

DECEMBER



DOCENT NEWSLETTER- DECEMBER 2013



DOCENT DOINGS

By Pat Neylan

A Celebration of Life will be held for Donna McElroy at 1:00 pm on January 18th, 2014 at our Community Center in Dayton. Please see email for other information.

To submit to Autumn Funeral home go to their website at <http://www.autumnfuneral.com/> and click on Donna McElroy in the lower left corner.

Railroad Working Group

Tuesday, January 7th, p.m.

Dayton Museum (Shady Lane at Logan Alley) This is our annual planning meeting. We'll soon be applying for grants. Come one and all!

~

Next Board Meeting - Jan. 14, 2014

10:30 a.m. at the Museum.

~

Next HSDV General Meeting

Wed., Jan. 15, 2014, 12:30 p.m.

Dayton Community Center

(Pike Street at Logan, Old Town Dayton)

We meet the third Wednesday of every month except December.

Newcomers and non-members are always welcome!

~

Next Docent Meeting – Wed., Jan. 22, 2014 at the museum. All interested are welcome.

~

I promise you GREAT letters from members, this month, so grab a cup of cheer and enjoy!

“Officially “docent” means educator or lecturer”.

From time inmemoriam (spell check questions that word but my 1953 Webster’s confirms it, and I am in reality only talking about the last 26 yrs) the schoolhouse museum has been the center of the HSDV’s exposure to the public. Sometimes in years past, randomly open, sometimes manned only by Ruby McFarland sitting there alone, covered in cobwebs, year after year, but in recent years faithfully opened and manned by “fairly” well trained dedicated HSDV members.

The seeds of our current Society were planted by a handful of dedicated if not “crazy” early residents of Dayton. As it grew and became known, Ruby “boldly” suggested the creation of a “docent” program to not only operate the museum during the season, but present knowledgeable information to all visitors to Dayton, whenever it was needed. Weekly informational “lectures”, more participation in community events were the byproducts of her efforts, and the official docent program was born. As the Society expanded and its place in the Dayton Community became more pronounced other programs were created and utilized such as the major school program and well received annual “Ghost Walk”. The importance of our museum was never diminished, but now had to share the attentions of our members with our other events. In recent years, Donna McElroy assumed responsibility for the scheduling at the museum and the other docent activities.

DOCENT LETTERS

Never in a “season” has the museum been neglected. Rarely has it ever missed the opportunity to greet or educate visitors. Never has it failed to uphold the standards of the HSDV.

2013 was no exception. When Donna was no longer able to do the scheduling, Sheila Hodach stepped forward to coordinate the docents at the museum backed up “technology” wise by Jack Folmar. Together they oversaw the constant scheduling of your Museum and it was always open as needed.

Because of them and all of you dedicated “official” docents, the Dayton Museum was always open, always available, and always a beacon to those with “Dayton related” questions...and there were more of them than you might think!!

All 100 plus members of the HSDV are docents! Each of you, when you proclaim yourselves members of the HSDV teach and educate others about the rich and incredible history of “DAYTON”. Every time you participate in any HSDV event in any capacity you are a docent teaching others by your example the importance of our, “their”, local history. Check the scrapbooks, the newsletters, the articles written over the last few years and see the obvious growth of the Society, the expansion of its activities, the increased importance and value of our participation in Dayton today. Be proud of your place in all of that. Be grateful to those in the Society that came before us...after all...it’s all about “history”!!! Have a Happy and Holy Christmas!!!! I look forward to continuing our work with your help in the coming year.



Ruby, at home, reading her December letter to us

By Ruby McFarland

***“Deck the halls with boughs of holly!”
(Traditional Carol)***

I remember a lot of Christmas’s – some that were jolly, some not so. Way back in the 1930’s when we were in the middle of the great depression the best thing I got for Christmas, and I might add the only thing, a Christmas stocking from my grandpa with a beautiful big orange and some hard Christmas candy. I was very grateful because, as a small child, I did realize that he sacrificed money to get me a present.

The times were hard in Dayton, too. Although most families didn’t have any money and no presents for their kids, Chester Barton made sure all the kids in Dayton had a gift. There was a party and tree at the High School just before Christmas each year where the gifts were distributed. It was a community activity and a good time for the hard times.

Emma Loftus recorded in her diaries the joys of Christmas. I’d like to share with you a few pages

~Friday, Dec.21, 1934:

“36 on the porch. A little cloudy and wind blew in the afternoon. I sent Mrs. Kean a fruit cake, today. I went to the entertainment and Christmas tree at the high school with Claude and Mabel Hammond. It was very good and all the little children were made happy with presents, candy, etc.”



Donna McElroy ~ Oodles of Noodles 2012

Through the years, Emma played Mrs. Santa at their family gatherings. They always had friends and family to share the event.

~Dec. 24, 1934

“26 this morning. I got up early and washed clothes – dried fine. I fixed my boxes of pastry for Chester’s family, fruit cake, cake and cookies, etc. Chester and family went to Reno to see the stores and a little shopping. In the evening we went down to his place. It was old lady Santa and they all got a grand lot of presents. The Hammonds and Mrs. Swain came down also. We had a happy evening.”

Emma was always doing housework, she never stopped. Even in her diaries when she was old and hardly able. This is how she ended 1934.

~Dec. 31, 1934

“21 on the porch. I washed this morning and it was a nice day. There are five feet of snow at Soda Springs on Donner Summit. 38 inches at Truckee. Well this is the end of 1934 New Year’s Eve. I hope 1935 will bring prosperity to the whole nation. We are well and hope we keep well in the New Year. End of another year of Emma Nevada Loftus, Dayton, Nevada. December 31, 1934 – Amen.”



Gretchen Arndt accepting the ‘2013 Laura Tennant Perpetual Award’ for “Outstanding Contribution, Time, Efforts and Devotion to Historic Preservation.”



Bernie Allen-for countless hours, weeks, months, years working to bring joy to others you are awarded the Laura Tennant Perpetual Award for 2013.



Fast forward, Dear Emma, to 2013, and we still see friends and family gathered at Christmas in the Community Center, (the old high school), enjoying and supporting one another ☺ Thank you!

Thanks also to Gary McElroy for sharing Donna’s lovely Christmas decorations with us. Donna, you will forever be in our hearts. ♥



Mike Workman is truly a friend of our Historical Society and was given the Gold Nugget Award.

*Here we come a-wassailing
Among the leaves so green,
Here we come a-wand 'ring
So fair to be seen.*

*Love and joy come to you,
And to you your wassail, too, and God keep you
And Give you a Happy NEW YEAR!*



Wonderful A-Wassailing!

Entering the Dayton Community Center for our "2013 Holiday and Awards Banquet" was like a wandring and a waltzing into a Grand Ballroom!! The young high school chefs lined up to serve our every need! The food` delicious, décor` exquisite, company` delightful, Gretchen's Champagne and Wassail Punches (and wine) – `quite literally` took us away☺ -thank goodness for egg-nog! Our chairman Gretchen Arndt and her awesome committee deserve a standing ovation!! Those of us who were given awards, plaques & accolades were overwhelmed with kind words. Jack's pictures, along with his beautiful speech, our president, Vickie Kinney, our presenters, our greeters, our chefs, and our guests - thank you to all. I also want to mention the other nominees for the Laura Tennant Award. What an honor to be nominated!! Along with Gretchen and Bernie, we applaud and tip our hats to Dianne Parcels, Sheila Hodach and Phyllis King. Your continued good work with the Dayton Valley Historical Society is appreciated beyond measure.



Sheila Hodach, Shirley Kagel, Dianne Parcels, Phyllis King, Barbara Peck making all beautiful!



Guy Rocha, Gretchen Arndt, Jack and Mary Epperson.



`Outgoing Secretary, Pat Neylan, receives a plaque & great words from new board member Elaine Bergstrom`



The Dayton V. High Chefs served our every need☺

MORE DOCENT LETTERS!!



By **Laura Tennant~**

Lucy Rutledge Cooke's letters tell pioneer's story:

Gold mining and gambling galore in 1852 in Dayton~

It was June 1853 when pioneer author Lucy Rutledge Cooke, en route to California, bathed her baby Sarah in the Carson River at today's Dayton. This region was called Carson Valley, a geographical designation in Utah Territory that included the areas between today's Genoa, Carson City, Dayton and beyond.

Many pioneer women, and some men, traveling on wagon trains kept diaries, but Lucy's journal contains lively stories in detailed letters written on the trail and sent to her sister Marianne in Rockingham, Iowa.

Marianne saved the letters, giving them to Lucy when they finally reunited in 1874 at Dutch Flat, Calif.

Lucy's letters offer a more personal version of the "perilous journey" on the trail than other diarists of the era. Details are entertaining, and stories of Brigham Young's Utah settlement, Deseret, and his religious practices, are historical as well as revealing. (Lucy's book: "Covered Wagon Days", was published in 1923 by her grandson Frank Cooke, a teacher and journalist in Modesto, and later reprinted by the Plumas County Historical Society. I bought it at a museum in Taylorsville, Calif. The journal is also in "Covered Wagon Women" 1852, Kenneth L. Holmes). It's a fascinating read. Living to 88 years, she spent 60 years in Nevada and California mining towns with no regrets).

Gold fever heats up

Lucy and her sister Marianne, well-educated English ladies, arrived in New York via ship from London in

1848. Their destination being Rock Island, Illinois, located on the Mississippi River where her uncle, Mr. Rutledge lived.

Opening a school specializing in music, Lucy met William Cooke. She said "gold fever" generated "heat" in the Iowa/Illinois areas near Council Bluffs where wagon trains organized to head West.

Married in 1849, the Cooke's, their baby Sarah (Sissy) and William's parents headed for Sacramento from Council Bluffs the spring of 1852. (Pa, William Cooke, Sr., rushed ahead of the family. When they reached Sacramento, he was supposed to have a home for them but he'd left for Australia! William's mother converted, remaining in Utah).

By July's end, out of provisions, William and Lucy wintered over at "Great Salt Lake City, Utah Territory" where he and many emigrants found work. It was a grueling winter all the way around and they prepared to leave in March, trading a yoke of oxen and wagon for passage, plus \$10 for Sissy, and William driving two-thirds of the way.

Feeling luxurious, Lucy notes their wagon has "a wide track...our bed is the whole width and will remain all day as at night so we can lie down whenever disposed." (Settlers often slept outside in tents or under wagons filled with their belongings).

Lucy added: "I sold my satin dress to get William an overcoat...of heavy broadcloth, lined and silk bound... too good for our need...my frock was only in my way. I got a new figured alpaca dress besides the coat...it will be a good second best dress when we reach our journey's end...I cut up the green skirt you gave me to make Sissy a warm petticoat."

William had sold his overcoat to buy 400 pounds of flour for their trip, and they also sold clothes or whatever they could to lighten the load. (The wagon had to be abandoned during the treacherous Forty Mile Desert crossing east of Fallon).

It would take four months to get to Sacramento City, plus more time waiting in Gold Cañon for the Sierra passes to clear. (They stayed a month).

Gold Cañon

The Cooke's arrived in 1853 Gold Cañon (Dayton) the end of May. She wrote: "William hired out to mine for \$50 per month room and board - \$2 a day. I'm helping round the house of his employer, Mr. McMartin (research indicates the name is McMarlin) and get mine and Sissy's board for pay..."

The place is a tavern and trading post, being the first after the long journey, everyone stops here and pack trains from Sacramento arrive frequently so we get news of the outside world. Mrs. McMartin (McMarlin) is a pleasant woman.

I enjoy helping her and the board is excellent*** such a treat for us.

Gamblers aplenty

“This is a great rendezvous for gamblers. Cards are being played day and night, and William sometimes stays up all night in charge of the store. They all make a pet of Sis, she being the only child here. The Carson River is in back of the log house, and I take my baby and we bathe among the willows, where the sand makes a pleasant footing. We sleep in a wagon standing near the dwelling and I enjoy the situation and surroundings. There are 20 boarders here, most mining up the canyon. Each night, pans containing the black sand and gold are brought to the store, and washed in big tubs or half barrels. This is our first introduction to gold mining. There’s a creek of clear water across the road. I pick up pretty rocks there and in some, gold is plainly seen.”

Lucy bids Marianne a lonesome farewell, hurrying to catch the mail pack train coming down the Emigrant Trail (probably Dayton’s Pike or Main streets)



Lucy, Lucy, Lucy...wish you were with us!
***** Our new ‘board’ is quite excellent, too😊**

~~~~~

*In the rest of the newsletter I’ve included various Winter/ ‘Christmas Stories’ from Fannie Hazlett’s Historical Sketch and Reminiscences of Dayton, Nevada little gray book. If you haven’t, as yet, picked up your copy please do so. You will never be disappointed! According to the forward, Fannie’s last work on this manuscript was completed in 1910.*

### **Lost Turkeys and Pigs. (page55)**

*F. Hazlett*

In those days (1860’s) fun was rampant. It was not always the most refined, but certainly it was funny. Practical jokes were in fashion. A favorite one was to steal and keep hidden a five-dollar Christmas turkey, and on that winter, of course, pour out his tale of woe about the lost turkey. Later in the course of the banquet, the thief would suggest that the turkey now being consumed might possibly be the guest’s fowl, since it very suspiciously came into his host’s cellar sometime previously in a dazed condition and evidently lost.

The story is told that Sheriff George once invited a party to dine with him. A pig was roasting in the baker’s oven. At the proper hour Mr. Shaw went to bring the pig home in order that it might grace the place of honor on his table. But no pig was there! A choice lot of citizens, in retaliation for the Sheriff’s famous misdeeds of the same kind, had appropriated his pig and were eating it in one of the near-by saloons.

### **A Children’s Party in a Saloon. (page 91)**

*F. Hazlett*

Big Nick was a saloon keeper. His heart was big enough to take in all the children in town. Those remaining now, who were children then, will recall his many acts of kindness. One evening he cleared his saloon of bar tables and all other saloon furnishings and gave a children’s party. There was music and games. Then followed ice cream and cake. Moreover ice-cream was not the everyday occurrence forty-five years ago that is now. Nick gave them the best the market could afford and it was a rare treat. Never more was there a more sincere host nor happier guests. Needless to say, the children ever after were his staunch defenders.





John and Linda at our Christmas Party

## Found: The Name and Background of the Wife of Dayton's First C&C Station Agent

### Dr. Linda Clements

In the July Docent Newsletter I told you about William Henry McCrillis (Henry or Harry) Cobb, our first C&C Station Agent in Dayton. In that article I mentioned that his wife was active in community activities in Dayton, but because they moved to Dayton after the 1880 census and left in 1887, and because in newspaper articles she was always listed as "Mrs. Henry Cobb," I did not even know her first name. I'm happy to report, that due to a serendipitous interaction, that situation has changed.

Mrs. Cobb's story started out happy in Dayton, newlywed to Henry, but turned sad later, when she bore four children and lost three of them in the early years of their lives. Eventually she had a mental breakdown and became a helpless invalid, unable to care for her remaining child or even herself. Henry himself, after success in mining and business in California and Nevada as well as community and lodge activity, died at the young age of 41. At the time of his death in May 1894 his wife was reported to be helplessly ill in Carson City, where they lived before Henry's death, and their young surviving son was said to be in the care of a brother-in-law in California.

At the time of that article I had pursued every possibility I could think of to find the name of Henry's wife. However, in October a delightful serendipity brought me just enough information to bring me the name and background information on Mrs. Cobb.

Early in 2013 Board Members of the V&T Railroad Historical Society had talked to me about presenting information on the C&C RR for their October history conference in Carson City. Eventually I agreed both to give a talk on the C&C RR in Dayton and to lead a tour of our depot as their official conference field trip.

When John and I came for the first day of the V&T conference on Friday, October 11 we sat up front where I was next to a friendly man who clearly knew a great deal about the V&T and was very interested in the C&C. As we chatted between presentations I learned that he was one of my "email buddies," Don Ball of Missouri, with whom I'd been exchanging information on the C&C by email for the past year. He and I chatted a lot, and on Saturday when I gave my presentation he was fascinated about the lack of information on Mrs. Cobb. Retired but far from inactive, he took out his smart phone and started searching. On Ancestry.com (which I no longer had access to due to finances) Don found a family tree indicating that her maiden name was Emlyn Walter. I portrayed Mrs. Cobb during our depot tour on Sunday but did not have time until Sunday night to start researching her. Don was correct; she was born Emlyn (spelled variously) Susan Walter!

According to church records, Emmaline Susan Walter was born and christened in 1854 in Bradworthy, Devon, England. She was the fifth child born to her parents, Charles Walter and his wife Susan. The family was Roman Catholic. The exact dates are not known, but three of her older siblings died as infants or children before 1858. In that year on May 13, Emlyn (listed as Emily), her parents, one older sister, and one younger brother arrived in the Port of New York on the ship City of Baltimore. The rest of their lives would be spent in the United States.

Interestingly enough, Emlyn was the second child born with that name, the older Emlyn having been one of the three who had died. Our Emlyn's younger brother Charles was also named after a deceased older sibling. I deduced that there was a third child who had died from the number of children borne their mother Susan reported in the 1900 census. I did not find the name of that other deceased child but it is possible that another surviving sibling (Emma, Cecil, or Edith) was named for that child as well.

By the 1870 U.S. Census the family had settled in Fairfield, Suisun Township, Solano County, California. Emlyn's parents would live in this area for

the rest of their lives. Emlyn was listed as Emeline Walter, 15, and was living at home with her parents—Charles (age 49, a laborer) and Susan (age 44)—as well as her one older sister—“Eunice” (actually Emma, age 20)—and two younger brothers—Charles (age 14) and Cecil (age 9)—and a younger sister—Edith (age 2). As would be expected from the immigration information, Cecil and Edith were listed as being born in California.

In the 1880 census Charles and Susan were still living in Fairfield and only their youngest child, Edith, age 12, was living with them. Charles was to die later that year. I can't locate Emlyn or her older married sister Emma in 1880 but in October of 1882 Emlyn married William Henry McCrillis Cobb. At the time Henry Cobb had been Station Master for the C&C RR in Dayton for about a year and a half.

In August 1883 Emlyn and Henry had their first child, William Walter Cobb, who died just after birth. A daughter followed in October 1884, but she lived only a few months, succumbing in January 1885. It is likely that these children are buried in graves whose markers have been lost in our Dayton Cemetery or possibly in Lone Mountain Cemetery in Carson City. In spite of these tragedies, Emlyn was active in the community in Dayton, and in 1885 served as Vice President for Lyon County of the Ladies Department of the New Orleans Exposition. Later that year she also served on the committee appointed by the State Board of Agriculture that was arranging for a Ladies Exhibit for the Nevada State Fair.

In March 1886 she made a trip with her husband's aunt to visit Henry's relatives in Maine until Fall. In the meantime Henry continued to serve as Station Master for the C&C but also became interested in mining, becoming part-owner of a mining claim near Hawthorne. He also became quite active in the Knights of Pythias, serving as Grand Chancellor for Nevada. He soon began taking time off from his C&C duties to pursue his mining interests around Nevada and into Utah. In January of 1887 another child, daughter Alma Walter Cobb, was born in Dayton. By April 1887 Henry Cobb had submitted his resignation to the C&C, being replaced by Wallace Coffin, and took the family to Grass Valley, where he went into business.

Within a year or two the Cobbs returned to Carson City, where Henry was appointed Assistant Coiner of the Carson Mint. Their pleasure upon

returning to Nevada was short-lived, however, since in April 1891 their third child Alma also died. According to an article in the Territorial Enterprise Alma was buried in Lone Mountain Cemetery in Carson City, but her grave does not appear in the 1956 or current inventories of the cemetery. By 1891 Emlyn had gone to California to soothe her grief—probably to stay with her widowed mother in Fairfield or with one of her sisters—and in June Henry had to go there to be with her when she became very ill. I don't know whether that illness was her eventual mental breakdown, but by October 1891 she had returned to Carson City, where she gave birth to her fourth child, and the only one to survive to adulthood, Walter Wilton Cobb.

In spite of this joy Emlyn soon succumbed to a complete mental breakdown. This kept her from knowing the joy of her last child growing to adulthood but also undoubtedly shielded her from the sorrow of the death of her husband Henry. In May 1894 Henry contracted cerebral spinal meningitis and died only a few days later. He was only 41 years old. Knights of Pythias from all over the area attended his funeral in Carson City, where he is buried in Lone Mountain Cemetery, as is his father who died a few years before him.

In the meantime their son Walter Wilton Cobb went to California to live with his mother's older sister Emma and her husband George Taft, who was a “vineyardist” in Fresno. They had no children of their own so adopted Walter, who now became Walter Wilton Taft. Emlyn probably went to Fairfield to stay with her mother (who may have been living with Emlyn's youngest sister Edith and family by then) but did not live much longer herself. Emlyn died in 1897 at age 43. She is buried—as Emlyn Cobb, widow of W.M.H Cobb—with her parents and younger brother Cecil in the family plot in St. Alphonsus Catholic Cemetery, Fairfield, Solano County, California. Her sister Emma and brother-in-law George Taft, who raised her son, are buried nearby as are her youngest sister Edith, Edith's husband Ray Smith, and one of their children.

Walter Wilton (Cobb) Taft had a much happier life than his poor mother. During World War I he continued to live in Fresno, where he had completed high school, but later married Anna, an Indiana native who had a college education. They lived the rest of their lives in Los Angeles, where he was a real estate salesman. He died in LA in 1962, leaving behind at



least one son, Robert W. Taft.

I expect that I will portray Emlyn Cobb again in the future, as the hopeful lady she undoubtedly was in the days shortly after she married Henry. I haven't decided if I can be tutored enough by my sons, both of who took four years of drama in high school, so that I can use the slight English accent Emlyn probably retained. I like to think that in death Emlyn was neither sad nor mad, but rather experienced the peace we all hope for and the reunification with her lost children and husband. That is the Emlyn I will portray: a lady of great hope and great devotion, whose time of sorrow is long past.

*(We're so looking forward to your portrayal of English lady, Emlyn Cobb, Linda. What a tribute to her to tell her story! As I read the article, I kept wishing happy endings for Emlyn, but it wasn't to be. You're right, though, this lady of great hope is finally reunited with her loves. Thanks LINDA!)*



*Ruins in COMO. Could it be the CROSS Hotel?☺*

*Fannie Hazlett reports a ball was given on December 24, 1863. A long list of names of 32 people from Carson City, Virginia City, Gold Hill, Dayton, and Como appears as a committee of arrangements. Adolph Sutro was one of them. Tickets, including supper, cost six dollars. The party was given at the Cross Hotel, which was a large three-story building.*



*Snowshoe Thompson delivers the mail.*

*Fannie also reports that the bright prospects for fortune-making on the Comstock rendered the hard winter of 1859-60 endurable. It was one of the most severe seasons ever known in this region. Horses, cattle, and animals of all kinds, as well as Indians, died from the cold and starvation. Flour was seventy-five cents a pound, and other provisions were proportionally high. Many miners were without boots. No supplies were obtainable except those that were brought over the mountains by "SHOWSHOE" THOMPSON on his Norwegian snow-skates, his load often being one hundred pounds!*



**Emlyn Cobb buried with her brother, Cecil and her parents, Charles and Susan Walter, at the family plot in Solono County, California.**



**Vickie Kinney, we thank you for being a great President!**



**Grace with Kay Winters**



**Bernie Allen accepts the Laura Tennant Award.**



**Barbara Madison with Grace.**



**Good Friends at the “Annual Christmas Party and Awards Banquet” 2013!  
Thanks to Jack Folmar for his pictures which can be seen on Sutterfly.**



**So long, 2013! Have a blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year!**

**(Thanks to all who contributed letters, this month!)**

