

DOCENTS NEWSLETTER

Historical Society of Dayton Valley

<http://daytonnvhistory.org>

May 2015

DOCENT DOINGS

By Pat Neylan

Technically winter is over and we are in the middle of spring. The Docent Program had a list of “winter projects” to accomplish and we did get to...most...of...them. We made some progress on the accession procedure; had a museum clean up day; did some yard work; redid and organized the gift shop and opened the museum on schedule in March. Our docents are a most remarkable, hardworking and resilient group and the Society should be very grateful to them!

Looking to the future there is a lot coming down Pike Street for us. We have already hosted a couple of tours for special groups; are planning for a myriad of spring and summer events; put on programs for the “fourth Sunday” socials at the museum; gearing up for the “Historic Schools of the Comstock” event; Nevada History appreciation month and a whole bunch more.

The museum is moving along well with staffing but some more help is still needed for the daily coverage in May, so if you hear from Sheila in the near future please jump in and lend a hand. The museum is still the centerpiece of our promotion of Dayton history. Many thanks to all who participate in the Docent Program!!

MUSEUM VISITOR

One of the best reasons for helping man our museum is what you can learn and who you can meet and today was a perfect example of that. A wonderful couple from Washoe Valley came in and in the course of the conversation asked if we had any information on the Pierretti family who once had a ranch in Churchill Canyon and a store in Dayton. They were very surprised to learn that our own Grace Ricci was in some way related to them by marriage and before the day was done we had put them and Grace together and they were swapping stories. After touring the museum, the couple toured Grace’s ranch taking at least 100 photos of the old buildings, farm equipment and the like. Now they are going to work together to assemble some more history on the family and ultimately the museum will be the winner with increased information about an old Dayton family. Ya gotta love history!!

Docent Letters

By Ruby McFarland

The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes.

Marcel Proust (1871—1922)

Lately I have profiled a few of the folks in Dayton who I think have contributed so much. It’s people who want to do something for the town or themselves that end up in the history of it all. They are willing to give of themselves and their time to make where they live a better place.

One such person is close to my heart and a good friend. This gentleman started visiting the museum when I was the only docent and wishing I could start a docent program. I wanted more people to be interested in the history of Dayton and share their interest with folks who dropped in on the museum. Patrick Neylan started visiting about the time he was about to retire from being a manager of an auto parts store. He was concerned that he wouldn’t have enough to do to keep busy once he retired. We talked about having a docent program for the museum and getting enough people interested to devote their time to sit the museum.

About that time a lady approached me about having a float for the Nevada Day parade. The Historical Society was not interested in participating. So Sara Fleming and I set out to get the community interested and we did. Patrick asked what he could do and frankly I couldn’t have made the float without him. He said he had no experience but was willing to learn. So we worked our butts off and pulled off a winner. I taught him how to paint

rocks that would be the school house, now the museum. He was somewhat amazed of his ability. I found a good friend and a willing worker in Patrick.

As time went on Patrick became involved in a lot of community and church projects and he became so busy he no longer wondered what he was going to do with his time.

No matter what I asked him to do at the museum, he was willing to do. We finally created enough interest to get people to be docents. By the time I had to slow down in my life, we had 14 full-time docents and a lecture program to teach history of Dayton to the Society.

Patrick added more to his plate by volunteering his time to the St. Marys Church in Virginia City. He became the main docent there as well as Dayton. The thing Patrick doesn't tell you is that he also visits folks in rest homes and is always available to help people in need. Been several times I've need help and Patrick was always there to help me, no matter how busy he was with other people. He never acts as if he is in a hurry to finish with you. Need I say I love the man.

He currently takes care of the Dayton museum as the main docent. He makes sure the museum has people to keep the museum open. He has become a true historian of Dayton, Virginia City, and Nevada. And I think he has found enough to keep him busy in his retirement.

Nevada history lessons excite Sutro Elementary School students

By Laura Tennant

The teachers and 4th grade students at the Sutro Elementary School deserve an ovation for their performances on April 1.

Since I am reviewing an educational Chautauqua presentation that the Historical Society of Dayton Valley gave at the Sutro School that day, it might appear odd for me to say that the SES students and teachers gave a stellar performance, but from a different viewpoint.

Basically, I had to commend the kids who were so well behaved and interested in Dayton's history that the Chautauquans felt good about their portrayals of a few ladies who helped make it happen. The kids' teachers, Mrs. Kirby, Mrs. Sattely and Miss Hicks, must be praised too for they have obviously trained their students well. Thank you, ladies.

Best ever Nevada history lesson

The HSDV's annual school living history program is presented each April and May to Dayton's three elementary school 4th grade classes when Nevada history is included in the student's curricula.

Retired Dayton schoolteacher, Barbara Peck has chaired the successful program for nine consecutive years. The history lessons Peck presents contain three phases and the first one begins in each school's 4th grade students' classroom. Charting the course of Dayton's history, Peck uses a large poster placed on the blackboard in the classroom and she describes a timeline of important 19th and 20th Century events that made history around here, including the fact that Nevada history began in Dayton, the site of the state's first gold discovery. This year, she presented the time-line history to seven separate classes to prep the kids for the rest of the history lesson.

Ms. Peck teaches future Nevada historians

After Peck's seven classroom lessons are finished, HSDV members present a Chautauqua to the same students, bringing to life the people who helped make Dayton one of the most historic and unique places in Nevada, yesterday and today.

The final phase of the history lesson happens when Peck takes 200 to 300 of the 4th graders on a field trip that includes a walking tour through Old Dayton. The fun begins at the 1860s Rock Point Mill site at the Nevada State Park and the outing includes an educational scavenger hunt at the schoolhouse museum, tour of the firehouse/jail, Dayton Justice Court, and a walk up the steep hill west of town to Dayton's boot hill, where notable pioneer settlers rest in peace.

After the cemetery tour, everyone takes a break for lunch before walking down to River Street and Our Park where the lesson ends at the old Douglass Mill site and a school bus picks up the kids, and by now, Ms. Peck and the other chaperones are ready for rest and relaxation!

Thank you, Barbara, for your love of Dayton history and passing on your knowledge to the future generation of Dayton historians.

Women diarists remember the past

Last week, at the Chautauqua held at the Sutro School, Peck also played the role of Emma Nevada Loftus, a woman who settled here in the early days and kept a daily diary of the weather and stories about life around town from 1917 to 1959. The diaries still exist and are archived with the Historical Society of Dayton Valley.

Vicki Kinney portrayed the life of Fannie Gore Hazlett, a pioneer emigrant who settled in 1862. Also a diarist, Fannie's memoirs of Dayton's booming days and the people who made it happen were published by the Nevada Historical Society in 1922. The book is sold at the Dayton Museum.

Lucky me, I portrayed Lucena Parsons, a sunbonnet pioneer woman who camped here with her wagon train in May 1851. Lucena was possibly the first woman who prospected for gold with the earliest placer miners in Gold Canyon. She kept a journal from May 1850 and June 1851 and diary documented hardships on the 2,000-mile adventure on the Overland Trail that came down today's Pike Street, up to the mouth of Gold Canyon, through Mound House and over the Sierra Nevada to the California goldfields.

Steve Knowles and Bernie Allen can be seen daily, rain or shine, working on the railroad at the Dayton Depot. They have laid track for special rides during events and remodeled an old shed. When finished, the outbuildings will be painted red



and it will add character to the Carson & Colorado Dayton Depot, the only freight and passenger station left standing on the 293 mile C&C line between Mound House and Keeler, California. The Depot was moved from its original location on Railroad Street in the mid 1950s to its location now at Main and U.S. 50. The Depot was remodeled by Chester Barton and remained his and wife Helen's home until her death in the 1980s. Today, the HSDV Railroad Working Group has a grant that will plan the reconstruction of the building and rejuvenate its original look in 1881. You can help: Call 246-0505. (Laura Tennant)



<< Bernie Allen throws an original historic railroad switch that changes the track on which a train will run. Bernie is working on the railroad at the Dayton Depot to create an historic setting at the Depot grounds. (Laura Tennant)



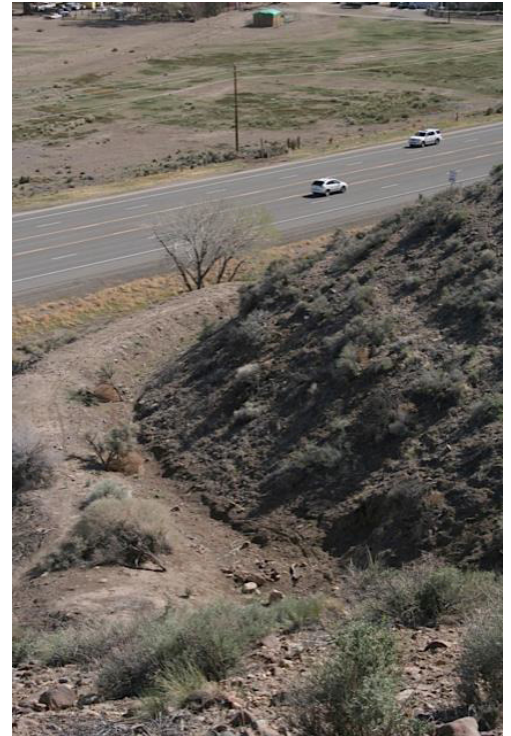
Mabel Masterman, Marty Lewis and Pat Neylan helped Barbara Peck prepare a huge Dayton timeline poster that she uses in the HSDV annual education presentation to Dayton's three elementary school 4th graders. Peck's presentation is followed by Chautauqua's in the classroom and a field trip through Dayton for all of the students. The HSDV deserves an award for the quality educational content of this program. (Laura Tennant)

Barbara Peck, lead HSDV member for the annual spring school Nevada history educational presentations gave instructions to a number of HSDV members so they could help her make the timeline information posters she uses to present Dayton history to between 200 and 300 Dayton 4th grade students who study Nevada history. (Laura Tennant)



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This is a photo of the River Street end of the water ditch the Chinese dug in 1857-58 to bring water to the placer miners in Gold Canyon. The four-mile long ditch began where the mouth of the Carson River flows into Dayton Valley (southwest at the bottom of Dayton Hill). It ended at a reservoir the Chinese also dug that is located behind Evergreen Studio (Steven Saylor's studio) on Cemetery Road. Incredibly, this reservoir was Dayton residents' water storage supply until 1982! Most residents in Old Town had a well then. (Laura Tennant)



May in Dayton *By Linda Clements*

It seems that May is a busy month for Dayton. Even though I don't have too many events listed by date after the early 20th Century this May timeline lists more significant historical events than any other month I've summarized to date. Fortunately, for the most part May does not have the massive area disasters that are found in other months, but it does seem to be a popular month for significant single-building fires.

- May 1850 **GOLD CAÑON, CARSON VALLEY** – William Prouse Finds Color; 3 Weeks Later John Orr Finds Large “Orr Nugget”
Years later John Orr reported on finding the 0.68-ounce nugget that bears his name. Orr's companion William Prouse had found color in Gold Cañon on passing through in May so Orr and Nick Kelly returned three weeks later. Like Abner Blackburn, and unaware of Blackburn's previous discovery, Orr used a butcher knife to dig out the nugget. In 1850 it was worth \$8.25 but Orr did not sell it, passing it on to his sons instead. Fortunately, it was eventually donated to the Nevada State Museum.
- May 29, 1851 **GOLD CAÑON, CARSON VALLEY** – Journal of Pioneer Lucena Parsons Describes Two Hundred Miners Working at Gold Cañon
The wagon train of Parsons and her husband George was delayed twelve days waiting for enough snow to melt from the Sierra that they could cross. This means that these miners over-wintered here, at the mouth of Gold Cañon. She also reported that John Reese passed through, taking a party to resettle Genoa. This shows that the area that was to become Dayton was Nevada's earliest non-Native settlement.
- May 1851 **SACRAMENTO, CA** – First Overland Mail Between California and Utah
George Chorpenny and Absalom Woodward are contracted to carry the mail in opposite directions once a month. It turned out to be more difficult than anticipated, due to hostile climate and hostile Indians. Finally in November Woodward was killed. After November the mail was carried via the much longer southern route through San Pedro, CA to Salt Lake City.

- May 1853 GOLD CAÑON, CARSON VALLEY – Snow Fast Leaving Sierra; Miners in Gold Cañon “Not Doing Well”
“The miners in that part were not doing very well, owing to the fact that Gold Cañon was pretty much exhausted. A number of miners are now engaged in prospecting.”
- May 1, 1854 GOLD CAÑON, CARSON VALLEY – First White Child Born in What Was to Become Nevada
Laura Ellis gives birth to James Brimwell Ellis.
- May-June 1858 GOLD CAÑON – Twenty Whites and Forty to Fifty Chinese, Trading Post
The correspondent to Hutchins California Magazine reported, “This night we reached Gold Cañon, crossed the river and camped on the opposite side in order to find grass for our animals. At this place we found about twenty American miners and some forty or fifty Chinese, and from the man who kept the little trading post here we learned that the diggings prospected well, and that a company of men were about conducting water in by a ditch about four or five miles long.”
- May 10, 1859 GOLD CAÑON FLAT, UTAH TERRITORY – Gold Cañon Flat, Chinese Miners
“The miners on Gold Cañon Flat, where they have a sufficiency of water, are making on an average, five dollars per day to the hand. This Flat, you are aware, is worked principally by the Chinamen.”
- May 6, 1860 WILLIAMS STATION, today’s Nevada – Incident Sparks Beginning of Pyramid Lake Indian War
A conflict started by ill-behaved white men, who kidnapped and raped two Paiute girls, ended with the girls freed, three white settlers dead, and the station burned on this date. Paiutes initiated attacks on Pony Express stations, leading to major delays in the mail delivery. On May 9, Pony Express rider Pony Bob Haslam made a historic 380-mile run to keep the mail moving.
- May 10, 1860 SILVER CITY – Post Office Established
- May 5, 1865 PALMYRA – Post Office Established
- May 2, 1866 DAYTON – Henley Home Destroyed by Fire
At about 2 PM was on fire. A large number of citizens worked to put out the flames, but water was the issue. However, they had to turn on the water from the Birdsall Mill, then cut the embankment at the head of Main Street to run it to the fire. The house was lost during the delay but the water plus hard work by the citizens prevented it from spreading to the nearby buildings, with the Brown’s home suffering minor damage. The cause of the fire may have been arson.
- May 29, 1868 VIRGINIA CITY and THE COMSTOCK – Pair of Strong Earthquakes Occurs on Virginia Range
Occurring about 10 minutes apart a pair of strong earthquakes shook the Comstock. They rattled dishes, windows and nerves, shook down plaster and cracked brick walls, but did not cause any serious damage. Residents of Dayton reported being “strongly shaken up.” The earthquakes were felt from the San Francisco Bay Area to Austin.
- May 10, 1869 PROMONTORY SUMMIT, UT – Transcontinental Railroad Completed
The driving of the Golden Spike signifying the joining of the rails officially completed the railroad.
- May 1869 DAYTON – Frederick Birdsall Builds Horse-Drawn Railroad to Bring Tailings to His Lyon Mill
Frederick Birdsall constructed horse-drawn railroad from dumps at the mouth of Gold Cañon to the mill.
- May 21, 1871 DAYTON – Gates Home Totally Destroyed by Fire
A fire at Dayton, about five o’clock, totally destroyed the residence of W. M. Gates. It was supposed to have caught from a spark blown from the stack of a tailings mill nearby.
- May 31, 1878 DAYTON – Wood from Large Drive Almost All Taken from River
“The wood has been nearly all taken out of the river at Dayton. Reports differ as to when the next drive will come down. Some say 25,000 cords will be put in the river soon, while others say no more driving will be done until after the high waters of the Spring season have abated.”
- May 10, 1880 CARSON CITY – Carson & Colorado Railroad Incorporated in Nevada
H. M. Yerington was listed as President, D. L. Bliss as Vice President, and D. O. Mills and William Sharon as principal stockholders.
- May 31, 1880 MOUND HOUSE – Work on the Carson & Colorado Railroad Begins
Work began with train to Mound House of 80 workers (mostly unemployed miners), a foreman, some officials, and a few visitors.
- May 1881 DAYTON – First C&C RR Station Agent Begins Work in Dayton
First month of duty for the new Dayton Station Agent, W. Henry M. Cobb, a native of Maine
- May 21, 1881 DAYTON – Some Businesses That Advertised in the *Lyon County Times*
- Delta Saloon and Billiard Parlors

- Jake Hanson, Proprietor, Main Street, Dayton, Keeps constantly on hand a choice stock of wines, liquors, and cigars
The only place in town where St. Louis and Boca Beer can be had.
- Pioneer Soda Works
Philo Knapp, Proprietor; Wines, liquors and cordials, and the best brands of brandy and whisky kept constantly on hand; All goods sold at lowered rates, and delivered free of charge in Silver City, Dayton and Sutro.
 - Como Hotel, Main Street, Dayton, H.W. Ely, Proprietor
 - Delta Saloon, Tunnel Avenue, Sutro; (Two doors above the post office.) John O'Donnell, proprietor, the best brands of wines, liquors, and cigars always on hand.
- Abt. May 1882 DAYTON – Joe Douglass Begins Remodeling and Enlarging the Newly Named Douglass Mill
On the advice of his superintendent, C. H. Rulison, he also extended the railroad downstream six miles to the tailings dump of the old Carson Valley Mill.
- May 1884 DAYTON – C. C. Stevenson is Milling Low-Grade Ores, Including at the Rock Point Mill Site
C. C. Stevenson, who is accumulating a large fortune from the so-called “low grade” ores of the Comstock, is about to leave for the East, being a delegate to Chicago, and may visit Europe. During his absence William Hardy, formerly Superintendent of the Ophir, will have charge of the Kentucky and Lady Bryan mines, the Buckeye and Rock Point mills, and Mr. Stevenson's other mining and milling interests.
- May 1897 DAYTON – Tons of Potatoes Being Shipped (on C&C) from Dayton
“Mike Frugoli, of Sutro, shipped two carloads of potatoes this week. So far this season about 1500 tons of spuds have been shipped from here, and the price has been better than for years past.”
- May 19, 1900 TONOPAH – Rich Gold Strike Made
This increased traffic on the newly purchased C&C allowed the SP to make back its purchase price in the first year.
- May 1902 DAYTON – Nevada Reduction Works Putting in Water Wheel for Power
Nevada Reduction Works installs water wheel below the Rock Point dam for power for pumping, etc. at the cyanide plant. This did away with the more expensive steam power, which was very expensive due to the high cost of fuel in the area
- May 1902 DAYTON? – Attempt Made on Life of Captain Herman Davis, Owner of the Mill at Rock Point
The location and nature of the attempt was not described.
- May 28, 1903 COMO – Post Office Reestablished
It had been closed Jan. 8, 1881.
- May 11, 1905 DAYTON – Nevada & California Railway Purchased Carson & Colorado Railway
In a financial reorganization N&C RW purchased the physical properties of C&C RW, whose stock was owned by SP.
- May 15, 1905 DAYTON – Lyon County Courthouse Destroyed by Fire
- May 28, 1906 NEAR DAYTON – Engine Derails on Bad Track
A light engine in charge of Engineer T. K. Allen derailed on bad track and rolled down a steep embankment about 6 miles from Dayton on its way from Mound House. The fireman, Bradley, was slightly injured.
- May 4, 1907 DAYTON – Joseph Quilici, Jr., of Dayton Drowns Trying to Cross the River in a Wagon
The bridge had still not been replaced so teams were forced to ford. Quilici and a Mr. Paganelli attempted to cross and got off the beaten track. The wagon overturned in the swift current and while Paganelli reached the shore after a struggle Quilici was washed away. Three of the four horses died with him.
- May 2, 1909 DAYTON – Rock Point Mill burns.
Arson possible.
- May 15, 1909 DAYTON – Lyon County Courthouse in Dayton Burns
Arson again suspected, though never proven. However, later evidence indicates it was caused by an electrical fault. The fire began under the roof and smoldered for hours before igniting in the building itself. This and the declining Dayton population ultimately led to moving the County Seat to Yerington.
- Oct. 1909 New Dayton Mill Near Completion
Captain Herman Davis stated to a representative of the Chronicle yesterday that excellent progress is now being made on the erection of the new 40 stamp mill, which is being put up on the site destroyed by fire last winter. The mill will probably be complete in all details by the middle of January next, and it will be put into operation just as soon after that time as possible. That work is being prosecuted with all possible haste consistent with thoroughness is shown from the statement that over 30 men are being employed in and about the plant....