

Docents Newsletter

Volume 2, Number 4

Historical Society of Dayton Valley

May 2009

Docent Program

By Ruby McFarland

We have had a busy month in April and from what I can see it ain't gonna let up. I've had to push myself a time or two just to keep up.

The fun we had on the 25th of April was one we won't forget soon. All the folks in the HSDV put on an open house at the Carson and Colorado railroad station. Then we all got in cars and caravanned down Fort Churchill Road to the Fort and then on down to a gated road that was to take us to Churchill, a stop on the C&C railroad. We all got a little stuck in the mud since it had rained and the adobe was slick. Fun. Fun. We got home safe.

We then hosted the Chamber of Commerce Mixer on April 29. I had fun cooking the beans with my sous-chef Gene Kinney. He is a good cook and Vicki is a lucky girl. A good time was had by all.

We will probably do chautauquas on May 9 at 12:00 Noon on the steps of the Museum. And we will be busy all the month of May. I can't tell you how proud I am of all you folks in the HSDV. We are a force to be reckoned with.

Docent doings

By Patrick Neylan

Calling all Docents! May is upon us and we will be in great demand. This is probably the most important month of the year for our group and we need all the help we can get.

As you all know, the Museum will be open every day during May and so far not all the dates are covered. If you were not able to attend the recent docent meeting and help fill out the May schedule, please contact me (246-3527), or Donna McElroy (246-8765) to find out which dates are still open. Many hands make light work. Exposure to the history of Dayton by the public is our best tool to build the future of the Society. The momentum is growing and the docents will continue to do what they can to build the Society

For the Society and the docents, knowledge is power. The weekly training sessions on museum displays are going very well. By the time you read this, we will have finished the incredible display of charm bracelets from the Randall family. As you all know the goal of this program is to create a docent manual to aid all of us in providing more quality and accurate information about Dayton history. The compiling of this information is the task of all of us. If you attend any of these sessions and take notes, please share them with the rest of us. We want all viewpoints and facts included in the final workup. History can be a mystery and we hope to make Dayton's history accurate. Notes can be sent to me at: 171 Roughing It Road, Dayton, NV 89403, or via email to virginiacitypat@sbcglobal.net

Thanks for your past help, and more importantly, thanks for what you are about to do.

May is National Historic Preservation Month -- Visit your local museum

Glorious Springtime

By Donna McElroy

Dear Docents, we have latterly hit the ground running with all of the wonderful activities we have already participated in so far this year! That is a good omen that this will indeed be a banner year for our group. We have much, much more planned for the rest of the year! The upcoming month of May will be our Historic Preservation Month and full of many fun activities for us all. You will see the many events listed elsewhere in this newsletter.

I would like to take this opportunity to let you know of some outside "field trips" that are planned for the near future. Anyone who is interested can let me know and we will add you to the list of participants.

June Date to be decided Archives Tour in Carson City

July Date to be decided Picnic at Como

September Date to be decided Dayton, Sutro & Carson Valley (railroad) hike

Mark this date: June 27 & 28 Annual Rummage Sale

Please collect and bring your gently used items to the Depot for the rummage sale. Any items are welcome. We would like to stay away from large appliances, especially those that need repair. If you need help with transportation, there are those of us who may be able to help with that. Please let us know! As always, we will need help with the sorting and selling of the items. Board members may be contacted for assistance with questions.

Nevada history books

Submitted by Dr. Linda Clements

[Dr. Clements asked former Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer Ron James and former Nevada State Archivist Guy Rocha to recommend books on Nevada history. It seems appropriate to present their recommendations during National Historic Preservation Month. -Ed.]

Note from LLC: I asked Ron both for recommendations of books by others and books that he has written.

History of Nevada (Second Edition) by William R. Elliott and William D. Rowley (1987, University of Nebraska Press)

RJ: For years, Russ Elliott's History of Nevada was regarded as the best, and it remains the most detailed overview available.

The Silver State, 3rd Edition: Nevada's Heritage Reinterpreted (Wilbur S. Shepperson Series in History and Humanities) (Paperback) by James W. Hulse (2004)
RJ: Jim Hulse's History of Nevada has less meat, but it is probably better written and more entertaining.

Author: Sally Zanjani

RJ: There are many excellent books on specific subjects. I'd read anything by Sally Zanjani, who is one of the best writers to have ever worked on a Nevada topic, and the range of her books offer many choices on specific topics.

Roughing It, by Mark Twain (1876)

RJ: I always recommend Mark Twain's

Roughing It as a nice bedrock of the Nevada experience. (LLC: This is free online at <http://www.mtwain.com/RoughingIt/index.html> and at <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/TwaRoug.html>)

The Big Bonanza: An Authentic Account of the Discovery, History, and Working of the Comstock Lode, by Dan DeQuille (1876)

RJ: Twain's friend, William Wright (aka Dan DeQuille) is not to be overlooked; he wrote The Big Bonanza in 1876. It is very entertaining and often closer to a reliable history (which, however, it is not) than Roughing It.

(LLC: Excerpts are online at <http://www.aracnet.com/~histgaz/dequil.htm> and the full text is available from The Nevada Observer starting at [http://www.nevadaobserver.com/Reading%20Room%20Documents/DeQuille%2001%20\(1877\).htm](http://www.nevadaobserver.com/Reading%20Room%20Documents/DeQuille%2001%20(1877).htm))

Ten Years in Nevada: Or Life on the Pacific Coast, by Mary McNair Mathews (1880)

RJ: Mary McNair Mathew' Ten Years in Nevada is interesting as a primary source, although I always emerge from her journal-like book really disliking her.

Author: Rich Moreno

RJ: On the contemporary end of the spectrum, I would recommend anything by Rich Moreno. He is not a historian – he's a journalist – but he is accurate and always a good read.

[Then I asked Ron about recommendations from among his own books:](#)

The Roar and the Silence (Wilbur S. Shepperson Series in History and Humanities)

(Paperback) by Ron James (1998, University of Nevada Press)

RJ: When it comes to my things, the issue may again be more about what topic a reader is interested in. The Roar and the Silence: A History of Virginia City and the Big Bonanza remains perhaps my most important work when it comes to content and contribution.

Temples of Justice: County Courthouses of Nevada (William S. Shepperson Series in History and Humanities) by Ronald M. James (1994, University of Nevada Press)

RJ: Temples of Justice, my overview of Nevada courthouses, offers brief histories on each of Nevada's counties, so that might be a good place to start for someone who wants to know each part of the state (Elliott and Hulse offer high fly-overs of the state, never really getting into local history).

Comstock Women: The Making of a Mining Community (Wilbur S. Shepperson Series in History and Humanities), by Ronald M. James and C. Elizabeth Raymond (1997, University of Nevada Press)

RJ: Many women are attracted to Comstock Women, but many of its conclusions are present in less technical ways in The Roar and the Silence.

Uncovering Nevada's Past: A Primary Source History of the Silver State (Wilbur S. Shepperson Series in History and Humanities), by John B. Reid and Ronald M. James (2004, University of Nevada Press)

Uncovering Nevada's Past, which I did with John Reid, is a collection of primary sources introduced by a wide variety of Nevada historians, so it is a way to consider actual

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records and to become familiar with many of our current writers.

Books recommended by Guy Rocha

The Silver State, 3rd Edition: Nevada's Heritage Reinterpreted (Wilbur S. Shepperson Series in History and Humanities) (Paperback) by James W. Hulse (2004)

Product Description

The essential history of Nevada in an updated edition.

Nevada has changed dramatically over the past quarter century, and in this third edition of *The Silver State*, renowned historian James W. Hulse recounts the major events – historical, political, and social – that have shaped our state. Hulse's cohesive and readable approach offers students and general readers an accessible account of Nevada's colorful history.

The new edition highlights the social and political changes that have occurred since the original publication of *The Silver State* in 1991. This book will inspire readers to take another look at the rich cultural heritage and eventful history of Nevada, the Silver State.

The Roar and the Silence (Wilbur S. Shepperson Series in History and Humanities) (Paperback) by Ron James (University of Nevada Press, 1998)

Editorial Reviews

Product Description

The first comprehensive treatment of Comstock society to incorporate mining history with the stories of the people who lived it.

From the publisher

Ronald James's brilliant new account of the Comstock's long and eventful history – the first comprehensive study of the subject in over a century – examines every aspect of Comstock and Virginia City and employs information gleaned from hundreds of written sources, interviews, archeological research, computer analysis, folklore, gender studies, physical geography, and architectural and art history, as well as over fifty rare photographs, many of them previously unpublished. James's lively, thoughtful text brings the Comstock to life again in all its complexity and boom-and-bust excitement. This path-breaking book offers a wealth of new information and insight into the history of one of the Old West's most storied areas.

Founding the Far West: California, Oregon, and Nevada, 1840-1890 (Hardcover) by David Alan Johnson (1992)

Editorial Reviews

From Publishers Weekly

For decades the vast Rocky Mountain area of the U.S. could claim only three states, all clustered in a region known as the Far West. From 1849 to 1864, California, followed by Oregon and then Nevada, achieved statehood. But, as first-time author Johnson demonstrates in this lengthy and lucid history of the region, proximity in no way produced homogeneity. Focusing on each state's constitutional convention and founding fathers, the author, a history professor at Portland (Ore.) State University, paints a picture of stark contrasts that he claims remain visible to this day: California, a mixture of Hispanic and American cultures; agrarian and isolated

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Oregon; and “jackpot mentality” Nevada. Well organized and clearly formed.

The History of Nevada, Edited by Myron Angel (originally published 1881 by Thompson and West, Oakland) [Note: This classic history is typically known as “Thompson and West”]

Comments by LLC: The book was originally published in 1881, but was reproduced in 1958 and once again later. (All editions have the same content with the exception of added introductions.) No matter what else is written, and what corrections may be found, this IS the definitive history of Nevada up to 1881. It is massive, detailed, and fascinating. Like most books of the day, it was published without an index, but an index is available separately (by Dr. Helen J. Poulton in 1966). Looking at Amazon.com and in eBay Stores, I found reproduction editions for \$52 to \$65 (with shipping about \$4). There and elsewhere online I found the 148-page index for \$15-\$19 plus shipping.

Amazingly, I also found the first three chapters of the book and much more online at <http://www.us-data.org/nv/tw/tw1881tc.html>. Apparently, this is a work in progress by the U.S. Genealogy Network, so maybe eventually the whole thing will be online!

Dates to remember

By Bob Wallace

May is one very busy month for the HSDV in general, and the Museum docents in particular. The Museum is scheduled to be open each day during the month, although as Patrick Neylan noted in his article on Page 1, there are still a

few days to be filled as of May 2. Check your schedule for the month and see if you can find some time to fill one or more days.

Also coming up this month are three lectures at the Dayton Senior Center, each Thursday evening's lecture scheduled for 7:00 p.m.

May 7: Cemeteries of Virginia City, presented by Candace Wheeler, Executive Director of the Comstock Cemetery Foundation.

May 14: The Sutro Tunnel, presented by *Adolph Sutro* (Dayton Museum's Jack Folmar).

May 21: No Lecture

May 28: Bootlegging in the Comstock, presented by Phillip Earl, retired Curator of History at the Nevada Historical Society.

In addition to dates given above, several other dates throughout the month of May need to be marked in your calendar.

May 9: Oodles of Noodles, in Old Town Dayton on Saturday beginning at 10:00 a.m.. We will be manning the museum, a booth on Pike Street, and the Depot parking lot.

May 20: HSDV General meeting at 12:30 p.m.; Depot Working Group follows.

May 27: Docents meeting at the Museum