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Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center
University of Nevada, Reno

**A Guide to the Records of
Sagebrush Rebellion**

Collection No. 85-04

The Sagebrush Rebellion

The Sagebrush Rebellion is the name applied to a movement which gained momentum in the 1960s in the western United States and especially in the State of Nevada, to return control of federal lands to individual states. In Nevada, federally managed and controlled lands totaled 87% of all land (Legislative Counsel Bureau, Division of State Lands, January, 1980). During the 1970s, Nevada made formal requests for additional land grants from the Federal Land Law Review Commission. That commission's 1970 report to the President and to Congress recommended "retaining [land] in Federal ownership whose values must be preserved so that they may be used and enjoyed by all Americans."

To counter-act that policy, the Select Committee on Public Lands was created in 1977 by the Nevada Legislature to seek changes in public lands policies and to seek out other states in the west who might want to join with Nevada in that effort. Appointed to the committee were Assemblymen Hayes, Kissam, and Moody; and Senators Norman Glaser, Hilbrecht, and Richard E. Blakemore. Their idea of a coalition of western state and local governments on the public lands issue was supported by the Western Council of State Governments, the Western Interstate Region of the National Association of Counties, leading to the formation of the Western Coalition on Public Lands.

Assembly Bill 413 entitled the "Sagebrush Rebellion" bill and passed by the 1979 Nevada Legislature, was designed to create a board of review and provide for state control of certain lands within state boundaries. Similar bills were passed by other western states.

In addition to actual legislation, the Sagebrush Rebellion was a general attitude reflecting the feeling that federal policies affecting the west were made in ignorance of conditions and concerns in the west, that those policies were made for a so-called national constituency without regard for western problems, that this "colonial" treatment was going to get worse as the west was called upon to satisfy the national's energy needs, and federal administration displayed outright animosity toward the west ("Questions and Answers on the "Sagebrush Rebellion" fact sheet, folder four).

Over the years, issues of the Sagebrush Rebellion have included allotments of grazing rights, mining development, military land withdrawal, closure of selected public lands to

hunting and fishing, and the proposed MX Missile defense system.
Scope and Content

The Sagebrush Rebellion collection was donated to the Special Collections Department in 1985 by Nevada State Senator Norman Glaser. It consists of 2.75 cu. ft. of material, dating from approximately 1967 to 1984. There are no restrictions on access to the collection.

The collection contains materials collected and created by Senator Glaser in his support of this movement. Included are reports, correspondence, studies, position papers, fact sheets, speeches, text of legislation, minutes of meetings, and newspaper clippings related to the Sagebrush Rebellion. The collection remains in the order in which it was received from the donor.

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Box 1

1. Genesis of a revolution.
2. The Natives are Restless (background).
3. Miners, ranchers skirmish at Battle Mt. with Feds.
4. Nevada Legislature dawn patrol. Legislative action organized,
5. Constitutional issues.
- 6-7. Rebellion flares. Legislation.
8. The west rides again. Legislative action in other western states.
- 9-11. Sagebrush studies and legislation.
12. Sagebrush roundups. Conferences in western states.
13. Sagebrush rebellion sizzles.

Box 2

14-15. Brushfire. Speeches, press releases.

16-17. Sagebrush Zenith. Court cases, UNR studies, press releases, Congressional action.

18. Who is the enemy? Old administration, new administration, good neighbor policy, panatization.

19. Water and wilderness.

20. The Rebellion fizzles. Republican feud in Congress, lack of interest.

21. A new direction. Legislation re: checkerboard, 6 million acres, state plan for federal land.

22. Goal is achieved by Sagebrush.

23-24. Riding down the canyon to watch the sun go down. Meetings of the Nev. Legislature's Select Committee on Public Lands.

25. Miscellaneous. Western Council of State Governments meetings.

Box 3

26. Western Conference of Council of State Governments (CSG) Public Lands Task Force Report.

27. WCSG past actions, meetings.

28. Nevada Legislative Select Committee on Public Lands meeting minutes.

29-31. Clippings. 1980-1981.

32-39. Clippings and articles. 1970s-1981.