

# Pieces of the Past

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This place is history with a beauty all its own. The land is vast and mostly treeless which allows the eye to see for miles: how the wagon trains of pioneers heading west, itching to get to the promise of nuggets lying on the ground must have felt when they saw miles and miles of desert ground, hued in tans, grays blues, pale peach, dusty greens, and deep purples. The parched earth and rising dust must have felt like an eternal hell with heat waves rising each afternoon before the winds arose. But the sunset of aqua blue and tiger lily orange was a sight to behold. Then came the chill of the night, marked with numberless tiny sparkles lighting up the black. When the huge moon would rise large and golden, some of those twinklers would disappear. They would fall asleep with the sound of the coyote singing its soprano song and rise with the sun, a slight dew, and the electric pink and blue sky to face the heat of another long, hot day.

Some of those pioneers would stay to become residents, building their paradise where the wagon wheel broke, using their oxen or mules to travel to a hidden canyon to find aspen and pine to build their cabins. Toiling, seemingly endlessly, to dig a well, plant a garden, turning the tans green. Carving out a life here was hard, but it built strong men and women who could stand the tests and raise a stalwart family. Some were lucky enough to make it to the base of the rising Sierra Nevada mountains, a river running year round. Maybe it was too daunting a task to drive over those snow capped peaks with winter approaching, or maybe they were just too tired, having added years to their lives, to finish the trek. Maybe they saw the gold they were seeking in the green river bottoms and decided that this was home. Much of that river land would become rich in farming and ranching, making the desert bloom. Who needs nuggets, anyway?

Sending for family and friends from the east, they created community with neighbors, churches, schools, granges. The strong stalwart families became strong stalwart communities. All too soon towns and cities developed, and pioneers of a different sort came to stay. They were builders of commerce and business with thoughts facing the future, for that is where their nuggets lay.

Because a life is hard to carve out in Nevada, those towns and cities are still far and few between, and that is what I love the most. The state is still mostly treeless, which allows the eye to see for miles the rich tans, grays, blues, pale peach, dusty greens, and deep purples, the vibrant sunrises and sunsets, the millions of stars, big moons. The smell of sage, the arid dust—all gladdens my heart. May Nevada's growth ever remain slow and may she ever remain the same, for the rest of my life, at least.