by Guy Rocha, former Nevada State Archivist

Reno Evening Gazette

Will Start Tonight
This Summer White House

EQUAL SHIP RATIO IS PROPOSAL OF JAPANESE ON MANES

Pleasant Valley Swept By Flood that Damages Ranches and Railroad

ROBBERY OF MAIL THOUGHT SOLVED WITH ARREST OF TWO.

WATER AVALANCHE IS LOOSED WHEN GRASS LAKE BREAKS

LIVESTOCK PULLS

Are the media in western Nevada geographically challenged when it comes to knowing the location of Pleasant Valley in Washoe County? The small valley was named in the 1850s and settled by Mormon pioneers when the western Great Basin was still part of Utah Territory. There was some mining in the nearby hills in the 1860s. Virginia & Truckee Railroad trains chugged through the valley between 1872 and 1950. Old-timers will fondly remember the Jubilee Club, owned by the Pagni brothers, with its bar, dinner house, and gambling. The club, dating back to 1953, closed on November 12, 1978. Today U.S. Highway 395 bisects the community with its one elementary school, celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2005, and no commercial development.

Pleasant Valley has remained a ranching and residential community for over 150 years. It is now on the brink of being consumed by Reno's urban sprawl. Traffic on U.S. 395 has swelled with the metropolitan growth in Reno/Sparks, Carson City, and Carson Valley over the last twenty-five years. Highway accidents are frequent, sometimes fatal, and the Pleasant Valley community has posted signs along the road pleading with motorists to slow down. The road is a bottleneck in times of fires, floods, and vehicular accidents, forcing drivers to detour through Virginia City, Lake Tahoe, and occasionally even Fernley. Interstate 580, including the 1,719 feet long and 302 feet high Galena Creek Bridge, on the west side of Pleasant Valley, is scheduled to be completed in 2011.

Yes, Pleasant Valley is south of Reno before you enter Washoe Valley—but not IMMEDIATELY south. That's Steamboat Valley, and it falls between Reno and Pleasant Valley. Steamboat

Valley is immediately south of the Mount Rose/Virginia City junction. It was there that Mark Twain, in August 1863, visited the well-known hot springs for which the valley is named. Steamboat Creek, originating in Little Washoe Lake, cuts its way through the valley on its way to the Truckee River. The landmark residence of former Governor John Sparks (1903-08) was moved from Reno to the southwest corner of Steamboat Valley, close to the Andrew Lane intersection, in 1978.

In 2004, a wildfire that burned much of the southern end of Steamboat Valley was called the "Pleasant Valley Fire." The fire, which started near the north end of Washoe Valley and rapidly progressed northeastward, never burned over the crest line of the Virginia Range hills that border eastern Pleasant Valley. Media coverage of the event was misleading and included warnings of a fire in Pleasant Valley, when the blaze was actually northeast of the little oasis. Imagine the fear and concern of Pleasant Valley residents working in Reno or Carson City and hearing the erroneous reports.

More recently, on September 29, 2005 a motorcycle fatality a few miles south of the Mt. Rose Junction backed up traffic for miles on Highway 395 in each direction. Those persons listening to the radio or watching television heard that the terrible accident was near Cheyenne Drive in Pleasant Valley. Newspaper headlines read "Pleasant Valley traffic claims another life" and "Man identified in Pleasant Valley wreck."

Is this all about rapid growth, so many newcomers moving to the area, and unfamiliarity with the local geography? The United States Geological Survey and Nevada Department of Transportation Quadrangle maps clearly show that Cheyenne Drive is in Steamboat Valley. The tragic accident occurred near Steamboat Western Wear and Steamboat Trailers. Although the SBC telephone book lists the businesses in Pleasant Valley, they are found in Steamboat Valley.

Perhaps this article will serve as a geography lesson. Then again, is anybody reading and does anyone care?

Click here for a map showing the relationship of Steamboat and Pleasant Valleys

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