

Docents Newsletter

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Historical Society of Dayton Valley

November 2009

Docent program

By Ruby McFarland

"But see, in our open clearings, how golden melons lie; Enrich them with sweets and spices, and give us the pumpkin pie!"

Margaret Junkin Preston (1820-1897)

Happy Thanksgiving! We have a lot to be thankful for. It may not seem so, but after reading the old diaries and Journals about our area -- we don't have too much to complain about.

I'm reading the second volume of the Alf Doten Journals and the Comstock was no picnic. The scarlet fever outbreaks, murders, mine disasters and more trying behavior of the folks made it a challenge to stay alive every day.

I know that looking at the three journals it would seem like a chore to read three. I've read one and a half and it really opened my eyes to what life was really like in the 1860's. Doten himself was a work in progress. He liked wine, women and song. He was liked by most and the ladies found him charming. In his journals he has a coded message. I wondered about it until Guy Rocha told me it was about his romps with some of the ladies and he wrote in code so his wife wouldn't know about it. It took me a while to break the code and -- Oh my goodness.

Have a good Thanksgiving and see you at the Christmas party.

[This year's **HSDV Christmas party** will be held at the Dayton Valley Country Club at Legado on December 5, 2009. No host bar, 6:00 PM; dinner served at 7:00 PM. Invitations have been mailed already, RSVP due by November 21, 2009. -Ed.]

Book review

By Patrick Neylan

Mark Twain and Orion Clemens:
Brothers, Partners, Strangers
by Philip Ashley Fanning

A couple of months ago I was discussing some historical point with a friend and somehow the question came up "Is Orion Clemens buried in Carson?" I replied that his daughter Jane (known as Jennie) was, but I had no idea where Orion was buried. On investigation, it turns out he died in Keokuk, Iowa. While looking into that I came upon the book "Mark Twain and Orion Clemens".

It is quite an amazing story about the two brothers. Orion is ten years older than Sam, and the book traces their lives with the parallels, jealousies, rivalries, and disappointments. Orion's high point was his years spent in Nevada as the secretary to our only Territorial Governor, James Nye. It turns out Nye was often away from the territory and Orion was in truth running the government, with great success.

After this, his life took many turns, some good, most bad. He had a lot of emotional and personal problems and several failed business attempts leading ultimately to living in his wife's birthplace, Keokuk, Iowa on a pension from Sam. Sam on the other hand had enjoyed much more literary success and was well known for his lecturing and touring, but was still burdened with many of the same personal and emotional problems that tormented his brother. Most of them stemmed from their relationship as brothers. The story unfolds from hundreds of original letters written by the brothers to each other over many years.

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The book is by no means a light and airy read, but it is a fascinating look at the lives of two famous brothers and the early workings of the government of our favorite state, Nevada.

Ghostly letter

By Vicki Kinney

Dear HSDV,

Thank you so much for inviting me to revisit Dayton once again. I had such a good time visiting with all the children and families while I was on Pike Street outside my old house. I was sorry to see my husband's medical office and pharmacy was no longer there, but they have planted a nice lawn where the building had been. There was such a good crowd this year, and everyone was so interested in what Dayton was like years ago. I also enjoyed seeing the other Dayton pioneers that joined me on Pike Street to greet our guests. Let me see, there was Olla Rollins (Linda Adams) near the High School, Frank Bugbee (Tom Parcels) was outside the *Odeon Hall*. Emma Loftus (Barbara Peck) stood in front of her old house. Julie Sutich who now lives in Emma's house, cooked up a great pot of stew to feed us hungry spirits. Thanks, Julie! Emma's husband, Jack Loftus (Bob Wallace) was down the street by his mercantile. I understand he was prepared to marry anyone that might have been interested. Then across Main Street near the Union Hotel were Manly Johnson (Pat Neylan) and his wife, Mary Johnson (Donna McElroy).

I also got to visit the old school house. It is great you are using the school as a museum. I certainly recognized many of the items in the museum. While at the museum I visited with many other Dayton pioneers. Ty Kim "China Mary" (Del Minor) was there as well as Laura Dettenreider (Marty Lewis). Several other Dayton pioneers (Vivian Smith, Lynn Erickson and Diane Parcels) were helping out at the museum, but I don't remember their names; after all, I am 171 years old. There was a photographer going around taking pictures (Morgan Webber). He looked just

like the photographer that took mine and JC's picture when we got married. It was a good thing Ruby McFarland and Dagmar Webber were there to help with all those things us ghosties weren't able to do.

Well, I think we put on a great Nevada Day/Halloween event. What a treat for us pioneers to visit here again and see what good hands our Dayton history is in.

Sincerely,
Fannie Hazlett (Vicki Kinney)

Dates to remember

By Bob Wallace

Reminder for everyone that the school house museum will remain open on weekends through the month of November, then close for the winter months. Depending on winter weather, February may be a reasonable time to re-open the museum following some post-winter cleaning, otherwise we'll be back in March of 2010.

The HSDV Christmas party is scheduled for the first Saturday in December, thus is being included in this newsletter as a reminder that this year's dinner is coming up on December 5 at the Dayton Valley Country Club at Legado. Times for that evening include a no-host bar at 6:00 PM, dinner to be served at 7:00 PM. RSVP is requested by November 21, 2009.

November 18: HSDV General Meeting, 12:30 PM at the Dayton Valley Library, followed by the C&C Working Group immediately thereafter.

November 26: Thanksgiving Day

December 5: HSDV Christmas party.