

Docents Newsletter

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Historical Society of Dayton Valley

September 2012

Remembering Vivian Smith



1927 – 2012

Vivian Smith passed away on August 18, 2012 in Dayton, Nevada. Our condolences to her family, relatives and many friends. She will be remembered by everyone who knew her, particularly her smile and that twinkle in her eye. Celebration of life was held in Carson City on Saturday, August 25 with a reception in Dayton that afternoon.

Picture courtesy of Jack Folmar

Docents program

By Ruby McFarland

“You cannot do a kindness too soon, for you never know how soon it will be too late.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1803 – 1882

What would I do without the good people of the HSDV? I hope I've done enough in the past to make up for all you folks have done for me.

Well, it's been a long hot summer. The HSDV have been busier than a one-armed paper hanger. Just all the moving stuff around at the depot was a gigantic task. Then all the scraping and painting to make the old station look kept. All that preparation for the annual depot celebration. I saw people working all July and part of August for the big days.

It is amazing to see the amount of people who get involved with the preparation of all the events the society has pulled off this year. The new blood in the society has stepped up like champs to help make the events a success.

Laura called to tell me about her picnic on the 25th of August. I was afraid I might miss it. I enjoy being with all the good folks of the HSDV. And it's always a good time to reflect on those people who are no longer with us. We miss them and know they are with us in spirit.

Looking forward to my favorite time of year – fall. The days are so soft and warm and the nights cold enough to pull the covers up around the ears. Doesn't mean a slow down for the HSDV. The best is yet to come.

[Ruby wrote this piece prior to going in for hip surgery the last week of August. Our best wishes for her speedy recovery. -Ed.]

Docent doings

By Patrick Neylan

Vivian Smith: A HSDV Model

It was not only a privilege to have known and worked with Vivian Smith, it was a HOOT! The twinkle in her eye and the constant smile on her face is my lasting memory. Stand up, organize and take a position of leadership? Not a chance! Ask Vivian to help out ... like the Society's Christmas Party, and she would! Stand up, organize and take the position of leadership! Remember those great Christmas Parties? You bet! It was Vivian's "filed reports" for that event that I just passed on to the new chairperson for this year ... and the only one that is on file!!

When Ruby first established the "Docent Program," Vivian was an early participant. When the first weekly "lectures" were held to educate docents and locals as to Dayton History, Vivian was always in attendance. As we went through all the topics – Gold, Scales, Chinese, Ranching, etc. – Vivian always kept copious notes, which when later I was called upon to summarize, I could always fall back on her input. Vivian took the notes that I did not. Much of her work is incorporated into the upcoming Docent Training Manual.

For the Historical Society, that work was very important and necessary. Did Vivian stop there? Not a chance. Sometimes she worked the "booth," sometimes she sat the museum, sometimes she brought "cookies" to "whatever event." Sometimes she just "came" and that was enough! That is where the "HOOT" part comes in.

When Vivian was present, humor reigned!! Her stories, memories, and "present" experiences, good or bad, always translated into a "bit" of life you could take with you ... for the rest of your life! I loved the opportunity to kid Vivian that I was "born" about the same year she and Emmett were married! I was about the same age as her "kids"!

My experience with the HSDV was greatly enhanced by my knowing Vivian Smith. She was never "in charge," but influenced much. Vivian had a "dedication" to a principal or a mere "concept," and she always followed it through! Somehow, she permeated every event she was able to participate in, made it better than it could have been, and left all of the rest of us with a "kind" of glow! Because of "her personality"!

The work of the HSDV will continue and will grow and prosper and it will be enhanced because of the work of many members! However, much of its early growth came about from a few early residents! Vivian and Emmett were actually late comers to that group, but in a short period of time they became somewhat "movers and shakers." Look around, read the papers, check the Society's schedule. You are a part of a Major Force in the Dayton Community. Without your knowing it, Vivian Smith and others like her have given you this opportunity to be a part of Dayton's History.

Hopefully, if we embrace Vivian's fire and determination, each of us will be able to add to Dayton's history ... day by day!!!! Remember, our "History" begins today! One hundred years from now you will be part of it!

Our thoughts and prayers are with Vivian, Emmett and their family. Thanks for Vivian's being a part of the HSDV. Each of us gained from it!

Closing notes

By Bob Wallace

The middle of August again turned out to be one of those weekends which finds the Historical Society of Dayton Valley (HSDV) extremely busy, again! Were it not for Oodles of Noodles, Dayton Railroad Days (formerly Depot Jamboree) and Dayton Valley Days as overall community events, there are the trio of lectures each May, a month of days of keeping the museum open four hours each day, and weekends between late winter and late

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fall/early winter. It sometimes amazes me that we're not totally exhausted!

This year's railroad-related event found all the usual suspects visiting the depot at Main Street and US Highway 50 East in Dayton to "spruce up the old girl." Lots of scrubbing on old paint, paint being applied to aging window and door frames, cleaning inside and out to get our depot ready for visitors once again. All that effort made the depot look great again!

What is "our" depot? It's the 1881-built Carson & Colorado Railroad structure that once housed the Station Agent's office at the Mound House end of the building, today's kitchen, a freight room at the opposite end, today's bedrooms and living room. That former depot is one of only three remaining along the former route of the Carson & Colorado Railroad, the only such C&C depot remaining in Nevada.

That depot, like a postman, stood her ground through rain, snow, heat, cold, even the occasional flood that would overflow the Carson River every few years. From its official opening in April of 1881 until abandonment came in 1934, Dayton's depot served as mainline representative for the Carson & Colorado Railroad until purchased by a Southern Pacific subsidiary, later becoming a branch line between Mound House and Churchill station just across the Carson River from Fort Churchill following standard gauging of the rails from Mound House to Mina, below Hawthorne.

Fortunately for Dayton, the depot was purchased and moved in the mid-1950s to its present location and modified to its current configuration. To avoid an even later fate, the building was purchased by a private individual and donated to Lyon County, it then being turned over to the HSDV as a historic Dayton structure.

If you've not noticed the old depot in recent weeks, it's undergone several hundred hours of volunteer effort to clean up, fix up and paint the doors, windows and porches, clean windows, work on weeds around the property, generally cleaning up anything and everything to make the building look like something worth keeping on the edge of Old Town.



A cleaned up and painted front (Main Street) porch at the Depot.



Kids of all ages around the State Railroad Museum's hand car.

September dates:

September 5: Depot Working Group, 1:00 at the museum.

September 15 and 16: Dayton Valley Days, Pike Street.

September 19: HSDV general meeting, 12:30 at the Dayton library.

September 26: Docents, 10:30 at the museum.

Dayton Where Nevada history begins