

## DISCLAIMER

Electronic versions of the exhibits in these minutes may not be complete.

This information is supplied as an informational service only and should not be relied upon as an official record.

Original exhibits are on file at the Legislative Counsel Bureau Research Library in Carson City.

Contact the Library at (775) 684-6827 or [library@lcb.state.nv.us](mailto:library@lcb.state.nv.us).

Buildings in the historic district have been renovated and remodeled throughout their history to meet current needs. Making the old Wells Chamber of Commerce, The City of Wells and local citizens are interested in further redveloping the historic downtown. If you are interested in one of the buildings that you saw on this tour, architectural and historic evaluations of the buildings are available from the City of Wells or Wells Rural Electric Company.



## Wells - The short story of a long history

Lush meadows and deep clear springs made this place a natural rest stop for the first western tourists...the emigrants on their way to the land of golden dreams in California. From the late 1840's to the early 1870's, it rivaled any resting place on the California Trail. The pioneers called it Humboldt Wells, the jumping off place for the toughest leg of a long journey, crossing the deadly arid desert to the Sierra Nevada Mountains, gateway to California.

For almost thirty years Humboldt Wells remained just a wild spot on the trail with no permanent buildings. The future townsite of Wells was a part of Utah Territory until 1866, two years after Nevada became a state. A strip of land, beginning just west of the present community and continuing east to Wendover, was taken by Congress from the neighboring territory and given to the Silver State.

In 1869, the Central Pacific Railroad laid its ties and steel to the site in its race to meet the Union Pacific in Utah Territory. When the rails met at Promontory on May 30<sup>th</sup>, the nation was finally joined together and travel time was reduced from three or more months to about ten days.

When the railroad reached Humboldt Wells, the company built a water tower and installed a boxcar next to the tracks for use as a freight and passenger depot. The original station was about a mile west of the present townsite. Wells soon became a freight division point and helper station. Extra engines were added to trains for the difficult pull east over the Paquop Mountains. Humboldt Wells began to grow and the townsite set to accommodate its growth pains. On Christmas the town celebrated its first building, a log hut housing a saloon. Following the establishment of that setern institution, a livery stable, telegraph office, and another saloon were constructed.

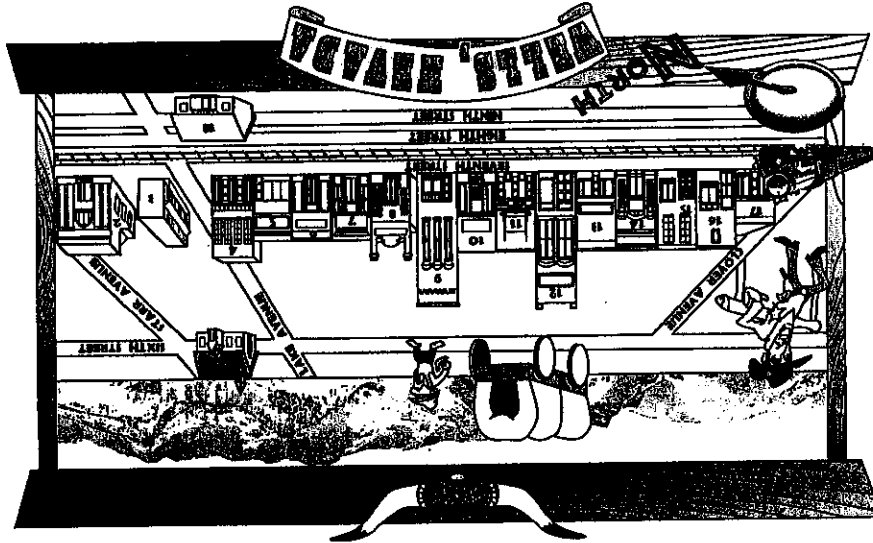
The local economy flourished with steady trade from the town that worked south of town at Spruce Mountain, Dolly Cherry Creek. More business came from the ranches by and Clover Valley, as well as the cattle outfits in community and, of course the railroad and wagon

train, vegetables and food were brought to the local valleys and traded for goods or shipped to Eiko communities along the railroad.

The town had grown into a complete community. There school where the ringing of a locomotive bell called the o class. In that same year, Eiko County Commission shortened the name to Wells. The town prospered in 1870's with a population around three hundred. A line in the 1880's hurt the community and its population. Railroad business and ranch trade was all the town alive.

This brochure would not have been possible without the pioneering work of historians Edna B. Patterson, Daniel Jarling and Howard Hickson who collected and preserved much of the history of this community. Numerous local citizens have provided information and photographs. The collection of the Northwestern Nevada Museum was made available and the assistance of its staff was invaluable. The City of Wells has commissioned two studies of the district that cataloged the available information. The Eiko Daily Free Press has contributed its expert staff members Malissa Courte and Laura Mandros to the final design and production. Finally, Wells Rural Electric Company provided the personnel necessary to research and develop the brochure and sponsored publication of the first edition. This second printing is made possible in part by a grant from the NCOT

more about our home town. They'll be happy to help you learn or any local merchant. Visit the Wells Chamber of Commerce at 305 6th St. And many local businesses Chimney Rock Golf Course



Southwest of Wells, a revival of mining at Cherry Creek in the 1880's and a new boom in the Ely area brought an economic spark of life to Wells when those places freighted ore to the railroad here.

Bad luck struck in the 1890's when Wells lost its status as a freight division point, but it remained an important helper engine station on the railroad that was, by then, the Southern Pacific.

Another blow to the local economy hit in 1906 when the Nevada Northern Railroad was constructed from the copper town of Ely to Cobre northeast of Wells. The ore shipping business in Wells dropped to almost nothing and local business had to rely solely on the ranching outfits and depleted railroad trade. In 1908, the new Western Pacific Railroad laid its tracks through town and took up some of the economic slack.

In 1926, the Union Pacific completed its Oregon Short Line from Twin Falls, Idaho to Wells. When the first train arrived from the north, 1500 people gathered to welcome it and hail what they thought was a permanent solution to local economic downturns. There was much to celebrate that day. Food and drinks were free, but most importantly, Wells High School soundly trounced its basketball rival from nearby Metropolis for the first time in three long years.

In 1927, the town incorporated and became the City of Wells. That same year, the community became part of the first rural electrification system in Nevada when Harry H. Cazier built power lines from a small hydroelectric plant on Trout Creek to Wells and Deeth.

After World War II, tourism began a serious rise as more and more people bought automobiles and traveled. Many stayed overnight in Wells. Nearby Angel Lake in the East Humboldt Mountains was made accessible by grading a road to the beautiful alpine lake. The road was paved in 1966.

Increased use of diesel locomotives eliminated the need for helper engines and Wells lost its status as a helper station in the 1940's. In the early 1970's, Union Pacific stopped operations on the Oregon Short Line. Wells felt the loss but not as badly as in previous years when other railroad operation shut down. Wells continues to be an important transportation point. Two major highways intersect at Wells: Interstate 80 and U. S. Highway 93, the Great Basin Highway.

Since the founding of Wells in 1869, its population growth or loss has always been steady and slow. It has never been a boomtown, nor has it died the quick death of a mining camp. The place has clung tenaciously to life through good times and bad.

No one can predict what these unusual times will do to any community, but it's a sure bet that the citizens of Wells will play the hands they are dealt and do the best they can with the cards, good or bad. Like their pioneer parents before, they are a tough breed with a vision of the future in a place that has always welcomed travelers.

Most of the buildings on this tour are between 70 and 130 years old. All are private property. Please visit the businesses that are presently open but do not enter vacant buildings. For your own safety and to preserve the historic nature of those buildings: NO TRESPASSING! If you enjoyed your walking tour of Historic Downtown Wells, please consider other sites and activities that surround our community. They include:

- Angel Lake
- Metropolis Ghost Town
- Wells City Park and Ballfields
- Twelve Mile Hot Spring and Bishop Creek Dam
- Clover Valley
- Secret Pass
- Ruby Lake National Wildlife Refuge
- Ruby Mountain Brewing Company
- Cedar Peak Pheasant Club
- The Oregon Trail
- The California Trail
- Trail of the 49er's Interpretive Center



## 1. Wells Community Presbyterian Church

The body of the church was first organized in nearby Death. On the 18<sup>th</sup> day of September, 1897, the group in Death agreed to join a group of worshippers from Clover Valley. The two groups met in the Little Red School House. In 1899, the Southern Pacific Railroad donated four lots at 325 Sixth Street for the construction of a church building. Offerings were collected and pledges made until March 5, 1899 when the Wells Community Presbyterian Church was officially dedicated by the Reverend I. M. Donaldson. On that Sunday, and every Sunday since, the youngest child in the congregation that is able, rings a locomotive bell in the cupola to call the faithful to worship.



Wells Community Presbyterian Church  
Circa 1928

## 4. The Bullshead & Wells Hotel

The Bullshead Bar & Casino & Wells Hotel is located at the corner of Seventh and Lake Streets. In 1868, H. R. Renshaw and William Humphries built a log hut and called it the Bullshead Saloon. It served the developing community of Humboldt Wells as the center of social activity. By 1897, a wood-framed building was erected on this site and called the Railroad Hotel. The proprietor was Mrs. C. B. Moore who was followed by Jas. L. Campbell. In 1900, a new wood frame, two-story structure was built and called the Bullshead Hotel. Like its predecessor, it was a lodging and eating establishment that also included a bar appropriately called the Bullshead Bar. The last known alteration covered the wood structure with brick in 1945.



The Wells Hotel on July 8, 1928

## 7. The Western Saloon

The Central Pacific Railroad established a major maintenance and refueling depot that sparked a rapid growth era for Wells. The Elite Bar was constructed on the site originally occupied by the Western Saloon. The Western Saloon was built in the late 1870's



Elite Club in 1915, just before Prohibition

but burned to the ground in 1881. Construction of the Elite Bar was completed in 1913 by J. E. Smith and E. O. Haymond. The building was remodeled in 1935 when Joseph Firth assumed ownership and management and again in the 1970's when it became part of DiGrazia Wholesale.

## 10. Quilici Mercantile

Quilici and Son's Mercantile was housed in a wood-framed structure built on this site in 1892. The original structure burned down in 1900 but was rebuilt by Charles Quilici in 1901. The Quilici continued operating the store until the mid 1930's when it was sold and converted into a series of bars, most notably Jim Jennings' Reno Club of the 1940's. The Williams family acquired the property in 1968 and converted it and the adjoining Johnny's Café into a bowling alley and bar.



Jim Jennings in the Reno Bar



General Store in Wells, 1962.  
Pictured are William Coombs, Edward Haymond and James Haymond

## 13. Mint Saloon



Mint Street of Wells around 1938

Like many structures along this street, the Mint Saloon was built by Duke Quilici. From its construction in 1902, the facility was used as a bar. Some remodeling work was done during the 1930's. It is unique among buildings on this block for two reasons. First, it is the only building made entirely of wood, and second, it is the only building with a "false front." The original wooden false front has been stuccoed and painted.

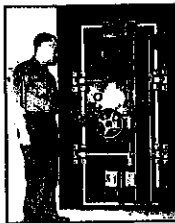
## 16. Donati Grocery

The fire that destroyed the C. A. Wiseman Garage cleared enough space for two new buildings. Like the neighboring Quilici Clothing Store, this building was constructed by John DiGrazia. Fearing another fire, the current structure was built with concrete block on a cement foundation with a brick facade. It became home to The Donati Grocery Store until the 1940's. After World War II, DiGrazia refurbished the facility to accommodate the United States Post Office that occupied the building until 1954. As witnesses of their former tenant, two eagles adorn the building's face. An eagle cast in iron keeps a watchful eye on the door while the cast concrete lion-relief companion surveys the area from his vantage point near the entrance.



## 2. Wells Bank Building

In 1908, the Western Pacific Railroad laid its tracks through Wells and spurred an economic revival. Encouraged by renewed business, brothers Morris and Selby Badt, local businessmen and cattle ranchers, opened the Bank of Wells in 1911. It was Wells' first and only bank until 1960. The entire shell of the building, even the roof, is constructed of concrete. The facade columns and lintel are pressed tin, stuccoed and painted. The present owners, Hal Cannon and Teresa Jordan, have created an exceptional model of historic renovation. Architectural and historical evaluations of the buildings on this tour are available from the City of Wells.



George Shuckett at the main door of the Wells Bank, 1964

## 5. M. Badt & Company Grocery



Interior of Quilici's Store



Lynn John Quilici

Commonly known as Quilici's Market, this structure was built by Morris Badt, a German immigrant. Badt entered business in Elko in 1888 and expanded to Wells as a result of an 1871 partnership with the Cohen Brothers. Sometime in 1875, he became the sole owner of the store known as M. Badt, General Merchandise Store. Badt operated the store until he sold it during the 1920's. John Quilici became the new owner and continued to operate the grocery store until 1995. John was a favorite among the local children because he always mended the full service butcher counter, handing out hot dogs in exchange for a thank you.

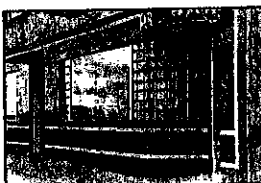
## 8. A.W. Goble General Merchandising

Built and operated by Albert Goble in the 1890's, A. W. Goble General Merchandise was one of four grocery stores serving the growing town of Humboldt Wells. The store was sold and renamed Peyer's in the 1920's. The Smith family purchased the store in the 1940's and continued to operate the grocery store. Life-long Wells resident Jesse Sharp found a receipt from Goble's General Merchandise among his father Phil's possessions. The receipt listed: 1 sack beans... 87¢, 1 kg vinegar... 35¢, 1 kg pickles... 35¢, 1 box paste... 45¢, 1 box tea... 45¢, 1 crate land... 50¢, 1 box candles... 20¢, 1 box dry fruit... 25¢, 1 pair shoes... \$4.00. A month's supply of milk totaled \$7.50



## 11. Johnny's Cafe & Murphy's Bar

During the 1890's, this site was home to a saloon. Johnny's Café, named after its proprietor, John DiGrazia, opened its doors in 1900. Homer Murphy used brick salvaged from the Lincoln School in Metropolis to add a basement in 1930. He opened Murphy's Bar in the basement and it became the local "speakeasy" during the prohibition era. Homer Murphy was also noted for his deliveries of bootlegged liquor into Utah and areas surrounding Wells. The bar was in business until 1968 when the Williams family remodeled the building into Wells Bowl.



Johnny's Cafe & Murphy's Bar

## 14. Wells Market

Frank Stenovich built, owned and operated the first meat market in Wells. The Wells Market opened for business in 1902. With the fire of 1900 still fresh in his mind, Stenovich opted for brick construction hoping to avoid the fate that had claimed so many of the neighboring buildings. The historical data is unclear as to how long the building housed the Wells Market or any other tenants who may have followed. Long periods of vacancy further hamper efforts to trace its chronology. If you have information on this building or the history of Wells, please contact a member of the Wells Chamber of Commerce or the Customer Services Department of Wells Rural Electric Company.



Wells Market and delivery wagon

## 17. The Progress Building

The first newspaper printed in Wells was the Wells Index. It was published for a short time during 1896. The premier edition of The Nevada States Herald hit the streets of Wells on March 18, 1897. Originally, The Herald was printed in a building on the corner of Lake and Eighth Streets. On July 5, 1901, Phil S. Triplett bought the newspaper and moved it into the office space in the Toombs Garage. Publication of The Herald ceased during 1933. Wells was without a newspaper until June 26, 1936 when the Wells Progress rolled off the press. The Progress Building was moved here from the ghost town of Tobar. The Progress moved back into the Toombs Garage from November of 1952 until the last edition in 1956.



Nevada State Herald Office in 1913, on the left, the post office

## 3. Toombs Garage

Toombs Garage, commonly known as the Frontier Market, at 1665 Lake Avenue, was originally built in the mid-1890's. It was operated as the Pioneer Market from 1897 to 1900. In the early 1900's, it was remodeled into Bradish's Meat Market. It was rebuilt during the 1920's to accommodate Toombs Garage. Remodeling during the 1940's converted the building back into a market. The building has apartments upstairs and office space on the street level. The Wells Progress, our town's third newspaper, had its office here until 1956.



Toombs Garage in 1926. Left to Right: Albert Sapp, George Toombs & Carl Sapp

## 6. Fisher's Saloon

Albert Fisher built and operated Fisher's Saloon as a bar and novelty store in the 1800's. The site was renowned for its collection of deer horns displayed on both the interior and exterior of the building. In the early 1920's, Tom Austin purchased the building. Austin remodeled the structure and renamed it the Capitol Club. John and Joe DiGrazia purchased the building in 1926 and continued to operate the saloon. During the 1970's, Sonny DiGrazia remodeled it and the neighboring Elite Club and Goble's Grocery into a wholesale liquor warehouse.



Interior of Fisher's Saloon, 1892. Left to Right: Pete Hahn, H.H. Coryell, Bill Post, Ed Marshall, Ernest Harberty & Al Fisher

## 9. San Marin Hotel

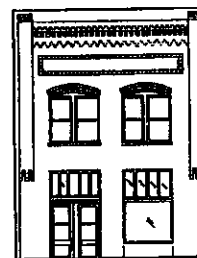
Prior to the construction of the San Marin Hotel, this site was the location of a wood-framed commercial building that was most likely a saloon. In 1902, Charles Quilici, who operated a grocery store next door, built the San Marin. It was the first two-story commercial building in Elko County. Features included a dining room that catered to the tastes of travelers desiring more formal fare. While the Quilici employed a number of managers, they retained ownership for many years.



Architectural rendering of restored San Marin Hotel

## 12. Newhouse / Nevada Hotel

Duke Quilici erected the New House building in 1902. A. J. Thomas operated the New House Restaurant until 1910 when Quilici remodeled it into the Nevada Hotel. In the early 1920's, the building was remodeled into a "picture show house" by Mary Day who named it the Piper House. Further remodeling occurred in the late 1920's when George Goble, uncle to Albert Goble of A. W. Goble General Merchandise, changed the name to the Nevada Theater. The Nevada Theater remained operational until the late 1940's when Goble built a new theater on Sixth Street.



Architectural rendering of New House Hotel

## 15. Quilici's Clothing Store

The first structure on this site was a wood-framed building erected around the turn of the century. It housed C. A. Wiseman Garage, a repair shop for wagons and buggies. Renovations enabled Glossier Hardware Store to occupy this building, but it burned down in the 1920's. John DiGrazia built two new structures in its place. This building was leased to Charles Quilici who operated a clothing store. Following Quilici's Clothing Store, Andreozzi's Shoe Shop was housed in this building until Delmo Andreozzi, who made and repaired shoes, retired. Recent renovations by Hank and Sue Chapman have brought the building to life once again. Business Service Associates is the Chapman's home-based business.



Quilici's Clothing Store present condition

## 18. Coryell House

Located on the north east corner of Lake and Ninth Streets, the Coryell House, built in 1870, was the first residence constructed in Wells. Horace Coryell was a prime mover behind the effort to incorporate the growing community into a city. The City of Wells was incorporated in 1927 and Coryell became the first mayor. Coryell remained in politics, serving in the Nevada State Legislature and eventually becoming the Nevada State Senator's President Pro Tem.



Horace and Annie Coryell's 1870 wedding photograph