

Nevada history books recommended by Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer Ron James: (28 January 2009)

Note from Linda C: I asked Ron both for recommendations of books by others and , separately, books that he has written or edited.

1. *History of Nevada (Second Edition)* by William R. Elliott and William D. Rowley (1987, University of Nebraska Press)
RJ: For years, Russ Elliott's History of Nevada was regarded as the best, and it remains the most detailed overview available.
2. *The Silver State, 3rd Edition: Nevada's Heritage Reinterpreted* (Wilbur S. Shepperson Series in History and Humanities) (Paperback) by James W. Hulse (2004)
RJ: Jim Hulse's History of Nevada has less meat, but it is probably better written and more entertaining.
3. Author: Sally Zanjani
RJ: There are many excellent books on specific subjects. I'd read anything by Sally Zanjani, who is one of the best writers to have ever worked on a Nevada topic, and the range of her books offer many choices on specific topics.
4. *Roughing It*, by Mark Twain (1876)
RJ: I always recommend Mark Twain's *Roughing It* as a nice bedrock of the Nevada experience.
LLC: This is free online at http://www.mtwain.com/Roughing_It/index.html and at <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/TwaRoug.html>
5. *The Big Bonanza: An Authentic Account of the Discovery, History, and Working of the Comstock Lode*, by Dan DeQuille (1876)
RJ: Twain's friend, William Wright (aka Dan DeQuille) is not to be overlooked; he wrote *The Big Bonanza* in 1876. It is very entertaining and often closer to a reliable history (which, however, it is not) than *Roughing It*.
LLC: Excerpts are online at <http://www.aracnet.com/~histgaz/dequil.htm> and the full text is available from The Nevada Observer starting at [http://www.nevadaobserver.com/Reading%20Room%20Documents/DeQuille%2001%20\(1877\).htm](http://www.nevadaobserver.com/Reading%20Room%20Documents/DeQuille%2001%20(1877).htm)
6. *Ten Years in Nevada: Or Life on the Pacific Coast*, by Mary McNair Mathews (1880)
RJ: Mary McNair Mathews' *Ten Years in Nevada* is interesting as a primary source, although I always emerge from her journal-like book really disliking her.
7. Author: Rich Moreno

RJ: On the contemporary end of the spectrum, I would recommend anything by Rich Moreno. He is not a historian—he's a journalist—but he is accurate and always a good read.

Then I asked Ron about recommendations from among his own books:

1. *The Roar and the Silence* (Wilbur S. Shepperson Series in History and Humanities) (Paperback) by Ron James (1998, University of Nevada Press)
RJ: When it comes to my things, the issue may again be more about what topic a reader is interested in. *The Roar and the Silence: A History of Virginia City and the Big Bonanza* remains perhaps my most important work when it comes to content and contribution.
2. *Temples of Justice: County Courthouses of Nevada* (William S. Shepperson Series in History and Humanities) by Ronald M. James (1994, University of Nevada Press)
RJ: *Temples of Justice*, my overview of Nevada courthouses, offers brief histories on each of Nevada's counties, so that might be a good place to start for someone who wants to know each part of the state (Elliott and Hulse offer high fly-overs of the state, never really getting into local history).
3. *Comstock Women: The Making of a Mining Community* (Wilbur S. Shepperson Series in History and Humanities), by Ronald M. James and C. Elizabeth Raymond (1997, University of Nevada Press)
RJ: Many women are attracted to *Comstock Women*, but many of its conclusions are present in less technical ways in *The Roar and the Silence*.
4. *Uncovering Nevada's Past: A Primary Source History of the Silver State* (Wilbur S. Shepperson Series in History and Humanities), by John B. Reid and Ronald M. James (2004, University of Nevada Press)
Uncovering Nevada's Past, which I did with John Reid, is a collection of primary sources introduced by a wide variety of Nevada historians, so it is a way to consider actual records and to become familiar with many of our current writers.