

DOCENTS NEWSLETTER

Historical Society of Dayton Valley

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THE CYCLE OF LIFE

By Pat Neylan

One hundred and fifty years ago as Dayton was riding high on the early boom at Virginia City the new schoolhouse on Shady Lane was born. It shared the vibrant joy and excitement of its early students. A few years later as the town grew and the students grew, so did the schoolhouse as it expanded to two classrooms. It touched the lives of every family in Dayton year after year; shared in all the joys and sorrows of the entire town; sat quietly, sadly, as its students went off to two world wars; survived countless economic fluctuations but was always there to welcome the new students who were full of dreams and ambitions.

After almost a century of proud and faithful service the old schoolhouse looked forward to a much deserved retirement. By that time, like so many of us, it suffered from “plumbing” problems and it watched as its last class of students moved on up the street to his younger brother, the “new” high school who had just barely turned forty.

But, like so many of us, it found plenty to do in retirement. It acted as a church, meeting hall, community center among other things. Eventually, as it too was a “senior” it welcomed the other seniors of the community while it served as their center for meals and activities. Finally at about 125 years of age it looked for an even quieter, calmer activity and generously offered to become the site of one of the best small town museums in northern Nevada; a decision we are all very grateful for!

Activity is the key to a long and healthy life, just ask the schoolhouse!

Newest donation to the HSDV Museum and a bit of 1950s DHS history

By Laura Tennant

Marius Kendall posed for this picture on the steps of the Old Dayton High School on July 24. Marius graduated from DHS in 1956 and is wearing the Dayton Haymakers’ school sweater that also shows the year 1956, when he graduated with a class of four, David Dull, John Bennetts and Walt McMain.

Marius has donated this sweater and other 1950s’ DHS memorabilia to the HSDV for display.

The old DHS is special to Marius because his mother, Lula Armstrong Kendall, a Silver City native too, and his Aunt Evelyn Freitas, also graduated from DHS. His grandmother, Lena Foote Armstrong was also born in the booming mining town.

Marius played basketball at DHS for four years and was the team’s captain for two years, served as editor of the 1956 *Dasiada*, the first yearbook published at the school for many years, served as class president and helped build the school’s Nevada Day float and participated in the class play, and he tells the funniest stories about student antics at DHS in the early 1950s, where the small student body allowed students to be family, not just friends.

Our teacher, Miss Berniece Johnson taught every student a college-prep curricula. She also coached the boys’ basketball team and the girls did not have a team then.

By the way, when the teen-agers rejuvenated the publication of a school annual in 1956, they called it the *Dasiada*, a name that incorporated “Dayton, Silver City and Nevada.”

Three years later, the last of the Old DHS annuals was published and the Class of 1959 became the last graduating class since 1918, when the school had opened.



Alas, the old school's doors closed and Dayton and Silver City students were bused to Carson High School.

The new DHS opened in 1982 and the Dust Devils continue to make DHS history.

Today, Marius, his wife, Iris and I stay in contact and he is here this week to attend the book signing of the *"Images of America: Dayton"* and the Dayton Grammar School's 150th birthday party that was held on August 1.

Marius is a Silver City native. His family settled in Silver in circa 1860. After graduating from DHS, Marius graduated from UNR with a chemical engineering degree and eventually settled in California and lives in Milpitas today.

Marius and his wife, Iris, who he met at UNR, have raised four children and today are enjoying their grand children and retirement.

Marius is always ready to be part of the HSDV reminiscent activities today, including giving a tour of the old high school building, now Dayton's community center. Guests enjoy his talks, and he also has a great memory!

2001-05-27-Founder's Day: Two years after our celebration of the Sesquicentennial of Gold Discovery (in today's Dayton) we returned to celebrate the 150th anniversary of our first provable date of Dayton being a settlement. Our first settlement proof is based upon the pioneer diary of Lucena Parsons, who documented 200 miners living here and working at the lower end of Gold Cañon in May 1851. Since the passes from California were still closed that means they were living here, and didn't just come over from CA for a bit. Two weeks later, while she and her husband and their party were still here, waiting for the snow to melt off the Sierra, she documented that John Reese took his party through on their way to found Genoa. As a result of these dates, once Genoa picked a date for their "Founder's Day"—based upon the date the Reese party arrived in Genoa (Mormon Station)—we scheduled our Founder's Day two weeks before!

Laura Tennant, Linda Clements & Del Minor

Picture and caption: Linda Clements

Dayton

It started in this valley...
That first color turned the trick
They flocked here by the thousands
And they headed up the crick
To seek their fame and fortune
Up in "Old Virginny's" town
But Dayton's where it started
And where many settled down
The roots of young Nevada
Spring up from this very spot
The birth of the Bonanza
The conception like as not
Mother of the Mother lode
For she held them here a time
While they rested in her shade
For the grade they had to climb
"Virginny" Stole her glory
The Comstock in all her fame
But old Dayton still survives
And we love her just the same



Cowboy poet Richard Smith wrote this poem when the HSDV was publicizing its Sesquicentennial Gold Discovery event in July 1999. Richard was a good friend of ours, a prolific writer of cowboy poetry and he loved Dayton. I don't know where he is today. (Submitted by Laura and Stony Tennant.)



Camille Pradere, a Dayton native Basque rancher who attended 12 years of school in Dayton. Camille raised sheep and owned the ranch on U.S. 50 East across from Our Park where you often see sheep grazing. His father was a local shepherd as well. This photo was not available for the Dayton book so I am continuing the coverage of Dayton in the Docent Newsletter. His son, Mike, also a Dayton native, runs the ranch today. Mike and his wife Barbara's sons, Paul, Michael and Brant still live in Dayton as do their two grandchildren, Laura and Cole. (Laura Tennant)

DOCENT LETTERS

By Ruby McFarland

The sun, with all those planets revolving around it and dependent on it, can still ripen a bunch of grapes as if it had nothing else in the universe to do.

Galileo Galilei (1564—1642)

And the sun was shining on a great day for a picnic at Stony and Laura Tennant's home. On August 23 we all gathered together for a wonderful day of good food and good conversation. I always like to arrive early at any doings, but it's especially fun to see the parade of people and food arrive.

Grace Ricci and I arrived at the same time and we found a shady spot on the deck where we could see the goings on and stay cool. Laura said she had figured out where the shade would be so us old ladies could be in the shade.

Then the stream of good people and good food started coming. It's fun to peek at all the dishes, each a masterpiece of the owner. That was proven about an hour later.

Levi Cooper and Bert, the Tennant dog, had a wonderful time playing fetch and sitting in Bert's swimming pool. Both of them had more energy than all the rest of us put together. Bert would chase a ball as long as anyone had the energy to throw it. Levi and Bert made a good pair. When it got too hot, both of them just plopped down in the pool.

Mabel Masterman passed a card around to be signed to show our appreciation to the Tennants for putting on a wonderful get together. The convivial group sat around swapping lies for a while.

Then Stony, the grill master, fired up the grill and very soon it was time to eat. There was a lot of chatter until everyone had a plateful and a hush fell over the crowd. Even Bert sat patiently by hoping someone might drop a treat. Stony gave the command and Bert sat quietly.

Stony and Laura were presented the card and a verbal thank you for their hospitality. It always seems to come together so effortlessly and there couldn't be a better host and hostess than those two. We owe the both of them more than just their hospitality. They have done so much for the community that it would take a long list to name it all.

I can't tell you how much it means to me to be a part of this great group of people. We have a couple of gatherings each year, but the picnic is my favorite. You don't have to "doll up" so just come as you are. It's a relaxing way to spend the afternoon with folks you know and like. Hope we continue having fun in the sun.

September in Dayton

By Linda Clements

Lots of “official” things have happened in September but other than that it is a varied and not usually traumatic month.

- Sept. 9, 1850 WASHINGTON, D.C. – Utah Territory Organized
The Territory includes not only today’s Utah, all but the southern tip of Nevada, the western section of Colorado, and the southwest portion of Wyoming. At the same time California became the 31st state.
- Sept. 3, 1857 SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH TERRITORY – Brigham Young Orders Mormons in Carson County to Return to Salt Lake City
The reason is anticipation of the 1857 Utah (Mormon) War with the U.S. government.
- Sept. 1859 WASHINGTON, D.C. – Isaac Roop Selected as First Governor of the Provisional Territory of Nevada.
He was a Whig from Carroll County, Maryland and after losing his wife to typhoid in 1850 had moved to California with his two sons and daughter. Eventually he settled in a town he christened “Susanville” for his daughter Susan. At the time Susanville was thought to be in Nevada. He served his term in Genoa and then returned to Susanville.
- Sept. 20, 1860 CHINA TOWN, UTAH TERRITORY – U.S. Census Shows 78 People, Only 6 Female
21 one of these residents are foreign born, with three of those from China (all enumerated were living in Occidental homes). 28 are miners, 10 laborers, 6 teamsters, 5 ranchers and farmers. It is clear that the census taken didn’t go into the Chinese section itself since many travelers had reported that there were more Chinese homes and Chinese than Occidentals. [Summarized by LLC from 1860 U.S. Census of Utah Territory]
- Sept. 2 1862 DAYTON – Gornn H. Moore Reelected as Sheriff of Lyon County, Nevada Territory
- Sept. 7, 1864 CARSON CITY – Nevada Voters Accept a State Constitution and Choose Officers for the Proposed New State
- Sept. 7, 1864 DAYTON – G. W. Shaw is Elected Sheriff of Lyon County, Nevada Territory and State
- Sept. 1866 DAYTON – Rock Point Mill Dam Washed Away
A flash flood brought on by a massive downpour first damaged the toll-house in El Dorado Cañon and washed away several wagons filled with wood, then after pouring into the Carson River, washed away the Rock Point dam, flooding the flat beyond.
- Sept. 29, 1877 CHURCHILL COUNTY – Amusing Quip Repeated in *Lyon County Times*
"Class in geography stand up." Teacher - "What are the products of Churchill county, Nevada?" Boy at the head - "Watermelons, Democrats and draw-poker."
- Late Sept. 1880 WALKER LAKE – Grading for C&C RR Reaches End of Walker Lake
- Early Sept. 1881 DAYTON – Horse Killed by the C&C RR
19th century newspapers knew how to phrase things: “Last week the C & C R.R. killed a horse for Riley Brougham.”
- Sept. 14, 1882 DAYTON – Joe. Douglass. Locomotive Steams Up in Dayton.
Joe Douglass himself had purchased the Lyon Mill and associated railroad from Frederick Birdsall earlier that year and renamed the mill as the Douglass Mill and the railroad as the Dayton, Sutro & Carson Valley Railroad.
- Sept. 22, 1883 DAYTON – Drought!
“The water in the Carson River is lower this year than it was ever known to be before.”
- Sept.-Oct. 1883 DAYTON – C.C. Stevenson Renovates Mill at Rock Point
He adds stamps from the old Lady Bryan Mill in Silver City; renovation is nearly complete by October.
- Sept. 1885 DAYTON – Good Ore from Como.
The thirty-live tons of rock from the Rapidan mine at Como that was worked at the Rock Point mill last week, yielded \$34.35 per ton. Work will be prosecuted at the mine more vigorously than ever, now that it is ascertained to be a paying institution.

- Sept. 10, 1887 DAYTON – *Lyon County Times* Reports No Vacant Houses in Dayton for Past Two Years
They report even all the old cabins have been fixed up to accommodate residents.
- Sept. 1888 DAYTON – Potatoes Grown Around Dayton are Large and Good Quality
“One of the Italian ranchers on the Carson river exhibited a spud here the other day that measured 10 1/2 inches in length, 4 inches in diameter, and weighed 4 3/4 pounds. The potato was white and clear, and when cut open was found to be perfectly sound - not a particle pithy.”
- Sept. 20, 1890 RENO – Governor Charles Clark Stevenson Dies.
“The sad news of the death of [current] Governor Charles Clark Stevenson was received here [Reno] yesterday morning. He died at 2 o'clock Saturday [Sept. 20] night. Governor Stevenson had been a sufferer for two months, and about three weeks ago his illness took a serious turn and he has been hovering around death's door ever since....” Gov. Stevenson also owned the mill at Rock Point Mill in Dayton.
- Sept. 20, 1893 GOLD HILL – Miners Union Votes to Accept Wage Reduction from \$4 to \$3.50 a day
The depressed market for silver led mine owners to push for a decrease in the hard-fought and long-standing daily wage. Faced with unavoidable economic reality, union members cast 37 votes to maintain the \$4 wage but 107 votes to accept the reduction.
- Sept. 23, 1893 DAYTON – Hunting Via the C&C RR
“Parties desiring to hunt about Fort Churchill have a fine opportunity to do so now as the C & C railroad has reduced the fare for the round trip from Dayton to Washout to \$1.50, good for three days.”
- Sept. 1895 VIRGINIA CITY – Daytonites E. Quilici and August Depaoli have Row in Virginia City
It was something to do with business matters. “Quilici battered up Depaoli considerably, and was arrested for assault. He will have his trial next Monday morning. He is now out on bail of \$250 which he furnished immediately after his arrest Thursday.” He was later fined \$50.
- Sept. 1901 The Rock Point Mill at Dayton Shut Down Due to Scarcity of Water in Carson River.
- Sept. 1904 DAYTON — Very Large Fossil Bone Found
“While sinking a shaft for the California Mining company, near this city, Doc Legg uncovered what is apparently the bone of an immense mastodon, or some other extinct animal, near the side of the shaft. The indications are that the remainder of the skeleton lies immediately at hand and it will probably be excavated. When taken out the fragments of bone crumbled when touched. The bones were found in what was once a large water channel.
- Sept. 1905 HAZEN – Standard-Gauge Line Completed from Churchill to Hazen
28 miles of standard-gauge line completed from Churchill to Hazen, connecting former C&C with CP main line operated by SP. After Hazen cut-off completed, traffic on Mound House to Churchill line reduced to a mere mail route with an accommodation train once a day each way.
- Sept. 1909 DAYTON – Hotaling Visits Herman Davis
“Mr. Hotaling, a capitalist of San Francisco is here on a short visit to Herman Davis. Mr. Hotaling is interested in the Nevada Reduction Works....” The Hotaling Estate Company later purchased the mill at Rock Point.
- Sept. 1913 DAYTON – Nevada Reduction Cyanide Plant in Operation
- Sept. 27, 1913 DAYTON – Freight Hauler Moves to Dayton from Virginia City
“Del Davis has moved his freighting outfit from Virginia City and will engage in hauling the tailings from the reservoirs to the cyanide plant of the Nevada Reduction works.”
- Sept. 1914 RENO – Daytonites Barely Escape Military Duty in Italy
A party of Italian tourists was detained by Italy for military as reservist but Albert A. Baroni and his wife of Dayton were released and allowed to return to Nevada. Their fluent English and protests of American citizenship finally won their release, upon which they took passage in steerage to reach New York.
- Sept. 4, 1962 YERINGTON – Neil Mortensen and Incumbent Joseph C. Ricci Win Primary Races for Lyon County
Commissioner
Republican Mortensen and Democratic Ricci face each other in November. Ricci wins this race.
- Sept. 13, 1989 CARSON CITY – Former Nevada Governor Charles H. Russell Dies. His wife, Marjorie Guild Russell, buried Gov. Russell in her family's Guild plot in the Dayton Cemetery, where today she lies next to him.



2006-03-23-Chinese Reception at Nevada State Railroad Museum (These photos were probably taken by Morgan Webber) This reception marked the opening of the new exhibit on the important contributions of the Chinese to building the railroads of Nevada . 19th century Chinese laborers who helped build the Virginia& Truckee Railroad, Central Pacific, and other railroads were honored, and plans for a proposed Chinese Workers Museum of America in Carson City were displayed. (Unfortunately the latter has never come to fruition.) The first picture shows members of the HSDV Board with UNLV professor and author Sue Fawn Chung. Mabel Masterman, Ruby McFarland, Laura Tennant, Del Minor (HSDV President), and Julie Sutich (now Workman). (submitted by Linda Clements)

Governor Kenny Guinn chatting with Mabel and Dagmar Webber. Laura and Del can be seen behind.



Pictures from our picnic August 23 (by Melanie Cooper)

