



# DOCENTS NEWSLETTER

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Historical Society of Dayton Valley

<http://daytonnvhistory.org>

December 2014

## AS MUSEUMS GO.....WE'RE RIGHT UP THERE!!

By Pat Neylan

As has been a Thanksgiving tradition for many years, HSDV member Rich Lowell and I pack a cooked turkey and other essentials into his truck and camper and head out into the desert for a prolonged period of hiking, biking and ghost towning and this year was no exception. As a side note, in the very early days we did this with an ancient truck and 1940's Sure-dry tent braving all the elements and discouraged by no "mountain too steep to climb". Today however finds us in a "state of the art" modern truck with a very comfortable camper mounted on it pampering us with a freezer for the ice cream that goes with the pumpkin pie and even more importantly, a furnace! The ice cream is supposed to be cold, not us!! Fortunately technology has progressed fast enough to keep up with our age!!

While on this annual odyssey this year we were pleased to be able to visit the Beatty Historical Museum and the Central Nevada Museum in Tonopah. Both are first rate and a must see if you ever travel to southern Nevada. Their layout and labeling makes it very simple to experience their local history. Both museums are larger in floor space than Dayton's. Beatty's is housed in the old Catholic Church connected to a larger annex building, while the one in Tonopah is in a building specifically built for it. However, being eternally open minded as always, I do have to say that a visit to the Dayton museum comes automatically with a homey and welcoming feeling missing in the others. I believe the pleasant folks at both venues were paid staff, efficient and on top of things...but not from Dayton!!

Our museum is now closed for the season, though open upon request whenever possible, and I have to again praise and thank our faithful docents that labor all season long and never fail to create a feeling of friendly, personal welcome to any and all visitors to Dayton. The displays, and ours are great, can only convey so much about Dayton; our docents are the clincher! When a visitor leaves our museum they know Dayton, not only the people then and now, the history, but the feeling of what it means to have been to DAYTON, NEVADA!!! Thanks, to all of you!!!!

## December and Christmas in Dayton

*By Linda Clements*

### Christmas in Dayton

Concerning early Dayton, Fanny Hazlett reports in her "Historical Sketch and Reminiscences of Dayton, Nevada" that in 1863 "fun was rampant. It was not always the most refined, but it was certainly funny. Practical jokes were in fashion. A favorite one was to steal and keep hidden a five-dollar Christmas turkey, and on that winter holiday to invite a guest to dinner who would, as a matter of course, pour out his tale of woe about the

lost turkey. Later, in the course of the banquet, the thief would suggest that the turkey now being consumed might possibly be the guest's fowl, since it very suspiciously came into his host's cellar sometime previously in a dazed condition and evidently lost.”

Then and later, as in rural areas across the nation, the focus of Christmas was family and friends. December Social Notes in the newspapers over the years usually centered on family and friends visiting for the holidays, or residents heading off to visit family or friends elsewhere. An example comes from the following headline from the Dayton section of the *Nevada State Journal*, December 29, 1939: “Dayton Residents Entertain With Christmas Dinners Over Holiday; Students Return Home on Visits”

While he was in office—from 1929 to 1966—Lyon County Deputy Sheriff Chester Barton made sure every child in town had a least one Christmas present.

### **December in Dayton**

But what about December in general? Unfortunately, December didn't always get into the Christmas Spirit, it would seem. Certainly the visits and shared meals with family and friends were positive, and there are happy events in the list below, but in many cases very un-Christmassy things have occurred in December. Flooding (which I know way too much about) seems to be the biggest threat, although I did find one attempted train robbery in December! Once again, I'd be happy to provide references and more details for anything you want to know more about.

- Dec. 1852                    GOLD CAÑON, CARSON VALLEY – Significant Flooding  
Significant flooding was recorded in Northern California, and in Genoa and the upper Carson Valley and thus undoubtedly occurred in the lower valley at Gold Cañon. The cause was heavy warm rain falling on a significant snowpack.
- Dec. 31, 1853                GOLD CAÑON, CARSON VALLEY – First Non-Native American Dance in Nevada  
Held at Hall's Station
- Dec. 1855                    GOLD CAÑON, CARSON VALLEY – Nearly 300 Miners are Waiting in Today's  
Dayton for Water to Work Their Claims
- Dec. 15, 1859 (Tues.)      GENOA – Isaac Roop begins term as first (provisional) governor of the proposed Nevada  
Territory  
Isaac Roop, Whig, was elected in September 1859 as the first (provisional) governor of the newly proposed Nevada Territory. He served from December 15, 1859 to March 2, 1861.
- Dec. 1861 & Jan. 1862      DAYTON – A Series of Massive Floods Damages Carson River Mills, Several Washed  
Away  
The worst flooding in over 100 years came in two main rushes, one in December and one in January. Several mills were washed away while others were significantly damaged, although most were rebuilt soon after. Water flooded well into Old Town and the bridge across the river as washed away. This was later replaced by a toll bridge. The cause was a series of intense storms and freezes, followed by warm rains. Dayton suffered drownings and the course of the Carson River was changed with a meander through Old Town cut off.
- Dec. 1862                    CARSON CITY – Bolivar Roberts    is Given Exclusive Right to Build and Maintain a  
Toll Bridge Across the Carson River at Dayton  
Earlier in 1862 the Board of Commissioners of Lyon County had voted to make an appropriation of \$10,000 to build a free bridge in Dayton, provided the public would put

up a sufficient amount to complete the bridge. However, later that vote was rescinded, opening the way for the Territorial Legislature to approve Roberts' proposal to build a toll bridge instead.

- Dec. 1867-Jan. 1868 **CARSON RIVER – Flooding Takes Out All Bridges on Carson River**  
Two massive rainstorms—from December 20 to Christmas Day 1867 and from December 30 to January 2, 1868—left the Carson Valley a vast lake and swept away all bridges crossing the east, west, and main forks of the Carson River.
- Dec. 26-27, 1869 (Su-M)**VIRGINIA RANGE – Two Large Earthquakes, about Eight Hours Apart, Cause Significant Damage**  
People were thrown to the ground, large rocks rolled onto railroad tracks and roads, and people stayed in the streets all night, afraid to go inside to bed. Strange lights were seen in the skies at the time of the quake. In Dayton bottles and crockery were shaken from shelves and a general panic ensued. A lamp was shaken down in the drug store, igniting a fire, which fortunately was extinguished after destroying about \$200 in goods. Smaller shocks continued for weeks.
- Dec. 1879 **VIRGINIA CITY – Ophir Veins Exhausted; Production from Comstock Mines Collapses**  
Production drops to \$1,903,132, about \$43.7 million in 2010 dollars, and never recovers.
- Dec. 30, 1879 **COMO – Post Office Established**
- Dec. 17, 1881 **CHURCHILL CANYON – C&C RR's First Attempted Train Robbery**  
An attempt to derail the train in Churchill Canyon, was averted
- Dec. 20, 1883 **DAYTON – Second Water Wheel Awaited for Rock Point Mill**  
The foundation for the wheel was ready and the wheel was on order. This will allow all 20 stamps to be used, while at the time 10 were idle.
- Dec. 15, 1893 **SILVER CITY and DAYTON – Rich Gold-Bearing Quartz Strike at Silver City to be Worked at Rock Point Mill in Dayton**
- Dec. 1898 **DAYTON – Italians Now Own All But Two or Three Ranches on the River**  
“The thrifty Italians now have all but two or three ranches on the river, and will likely own those in a few years.”
- Dec. 1898 **DAYTON – A Great Potato Crop is Reported**  
“The spuds raised on the Italian ranches on the river this year seem to be of extra fine quality, and a great many have already been purchased by California buyers at good prices. The potatoes are held here to be shipped in quantities as ordered by the purchasers.”
- Dec. 1904 **DAYTON – Standard Gauging of the Carson & Colorado Passes Through Dayton**  
Standard gauging of the C&C RR, now owned by the Southern Pacific, starting in Mound House and reached past Dayton before the end of the year.
- Dec. 1909 **DAYTON – New Mill at Rock Point Nearly Complete**  
Even after a devastating fire destroyed his just-expanded mill in May of that year, Captain Herman Davis rebuilt the mill. As rebuilt the mill was judged one of the best small mills in Nevada, and went on to work the low-grade ores of Silver City. However,

soon thereafter Captain Davis lost interest in milling in Dayton and moved his family to Reno while he pursued mining interests around the state, allowing others to run the mill.

Dec. 19, 1933

WASHINGTON, D.C. – ICC Examiner Recommends Allowing Abandonment of Former C&C RR Through Dayton

Examiner for Interstate Commerce Commission in Washington, D.C., recommends allowing SP to abandon the line from Mound House to Churchill, overruling the Nevada Public Utilities Commission.

Christmas 1955

DAYTON – Major Flood on Carson River Washes Out Dayton Bridge

The “Christmas Flood” also significantly damages ranches and the town reservoir and ditch. As in historic floods of the past, a “go-devil” is rigged for passage across the river until a temporary bridge can be provided. While many farm animals and pheasants were lost, no human lives were lost. However, elderly Mr. Howe had to be rescued off the kitchen table in his flooded home.

Dec. 1996

DAYTON and WESTERN NEVADA– Major Snowstorm is Followed by Very Warm, Heavy Rain to Above 10,000 Feet

The heavy snow followed by heavy rain to high altitudes sets up the conditions that would lead to a 200-year New Year’s Flood starting on New Year’s Day 1997.

Dec. 2007

DAYTON – Stewardship Agreement for the Depot Signed Between Lyon County and the Historical Society of Dayton Valley

HSDV is given stewardship of the 1881 Carson & Colorado Railroad Depot. The agreement includes a clause giving HSDV the right of first refusal in purchasing the depot if the county chooses to sell it, with a cost to HSDV of \$1.

### **2014 Nevada Day Parade Grand Marshal**

**Kathleen "Kay" Winters**

As a long time community leader and volunteer, Kay Winters is the epitome of a true Nevadan. Not long after relocating to Carson City from Tacoma in 1941, Kay embarked on the first of a long line of public service projects by first collecting scrap for the World War II effort and knitting khaki-colored hats, gloves, scarves and socks for the military.



She recalls her early life in Carson City. "We lived across from the Governor's Mansion on one of the two paved streets in town. The other was Highway 50. Carson City had a population of 1,500, one theater, one grocery store/bakery, one meat market, two drug stores and numerous saloons. In those days folks called the Governor by his first name and knew the Sheriff and all the city officials," said Kay.

In 1948, she met and married JohnD Winters, whose family played an instrumental role in developing Nevada, entering the region as pioneers along the Oregon Trail in 1848 and settling in Washoe Valley in 1852. The Winters family went on to shape Nevada history through

involvement in mines, ranching and politics. The late JohnD Winters was also a Nevada Day Parade Grand Marshal in 1995.

A mother of five, Kay has been a leader in 4-H, Brownies, Girls Scouts (serving on the state council), Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts. The Winters' ranch home in Carson City hosted two scholars from the Rotary foreign exchange program and was a destination for American Field Service's young people before they left the U.S. for their homes abroad. Kay also helped establish the Carson Comets Ski Program, which is still active today.

Kay helped raise funds for Carson City's first hospital and helped establish the Carson Tahoe Women's Auxiliary, where she served as their first membership chairwoman and third President. The Auxiliary furnished the hospital rooms and established the Gray Ladies and Candy Strippers groups.

Kay and JohnD moved to their Dayton ranch in 1965, where she served on Lyon County's Park and Recreation Board for 10 years. During her tenure, she secured "Our Park" at the entrance to Dayton, obtained land through the BLM for a Little League baseball park near Dayton schools and secured land through the State Legislature for a park with an historic mill site along the Carson River.

Because of Kay's established reputation for public service, she was asked to join the Advisory Board for Arts and Science at UNR from 1980-1990, where she received the University's President's medal in 1987 and the Distinguished Nevadan award in 1989.

Over the years, Kay and JohnD donated ranch land for Carson High School, Eagle Valley Golf Course West and Centennial Park. "My life has been full," adds Kay. "I had a wonderful husband for 59 years, and a fine family of 5 children, 15 grandchildren, 29 great grandchildren and 5 great, great grandchildren. How blessed I am as I know each one of them well." Kay has lived in Carson City and Dayton for 73 years, nearly half of the state's 150. And, although she wasn't born here, Kay embodies the words of the state song, "Home means Nevada."

**Docent Letters**  
**By Ruby McFarland**

*No individual has the right to come into the world and go out of it without leaving behind him distinct and legitimate reasons for passing through it.*

George Washington Carver 1915

I can't help noticing that we have not always sought out or recorded historical people in the Dayton area. We know these people are in the area but do nothing about picking their minds about their part of the history of the area. Then too soon they are gone and all the history of their being here goes with them. We are lucky that some of the pioneers left diaries that name some of the names we know now.

A couple of examples I can think of lost history are two men I met through the historical society. One of those men was David Allingham. David was born in Dayton and was the son of Wilma "Sparky" Allingham. Wilma was raised by Chester and Helen Barton, along with her sister Ursula and brother Bob Hankamer.

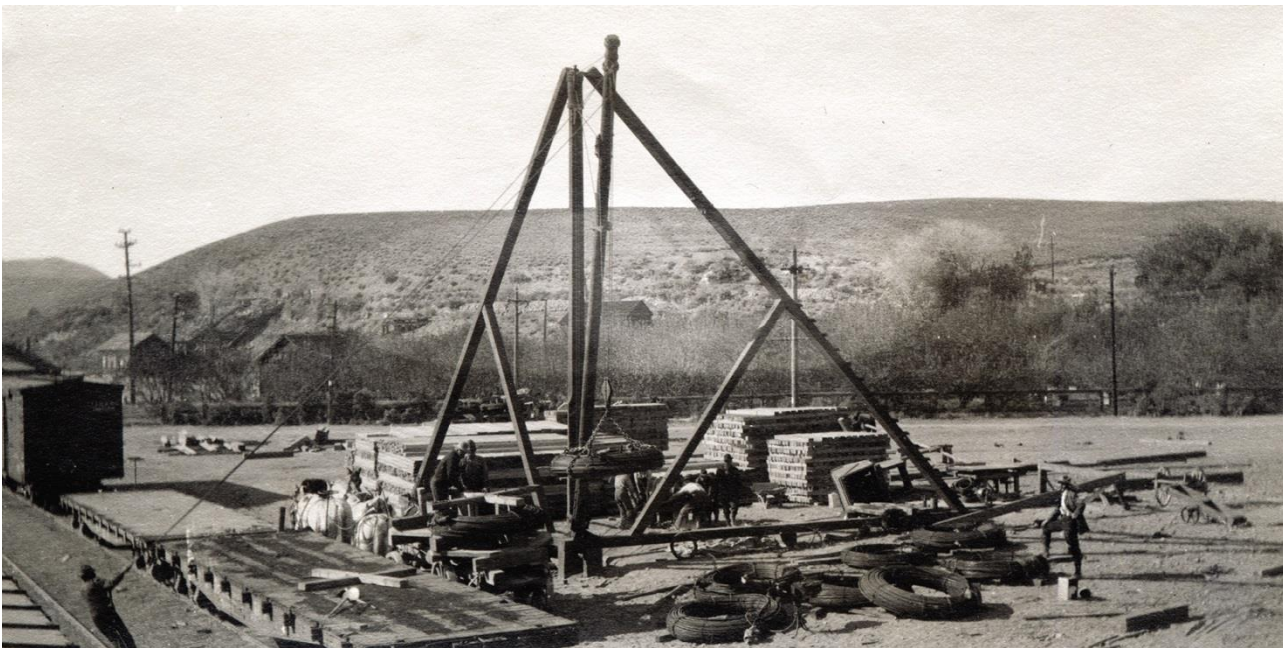
David is gone now, but he became a friend of mine before he died. He would tell me about staying with "Auntie Emma" Loftus when he was a little boy.

The other man was James Parker, Emma's nephew. He too had stories of his aunt and time spent with her. They are gone now and we didn't think to question them about the early days of Dayton so we could record it.

One of the oldest people who we haven't recorded is Bert Perondi. He lives down the road from me, and it's hard to get him to talk about the early days. Emma talked about the very young man Bert, who did yard work for her. I know a little about him. He was a boy scout along with his brother "Bushy." He also lived up in Como in a cabin that is still there. He is, and has always been, a loner. He is a Navy veteran of WWII. Other than that I don't know much about Bert. There are, however, people who do know more, but how do we record it. And those people will soon be lost in history.

I'm so glad we recorded Victoria Pradar and Raymond Walmsley in our CD library. But has anyone gotten May Belle Walmsley's story. Emma also spoke of both Ray and May in her diaries as young people. She also spoke of Victoria's son Victor who was a local terror on the streets with his car. Victor is gone now, but I knew him to be a kindly man.

We sometimes miss the obvious by not telling or writing about the folks who are or were here. We all become a part of history sooner or later. We were here and no matter how small we made our mark. There are others who made huge contributions to the history of Dayton. We have made CDs of some of them; I hope we make sure that all get recorded for their contributions to the history. Folks now are no less important than those who were here 150 years ago.



Men using the stiff-legged derrick located across the tracks from the old C&C Railroad depot to unload cable from a standard-gauge flatcar. The date is uncertain but from the utility pole as well as the presence of standard-gauge cars, this must be after 1905. I like the men working diligently, and the "foreman" standing to the far right overseeing the process. (by Linda Clements)

