

Docents Newsletter

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Historical Society of Dayton Valley

March 2009

Docent Program

By Ruby McFarland

Lately I find I'm less able to do the things I've always done in the past. I saw it coming several years ago when the doctors started replacing, or wanting to replace, parts of me because I was wearing out. The one place, according to me, I don't seem to be running down is my brain. And as long as my brain serves me, I'd like to continue serving the docent program. It's not that I don't think ya'll can't do it, but that I hope I still have something to contribute.

This docent year I think we should go back to the beginning as I've noticed that there are folks among you who really need to know about the displays and how they relate to the community's history. We will do less lectures and more exploring the museum. We will ask those people who know more than we do to help explain some of the displays so we know the best information available. I've poked around a lot in the museum and I'd be the first to tell you I don't know about everything that is displayed. But I do know who to ask.

Please continue to sign up to be the docent for the weekend. I want to be part of that chore for at least one day a month. That keeps me involved and my brain engaged.

Saturday, March 7 lecture: Laura Tennant on the Sesquicentennial, 11:00 A.M. at the School House Museum

Docent doings

By Patrick Neylan

Recently I was asked by a friend, "You have a lot going on since you retired, why are you also a docent for the Historical Society of Dayton Valley?" Actually, that's not true, but needed the intro for this article. I love being a Docent within the Historical Society.

I joined the Society many years ago. Probably 10 or 12 (will have to ask Grace Ricci). I just wanted to "belong" to the organization that promoted the history of the town I live in. I worked retail, weekends, holidays, nights with no set days off. I worked in Carson, Reno, Gardnerville, and even Fernley, so I could never participate in any Society activities. But, felt I could help by being a member. History has always been a major interest in my life. Those who know me, know I am very steeped in US automotive history, especially Cadillac. Beyond this I have always studied California and especially Nevada history. What better place to sow those seeds than Dayton, Nevada! As I neared retirement I wanted to become more involved. I engineered, and that is what it took to get a Saturday off and come to a museum clean-up day. Entered the museum a stranger and came out with a lot of new friends. Del, Mabel, Linda C., Stony, Laura, and of course Ruby. Had only been to the museum once or twice in the past 10 or so years. Led a Cadillac Club tour there once, years before, but this was a great day for me!

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To belong to an organization is very important. As my time constraints changed, and I was now more able, I wanted to learn more about our local history. I wanted to be wherever I could be to soak up more history. Hang around the museum. Read what I could find. Listen to the locals. I became involved with St. Mary in the Mountains Church and then the natural links to the Comstock.

That is back to Dayton! You can't learn history any better than having it in your face. Enter Ruby and the Docent Program! Ruby is a gift to us all, and one to be treasured. No matter why you choose to be a Docent, she has influenced you, helped you, encouraged you, as she did me. So where does that put you right now? Ask yourself that. Soon we will begin a comprehensive review of the Museum displays. Soon we will develop both basic and detailed explanations of all the Museum displays. Soon you will feel more confident, knowledgeable, and most importantly, comfortable in the Museum. Learning, learning, we do it together, we learn from each other. Grab the ring and ride along! Any questions, doubts, concerns, just ask! We all know by now everyone in the Society is family. The family of Dayton!

Contact Pat at 246-3527, or email him at:
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Dates to remember

By Donna McElroy

Beginning in March we will begin the new docent training by Ruby. Our training will start on Saturday as follows:

March 7: Laura Tennant discussing the Sesquicentennial.

March 14: Explore contents of the display cases throughout the museum in coming weeks.

March 21: Bob Foster will talk about the scales and their part in history.

March 28: Del Minor on teacher Bertha Scott and her part in Dayton's growth.

Other dates to keep in mind:

March 18: General meeting at the library.

March 25: Docents meeting at the museum.

Coming up on Saturday, April 25, 2009, remembering the Carson & Colorado's last days as they closed the Mound House to Fort Churchill branch line 75 years ago.

Book report

By Tom Parcels

Fort Churchill, Nevada's Military Outpost of the 1860s.

Editor, Stanley Paher; Researcher, Kathryn Totton
Dayton Library Index No. 979.352

A short history (only 49 pages) of Fort Churchill and the activities of the military from its opening in 1860 to its abandonment in 1869.

One of several interesting items gleaned was the cost of construction: \$192,552.00 in pre-Civil War Dollars. It also tells of the lynching of James Linn in Dayton for stabbing John Doyle on August 6, 1864. A troop was sent to Dayton to preserve order but all was quiet the next morning. Linn's body had been returned to his cell "after they were certain he was dead." Note: according to "Lawmen of Early Nevada Territory," this was only the second recorded lynching in the western Nevada Territory.

The book relates the problem of supplying the fort from San Francisco, dealing with the Indians and Confederate sympathizers, and the fort's decline after the war. Some very interesting photos (no early photos), line drawings and maps. A good short read.