

# Docents Newsletter

Volume 5, Number 10

Historical Society of Dayton Valley

November 2012

## Docents program

By Ruby McFarland

“The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched - they must be felt with the heart.” Helen Keller 1880-1968

I didn't know there were so many caring people in my life. I had an emergency gall bladder operation on the 27th of October, and all the nurses and support people at the V.A. were so helpful. They were surprised to see me so soon after my hip replacement. I told them I hadn't planned it that way, but was glad they were there to take care of me.

And again all the folks in the HSDV rallied and sent their love and best wishes. Ron Rowe came to take me home this time. The nurses asked how I was going to get home. I told them not to worry.

While I was there this time the young ward doctor, new to this area, found out that I knew the history of Dayton and the Comstock. His name is Jeffery Orr and he was interested in the fact that John Orr was part of our history. He came to my room on his break and sat down and said, “Now tell me about Nevada and Dayton.”

I tried to cover a lot but I was still hurting from the operation. However, I did try to give him a good synopsis. I told him about the discovery of gold, the mills around Dayton, the people who lived then, and the Sutro Tunnel. I also told him how we get finances from PILT. I told him there would have been no Virginia City without Dayton. After 45 minutes I was getting very hoarse and almost lost my voice. I begged off but he seemed satisfied and I told him how to find more information.

I surely hope I'm a good ambassador for the HSDV. I try my best. I'm proud of my community and the people who live here now and before me. And I don't mind telling anyone who is willing to listen.

## Docent doings

By Patrick Neylan

2012 has been a banner year for the HSDV. As a group we have made “many and great” strides. The museum took on a new look. Railroad Days thrilled visitors with a “hand car” ride! I rode it myself several times! We had the best rummage sale ever. Traffic in the museum increased, the lecture series was well received, the school program was never better. This year's Pioneer Ghost Walk hosted 256 kids. There was an increase in the number of “special” tours requested: scouts, car clubs, other historical societies, new members have been added. The list goes on ... and rightly so! These accomplishments did not happen overnight and no one member is responsible for all of our improvements. That is a “no brainer”! Look around; we have a great group of dedicated, passionate, hardworking members. Some are on the “scene,” “some are on the comuter,” others just “plug in” when needed. Whatever it took, your Society made it happen!

The “success” of 2012 did not just happen at one time during the year. In 2012 we also celebrated the Society's 25th Anniversary. This year we celebrated all of the work of our founders and of members sometimes not known even to our current “movers and shakers,” those who created our Society in 1987 and laid the foundation upon

which we are still building in 2012. Then there are the “middlemen.” They didn't start it, they aren't helping now, but they gifted us with the continuity we now enjoy.

No one fits that bill any better than Armand Arnett! At age 88 we just lost him a few weeks ago but his influence on the Society and on Dayton history will be felt well beyond even our years. Nothing in a community is more sacred than its cemetery and no one in Dayton ever did more to preserve the grounds of our cemetery or honor its “residents” than Armand. For two decades, purely as a volunteer labor of love, Armand and Jessie kept records, weeded, and more importantly, “prodded” others to help keep up the cemetery. There is “no history” unless those in the present respect it, search for it, live to preserve it. That was Armand. He now is part of our past, but his legacy should be our “present” and lead us into our “future”! History is elusive. No one knows that better than our members. Keep searching, working, digging to find it, honor it, and make it true! That will pay respect to Armand, Victoria, Morgan, Dagmar, Vivian and all of the others who have worked for us! We should all be grateful for their efforts and proud to carry their work forward. In 2013 the Society will be even better than it is today. Dayton's history will be better known and better defined than it is today and you will help make it happen.

---

## Fanny Hazlett writings

By Vicki Kinney

We have some writings from Fanny Hazlett that our dear Vivian Smith typed out for us. I have a copy of the typed copies and thought I'd share a bit of Fanny's thoughts with you. This section is titled “Lions Club.” I am not correcting what was typed. Vivian didn't either, just writing it as it was taken from Fanny's pages. A small amount you might recognize from Fanny's book. (Well, a couple of times I fixed a bit of sentence structure.)

When I was asked to speak before the Lions Club my first thought was what am I to say to interest these sum of officers, but the Prof. Thompson said, “What we want is a talk about time when Nevada came into statehood.” I was living in Dayton, then the third town in Nevada in size and importance. It was then Virginia City, Carson and Dayton, in 1865 there were 2500 in and about Dayton. I came to Nevada in 1862 by mule “train” across the plains. The Comstock was at the height of its glory. Mining, milling, and teaming were the principal business of the country. Very few old people were here, men in the prime of life full of hope and vigor, free from the restraints of older states, ran their course more or less hilariously according to dispositions and early training, tho early training and habits sometimes were kept in the background. I remember one very pleasant young man, son of an English consul to Sweden named Seymour who came with the rush, but found when he got here he must work to live. He had no trade or profession, had never worked at common labor, but could play cards and finally fell into gambling. Saloons were too numerous to name and was it any wonder that men living in shacks or sleeping in corrals, as large unfinished lofts with 20 or 30 beds were called (to the saloons). No place else to congregate in bright warm saloons made cheerful and with companionship of all degrees of respectability down to the lowest types of vice – gamblers were plenty. Seymour fell in with them and made a precarious living. He told me he would not have his people know for anything the life he was living. One day he sickened and died. Mother Holmes took a valuable ring from his finger in part payment for board and lodging – he had no other valuable effects – and before night he was laid away in a nonsuch's grave, no one knew of his parents to tell them – one of thousands who came here never returned and never heard of. My husband Dr. Hazlett had a large practice which took him into the mountains east of Dayton. Nut pine covered the hills and was cut and hauled to

Dayton and distributed to the mills and mines, 125 teams crossed the toll bridge daily. He said it was wonderful the men he found lying in dugouts, brush shelters, tents, on the ground sick and sometimes alone, men who at home were Professors, teachers, sons of well to do people – coming to find the fortunes lying about – waiting to be picked up. Awaking to find themselves in a place sparsely settled and where the urge to work or starve was insistent beyond anything they had before known. On the other hand it occurred to me that most men thought of was to play a practical joke on the other fellow not always the most refined but funny at least to the perpetrator – yet in no other place were there readier response to any call of distress or misfortune. The first year I was in Dayton there were 47 case of small pox. One fatal case was a large fine looking young man also of the gambling fraternity – a few weeks after his death a young lady arrived on the overland stage to marry him. She had been sick in Denver while on the way, which had exhausted her money so when she arrived in Dayton she was penniless. Her expenses were paid while she recruited (maybe should have been recuperated) and when ready, was sent – back East to her friends – and by people who had never before known of her – this is only a sample of what might occur any day.

(I will stop here. I may add some more in the next newsletter. I would like to see more field trips and maybe lectures about our history in 2013. All our events are great but I like to learn about our history too. We have gotten great at sharing our history with others and I think there is a lot more I (we) could learn about our history. I think it will keep my interest alive.)

## Dayton

### Where Nevada history begins

## Closing notes

By Bob Wallace

As many of you know, we are on the road with our fifth-wheel trailer, having already spent a week in central Oregon to visit with friends in Bend, now up in Washington state to visit friends living in this part of the world, and about to leave for the Portland area for yet another visit. There may be the question of whether we are tempting the snow gods by traveling to the Pacific Northwest in October and early November, but then we are on our own time with thoughts of heading for warmer – and drier! -- climes in coming weeks.

One recent message by a railroad-related group had me thinking about transportation prior to the railroads. One of the first searches shortly after moving to Dayton was the freight wagon roads that brought goods and supplies to the mining areas prior to the arrival of the iron horse. Among results from that search was Henness Pass Road, it going out the northwest part of Verdi on its way to the Sacramento River at Marysville, California.

But back to that email message of recent days. When the Central Pacific opened its route across northern Nevada, one of the offshoots of that contact with the outside world brought with it the opening up of the Wadsworth Columbus Freight Road, taking supplies from the rail connection in Wadsworth, Nevada to the Columbus Mining District near Candelaria.

This long road, trips frequently taking more than a week in each direction, found most teamsters hauling freight in both directions with their teams, many of them said to have had as many as 20 oxen or mules towing the wagons long before “Borax” Smith made that “20 mule team” phrase commonplace a few years later. Over a road that extended for about 130 miles, supplies went south as far as Columbus, salt for the mining/milling operations coming north.

If you have an interest in freight wagon roads, run a search on the Internet and check the results.