’s comment to his daughter some time after the novel’s publication in 1964, as much as to say, ‘To hell with him!’

In 1970, Clark wrote a letter to Joanne de Longchamps, who had studied under him at the university in the 1950s, framed with tact but in actuality extremely hard on a nonfiction prose manuscript of hers, “Crystals,” for falling between the stools of poetry and prose (Clark, letter to Joanne, Jan. 13, 1970, de-L-UNR).


the very young: Caples, letter to Robbins, Jun. 25, 1974, Emily Robbins. Elsewhere he compared the style to “someone telling a fanciful story of rabbits and Easter eggs” (Caples, letter to Morrie Jellett, Jan. 18, 1974, Caples Archive).

his Children: The Potter aims to “break the Monkey barrier” (Caples, Potter, 24) when he makes the children from “Monkey-Batter Supreme” (22) plus “fabulous extras” (23) stolen by his animal helpers (previously made by him) from animal adversaries comparable to Snake in “Manta,” here a “Feathered Serpent” (49) as well as Turtle (37) and Crab (40). Eventually the Children covet the whole Earth, through jealousy, selfishness and greed unwilling to share it with the Animals who helped in their creation (179).

this “easy fable”: Caples, n.d., probably 1973, “Concerning: THE POTTER AND HIS CHILDREN (a Letter To A Recent Reader),” Caples Archive; Caples, letter to Morrie Jellett, Aug. 3, 1974, Caples Archive. Robert sent Walton a copy of the former in 1979, with a letter informing him that it had been
written in December, 1978 for a “well-intentioned” reviewer who Robert felt was “kind” but had missed the point (postmarked Feb. 7, 1979, Walton Papers). But he had already sent me a copy in 1977. He did not, nevertheless, send me the book itself.


291 “we’ve been through this” : Caples, Potter, 115.


n598 Walton replied: Walton, letter to Caples, Aug. 7, 1978, Walton Papers. Robert’s penchant for oblique insult was something Walton had chewed over quite resentfully on one of his oral history tapes (Walton, Tape #59, Walton Papers). In making the connection with Robert’s style in Potter, he couched his insight diplomatically: “It is almost the same snarl as one could sense in a Caples insult, either from your father or yourself.”

n599 “What was required of me”: Caples, letter to Morrie Jellett, Aug. 3, 1974, Caples Archive.

Below is a partial outline of the story with my best gloss of symbolic meanings:

The Potter of Eon makes pots for all the animals.

The Potter is the Demiurge, the constructive force in the material universe.

The animals are breaking more and more pots and ordering replacements from the Potter, who decides to make four little Potter’s helpers after hearing music in the air.

The music comes from Myrios, the infinite, the ultimate creative force of the universe; Myrios is stirring things up to bring about the creation of mankind. Robert said “the hidden workings of Myrios as ‘prime mover’ are intimated even [on] the very first page” (Caples, letter to Morrie Jellett, Jan. 18, 1974, Caples archive), but the name occurs only much later.

The Potter uses the Monkey batter recipe from the Dakini pot to “break the Monkey barrier.”

Evolution but also something more (here the Tantric oracle) go to make humanity.

But Gekko the lizard has stolen another ingredient, the Stones of Heaven.

Gekko is a “Prometheus-in-reverse” (Caples, letter to Robbins, Mar. 8, 1973, Emily Robbins). The missing Stones of Heaven would have prevented suffering, so humanity must suffer.

The Potter starts on the recipe, which includes “candied Karnas.” The Animals rejoice at the news of the four little Potters-to-be. The Potter calls eight of the animals aside to the Dharma bush, instructing them to obtain some special ingredients.

Karma and Dharma are, respectively, the principle of causation and the foundation of order in the universe, in all the major psychospiritual systems of India.

Three animals must go for the most essential ingredient, the Sacred Icon, “the sea-cool petal of starry fire I need to quicken my clay.”

The Icon (from ikon) symbolizes the essence of all religions, a light present in mankind, but which the Potter himself lacks.

Bear brings the Sacred Icon, a “magnificent crystal” of “white fire.” To celebrate the Potter throws a party for his familiars: Aga-ma the Lizard, Pali the Parrot, and Juju the Space Bird.

Aga-ma is a genus of African lizard, and Sanskrit for ‘scriptures’. Aga-ma “represents the deeper rivers of consciousness.” Pali is the ancient literary language of Sri Lanka. Pali the Parrot is the only talking animal. Juju refers to African spiritual practices.

The Potter discards the recipe and follows his heart, throwing everything into the batter including Jellybeans and Bear Sugar, all blended with Amrita water, and finally the “Icon flake right in the center of the clay.”

Jellybeans = chromosomes, Bear Sugar = DNA. Amrita water is a drink associated with meditation and the immortality of the gods in Hinduism.

On the rolled dough he sprinkled nutmeg for the boys and cinnamon for the girls, then cuts out the four forms, names them and bakes them overnight. In the morning he instructs them.

The two boys and two girls are to be the founders of the four races of mankind.

On a picnic excursion to the river, they learn that trouble is brewing in Eon: the river providing all Eon’s water is going down.
Notes, The Nevada They Knew, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 291–292  •  Indexed Note n600

The Potter makes an indecipherable allusion to the Big Bang theory.

When the children begin to disparage the animals, the Potter informs them how the animals helped in their making. He sees the light of Icon shining in their eyes, “‘a light different from any light in Eon.’”

Something in mankind cannot be explained by physical processes alone.

To save the animals from thirst, the Potter will fashion an enormous water pot, the Earth Jar.

The Earth Jar is the very earth to be.

On the Earth Jar’s surface he will paint “‘the brave Animals who featured so splendidly in your story!’” including “‘the Spirited Creatures without whose opposition there could be no victory.’”

Robert acknowledges the dualism of light/dark, creative/destructive, good/evil as essential to the human condition.

With the assistance of the Potter, the children commence to fashion the Earth Jar.

Here occur nuclear explosions, “Quantum jumps” and other nods to the physics of celestial formation as understood in the 1970s.

The Potter paints the Earth Jar, with land masses in the forms of the animals. But the children rebel against giving the animals so large a place, they want the Earth Jar all for themselves.

The world as we know it coming to pass due to the selfish actions of children echoes Paiute and Washo creation legends – some of which, moreover, such as the one depicted in the courthouse mural, centrally involve a jar.

The Children abscond with the Earth Jar to their cave, with only the Dog. The Potter has the power to reclaim the Jar and discipline the Children, but out of love for them he sends them to Dream School, where they will remain until they learn sharing and love. This is no punishment, for “‘what is Dream School but a place of awakening?’” And he predicts they’ll like it so much that they’ll want to remain. He foresees the nations of mankind, who will “‘go on to discover new worlds of meaning for us all.’” And the Children will lead them all to the place called Ariel. He sees now that the Children have painted their cave with fantastic animals of their own devising. “‘Behold, the World!’” he cries. The Earth Jar begins slowly to revolve.

The Dream School is life on Earth as we know it – samsara or illusion – come about by a gentler version of the Old Testament expulsion from paradise. The lesson of love refers to Christ – Robert deliberately drew the Holy Icon as a Hindu/Buddhist mandala with the cross of Christ embedded, prefiguring Christ’s eventual emergence in the Dream School, after which the Children will remain on Earth “until” . . . until enlightenment or the resurrection: Robert saw all belief systems as equivalent images of an ultimate known only through loving intuition. The place Ariel, a name taken from the Hebrew angel, is Nirvana and Heaven, enlightenment and resurrection.

In the Earth Jar the Children are lifted by the wind of Myrios into the sky, “No memory now of one for another, . . . Only the multiple forms of themselves aware of the land, aware of the sea. And the wind, the voice of the wind!”

Myrios, named now for the first time but present throughout the story, is the prime mover, symbolized by light and by wind, “the wind that blows between the stars.”

291 “‘borrowed’ the funds”: Caples, letter to the author, Oct. 11, 1977, Shafton-UNR.
291 “just to show them” : Caples, letter to Samuel G. & Edda Houghton, Nov. 20, 1970, Houghton-UNR.
292 “[T]he wretched outfit” : Caples, letter to Morrie Jellett, Mar. 9, 1974, Capsles Archive. The mandala is on p. 132 of Potter.
292 In declining : Caples, letter to N. Edd Miller, Mar. 27, 1971 (carbon copy), Caples Archive.
292 Western friends : Correspondents include Dr. Fred Anderson, Dorothy Bartlett, Betty Bliss, Joanne de Longchamps, Sam Houghton, Edda Houghton, Graham Erskine’s wife Hazel, Hans Luginbuehl’s wife Aimée, Ken Robbins, and Bettina Swanson.
292 “many, many letters” : Caples, letter to the author, Oct. 11, 1977, Shafton-UNR.
292 There was one letter : Morrie Jellett, letter to Robert and Rosemary Caples, Jun., 1973, Capsles Archive.
The Nevada They Knew, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 292–298  •  Indexed Notes n601–n608


In August, 1968: Benson, Ox-Bow Man, 370. Since returning to Reno for the Doten journals in 1962, the Clarks had been living in a house owned by Walter’s brother David, who had relocated to Albuquerque (ibid., 306, 321–22, 337).

To justify further delay: Clark, letter to Robert Laxalt, Sep. 6, 1968, Robert Laxalt Archive, Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno Libraries, Collection 85-9.

Barbara began suffering: Benson, Ox-Bow Man, 377–78.


Barbara died: Unaccountably there was no notice of Barbara’s death in the Virginia City Legend, which carried news items about four other Comstock obituaries in the weekly issue following her death (Nov. 19, 1969). The Territorial Enterprise had ceased publication the previous March. Family friend Les Gray, who had moved his column “Sun Mountain Silver” from the Enterprise to the Legend, also failed to mention Barbara’s death. The obit in Reno’s Gazette gave more space to Walter than to Barbara (“Mrs. Walter Clark,” REG, Nov. 13, 1969, 24).
298 Walter replied: Clark, letter to Caples, Apr. 18, 1970, Clark-UNR. His last had been a Christmas letter (Clark, letter to Caples, Dec. 24, 1969, Clark-UNR).
298 A month later: Clark, letter to Caples, May 15, 1970, Clark-UNR.

n609 298 a certain high-handedness: Robert Laxalt, letter to Caples, Jul. 13, 1970, Caples Archive. Thus Robert was asked to select eight portraits for inclusion, then nine were chosen, “most” from Robert’s “first and second choices. The others,” Robert was told by Laxalt, “are for reasons of rounding and balance” (Robert Laxalt, letter to Caples, Apr. 13, 1970, Caples Archive). And the drawings were to be reduced in size, without prior approval from Robert. And his title was rejected in favor of one written at the press.


n610 299 a history of animosity: Walton resented Walter for not recognizing him as a writer as well as a painter, while Walter had his own animus against Walton, whom he’d once described to Barbara as brashly overconfident in manner while lacking real confidence and direction. “It is pitiful, in a way, and painful. . . . But none of it excuses his public condescension and discourtesies” – a concise, dismissive judgment (Clark, transcript of letter to Barbara Clark, May 22, 1952, Benson-UNR). There might have been an undercurrent of competition for Robert’s friendship between them. And Donnelly Curtis (written notes, May 28, 2015) thinks Walter must have disapproved of Walton’s “lewd nudes” and his marriage to a sixteen-year-old.

299 Walter Clark shouted: I have combined passages of Walton, letters to Caples, Aug. 7 and 24, 1978, Walton Papers.


299 “mockery and bitterness”: Clark, Ten Women, 53.

299 early stories: RM Clark, transcript of a letter to Jackson J. Benson, Sep. 25, 2002, Benson-UNR.

299 But even in City: Quotes are rearranged from Clark, City, 337, 352, 410, 429, 440.

299 “moribund”: Ibid., 3.

n612 300 He passed that judgment: Milton, “Conversations,” 32–33. On the subject of urbanization, his tone was more measured in an interview several years earlier (Amaral, “Walter Van Tilburg Clark”).

I would like to have countered Walter by calling his attention to Edward Hopper’s paintings, those such as Room in Brooklyn with a solitary man or woman in a room on an upper story with windows through which she and we see nothing but the tops of other buildings and the sky. The buildings, as trees can be, are the viewer’s visual stepping stone to the rest of space. Hopper no less than Walter teaches us or reminds us how to see space with all our being. I myself love trees, like Walter I much prefer them to buildings, but Hopper, best known for his evocations of treeless cityscapes, cannot for that reason be dismissed as “moribund.” There is a real kinship of sensibility between these two important mid-century creators. Walter was right about trees, but wrong to dismiss “silly towns.” Moreover all of us – as Walter himself had rhapsodized with surpassing eloquence in City, in the near-perfect Bowers Mansion episode, quoted earlier – we all (country and city dwellers alike; Walter didn’t say that, but it’s true) also have the moon by which we gauge our lifespans when we spontaneously measure its distance against the horizon, any horizon.

300 “distance became time”: Clark, City, 160.

300 Walter “always had something”: Benson, transcript of phone interview of Walter Brown, May 26, 2000, Benson-UNR, 4, 5, 8.

300 “the omnipresent God-damned tourist”: Clark, letter to Caples, Apr. 18, 1970, Clark-UNR. Two letters later he was back on the tourists’ “fat asses” (Clark, letter to Caples, Aug. 13, 1970, Clark-UNR).

n613 300 he again inveighed: Clark, letter to Caples, May 15, 1970, Clark-UNR. Another example of Walter’s anger: “[He] became absolutely furious at the tearing down of old houses in Reno to make way for redevelopment . . . and said he would sabotage the project. ‘I’m so ill, they’d never hang me.’ Or words to that effect” (Carl Heintze, “Notes from Ray West Jr. interview in Santaquin, May, 1980,” Heintze-UNR).
Notes, The Nevada They Knew, by Anthony Shafton 94

Notes to Pages 300–305  •  Indexed Notes n614–n619

300  Rusty Nash: Judy Nash, phone interview, Feb. 12, 2014.
300  Peter Kraemer: Peter Kraemer, phone interview, Jul. 11, 2012.

n614  300  1964 letter to his son: Benson, Ox-Bow Man, 348–49. Walter did testify at the 1957 trial of Lawrence Ferlinghetti for publishing Allen Ginsberg’s Howl and Other Poems, out of principle (ibid., 301–3). But Bob Clark “doubt[s] he would ever have read Howl if he didn’t have to become an expert for defending it” (RM Clark, email to Benson, Jun. 5, 2002, Benson-UNR).
301  tie-up scene: Clark, City, ch. 8.
301  Tom Wilson’s oral history: Wilson, “Reminiscences,” 27.
301  mental courage: Robert Harvey, phone interview, Jul. 25, 2012.

302  “The beast has got me”: Monique Laxalt, conversation, Oct. 29, 2014.
302  “Suicide was never too far”: Benson, phone interview of Walter Brown, Sep. 25, 2000, Benson-UNR, 1.
302  “third bout of whittling”: Clark, letter to Caples, Jan. 30, 1971, Clark-UNR.

n616  303  no more than three: Robert had begun saving Walter’s letters in 1956. Through 1967, there were twenty letters in all, between one and two a year on average. In 1968, the year Walter symptoms began, there was only one; in 1969, when Barbara sickened and died, three; and again three in 1970.
303  February 14: Clark, letter to Caples, Feb. 14, 1971, Clark-UNR.
303  February 23: Clark, letter to Caples, Feb. 23, 1971, Clark-UNR.
303  March 3: Clark, letters to Caples, Mar. 3 and 6, 1971, Clark-UNR.
303  March 15: Clark, letter to Caples, Mar. 15, 1971, Clark-UNR.
303  April 6: Clark, letters to Caples, Apr. 6 and Apr. 6, postmarked Apr. 7, 1971, Clark-UNR.
304  April 8: Clark, letter to Ray and Lou West, Apr. 8, 1971, quoted in Benson, Ox-Bow Man, 386. “It was no particular jolt when the doctor told me,” he writes, “I’d more or less guessed it for a long time – since well before Christmas, anyway. This is easy compared to a year ago September, very easy.” He is referring to Barbara’s shocking diagnosis. He tells the Wests he’s still “putter[ing] at . . . Alf Doten, who must be finished.”
304  With Robert: Clark, letter to Caples, Apr. 8, 1971, Clark-UNR (paragraphing omitted).
305  April 22: Clark, letter to Caples, Apr. 22, 1971, Clark-UNR.

n619  305  April 27: Clark, letter to Caples, Apr. 27, 1971, Clark-UNR. Walter must have realized that Robert didn’t do portraits anymore, much less traditional oil portraits of conservative politicians such as Paul Laxalt. Nevertheless, he suggested that the $5,000 fee would come in handy; that he could kill two birds, the degree and the portrait, with one stone – Walter didn’t know that Robert posted his conclusive refusal of the degree to President Miller the previous day (Caples, letter to N. Edd Miller, Apr. 26, 1971 (carbon copy), Caples Archive); and that he could have a room with a north exposure in the little red house as a studio.
Notes to Pages 305–308  •  Indexed Notes n620–n624

305  

April 28: Clark, letter to Caples, Apr. 28, 1971, Clark-UNR.

May 13: Clark, letter to Caples, May 13, 1971, Clark-UNR.

n620  

Molly [in the figure]: “Molly” was Molly Knudtsen, rancher, author and university regent. Robert received a letter from Mrs. Wm. C. Knudtsen (May 2, 1971, Caples archive), chair of the honorary degrees committee, renewing the honorary degree offer, and also, as a member of another committee, adding what she must mistakenly have imagined would be an incentive, the offer of a commission to paint the portrait of Paul Laxalt, who would be receiving an honorary degree on the same occasion.

306  

Late May: John Caples Diary, Jun. 11, 1971. Rosemary Junior remembers that her mother was glad, almost relieved it seemed, that the reunion had at last taken place (R Caples Jr, phone interview, Feb. 21, 2012). From this I take it that Senior saw complications in the friendship of the two men. Years later Rosemary told Benson that she and Robert flew out “to see Walter and” – she added – “his [Robert’s] favorite Miriam” (Benson, transcript of phone interview of R Caples Sr, Aug. 9, 2000, Benson-UNR). She described Walter then as watching television from his bed and making jokes. “He had a very stinging humor at times. Wonderful humor, but very sort of dour.”

306  


Also June 14: Clark, letter to Caples, Jun. 14, 1971, Clark-UNR.

n621  

his own man again: Just as Tim’s mother (Clark, City, 330), who did have faith (but does that make the difference?), became herself as she was dying of cancer. “[She reached] the point at which an individual can let go and stop blaming and urging himself. It’s hard to explain, but you know it. You become just yourself.”

307  

July 22: Clark, letter to Caples, Jul. 22, 1971, Clark-UNR. “Silent Passage, by one RCR,” Walter wrote. Robert almost never signed paintings with his middle name or initial. Walter is, I think, evoking “for R. C. C,” the dedication of City. RCC, not RCR – this little slip of Walter’s reveals how close Robert is to his heart: Robert Cole Robert.

307  

August 15: Clark, letter to Caples, Aug. 15, 1971, Clark-UNR.

Walton sent Robert a note: Walton, Tape #82-A, Walton Papers.


n623  

Robert flew on September 28: R Caples Sr, n.d., note to Caples in envelope he labeled “Things That Matter,” Caples Archive; Lanier Graham, emails, Jan. 15, 2013. Rosemary flew later, to San Francisco, before joining him. Robert phoned Rosemary after he got situated, initially in Carson City where Rosemary sent him the noted just cited. It’s a very affectionate note. She will leave San Francisco for Reno Wednesday, she informs him, then the two of them will fly home from Reno on Saturday – she has changed his reservation. “Hope that will be alright with you – was I presumptuous?” Considering that Robert had planned the trip around his oldest, dying friend, it certainly appears to have been presumptuous. Rosemary genuinely adored Robert, but was decisive where her own wishes were concerned. She then wheedlingly invites him to fly to meet her in San Francisco for her flight into Reno, which would interrupt his time there. She goes on: “I am so relieved to know that you are safely in Carson that I have become slightly euphoric – but deep down I know that your days ahead are to be difficult, sad and tiring. If only I could share completely your sad mission – to Walter – I would bear all the pain for you.” Why did she know “deep down” what was most obvious? Why reductively call the attention of one undertaking so solemn a mission to its being “tiring”? Would Robert conceivably have wanted another to bear the pain for him, or have welcomed the implication that he might have? But that’s me. The thing that can be said for certain about Robert’s reaction to the letter is that he preserved it in an envelope he labeled “Things That Matter.”

308  

commissioned after Barbara died: RM Clark, email, Sep. 21, 2013.


Bob had been about to join: RM Clark, interview, Jun. 27–28, 2012.

“He was released”: Benson, Ox-Bow Man, 389.
308  Then came a terrible night : Benson, Ox-Bow Man, 389.
309  Reno’s Masonic Cemetery : Clark, letter to Caples, Dec. 31, 1963, Clark-UNR.
310  With only a few lapses : “For some inherited reason, the big, ship-bodied birds didn’t frighten Hook” (ibid., 83). There are three lapses of point of view into anthropomorphism here: the mention of inherited traits, the ship metaphor, and giving a proper name to a bird in the first place. Elsewhere Hook observes “white foam-writing” on the beach (89).
310  point of view breaks down : Though greatly admiring Henry James, Walter didn’t always adhere strictly to point of view, and taught that many fine writers don’t (Benson, transcript of interview of Charles Brashers, Mar. 31, 2000, Benson-UNR, 11). In his critiques of young writers, Walter did pay careful attention to their handling of narrative point of view (Clark, nominations and comments for the Hopwood Awards in Fiction, 1963, Hopwood Awards Collection, AMSHW, University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library)). I don’t believe the departures from point of view were controlled and deliberate in the case of the anthropomorphisms in question.
310  thought me “fortunate” : Carl Heintze, letter to the author, Apr. 17, 1980, author’s files. Even Tim Hazard found that because of Lawrence’s “intent secrecy,” his “inner life had to be inferred” (Clark, City, 142, 637).
311  Robert had known Harry : Over the years Robert frequented the three guest ranches the Drackerts successively ran, the Pyramid Lake, the Donner Lake, and the Silver Circle guest ranches (McGee & McGee, Divorce Seekers, 371, 375–76). Joan arrived in Nevada in 1946 (364).
311  Nevada friends : In addition to those listed, the Gordon Lanes tried on three separate trips East to connect with Robert at Turtle Hill, but it wasn’t managed (Benson, transcript of interview of Gordon Lane, Aug. 18, 2000, Benson-UNR, 6). One or more of those attempts probably came before 1971.
311  Walter and Barbara : Benson, Ox-Bow Man, 316–17. In 1960, Walter held a fellowship at Wesleyan in Middlebury, Connecticut, just fifty miles from Turtle Hill. Babs understands that when Robert got a look at the swing hanging from the ceiling in the Clarks’ house, he said, “This is a polka dot room if ever I saw one,” and proceeded to paint big polka dots on the walls (Barbara Clark Salmon, interview, Jul. 12, 2012). Walter extended a second invitation (Clark, letter to Caples, Oct. 22, 1960, Clark-UNR), but whether Robert took it up I don’t know.
311  Margaret Bartlett : Margaret Bartlett, letters to Clark, Jul. 25, 1963 and Mar. 23 and Apr. 5, 1966, Thornton-UNR.
311  Gordon and Sue Chism : Clark, letter to Robert Caples, Jul. 10, 1962, Clark-UNR.
311  checking account : When Robert’s wealthy Aunt Ellen, Ralph Caples’ widow, left him a token bequest of $1,000, he deposited the check by air mail in his Reno bank (Caples, notation on letter from John F. Burket, Jr., Feb. 3, 1972, Caples Archive). In August of 1976, Robert received a letter from a new “Administrative Officer” at First National (Caples Archive). In 1963, brother John was surprised to
learn of the Reno account, into which Robert’s “art agent” had recently deposited $75 for a sale. His balance then was $1,300. The account, John surmised, was Robert’s way of maintaining a connection “that could lead him back to Reno” (John Caples Diary, Jul. 15, 1963). This deposit and other documents and letters verify Robert’s ongoing relationship with Reno art dealers.

Lizard Hall, the Dayton house, wasn’t one of Robert’s financial ties, for he and Rosemary rented not owned 175 Silver Street (Russ Lindsay, Nevada Register of Historic Places Registration Form for Lizard Hall, Dayton, submitted to Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs, May 28, 2006). Walter mistakenly assumed they owned (Clark, letter to Caples, Apr. 8, 1963, Clark-UNR).


312 to the Drackerts: Harry Wilmot Drackert Papers, 19-49, Series 5, Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno Libraries.

n632 312 the Houghtons (35): In 2003, Edda’s daughters Linda and Monica, following her wishes, donated the correspondence to Special Collections (Linda Houghton Krantz, email to Nettie Oliverio, forwarded to the author, Jan. 12, 2014). Special Collections’ Jacqueline Sundstrand counts 35 Caples letters in this archive, dated 1968–79 (email, Jan. 14, 2014). Her tally doesn’t include the 4 I found there from prior to 1968, but probably does include some of the numerous cards, notes and clippings which I didn’t count to arrive at the number 20 for 1968–79.

n633 312 Monte married twice: Her first marriage was to Richard W. Millar, a banker, on January 24, 1930. I don’t know when they divorced. On May 27, 1944 she married William Robert Thornton, in the aviation industry. They divorced March 1, 1954.

n634 312 romance at twenty-three: Margaret Bartlett, letter to Clark, Oct. 28, 1956, Thornton-UNR. She sent Walter a fictionalized memoir alluding to her affair with Robert as with “Lawrence . . . when he was seventeen and I was twenty-three. The name persists from your ‘City,’” she informed him unnecessarily, then asked, “should you prefer I not use it?” I believe Walter ignored the question. From their birthdays, she would have been twenty-four, actually – or else he sixteen.

312 “My love”: Ibid., note to Caples, 1974, Thornton-UNR.


n636 312 bequeath Walter notebooks: Margaret Bartlett, letter to Clark, Jan. 19, 1950, Thornton-UNR. The quote continues: “and filled with him. You are the only one they couldn’t hurt and in whose hands he is never lost.”

n637 312 Walter refused: Clark, letter to Margaret Bartlett, Jan. 23, 1950, Thornton-UNR. “Don’t you ever dream of leaving me private note-books full of material about Robert. I am the last person in the world, or next to the last, Robert himself being last, to trust with such things. I am profoundly prejudiced in the matter.”


312 “interminable crucifixion bit”: Caples, letter to Margaret Bartlett, n.d., Thornton-UNR.

312 “both tormented and tormenting”: Caples, letter to Samuel G. & Edda Houghton, Jun. 6, 1972, Houghton-UNR.

n638 313 a dirty joke: He passed along jokes from his friend the artist Eric Sloane, which to judge from the selection were none too sophisticated, e.g., “The young man asks if the car over there is an Avis. ‘No!’ screams the girl in the back seat. ‘It’s a Hertz!’” (Caples, card to Joanne, Mar. 22, 1977, de-L-UNR).

313 “You are truly a knockout”: Caples, letter to Joanne, Aug. 20, 1973, de-L-UNR.

n639 313 After a phone call: Caples, letter to Joanne, Feb. 1, 1974, de-L-UNR. Still, later the same year Robert explained to Joanne why he sometimes hesitated to call (letter, Sep. 25, 1974, de-L-UNR): “I think about telephoning now and again. But the telephone... it has a mock nearness, the miles flood back more widely than before. No, not that I’m mad at telephones, certainly not that – telephones are wonderful happenings, it’s just that, especially with people much cared about, that a sense of emptiness, of momentary loss, follows upon the placement of such an absurd looking object back upon its two-buttoned cradle. And all those sterile bees humming in your ear when you pick the thing up again, just hoping.”

n640 313 jade-green frogs: Not long after Walter’s burial in Virginia City, Ross Salmon (conversation, Oct. 17,
Notes, *The Nevada They Knew*, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 314–315 – Indexed Notes n641–n647

2014) was tending the cemetery grounds when he noticed Robert Laxalt’s wife Joyce walking down the hill from Walter’s grave. Not that day but the next he went up to the lot, where he found a green stone frog on his father-in-law’s headstone. He assumed Joyce left it there, which makes no sense to him, Babs, or Joyce’s daughter Monique. This allusion of Robert’s to green frogs the color of jade in a letter to Joanne makes me wonder if it were she who placed the carving.

**n641** 314 **After Robert died**: Caples, “de Longchamps,” n.d., envelope containing Caples notes, de-L-UNR.


**n642** 314 **Nick Cady, then chief**: Nick cady, phone interview, Jun. 24, 2013. A better fit for a lasting friendship, you might think, would have been Robert Laxalt. Possibly the director’s close friendship with artist Craig Sheppard held Laxalt and Robert back, one or both. Robert said of Sheppard (Caples, letter to Walton, Aug. 1, 1978, Walton Papers): “I’ll confess I didn’t know him as well as I would [have] choose[d] – there were too many things in the way, nothing truly tangible – just a sense of awkwardness, on my part at least.” For his part Sheppard, five years younger than Robert, was, according to Jim McCormick (interview, Jul. 19, 2012), “jealous” of Caples for his standing as the Nevada artist. They knew each other and were friendly, but there was “a distance between them.” Sheppard “had to wait for Caples to leave.” Eventually Sheppard established “his own iconic status.”

**n643** 314 **large correspondence**: Robert’s letters to Ken averaged over 700 words, not short letters, the longest over seven pages.

**n644** 314 **his widow Emily**: Emily Robbins, interview, May 7, 2013 and phone interview, May 16, 2013. Robert was also fond of Emily, and sent occasional haiku and pictures with letters addressed to both of them.

**n645** 314 **lamentations about development**: E.g., Caples, letter to Robbins, Feb. 11, 1977, Emily Robbins.

Robert continued, “and maybe Virginia City most of all. The Virginia City disaster I was more or less prepared for – it had been falling in upon itself for years long gone – but the ghastly brick-and-chrome vulgarities that had overwhelmed Reno set up some shock waves inside me that didn’t really destroy me until early June. And Carson! – there the progress-oriented devastation is beyond words.” Robert disliked the direction of change everywhere, not just in Nevada, and once mused in a cosmic vein how the ruin might not be irreversible after all (Caples, letter to Robbins, Aug. 14, 1975, Emily Robbins): “I saw quite a stretch of [the drive around Lake Tahoe] on the Sunday that we were up there: it was dreadful beyond belief. Liked the water but refused to accept what people have done to the land. I lean heavily on the next Ice Age to clean things up a bit – I think five or six advances of the polar cap will do much to bring things back to a sense of freshness – especially in New York and New Jersey regions. . . . [I]t’s nice to know it’s coming. I only hope the earth tips a little on its axis – it pleases me to think of Florida under ice, too.”

**n646** 315 **conservationist**: Sam Houghton authored *A Trace of Desert Waters*, a wide-ranging personal appreciation of the Great Basin, published posthumously.

**n647** 315 **real exchange**: Walton said, “We weren’t correspondents until the end phase of our relationship” (Tape #82-A, Walton Papers).

**n648** 315 **postcard from the South Seas**: Walton, draft of postcard to Caples, Mar. 8, 1978, Walton Papers.

**n649** 315 **“For Moby-Dick Walton”**: Walton, Tape #82-A, Walton Papers.

**n650** 315 **Walton explained to Joanne**: Walton, letter to Joanne, Nov. 18, 1977, de-L-UNR.
for Arrow Maker: “Nevada Indian Art.”

Or almost hear Robert at his desk: Caples, Potter, 51. Walter of course also picked up on Robert’s adoption of Byron’s slightly theatrical, archaic manner of speech. Lawrence greets Tim with “‘Timothy, how are you?’ so much the way his father used to that I almost laugh” (Clark, City, 442). Until I heard the radio interview, I took Walter’s Mr. Black to be almost a lampoon, as when he offers Timothy “‘lemonade on the lawn,’” and when Tim accepts, “‘Ah, good. I shall put in our order with Agnes. . . .’” (143). Robert’s mannerisms in the interview, even to the selective rolling of his r’s, show the enduring imprint of his father’s stilted mannerisms, drawn out of Robert by self-consciousness in the situation. I don’t remember Robert talked that way at Turtle Hill, where he was at his ease. Others describe him as correct, deliberate, but not stilted. Another trait of Mr. Black’s and Byron’s shown by Robert in the interview is defensive self-deprecation in a smiling voice (146). Robert’s self-deprecation often gets expressed in his correspondence, where it is undoubtedly sincere but at the same time stylized, a posture, in the sense of being a psychological defense. I actually called him on it in a letter (Nov. 16, 1977, Shafton-UNR). It came up in connection with Robert’s repudiation of the idealized portrayal of Lawrence in City, particularly the Death Valley scenes. After saying he was “a beautiful writer, not to say a beautiful person,” I continued: “I smile as I write this, because I’m putting you on—not that I don’t sincerely mean it, just that I’m sure you wince to read it. And I do so, not because I am either sycophantish or unsubtle, but because there is a game of self-deprecation you play around your real self-doubt which is probably unnecessary and which is also something of an imposition.”

sonorous like Byron’s: Byron at age 57 was described in a Reno newspaper chatter column: “I was at the roulette wheel,” wrote the columnist, “when a deep, resonant, extremely pleasant voice attracted me—and how! I didn’t listen to what he said (much) but the voice was swell. I learned that the voice belonged to Dr. Caples. I am very well, thank you, and don’t need a doctor—but if I did!” (“Loose Leaf” item, Countess Magaroff, NSJ, Oct. 21, 1934, 1).


last to Walton: Caples, letter to Walton, Jul. 27, 1979, Walton Papers.

“I tell them I think not”: Clark, letter to Caples, Aug. 5, 1964, Clark-UNR.

“persistent sense of inadequacy”: Caples, letter to N. Edd Miller, Mar. 27, 1971 (carbon copy), Caples Archive.

broke the ice: In 1962, Robert was awarded a ribbon in the contemporary category at the Western States Arts and Crafts Fair in Reno. The Journal reported that “artists hung their own paintings” (“Words Of Art” item, Jane Hickson, NSJ, Jun. 10, 1962, 7). But no direct evidence exists that Robert was actually there to hang his entries, and I don’t believe he was.


Walter “romanticized”: Benson, Ox-Bow Man, 23.

“I’ve not looked into”: Caples, letter to the author, Oct. 11, 1977, Shafton-UNR.

destroy personal papers: After Walter’s death, Babs informed me, she and Bob destroyed some of their father’s papers, ones they thought were no one’s business, including love letters from Walter to Barbara (Barbara Clark Salmon, interview, Jul. 12, 2012).


centennial medallion: Michael McAuliffe, conversation, Mar. 28, 2014. They met in the Shore Room of the Holiday Hotel, where the Siena later stood, and now something else. The return probably happened in January, 1973, since Robert’s 1972 Christmas card to Walton said Robert hoped to see him in the coming year (Caples, Christmas card to Walton, 1972, Walton Papers). Robert felt, I’m afraid, that Jack McAuliffe’s efforts for the medallion “left substantially much to be desired” (Caples, letter to Robbins, Jun. 20, 1979, Emily Robbins).


ten days in May: Caples, letter to Robbins, Aug. 16, 1973, Emily Robbins; John Caples Diary, May 21, 1972. The trip had been announced to Ken (Robbins, Mar. 8, 1973) as an Easter trip (Easter, 1973 fell on April 22), and in a letter to Sam Houghton (Apr. 12, 1973, Houghton-UNR).
The Nevada They Knew, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 320–322 • Indexed Notes n654–n658

320 medallion again: Jack I. McAuliffe, letter to Caples, May 16, 1973, Michael McAuliffe’s files.

n654 320 account executive: The executive was Thayer Bigelow (Capes, letter to Robbins, Aug. 16, 1973, Emily Robbins).

n655 320 Four times in 1974: Peter Stremmel, who got to know Robert quite well (letter to Caples, Jan. 31, 1977, Stremmel Gallery files), thinks they first met in 1974, at the Drackerts’ Silver Circle Ranch (Wheeler, “Capes”). But as far as I can determine Stremmel has the year wrong. The first plan envisioned Easter in San Francisco again (Capes, letter to Samuel G. & Edda Houghton, Mar. 21, 1974, Houghton-UNR), then Reno in early May (Capes, letter to Robbins, Mar. 1, 1974, Emily Robbins). Reservations were made (Capes, letter to Joanne, Sep. 25, 1974, de-L-UNR), but Easter (Apr. 14) passed. The trip was next projected for Thanksgiving (Capes, letter to Joanne, Apr. 24, 1974, de-L-UNR), then abandoned. Then they aimed for September when, with suitcases packed, issues with the house and visits from friends intervened. They still hoped, Robert advised Ken, to make it in mid October (Capes, letter to Robbins, Oct. 4, 1974, Emily Robbins).

320 “I have it in my heart”: Caples, letter to Houghton, Apr. 18, 1974, Houghton-UNR.

n656 320 “As you know, the West”: Caples, letter to Houghton, Jul. 1, 1974, Houghton-UNR. Then, Thanksgiving forgotten, they planned a “quiet, hidden-away trip” (Capes, letter to Robbins, Aug. 28, 1974, Emily Robbins).

320 “Come West”: Caples, letter to Houghton, Aug. 31, 1974, Houghton-UNR.

320 We will make it: Caples, letter to Robbins, Jan. 10, 1975, Emily Robbins.

320 near the beginning of summer: Caples, letter to Houghton, May 10, 1975, Houghton-UNR; Caples, letter to Kenneth and Emily Robbins, Aug. 7, 1975, Emily Robbins; Emily Robbins, interview, May 7, 2013; Caples, letter to Joanne, Jul. 25, 1975, de-L-UNR.


n657 321 like kids: David Chism, interview, Jul. 8, 2012. After they landed, Robert told David, “‘We want to talk about this, but we have to go home and think first.’” They took pictures, but their camera malfunctioned.


322 an early summer trip: Caples, letter to Robbins, Mar. 6, 1976, Emily Robbins; Caples, letter to Joanne, May 8, 1976, de-L-UNR.


322 Robert’s acknowledgment: Caples, letter to Norinne Buck, Sep. 10, 1976, Buck-UNR.

Notes, *The Nevada They Knew*, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 323–324 • Indexed Notes n659–n661

323 “ten thousand Connecticuts”: Caples, letter to Norinne Buck, Sep. 10, 1976, Buck-UNR.
323 chess with Sloane: Caples, letter to Edda Houghton, Jan. 20, 1975, Houghton-UNR.
323 enjoyed his jokes: Caples, card to Joanne, Mar. 22, 1977, de-L-UNR.
323 endured his prodding: John Caples Diary, Apr. 29, 1967.

n659 323 Sloane’s own prolific art: “I remember saying to Eric only the other day,” he wrote to Walton, “‘I know a lot about art, but I don’t know what I like.’ He thought that was a difficult bind to be in. ‘It could happen,’ he admitted. He goes right on painting, unconfined by any telling knowledge of either. Nor does he have to look at his work for more than a few days; it all sells. It’s a different world, one I was never acquainted with. One of his larger paintings, sold before it was finished, he managed to dry in time, on his way to his New York gallery, by rolling the windows down in the back of his station wagon” (Caples, letter to Walton, Apr. 18, 1978, Walton Papers).

n660 324 letters from Eastern addresses: Caples archive. From Connecticut: Jennifer Almquist, New Preston; Lesley Clark, Litchfield; Lillian Ellis, South Windsor; Florene Maine, Ridgefield; Liane and William Mosher, Cornwall Bridge; Edith Ellen Platt, Torrington; Louis G. Signorelli, Torrington; Emma Wellnitz, Litchfield (a letter from Marion Wellnitz in Reno suggests that Emma was a Reno connection). The rest: Pam Jordan, Alexandria, VA; Florence Olivenbaum, Philadelphia, PA; Deborah Rothesay, New Brunswick, ME; Spindeyr, Monhegan, ME; J. Gwynne Thorsen, Keene, NH.
324 “Someone who had dropped in”: Caples, letter to Joanne, Jul. 19, 1979, de-L-UNR.
324 looked like his father: Denny Lake, e-mail, Jul. 24, 2012.

n661 324 Cricket lived with Shirley: Maureen Dane Benjamin of Indian Springs, born there in 1940, told me (phone interview, September 15, 2016) that Shirley married the artist colony’s ranch foreman, named Peterson, before Sandy Griffin. In any event, the Dane family knew, liked and stayed in touch with Sandy Griffin. So apparently Shirley remained at Indian Springs for some time. Maureen Benjamin said that after Shirley’s death, Sandy moved to Hawaii. I suspect the whole family lived there before Connecticut.
324 Lawrence University: Alumni Office, Lawrence University, phone conversation, Nov. 18, 2014.
324 or else Cricket: Denny Lake, phone interview, Jul. 19, 2012.
324 Cricket graduated: Alumni Office, Lawrence University, phone conversation, Nov. 18, 2014.
324 joined the Navy: John Caples Diary, Mar. 2, 1965.
324 liked the job: Ibid., Apr. 6, 1967.
324 quite a fine place: John Caples Diary, Jul. 29, 1972.
Notes, The Nevada They Knew, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 324–332

Indexed Notes n662–n666


n662 324 Cricket and his childless Uncle John: In 1967, when John saw Shirley for the first time since 1941, “she intimated that Cricket was her gift to” John, who “thanked her for her gift and said: ‘He’s a godsend!’” (ibid., May 25, 1967). On a number of occasions thereafter John again had dinner with Cricket and Shirley (ibid., May 21, 1968, Jun. 11, 1969 and Nov. 30, 1970).


325 “craves family”: Ibid., March 9, 1967.


325 “fed up”: Ibid., April 20, 1968.

325 “unless invited”: Ibid., December 11, 1969.


325 “Dear Father”: Caples Archive.

n663 325 wind energy start-up: John Caples diary, Feb 9, May 5 and 8, and Aug. 7, 1976. Five partners owned 20% shares in Dynapower Associates of Litchfield, CT that was going to manufacture electricity generating windmills, or rotors, set to sell for $2,000–$10,000. Robert C. Griffin’s 32-page pamphlet, Wind Energy and You, which “he hopes to sell by mail at $2.50,” revealed “so many problems that I was no longer interested. The booklet unsold me,” wrote John.

n664 325 the three drank heavily together: John Caples Diary, Nov. 25, 1978: “Cricket now in New Hampshire. Has a job in solar power. . . . During Cricket’s most recent year in his house, he spent a lot of time at Shirley’s. A lot of drinking. Robert said it was almost this bad: Some nights Cricket and Mr. Griffin would have to put Shirley to bed. Some nights Cricket & Shirley put Mr. G to bed. And some nights Shirley and Mr. G put Cricket to bed.”

n665 325 died at just forty-two: Cricket died on June 1, 1981 (Alumni Office, Lawrence University, phone conversation, Nov. 18, 2014).


327 Last night we were sitting: Caples, letter to Joanne, Mar. 6, 1973, de-L-UNR. Compare Clark, City, 108, where Tim “felt the birth of the world, and the deep, sad kinship of everything in it.”


328 Where were the Greek Islands: Caples, letter to Robbins, Dec. 4, 1973, Emily Robbins.

328 Anyway, Joanne: Caples, letter to Joanne, Feb. 1, 1974, de-L-UNR.

328 I got to wondering: Caples, letter to Joanne, Feb. [no day], 1974, de-L-UNR (punctuation added).

328 I told Bob Clark: Caples, letter to Joanne, Apr. 24, 1974, de-L-UNR.

328 I mean, there you are: Caples, letter to Joanne, Feb. 25, 1975, de-L-UNR.


329 I’m guessing we’d have: Caples, letter to Joanne, Jul. 25, 1975, de-L-UNR.


332 We are so surrounded: Caples, letter to Miriam & John Chism, Oct. 26, 1976, David Chism’s files.


332 Oddly enough: Caples, letter to Peter Stremmel, Feb. 4, 1977, Stremmel Gallery files (paragraphing omitted).
Notes, The Nevada They Knew, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 332–346  •  Indexed Notes n667–n675

332  I think of how bones : Caples, card to Joanne, Mar. 22, 1977, de-L-UNR.
333  I stop here to say : Caples, letter to Joanne, Jun. 6, 1977, de-L-UNR.
333  It most certainly is not : Caples, letter to Robbins, Jul. 21, 1977, Emily Robbins.
333  I strenuously resist : Caples, letter to Joanne, Aug. 15, 1977, de-L-UNR.
334  A long quietly spent weekend : Caples, letter to Peter Stremmel, Aug. 30, 1977, Stremmel Gallery files

n667  335  her love of music : Rosemary, besides being a dancer, played both piano and violin (R Caples Jr, interview, Jul. 15, 2012).

n668  335  We shall not cease : Robert quoted the same lines from Eliot’s “Little Gidding” to Joanne weeks before (Caples, letter to Joanne, Jul. 13, 1977, de-L-UNR). “Those lines rang profoundly true for me when I first read them, years ago. . . . Actually, those lines were in my head when I wrote the conclusion of “Potter” – but who could know, or care?” Robert had quoted the lines to Ken three years earlier, also in connection with Potter: “Well, there is it, the voice in the wind” (Caples, letter to Robbins, Jun. 25, 1974, Emily Robbins).

335  It's been a low time : Caples, letter to the author, Oct. 11, 1977, Shafton-UNR.
336  Robert saved : Caples Archive.
336  We've had a difficult time : Caples, letter to the author, Jan. 12, 1978, Shafton-UNR.

n669  337  one man in particular : Probably Peter Stremmel, possibly Eric Sloane, was prodding him to paint.

n670  339  all my father's fault : Byron, a few years before he died in 1955, was shown a framed photo of himself holding two-year-old Robert. His reaction: “‘It’s all my fault’” (John Caples Diary, Jul. 4, 1977). Robert may or may not have known that.


n671  340  I don't know how : Caples, letter to Robbins, Mar. 28, 1978, Emily Robbins. The University of Nevada Press brought out a portfolio of Will James drawings instead. It was not that the press weighed Caples against Will James, according to Nick Cady, the editor at the time. The press thought a Caples portfolio in color too expensive for their resources. So they “hunted for another artist” with a Nevada focus, and selected James (Nicholas Cady, email, Jul. 6, 2013).


340  Hylozoism holds that life is a property of all matter. Robert was asking about my state of mind by pointing to my belief that awareness (though not life, a special kind of system) is a property of all systems.
341  I used to hear : Caples, letter to Joanne, Jun. 5, 1978, de-L-UNR.


343  Robert's eyes were bloodshot : John Caples Diary, Nov. 25, 1978.
343  I suppose it's just possible : Caples, letter to Joanne, Mar. 5, 1979, de-L-UNR.
343  I was [in Salt Lake City] once : Caples, letter to Robbins, Mar. 28, 1979, Emily Robbins.
344  I started dying again : Caples, letter to the author, Jul. 18, 1979, Shafton-UNR.
344  And thank you : Caples, letter to Joanne, Jul. 19, 1979, de-L-UNR.
345  It's only recently : Caples, n.d., fragment, Caples Archive.
346  I was better than half-persuaded : Caples, letter to Walton, Jul. 27, 1979, Walton Papers.

n674  346  I was enormously pleased : Caples, letter to Norinne Buck, Aug. 3, 1979, Buck-UNR. For a fuller quote of this letter see p. 137.

Notes, The Nevada They Knew, by Anthony Shafton

Notes to Pages 346–352  •  Indexed Notes n676–n685


n676 346 birthday lunch: Ibid. Robert’s birthday lunch at came early because John would be traveling.

n677 347 D said later: Ibid., Oct. 27, 1979. Cynical Dorothy saw Robert’s condition as due to alcohol and said Rosemary ought to take him to Nevada to “dry out” – but she was mistaken.

347 Robert phoned thanks: John Caples Diary, Nov. 8, 1979.
349 Rosemary phoned: Ibid. (punctuation corrected).

n678 349 history of Caples family: Caples Archive. The book John gave Robert was a mail-order genealogy in pamphlet format – from one of John’s clients? – featuring a purported family crest and several pages of family history without discernible connections to Robert’s lineage.

n679 349 Marie Lauria: John’s long-time secretary was Marie Lauria, who with John’s encouragement had published a successful book of her own, How to Be a Good Secretary ((1969), Barnes & Noble Books), where unsurprisingly the executive is always “he,” the secretary a “girl.” Rosemary had found a nursing home for Marie’s father, had even come down to New York and driven him there (John Caples Diary, Dec. 7, 1978). Yet John didn’t think to let Marie know Robert had died, or if he did, to record her reaction.

349 Not for another eight days: John Caples Diary, Nov. 27, 1979.

n680 349 Mary [Miriam]: Ibid. ‘Mary’ for ‘Miriam’ is John’s error, which says that John knew little if anything about that connection to Walter’s family.

n681 350 At lunch: John Caples Diary, Nov. 29, 1979. John intended to save the copied condolence letters in his “file folder marked Robert,” but neither those copies nor Rosemary’s originals exist in the archive of either brother.

350 Next day he returned: Ibid., Nov. 30, 1979.
350 The following day: Ibid., Dec. 1, 1979.

350 “My loss is so heavy”: Walton, Tape #82-E, Walton Papers.


n684 351 moments with Bettina: Bettina B. Swanson, Christmas card to Walton, postmarked Dec. 19, 1979, Walton Papers. Bettina’s card, postmarked three days after the memorial said, “It was so good seeing you at the service for Robert. So sorry it was such a nothing! (Robert would have gotten up and gone home.)” I’m sure he wouldn’t have.


n685 351 Peter Lenz: Elizabeth Lenz, interview, Jul. 12, 2014; R Caples Sr, letter to Peter Lenz, Jan. 27, 1980, Elizabeth Lenz’s files. Rosemary sent Peter Lenz a check with her thank you note. Today Lenz, an engineer by profession, is principal cello with the Reno Philharmonic.

351 explanation to Peter Stremmel: Caples, letter to Peter Stremmel, Aug. 30, 1977, Stremmel Gallery files.
351 Robert died at home: R Caples Sr, letter to the author, Feb. 11, 1980, Shafton-UNR.
352 Also in the archive: R Caples Sr, n.d., Dec., 1979 or Jan., 1980, signed note about Caples’ photograph of his own hand, Caples Archive. Later I came across one other print, the one Rosemary sent to Edda Houghton with a notation similar to mine: “Robert took this picture of his own hand with a child’s camera. To me it is the essence of Robert and his total love and respect for LIFE” (R Caples Sr, Caples’

Your letter to me: R Caples Sr, letter to the author, Feb. 25, 1980, Shafton-UNR.

Walton asked Rosemary: Walton, Tape #82-E, Walton Papers.


Reading Clark’s account: John Caples Diary, Mar. 19, 1980.


Robert, or else Rosemary: Barbara Clark Salmon, interview, Jul. 12, 2012.


“We have no real presence”: Griffin, “Snowalking,” 100.