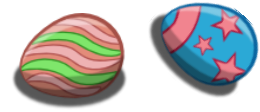


# DOCENTS NEWSLETTER



Historical Society of Dayton Valley

<https://daytonnhistory.org>

April 2015

## MAKING HISTORY PERMANENT

By Pat Neylan

This sounded simple when first approached but became quite the eye opener when pursued. An artifact that comes into the ownership and trusteeship of a museum for future preservation brings with it immense responsibilities. First there is the fairly complicated but most important process of creating a paper/digital record of its acquisition and historical significance to the community. This process involves several detailed forms as well as clear photos, both of which need be transferred from paper to digital while maintaining total and completely separate records. Within this process a “temporary” label must be attached to an artifact recording the date, accession number, donor, type of artifact, description of item (maker, purpose etc) storage/display location and photo number. We have gotten to this point on several hundreds of items. Then there is the next step....removing the “temporary” label and permanently marking the artifact.

Several of us visited the Nevada State Museum some months ago to inquire about this process and were treated royally, gaining much indispensable information. Sample supplies were purchased, techniques discussed and then the big moment; we scheduled an experimental session to try out the methods, make a time study for future planning and actually “mark” items. We gathered a selection of “dummy” artifacts (nothing of importance or value) and prepared to test. We had old tools, pieces of wood, glass, china, tin, rusted square nails and the like. The process calls for applying a coat of a special clear material, letting it dry, lettering on the appropriate accession number in either white or black depending on the surface, letting it dry and then sealing the number with an additional coat of the clear liquid. This involved measuring the drying time of each step for each type of material and noting the temperature at the time of the test. Bottom line: we discovered that the time to permanently mark any given artifact is about 20 minutes. On top of this physical process there is an additional level of paper/digital work; that of recording the history of each paper label removed to be sure no information is lost and no donated artifact falls through a crack. The total process is and will continue to be slow, but your society understands the importance of it all not only to the donor of an artifact, but also to the future of Dayton’s history.

A special thanks goes out to all the society members who participated in and contributed to the results of our first experiment in “making history permanent”!!!

### Docent Letters

By Ruby McFarland

*The sleepy colors of winter fade fast in the dawn of spring. The joy of Easter’s promise delivers sweet reason to sing.*

Author unknown

I sometimes wonder if anyone reads what I have written each month. I write for the pleasure of it and hope others find something that pleases them. Once in a while someone calls or tells me how much they enjoy my efforts. It keeps me from thinking that I’m not just spinning my wheels.

There are others who write articles from time to time, some on a regular basis. I enjoy their efforts and hope they will continue to contribute. Laura Tennant has been writing articles, not only for this newsletter, but for a lot of other publications. She inspires me to do better.

When I came to Dayton 28 years ago Laura was the editor and writer for the Leader/Courier newspaper, a publication for our area. She had an office in the back of an office on highway 50. She had her ear to the ground and reported all the local news. That wasn't the only job she had. She has always been active in all the organizations in Dayton. She is one of our loudest cheer leaders. Any event worth working for I found Laura in the thick of it.

In the early days of my moving here, I tried to be a good citizen and get involved. Laura was always there, either as a reporter or active in the project. If I went up to Virginia City to a meeting, there was Laura.

Her articles in the Reflections Magazine, part of the local paper, are written reports of the history of Dayton. She wrote about people who were part of the important people who form the history of Dayton—past and present. A lot of the history of Dayton that I know came from those articles. I learned from other history sources that she always researches all her stories so the truth is told.

I have always told the docents that if you don't know the answer to a history question, say "I don't know, but I'll find out for you. It's so important that we don't give people the wrong answers. Laura taught me the importance of giving the public the true story. That way you don't come up with an off-the-wall answer that gets told as the true story. I've run across some of those too.

Laura has written a book and I'm looking forward to a good read. If anyone can tell the story of the area, Laura would be the one.

### Women's journals chronicled Nevada's earliest history By Laura Tennant

March is women in history month and a number of covered-wagon women deserve recognition because they chronicled Nevada and Lyon County's history that began in Dayton during the 1850s and 1860s.

One of Nevada's earliest emigrant trails ran through today's Dayton in the late 1840s when weary emigrants camped along the Carson River near the river crossing, where the bridge is now.

The news of a gold discovery in 1849 at the mouth of Gold Canyon had been passed from one wagon train to another and the emigrants were anxious to see the site.

#### **Lucena Parsons**

On her honeymoon in 1850 and 1851, Lucena Parsons, 24, kept a daily diary when she and her husband George left Missouri in a covered wagon. Their company reached the lower Gold Canyon in May 1851 and the Parsons spent nine days camping and prospecting with the 200 placer miners living around the area. Noting that gold fever was rampant, Lucena dug up a few gold nuggets and traded gold for a fresh milk cow before the Parsons left for Sacramento. A text script of her diary is at Stanford University and copies are available at the Dayton Museum.

#### **Lucy Cooke**

Lucy Cooke bathed her baby, Sissy, in the Carson River in May 1853 when she and her husband William took a break from wagon life and stopped at Hall's Station on their way to California's goldfields. Hall's was a trading post, tavern and boarding house that was established in Utah Territory on the emigrant trail near where Dayton began in 1851.

One of my favorite autobiographies of life on the trail is in Lucy's personal letters that were written throughout her trip to her sister Marianne. Marianne saved the letters, and returned them to Lucy, who published them in 1923.

The Cooke's stopped at Hall's near the gold mines so William could make a few extra dollars. He made \$50 a month with board, and Lucy earned her board working at the station. Since no rooms were available at Hall's, the Parsons stayed in their wagon parked nearby.

“Everyone stops here and pack trains from Sacramento arrive frequently,” she wrote, noting that a stage delivered and picked up mail there too.

“This is a great rendezvous for gamblers, and the miners gamble with playing cards all night,” she wrote.

### **Laura Ellis Dettenreider**

Laura Dettenreider and her husband George also arrived at Hall’s trading post sometime in 1853. Impressed with the growing town, Laura and George built a log cabin on the river, where they developed a farm. Because Laura also kept a journal, her documentation of life on the teeming Dayton emigrant trail includes pertinent details, such as, in July 1854, there were 213 wagons, 360 horses and mules and 7,150 sheep that the emigrants brought with them when they came through Dayton.

Laura recorded stories about the people who lived in Dayton then. She was a humanitarian who administered medicines, served as an attorney and preacher and documented history.

Although Laura’s journals have never been found, a reporter’s personal interviews with her are published in Thompson & West’s History of Nevada, 1881 and in Fannie Hazlett’s book on early Dayton that is for sale at the Dayton Museum.

### **Fannie Hazlett**

Spunky Fannie Gore, 24, crossed America in a prairie schooner with her brothers in August 1862 after a 16-week, 2,000-mile journey to Dayton over the Emigrant Trail.

She described what she saw: “This is mining country and the society is rough, with frequent shooting affrays. There is drinking and gambling at every door and there are about 20 men to one woman,”

Fannie lived in a tent at an Eldorado Canyon pine nut wood ranch south of Dayton, where she socialized with 30 rowdy miners and around 200 local Indians and was always well treated.

In 1864, Fannie married Dr. John Hazlett, a Lyon County Senator at the Nevada Legislature and a District Attorney.

Fannie supported women’s suffrage and made national news, when at age 85, she became the oldest woman in the world to ride in a small, open “aeroplane.”

Well respected around the community, Fannie lived in Dayton for 52 years, where she served as a postmaster and organized a library. Fannie wrote the “Historical Sketch of Dayton” published in the 1921-22 Nevada Historical Society Papers.

Proving hardship and adventure add to life’s treasures, Fannie lived to be 95 years old. She had met Brigham Young, heard Mark Twain lecture and socialized with Nevada’s first governors and legislators. Fannie is buried at the Dayton Cemetery located adjacent to the emigrant wagon trail that she rode past in 1862.

## **April in Dayton** *By Linda Clements*

While flood-borne disaster is common during the winter months in Dayton, Spring brings much more varied types of events. Many of these are beginnings, as Spring frees up activities and decisions. But no month is free from disaster, in Dayton, the Comstock, and the country as a whole.

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|----------------|--|
| April 1853     | GOLD CAÑON, CARSON VALLEY – A late Spring, with about 70 people staying to mine over-winter Placerville newspaper correspondent Mr. Blanchard reported a very difficult trip over the Sierra from Carson Valley to Sacramento, finally arriving on May 1. He reported that, “The mines in Gold Cañon are paying good wages, and about seventy persons engaged at this point have earned steady wages during the entire winter.”        |
| April 3, 1860  | ST. JOSEPH, MO and SACRAMENTO, CA – Pony Express starts up<br>On this date a lone Pony Express rider left St. Joseph while another one left Sacramento at the same time. This was the beginning of the first of nineteen months of cross-country journeys from St. Joseph to Sacramento and back.  |
| April 23, 1861 | DAYTON – John Lothrop with his mother and brothers comes to Dayton from California<br>In Dayton he founded the Logan and Holmes two-stamp mill, driven by an undershot water-wheel, about 1,000 feet southeast of the later Lyon/Birdsall/Douglass Mill. An attorney and notary, John Lothrop was Lyon County Deputy Sheriff and Deputy Clerk, then was three times elected County Recorder and later served as District Attorney. His |

mother was Mary Malinda Fowler Johns Lothrop McDowell (and later Stiles), who built the original Union Hotel near the Carson River.

- April 15, 1865 WASHINGTON, D.C. – President Lincoln is assassinated
- 1868, Mar-Apr. DAYTON – James Crawford has his foot crushed at the Rock Point Mill, Dayton.
- April 7, 1869 GOLD HILL – Yellow Jacket Mine fire erupts  
The Yellow Jacket Disaster was probably the worst mining accident in Nevada history. On the morning of April 7, 1869, fire spread at the 800-foot level. As the day crew descended, smoldering timbers collapsed, flooding poisonous air into the Yellow Jacket and neighboring Kentuck and Crown Point Mines. Fortunately shifts were changing reducing potential casualties significantly. Nevertheless, survivors described horrible scenes of miners desperately struggling for life. Heroic firefighters entered the mines, but flames and smoke pushed them back. At least thirty-five miners died, but some bodies were never retrieved, and single workers may have vanished without record. The fire persisted, so miners sealed off the offending levels, which remained hot for several years.
- April 8, 1872 DAYTON – Dayton Methodist Church burns  
The fire broke out about 2 AM on Monday in the church belfry. While the engine company saved the neighborhood the church itself could not be saved. Arson was assumed.
- April 1874 DAYTON – The Rock Point Mill is being thoroughly repaired and will shortly start up again on ore from the Comstock mines.
- April 18, 1881 DAYTON – Carson & Colorado Railroad line through Dayton from Mound House to Hawthorne goes into paid service.
- April 1881 DAYTON – Lyon Mining and Milling Company starts grading for a new, two-mile railroad  
Grading for the narrow-gauge railroad starting from a connection with the C&C RR about 1/8 mile west of the depot and ran to the mill with a side track to Ophir Flat and another line to the tailings dump at the mouth of Gold Cañon. On the mill grounds branches and spurs ran to all parts of the workings. This railroad was completed in June.  
The mill previously had a horse-drawn railroad from the dumps at Gold Cañon to the mill
- Abt. April 1882 DAYTON – Fred Birdsall becomes interested in the San Joaquin & Sierra Nevada Railroad  
Thus, shortly after upgrading his railroad he sold the mill to Joe M. Douglass of Virginia City.
- April 1888 DAYTON – Rock Point Mill has a contract with the Savage Mine  
Ore was brought directly to the Rock Point via a narrow-gauge spur track. A standard-to-narrow gauge transfer trestle was built in Mound House at the same time to facilitate the transfer of ore from the standard-gauge V&T RR to the narrow-gauge C&C.
- April 1898 DAYTON – Potatoes continue to be a strong crop  
“During this season there have been shipped from Dayton so far 76 carloads of potatoes, or nearly 1030 tons. These potatoes were all raised on the Carson river ranches within a few miles of this place, and California was the market. The spuds averaged the growers about \$13 per ton, making the total amount received by them nearly \$13,500. There possibly may be enough more spuds shipped to make an even 80 carloads for the season.” [*Lyon County Times*]
- April 1902 DAYTON – Cyanide plant of the Rock Point is reported to be the most complete in the state  
This cyanide plant was located in the path of today’s Hwy 50E roughly where the Pizza Factory is today.
- April 1905 DAYTON – Plan to cut off the old C&C line through Dayton initiated  
The Nevada & California Railway Co. was incorporated in CA to construct and operate a railway line from Hazen, on the Central Pacific Railroad, to meet the SP and a branch from Churchill to Mound House, to meet the V&T. Like its predecessor, this was a wholly owned subsidiary of the SP.
- April 9, 1907 SPARKS, NV – Lyon County Commissioners offer the SP the county’s help to speed construction of a bridge to replace the one destroyed during March floods.
- April 1907 DAYTON – Captain Davis and other millmen complain that agriculturalists are using more water than they need. They maintain that the excessive use of water for irrigation keeps the mills shut throughout the summer.
- April 1910 DAYTON – U.S. Census shows 520 individuals

Of these, 34 are Native Americans (listed on a separate schedule), 132 are Italians (mostly located in surrounding ranches), only seven are Chinese, much reduced from days past. Dayton was 35% female. In Sutro there are 53 people (16 Italian, no Chinese) and in Ramsey 62 individuals (7 Italians, no Chinese).

- April 1913 RENO – Several ads placed by Captain Herman Davis to sell the Rock Point mill equipment  
“One ten-stamp mill, used only three weeks, in corrugate[d] iron building, one third mile from S.P. depot, including ore bin, rolls, crusher, elevator, plates, concentrator, 80? H. P. engine, tanks, cars, wagon-scales, tools, pumps and cyanide plant, complete for \$1,500. Will also sell one Lane Slow Speed Mill used two months, and one 25 H. P. gasoline engine. Address Herman Davis, Rawhide, Nevada.”
- April 1932 DAYTON – High School honor roll issued  
Highest honors on the scholastic honor roll for the last six weeks' period were received by Laura Mastroianni and Ida DeNevi, who came second. The complete honor roll was: Seniors, Laura Mastroianni, Clotilda Goni, Margaret Lawson; juniors, none; sophomores, Ida DeNevi, Miller Blakey, Beatrice Hardwick; freshmen, Leah Giometti, Freda Goni, Beamba Gianni, Bertha Mastroianni, Yolanda Peri and Wilma Hankhammer.
- April 3, 1933 DAYTON – Mrs. Frances Gore Hazlett dies at age 97  
With the help of her daughter Gertrude Randall, Fanny Hazlett documented the history of Dayton. As a girl she came across the plains with her parents in a covered wagon, arriving in Dayton in 1862. She was preceded in death by her husband, Dr. John Hazlett, and her daughter Gertrude.
- April 25, 1934 DAYTON – C&C RR track through Dayton abandoned, depot closed  
The 26-mile line from Mound House to Churchill was abandoned, resulting in a large loss of property tax income in Dayton.
- Apr. 4, 1943 YERINGTON – Mining man and legislator Frank Bugbee dies at age 75  
Born in Ohio he grew up in Kansas and Colorado and came to Nevada as a young man, living in Mason Valley and Dayton where he pursued mining for many years. He served as a deputy sheriff at Dayton for a time and was an assemblyman in the Nevada legislature during the sessions of 1931, 1933 and 1937. Even though he was already ill, in the legislative session that closed just a few weeks before he died he served as assistant sergeant-at-arms. He was survived by his wife Mabel and his son Lyle of Texas.
- April 29, 1960 KEELER – The last remnant of the old C&C RR was closed down  
After 80 years of operation, service was ended from Laws to Keeler, closing the final remaining section of the far west's largest narrow-gauge railroad.

YIKES! Elaine Bergstrom went beyond the call of duty when she cleaned the higher reaches of the Dayton Museum earlier this year.



Pat Neylan, museum curator, recently led a tour of ladies through the Dayton Museum. The tour of the 1865 schoolhouse museum, firehouse and Jail was conducted by Eileen Cohen, a local tour guide. (Laura Tennant)





On August 7, 2014, Dr. Denise Khor visited our museum to look at our primary materials concerning the Chinese in Dayton. Now an Assistant Professor at the University of Massachusetts, Dr. Khor at the time was the Research Director of the "Chinese Railroad Workers in North America Project" at Stanford University. Here she is talking to Linda Clements, who sent her copies of documents and gave her an overview of the Chinese railroad workers, as well as census results, in this area. In addition, Laura Tennant showed and explained the Chinese artifacts and information we have in our museum and gave an overview of the Chinese in Dayton history."

David Dukleth and Shiela Hodach dust off the cobwebs at the Dayton Museum's extensive local Indian artifact display that educates folks on how our local peoples made arrows from rose bush stems, the ages of a wide variety of arrow points (arrowheads), handmade cordage from sagebrush, and a child's toy cradleboard, and much more. Don't forget, YOUR museum is open from 10 to 3 p.m. during May, Nevada Historical Preservation's archaeology and preservation month.



A young couple looking at our walking tour brochure with the mining exhibit in the background.