

Introduction to
The Lonesome Lover's Grave
c. 1870

The manuscript is a ten-page handwritten document.¹ The document is in the third folder of Harvard Archives Royce Papers (HARP) Box 114. There is an inscription on the top of the first page of 'No. 1' in Royce's handwriting; a marker that indicates Royce intended the manuscript to occur first in the index of his early writings. Royce left the manuscript untitled; later an archivist labelled the document as 'The Miner's Grave.' But there is another manuscript that records Royce's musings on a visitation to a miner's gravesite, while this manuscript concerns the tragic fate of a lady and her lover. Thus, Oppenheim proposes the title 'The Lonesome Lover's Grave' to distinguish the two manuscripts.² Given the topic of the manuscript evokes themes predominant in Royce's high school essays — themes of loss and abandonment, decay and death, sin and fate, loneliness and love³ — and Royce intended the manuscript to occur first in the index of his early writings, then the composition of the manuscript must have been sometime around 1870.

The manuscript begins with a description of a lush mining town the narrator lives nearby and details a journey to a barren and desolate area where there is a grave; a symbol of forgotten love and lost hope. The grave prompts the narrator to wonder and recall a conversation about the grave with an old acquaintance about the tragic fate of a lady and her lover. An illustrious but poor young man arrived to the town and sought to acquire wealth as a miner to win the hand of a young lady from a prosperous family. The man befriended a mischievous local named Lewis; eventually, Lewis betrayed the man to take over the mining town and told him the young lady was unfaithful, when she was not. Thereupon the man left the town for a foreign country, and after the young lady fell ill from melancholy. Though Lewis never profited from the scheme, the young lady died soon after and asked to be buried in the barren and desolate land where the grave is now. Then the narrator perceives the man standing over the grave mourning and asking forgiveness. Unable to help, the narrator leaves but returns in the morning to find the man lying dead over the grave bearing the smile of someone forgiven. The narrator speculates that, even if separated through deceit in life, the lovers are reunited now in death.

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¹ All information on the manuscript is found in Oppenheim's Comprehensive Index, entry 4 in Part II. An online version is available at <http://royce-edition.iupui.edu/docu/index.pdf>.

² See entry 3 in Part II of Oppenheim's Comprehensive Index at <http://royce-edition.iupui.edu/docu/index.pdf>.

³ Clendenning, John. *The Life and Thought of Josiah Royce*. Nashville & London, Vanderbilt University Press 1999: 3 and 27-30. For the earliest of such writings, see the typescript copy of 'Pussy Blackie's Travels,' supposedly written in 1864 when Royce was about 8 or 9 years old.

