

Docents Newsletter

Volume 3, Number 6

Historical Society of Dayton Valley

July 2010

Docents program

By Ruby McFarland

“When the hours are so still that time forgets them, and lets them lie 'neath petals pink till night stars wink at the sunset in the sky – It is July.”

Susan Hartley Swett “July” 1882

How did it get to be July? It sneaked up on me when I was busy doing Spring. Got things coming up in the garden and I should have realized summer was going to be a comin' soon.

We will be able to coast a little but July 13 there is a field trip to St. Mary's of the Mountain. Meet at the museum at 10:00 AM and Pat will be looking for us around 11:00 AM. Then we will have lunch in Virginia City.

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We are trying to get a plan together for a display at the Nevada State Fair in August. It will take some planning to have an eye-catching display. Lois Wallace, Laura Tennant and I have been working on preliminary plans and making it come together. We will need lots of hands to pull off a great display. Call one of us to volunteer.

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The trouble I see with too much commitment is people burn out. We should think before we accept any commitment. Who is going to do the job. Same old gang that does all the plans? Same old gang gets burned out and gets grumpy. If we are going to get involved we have to be sure we can muster up all the folks we need to pull it off. We have a lot of talent in our organization but it's time for all of us to evaluate how much we can do, or want to do. I don't want the little red hen to have to do it herself.

HSDV Rummage sale

By Patrick Neylan

Generosity is a two way street when you are driving a 1987 Dodge Van! The generosity of long time member, Judy Harris, supplied the Historical Society with a donated 1987 Dodge Van. It was a semi-custom, low mileage, multi-seating with a bed, definitely multi-purpose van! The proceeds from the sale of this van will be applied to the restoration fund for the Dayton Depot, separate from the proceeds of the Society's rummage sale. All Society members need to know that!

During the first day of the Society's rummage sale, after a number of tire kickers, the donated van was sold! It was sold to a Daytonite whose generosity was helping a family member taking on the responsibility for five young children. The family needed a larger, safer, dependable vehicle. All flaws were explained to the buyer. The recipient is a professional mechanic and is capable of fixing whatever is needed.

The van has been sold, but, in its simplicity, it has served many purposes. The disposal of the van has been a relief to Judy. The van's acquisition and sale a boon to the Society, and its purchase the solution to a major problem for a young family in Dayton. Dayton has grown a lot in the last few years, but a story like this helps us keep our small town friendly attitude and ain't that just the best!

Thank you, Judy, for getting the ball rolling and giving all of Dayton your spirit of generosity!

If you see a white and burgundy '87 Dodge Van jammed with kids motoring down the road, give it a thumbs up and wave! That van is a symbol of what makes a Society, Dayton and Nevada great!

Carson River mill sites

By Bob Wallace

One of the interesting pieces of the historical puzzle that is Dayton comes by way of the mills that used to populate the Carson River Canyon between what was Empire City (far northeastern edge of present day Carson City) and Dayton. These mills processed the material coming from the mines in Virginia City, going through tons of rock and dirt on a daily basis to get to the gold and silver. What used to come down from Virginia City to the Carson River in horse-drawn wagons began traveling in rail cars of the Virginia & Truckee Railroad beginning in January of 1870.

All that material worked its way through the mills lining the Carson River from the eastern edge of Carson City (Empire in that era), all the way through the Carson River Canyon stretching from today's Deer Run Road to the Santa Maria Ranch on the edge of and through Dayton.

Much of the information on the Carson River mills was put into a nine-page handout by Ruby McFarland several weeks ago, covering the river's mills beginning with the Mexican/Spanish, and including Mead's, Morgan, Brunswick, Merri-mac, Vivian, Santiago, Eureka, San Francisco, Franklin and Island mills along the river canyon.

In addition to the handout put together by Ruby, Laura Tennant sent along an email message on June 30 detailing a book by author Mary B. Ansari, a respected Nevada historian who covers the Carson River area with text, photos and maps. One of the mills asked about in recent weeks was Mead's Mill (also noted as being Meads Mill in some sources), which, according to Ansari, was an Empire City quartz mill built in 1861 between the Mexican Mill and the Carson River, having six stamps, 10 stone pans, a main building 46 by 56 feet, and a working capacity of 20 tons per day with 12 employees. This mill was also known as the Yellow Jacket Mill, according to a man named only as Dotson.

In addition to the above, local libraries and museums may have additional resources available

for researching both mines and mills located in the Comstock Historic District. Among other finds on the Internet was one book with Dan De Quille's name attached to it: "A History of the Comstock Silver Lode and Mines," including portions on the Carson River, Placer Mining in Gold Canyon, River and Canyon Mills, Dayton, and the Carson & Colorado Railroad.

Dates to remember

By Bob Wallace

Off we go into the second half of 2010 with this month's newsletter. June's rummage sale delayed the docents meeting late in the month, requiring a special docents meeting on July 7 at the museum. In addition, we will be visiting Virginia City for a tour led by Patrick Neylan.

July 7: Docents meeting at the museum at 10:30.

July 13: Meet at the museum at 10:00 for the trip up the hill to Virginia City. Lunch following in Virginia City.

July 21: HSDV General meeting at 12:30, Dayton Branch Library. C&C Working Group will meet immediately following, about 1:45.

July 28: Docents meeting, 10:30 at the museum.



Dayton Depot about 1910. Somewhere in the future it may look something like this again.