

DOCENTS NEWSLETTER

Historical Society of Dayton Valley

<http://daytonnvhistory.org>

June 2015

MAY: NEVADA HISTORY APPRECIATION MONTH!

By Pat Neylan

For a little out of the way museum in small town Nevada to take part in a month long special celebration of Nevada's rich history is in no way a small accomplishment...but we did it!! At first glance the "record" numbers may seem almost trivial, but with any understanding of our museum, and the dedication that goes into its operation, they will be recognized as nothing short of phenomenal!!

Since Ruby McFarland's original dream of creating an official "docent program" the operation of the museum has been the backbone of the Society's exposure to the outside world. It is the day in and day out introduction to Dayton history for Hwy 50 travelers; Pony Express enthusiasts; Marilyn Monroe fans; Comstock historians; people lost on Pike St; locals who never knew the museum was there, let alone, Bonanza and Ponderosa groupies!! Every visitor that finds our museum is important because they are the "right now" opportunity to fulfill the Society's mission statement and no docent ever lets that opportunity pass!! So many comments come back to the museum about its "friendliness"; its "special feel"; its "personal attention" and "knowledgeable help". Our "small town", "personal" flavor is still our greatest asset. It may take longer to make our museum famous around the world, but every visitor that experiences one of our docents, takes that real, vivid and lasting memory of us further, and reaches more friends and family than any other campaign we could launch. Some docents have left us, taking advantage of other opportunities, their talents perhaps spent, but still built upon and others have recently joined us and now add to the overall experience of our visitors. For both of these groups the Society will be forever grateful.

So to the actual numbers. In the month of May our docents volunteered over 150 man hours, not counting their individual driving times or costs. They showed the museum to well over 300 visitors. This included about 150 4th grade students participating in Barbara Peck's astounding walking history tour of Dayton which for many was their first exposure to Dayton's early history and Dayton's place in Nevada's history. Our museum is always open on weekends during May but on weekdays alone we added about 100 new visitors that may never have had the opportunity to experience Dayton nor understand the beginnings of the famous Comstock. Several foreign countries were represented within this group. There were additional monetary donations to the museum as well as sales in our gift shop during this time. For all of these great accomplishments we owe extreme gratitude to our docents!!

The concept of keeping the Dayton Museum open on weekdays during the month of May might seem fairly simple, but believe me, the logistics are not much easier than the D-day invasion of Europe!!

How it all came about is pretty simple: SHEILA HODACH. Way, way behind the scenes, Sheila worked constantly and tirelessly to make it all come together. She dealt with the changes, the weather, the schedule of one docent (mostly mine!!), the illness of one, the doctor's appointment of another, family plans of some, and a myriad of other..very valid..reasons of others. Whatever it took, the museum was covered..even if she had to fill in herself. Whatever it took the Dayton Museum of the Historical Society of Dayton Valley was available to locals and tourists alike for: May: Nevada History Appreciation Month!

Thank you Sheila!!!!

June in Dayton
By Linda Clements

June seems for the most part to be a “no drama” month in Dayton. Flooding is past, fires aren’t starting yet, and with a few exceptions, most folks seem to use the calm to get things done. For the early miners and millmen, however, June could be frustrating since usually the river and stream water had run out by this time and would not return until the fall.

- June 1, 1850 GOLD CAÑON, CARSON VALLEY – John Orr Finds Large “Orr Nugget”
Years later John Orr reported on finding the 0.68-ounce nugget that bears his name. Fortunately, it was eventually donated to the Nevada State Museum.
- June 6, 1853 CARSON VALLEY – Mail Carrier Reports the Johnson Trail Over the Sierra to be Snow-Free and in Good Condition
Mr. Dritt, the Sierra mail carrier of the time as well as Placerville *Mountain Democrat* correspondent, made the journey from roughly Genoa, leaving on June 6, to Placerville in two days. This means that the route was open for gold-seekers to the lower Carson Valley (Gold Cañon) as well as business in the upper Carson Valley around Genoa. He also reports the Indians, who take trout from the Carson River and exchange with the whites for bread and provisions, to be quiet and friendly.
- June 1850 GOLD CAÑON, CARSON VALLEY – Large Numbers of Miners Digging for Gold “at Lower End of Carson Valley”
The Fort Wayne (IN) *Sentinel* reported “...on the lower end of Carson Valley, some fifty miles beyond the summit of the mountains, gold has been discovered, and large numbers of people were digging when our informants were there. The diggings had proven quite rich.”
- June 1853 NEW YORK CITY, NY – *The New York Daily Times* Reports that Gold Cañon is Nearly Exhausted
This was based on a report from the Placerville *Mountain Democrat*, which consistently had a correspondent who traveled over the Sierra to and from Gold Cañon to bring the news to both communities. Mr. Solomon C. Perin reported “The miners in that part were not doing very well, owing to the fact that Gold Cañon was pretty much exhausted. A number of miners are now engaged in prospecting.”
- June 1855 UPPER CARSON VALLEY – Orson Hyde Arrives to Serve as Carson Valley District Judge
Apostle of the Church of Latter Day Saints, Hyde was appointed by Brigham Young. He arrived in the Upper Carson Valley accompanied by his fifteen wives and numerous children.
- June 1856 GOLD CAÑON – Miners Idled Due to Lack of Water
- June 1857 SALT LAKE CITY – LDS President Brigham Young Initiates Calls for LDS Colonists in Carson Valley to Return to Salt Lake City
U.S. President James Buchanan had sent an Army expedition to Utah Territory to restore non-theocratic rule and a tactical standoff had ensued. Young, fearing the worst, recalled all saints to consolidate to prepare for action or evacuation.
- May-June 1858 GOLD CAÑON – Reports Count Twenty Occidentals and Forty to Fifty Chinese, Trading Post
- June 1859 Near GOLD HILL – Comstock Lode “Discovered”
Gold ore from placer mining near today’s Gold Hill was assayed and the blue-grey muck that had been contaminating the sluices was found to be one of the richest silver lodes ever found.
- Abt. June 1870 DAYTON – U.S. Census Shows 640 Individuals in Dayton
Of these 61 were from China. There were also 40 people in Churchill while Silver City is still booming at about 1240.
- June 1870 NEVADA – U.S. Census of Nevada Shows State Primarily Made Up of Working-Age Men
Total population 46,491; women make up only 23.6% of population. Removing children and those over 65, the discrepancy was much greater.

- June 1880 DAYTON – U.S. Census Shows Dayton Area Population About 500; C&C Railroad Workers and Sutro Add Many More
Lyon County has 2406 individuals, most in Silver City, which had only 13 Chinese. 507 individuals are in Dayton, New Jerusalem (Dayton Valley), and Woodworth Mill (on today’s Santa Maria Ranch), 442 in Sutro, 76 in Como and Palmyra, and 181 working for the C&C. Chinese total 46 in the Dayton area, 25 at Sutro, 20 at Palmyra, with none recorded as working for the railroad. However, the Chinese were “hidden” farther along the C&C grade, with 228 Chinese men and two women working in Churchill Canyon and 96 Chinese men working elsewhere along the Carson River.
- June 2, 1881 DAYTON – The Lyon Mill and Mining Company Employs 100 Men
The Carson & Colorado Railroad had opened that Spring and ore from mines to the south was flowing into the Mill at Rock Point. The article reported that “The first cost of their present works was \$206,000, and they talk of adding thirty stamps.”
- June 1881 DAYTON - Expanded Dayton, Sutro & Carson Valley Railroad Completed
Frederick Birdsall expanded his little horse-drawn railroad to make it into a real narrow-gauge railroad with two small locomotives. These brought tailings from Gold Cañon to his Lyon Mill for processing.
- June 25, 1881 DAYTON – Ad in Lyon County *Times* for Union Hotel Claims “The Only First-Class Hotel in Lyon County”
“Fireproof Brick Building, Main Street Opposite Pike.”
- June 12, 1882 PITTSBURGH, PA – Joe. Douglass. Locomotive Completed at H. K. Porter & Co.
By this time the Lyon Mill and its railroad had been sold by Frederick Birdsall to Joe Douglass of Virginia City and he needed his own mill locomotive.
- June 3, 1887 CARSON VALLEY – Violent Earthquake Produces Significant Damage from Carson Valley to Virginia City
Damage from the estimated 6.3 magnitude earthquake was significant from Genoa to Carson City. The *Territorial Enterprise* reported fissures opening up in Minden that for a time spouted hot water and sand. However, in Dayton the main product was broken crockery and fear that kept residents outside all night, some nervously watching surrounding peaks for signs of fire and brimstone.
- June 29, 1889 DAYTON – The Douglass Mill Purchases 600 Cords of Cottonwood at \$5 per Cord
In a long article extolling the virtues of Cottonwood as a cash crop, the *Mountain Democrat* reported not only the Douglass Mill purchase but the writer’s positive experiences in growing the wood.
- June 1893 DAYTON – New Dredge on Carson River in Dayton Expects to Begin Operation in Mid-June
Dredge primarily operated on meander on the river that had been cut off in the floods of 1861-62.
- June 1900 DAYTON – U.S. Census Shows 427 Individuals in Dayton, Sutro Only 109, and Silver City Population Down to 257
Most of the population of Sutro is Italian, with no Chinese listed. Dayton lists only 17 individuals from China. Como Mining District lists only 15, with two from China.
- June 6, 1900 DAYTON – Improvements Underway at Rock Point.
The Dayton *Times* reported: A force of men has been employed during the week tearing on the old battery blocks at the Nevada reduction works’ Rock Point mill, preparatory to replacing the old machinery with that of a more modern type, New mortars, cams and shafts are to be substituted which will permit of the running of the mill at a higher rate of speed than at present, and means more crashing capacity. The Rock Point mill was rebuilt by the late Governor Gov. Stevenson out of old material, which served its purpose for a time but has now reached the condition when it has to be removed.
- June 15, 1905 DAYTON – Members of a Boxcar Burglary Ring Arrested in Dayton
Four thieves were arrested; more arrests expected. The SP had lost thousands of dollars over more than 6 months.
- June 17, 1905 DAYTON – Ophir Ranch Sold for Water Rights and Access to Placer Sites
The Depaoli, formerly Ophir, Ranch sold for \$20,000. The Reno *Evening Gazette* reported that new owners’ plan was to pump water to raise the water level on the ranch to allow the working of possible placer deposits.
- June 28, 1906 DAYTON – Nevada Reduction Works Letterhead Lists Mill Executives
Executives for the mill at Rock Point were [Captain] Herman Davis, President and Manager, Frank J. Kornmayer, Superintendent, Vance C. Osmont, Consulting Engineer.

- June 3, 1914 DAYTON – Check to Masonic Board of Relief Reveals Officers of Dayton’s Hall of the Valley Lodge No. 9 of the Masons
The Officers listed or signing the check are W. H. Scott, Master, Byron Gates, Treasurer, and J. F. Blakey, Secretary.
- June 7, 1917 DAYTON – Scott Carnal, Who Lost a Leg from Injuries in the Civil War, Dies in Dayton
Pvt. Scott Carnal’s life took him from slave to escaped slave to Union soldier to casualty to disabled veteran to outcast to husband to father to divorce and finally to work as a miner in Colorado, California, and Nevada. We will be giving him military honors at a ceremony at the cemetery on June 7.
- June 6, 1926 DAYTON/WASHOE VALLEY – The Nevada State *Journal* Reports Several Daytonites Hold Wiener Roast at Bowers Mansion
Several Daytonites held a wiener roast at Bowers Mansion Wednesday evening after which swimming and dancing were indulged in. Those attending were: Messrs. And Mesdames M. J. King, R. O. Weede, J. F. Blakey, R. L. Baloun and C. C. Braun, Mesdames P. J. Quilici, G. C. Barton, Julius Labadie and Herbert Bruce and Miss Mary Scott.
- June 1932 SP Railroad Requests Discontinuance Between Mound House and Wabuska
Dayton and others fought this for two years but the railroad eventually received approval and closed the line and the Dayton Depot on April 25, 1934. The blow to the local economy was significant.
- June 10, 1936 DAYTON – June Graduates of Dayton Schools are Reported
After a lengthy report in the Nevada *State Journal* on awards to students the following graduates are listed:
The graduates of the high school were: Louie Giometti, Ursula Hankhammer, Pio Mastroianni, Alfred Perondi, Oliver Perondi, Joan Potter, Camille Pradere, Clifford Quilici and Joseph Ricci.
The eighth grade graduates were: Albert Parlanti, Lila Perondi and Jerry Tognarelli.
The seventh grade graduates into junior high were: Bud Longwill, Nellie Bounimaci, Jean Caffrey, Irene McCauley and Betty Jane Carlson.
Principal of the schools: Miss Bernice Johnson
- June 14, 2009 SEATTLE, WA – Lyon County is Listed at Seventh Worst Economically Impacted County in the Nation
The article in the *Seattle Times* was based upon the Associated Press Economic Stress Index, which would get worse for Lyon County before it got better. At the same time the Lyon County unemployment rate was maintaining its place as highest in the state, 15.5% for May.
- June 28, 2009 CARSON CITY – Drought Conditions Continue in State
As if the economy was not enough bad news, the drought that began in 2007 continued through 2008 and into 2009. The article reported this to be one of lowest 3-year rainfall totals in the last century. (Since that time new lows have replaced that observation.)
- June 2, 2010 CARSON CITY – Lyon County Unemployment Remains Above 19 Percent, Second Most Stressed County Highest in the State, Lyon County’s unemployment rate in May was 19.1%, with almost 4500 unemployed workers in a workforce of more than 23,000.
This same month the Associated Press Economic Stress Index showed Lyon County to be the second most stressed county (of more than 25,000 population) in the nation, second only to Imperial County, CA.
- June 7, 2013 LYON COUNTY – Former Lyon County Commissioner, Cowboy Poet, and Pony Express Re-Enactor Larry McPherson Dies
McPherson stunned the electorate by defeating the incumbent in the primary and his opponent in the general election in 2006. A community volunteer, he was also active with the Sheriff’s Mounted Posse, Lyon County Search & Rescue, Dayton Kiwanis, the Historical Society of Dayton Valley, and other organizations and boards. He served for 16 years as the announcer and “Voice of the Nevada Day Parade.”

DOCENT LETTERS
By Ruby McFarland

Tell me and I forget. Show me and I remember. Involve me and I understand
Chinese Proverb

I've decided to continue profiling some of the people who have made the Dayton historical society as strong as it is today. It took more than a handful to make our society a strong working outfit.

While Pat Neylan and I dreamed of a docent program, I had a frequent visitor from Livermore, CA who said she and her husband had bought a house in Dayton and she would like to get involved with the historical society as soon as she moved here.

Donna McElroy was a real fire cracker and a welcome addition to our community. Donna has since passed away, but not before leaving her mark. She came on like gang busters and got involved right away. She had been a member of the historical society in Livermore. She was a volunteer all her life. She volunteered to be an airman in the U.S.A.F. She and I shared that honor of being good soldiers.

She also volunteered with the wild horse group. She put in a lot of hours with both groups. I don't know where she found all the energy she had. She also would help me take care of my friend when I had to be away. When my friend became very ill, Donna would visit her. She was always thinking of other people and what she could do to help.

Donna herself was not a well person. She had already had a bout with cancer when she came here. You would never hear her complain about her ailments. She was a real trooper, one I'm proud to have known. When Donna became so ill she had trouble getting out, you still found her out in a wheel chair doing her best.

Donna was a delight in her period costumes. She had many changes of clothing that depicted the early days of Dayton. She loved telling the fourth grade children all about her dresses and purses. She portrayed what a lady was all about and it wasn't an act.

She was one of those HSDV members you wish we had a lot of, always ready to pitch right in where she was needed. We were lucky to have her as long as we did. Good job—Donna.

On a rainy day April 25th, 52 members of the Douglas County and Alpine County E Clampus Vitus toured Old Town Dayton under the guidance of Stony and Laura Tennant. The tour was organized by Linda Clements after one of the group's members contacted her about the restoration work being done on the Carson & Colorado RR Depot. The E Clampus Vitus is noted for volunteering to help preserve history. (Laura Tennant)





BELLY UP TO THE RAIL BOYS: Taking in Dayton's history on April 25, these E Clampus Vitus fellows from Douglas County and Alpine County in California, toured Old Town on April 25th. The old-fashioned wooden rail one sees here is behind the old firehouse and jail and above the buildings' old basement that was buried in sediment for well-over one hundred years until it was excavated 2010. The 1875 firehouse stands on Pike Street very close to Gold Canyon Creek and floodwaters had deposited debris in the basement anywhere from three to seven feet deep. No one had paid attention to the backside of the building until Stony Tennant realized a portion of the building was buried. The Society had received a grant from the Nevada State Legislature Cultural Affairs Committee in 2010 to shore up the building's foundation that was deteriorating. (Photo courtesy of Laura Tennant.)

This boy was Dayton Pioneer Eugene Howard's grandson. He owned and operated the Union Market on Main Street where the dog groomer is today. He and his wife Eloise raised four children and lived on Main Street between Shady Lane and the old Gold Canyon Steakhouse. When the kids graduated from high school, he moved his family to Berkeley so they could get college degrees, which they all did! (Submitted by Laura Tennant)

