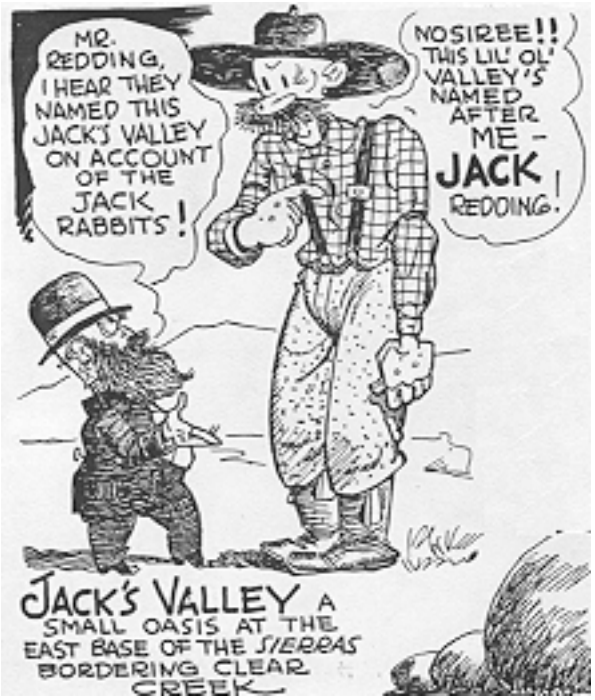
by Guy Rocha, former Nevada State Archivist



The origins of the names of many places in Nevada are shrouded in mystery and myth. Jacks Valley, a small valley in northwestern Douglas County, is one of those places. Lying at the base of the Carson Range, the valley is near Clear Creek and Carson City. It extends several miles south and overlooks Carson Valley. Published sources claim the name "Jacks Valley" is associated with Jack Winter, or Jack Redding, or maybe even jackrabbits.

The truth is found in a Nevada Supreme Court case, Jacob N. Winter v. Robert Fulstone. A transcript on appeal filed on November 5, 1888 in Carson City contains the testimony of Stephen A. Kinsey, who had traveled from the Salt Lake City area with John Reese and his company to settle at Mormon Station on June 6, 1851.

According to Kinsey's statement in the water rights case, he was "In Jacks Valley in the Summer of 1851. I had quite a number of horses and cattle there. Jack Redding Valley is called after him."

We know much of Kinsey's life including his holding the positions of Carson County, Utah Territorial Probate Court Clerk and county recorder beginning in 1856. After Douglas County was created in November 1861 by the Nevada Territorial Legislature, he held the positions of county commissioner, county clerk, and county recorder. Kinsey died in Genoa in 1903, a revered Carson Valley pioneer.

On the other hand, we know little of Return Jackson Redden (AKA Jack Redding) when he resided in western Utah Territory. John Reese, in his memoirs dictated to historian Hubert Howe Bancroft in 1884, stated that Redding was a Mormon, a family man, and lived in the valley that bears his name in the winter of 1851-52. A work entitled *Our Pioneer Heritage* claimed that Redding accompanied LDS Apostle Amasa Lyman to California in 1850 before his stay in Jacks Valley.

Frank Hall, who settled in nearby Eagle Valley in late October 1851, told journalist Alfred Doten, in 1899, that he encountered the Redding family in "Jack's Valley" shortly after Hall's arrival from California.

Dale Morgan in his work *The Humboldt: Highroad of the West* (1943), claimed young Redding "perhaps was a saint only on Sunday" and pursued some criminal ventures before settling down to a quiet life of respectability in Utah after departing Jack's Valley.

We do know from reports on June 29 and July 10, 1852 in Sacramento's *The Daily Union* that Redding had been arrested in Jack's Valley by a posse and taken to Mud Springs, El Dorado, California and tried for horse stealing. The charge was predicated on the allegation of one William Hibbard who had been tried, convicted and shot for horse stealing.

Earlier Hibbard had been captured at Redding's residence after selling the animal to Redding. With only Hibbard's accusation and no evidence to support it, Redding was released. Redding and his family probably left Jacks Valley not long after this brush with the law.

The records of the provisional government established in western Utah Territory between 1851 and 1855 contain no entries for Redding, although there is a survey for land in Jacks Valley filed by R. T. Hawkins on May 17, 1853. Neither the Carson County, Utah and Nevada Territorial records (1855-61), nor Myron Angel's History of Nevada (1881), make any reference to this

obscure settler.

Redding and his family apparently stayed less than two years in the valley named for him without ever filing a land claim or leaving any other record.

Son Adelbert was born in Coalville, Utah Territory on May 20, 1853.

Redding, 73, died in Hoytsville, Summit County, Utah Territory on August 30, 1891 and is buried in the Coalville cemetery.

Jack Redding's legacy in Nevada is his name and we can thank Stephen Kinsey for remembering.

Photo: Sketch by renowned Nevada artist Lew Hymers. Courtesy The *Nevada Magazine* September 1945.

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