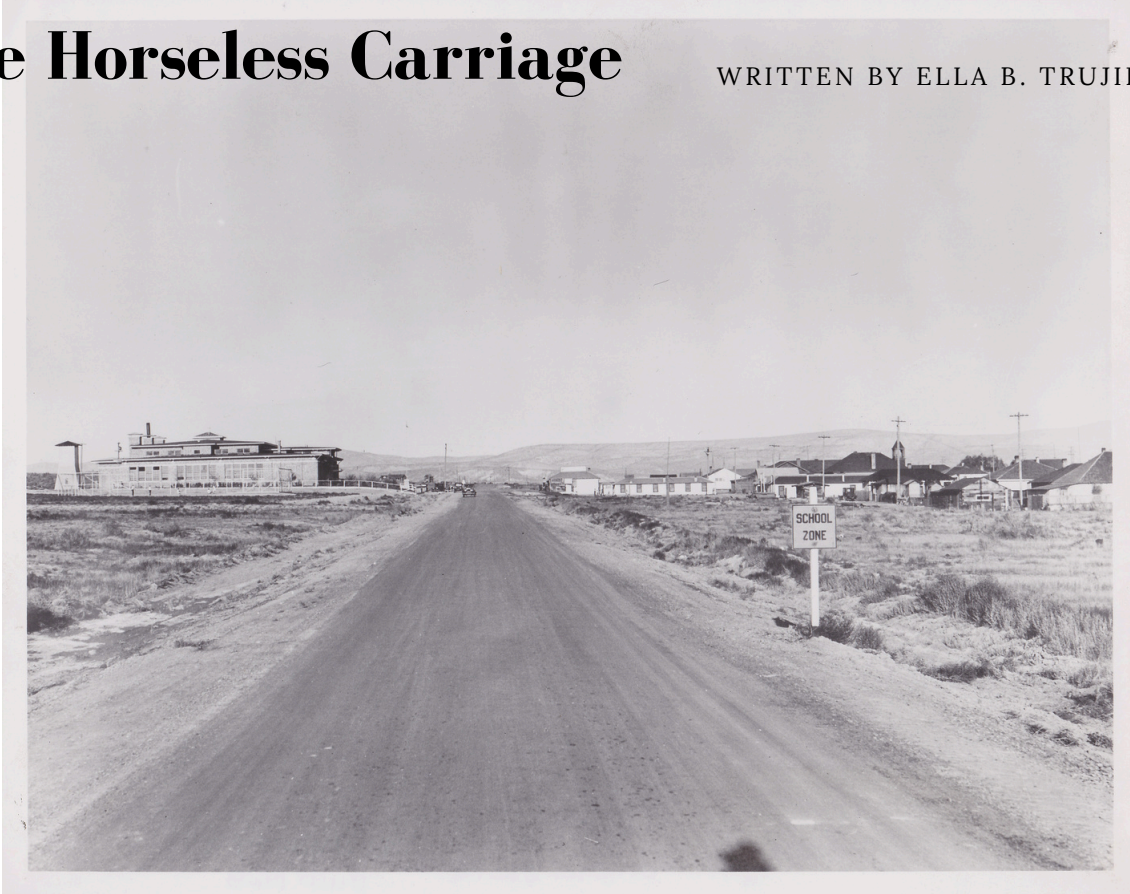

FALL 2024

DESERT DUST

Carlin Historical Society - Carlin, Nevada

The Horseless Carriage

WRITTEN BY ELLA B. TRUJILLO



Who owned the first “horseless carriage” in Carlin is not known but we do know for sure that the invention changed Carlin forever by shifting the town away from Main Street and the railroad to the north. In the early days, automobiles in Carlin visited service stations and garages on Main Street -- primarily the Carlin Garage and Aiazzi Brothers Garage. Travel to and from Elko was treacherous as the roads were designed for horses not cars. However, the pioneering “automobile enthusiasts” of America spearheaded the movement to build roads made for their beloved machines. Starting with the California Automobile Association mapping out a route through Nevada and the passage of the Federal-aid Road Act in 1916, a state highway department was formed. But, first, in 1913, NV Route 1 took over the abandoned Central Pacific grades (especially in Carlin Canyon) and the roads were mostly maintained by local automobile associations. Road conditions were often reported in the local newspapers.

In 1920, Route 1 became known as the Victory Highway (to commemorate the victory in World War I) and things got serious. The new roads built for automobiles couldn't pass through the middle of Carlin so they were constructed north of town along what is today Bush Street. The process of building the Victory Highway between Carlin and Elko was not an easy task, mostly because of the meddling of humans. The people argued over the route (including Carlin's John W. Puett) and several contractors failed to deliver the goods. In 1921, a former disgruntled contractor hired a poor fool to dig holes in the new roadbed every hundred feet or so in retaliation for being kicked off the job! But, in the end the road was finished and the cars came. In Carlin, new businesses popped up on what is today Bush street, such as the Victory Station (pictured below). The Victory Station had cabins that motorists could park at to stay the night after a long day on the road. This new gas station was located right across the street from the school playground. Speaking of schools, in 1926, Carlin built their brand new school house on the highway. This became a problem as the motorists would fail to slow down as they passed the school and it was dangerous for the children. By 1930, the town posted speed limit signs and installed a traffic officer on the road to try to enforce the speed limit. This would end in disaster. On April 19, 1930, the traffic officer was placed on duty and quickly made a couple arrests. He was then forced to shoot after one car that failed to stop while speeding. Those who passed through Carlin started to complain at the amount of force being used. This somehow resulted in the Southern Pacific Railroad ordering Mayor J.M. Lee to remove the traffic officer or be fired from his position with the railroad. The traffic officer was removed and the Mayor resigned so he could keep his job.

In 1940, the highway was moved again one block north to Chestnut Street and once again new businesses popped up including the State Inn (built by Gino Quilici), which had a service station out front, and a Shell Service Station (where the Cavalier is today) that was owned by J.W. Puett. The railroad hadn't faded yet but the landscape of Carlin had certainly changed as a result of the invention of the "horseless carriage".



News and Gossip

Don't forget our upcoming fun events!

**September 17
and November 19
- Tea Time Talks
September (Date
TBA) - Cemetery
Tour
January (Date
TBA) - 3rd Annual
Murder Mystery
Dinner**