





states in the north and west to fashion a meaningful policy to discourage racial bigotry." Calling the Silver State the "Mississippi of the West" was a provocative rhetorical measure to elicit positive change in race relations, and it worked. Just the same, the moniker did not reflect the reality of Nevada vis-à-vis Mississippi.

Nevada has not been the only place compared to Mississippi when it came to characterizing race relations. At times, Indiana has been called the "Mississippi of the North." An African-American civil rights leader picketing the Pomona, California, City Hall on February 3, 1970 over racial discrimination in city hiring called "Pomona and San Gabriel

Valley 'the Mississippi of the West'." Hyperbole, no doubt, but by calling anyplace "Mississippi" you could get the media's and politicians' attention.

Photographs courtesy of the Nevada State Library and Archives.

Top: Pickets surround Storey County Senator James Slattery, protesting his status as "paid senator of the gaming industry in Reno," 1963.

Bottom: Governor Grant Sawyer meeting with leaders of the NAACP and other civil rights activists in the capitol.

Original version in *Sierra Sage*, Carson City/Carson Valley, Nevada, August 2006 edition.