



DOCENTS NEWSLETTER

Historical Society of Dayton Valley

<http://daytonvhisory.org>

July 2015

DAYTON SCHOOLHOUSE 1865-2015

By Pat Neylan

One of the happiest and most exciting moments in a new parent's life is baby's "first word". This is the event recorded in millions of baby books across the country and relayed on to grand and great

grandparents everywhere! If I were an infant growing up in Dayton Nevada my doting parents hovering over me, waiting expectantly for my first word would not be surprised when I pulled out my pacifier, uttered my last goo goo or gaa gaa and said "sesquicentennial"!!

The people of Dayton are definitely old pros at celebrating the 150th Anniversary of almost everything. It started with gold discovery, settlement, the founding of Lyon County, the establishment of the State of Nevada, and moved right on to the Dayton Fire Department, Civil War and the Pony Express. 2015 brings us the wonderful opportunity to celebrate the 150th anniversary of one of Dayton's oldest and most important buildings; the Dayton school. It was in this building that our future was determined and our past preserved as our children were educated. The methods and techniques have changed and evolved but the results are still remarkable. Gone are the rows of neat orderly desks bolted to the floor with eager children sitting in them. Today they have been replaced with stunning display cases loaded with all kinds of things that will peek the curiosity of the modern student. In this building students are offered actual instead of virtual reality. Without one beep or flash they can experience the smell and feel of leather on an old harness or saddle or hear the clang of the antique school bell from England. Their own imagination is unleashed instead of some new program or app. The function of the venerable old building has not changed and its results have not been diminished. Classes are not held daily anymore but do continue all year long. Including the school program walking tours, the Pioneer Ghost Walk, and the many special tours conducted every year, including the cub pack that experienced it just this week, more kids learn from that building in a month now than would have gone through it in ten years 100 years ago!

The family is the most important part of our society and their children are our greatest asset going forward. The historic Dayton Schoolhouse has been part of life in Dayton and Nevada for 150 years now and it does not look like that will change anytime soon! Happy Birthday!!

Look for a special celebration later this year to honor our old friend and if you would like to become part of the educational process and show off the museum now occupying the old school, give me a call.

DOCENT LETTERS
By Ruby McFarland

Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail
Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)

I've decided it's time to give a big "atta girl" to someone in my family. We all have someone who gives more than is asked. We're fortunate to have them in our lives. I was at my wits end being a caregiver when my foster daughter, Phyllis King, gave me a call. She was free of responsibilities at the time and she agreed to come to Dayton to help me out. No sooner had she arrived here, than she was diagnosed with colon cancer and had to have 18 inches of colon removed. She is in remission now. That didn't stop her from helping me out. I had to have a hip replaced and she took over the job of caregiver for me and my charge.

Once over the worst, she looked for something to occupy her time. I suggested getting involved with HSDV. I didn't say "spend all your time there Phyllis."

She started by being part of the Carson/Colorado railroad group. She wasn't as interested in knowing the history as she was just helping out where needed. That is what she still feels and it has run into a lot of other responsibilities. I told her I was going to ask her for an itinerary so I know when I might have some of her time.

I've asked her what part of NO don't you understand when she comes home and tells me what she is up to at the time.

Phyllis is the mother of 2 kids, 4 grandchildren, and a whole bunch of youngsters who call her "grams." She tries to spend a little time with them in August when she goes to Phoenix, AZ for a week. It gets harder to let her go as I have gotten to the place where I need a lot of help. She supplies that help no matter how busy HSDV keeps her.

I don't think there is any part of the HSDV Phyllis hasn't volunteered to help in one way or another. She feels right at home here in Dayton and has made a lot of good friends. It's because of me that she stays here—to look after me. I sometimes act like a bossy mother and I'm sure all she hears from me is "Wa, Wa, Wa. Other times she is my mentor.

It may be only my opinion, but I think she is a good addition to HSDV. She's a hard worker who wants the best for the society and works hard to get it.



Barbara Madison shows a Riverpark School 4th grader the dollhouse at the Dayton Museum during the annual school educational program organized by Barbara Peck.

July in Dayton

By Linda Clements

July is the month of the worst disasters that occurred to early Dayton. This is the time of FIRE, and fire meant actual and financial destruction in 19th-century Western towns due to the wooden buildings, with the resulting inferno often taking many of the masonry-built buildings as well. Two Great Fires, in 1866 and again in 1870—both in July—changed the course of Dayton history and stopped its milling-induced boom in its tracks. In fact, the mills already had problems with July since after the earliest years the water from the Carson River to drive stamps often ran out in July. However, in spite of the potential for disaster July could also be a month of accomplishment, as described in the entries below.

- To July 1, 1854 GOLD CAÑON, CARSON VALLEY – Emigration Through Gold Cañon Lively
“Mr. Jas. B. Ellis, of Gold Cañon, has kindly furnished us with a list of the arrivals in the Valley, from Salt Lake, up to the 1st of July. It sums up as follows: Wagons, 213; cattle, 7,528; horses and mules, 300; sheep, 7,150.”
- July-Oct. 1854 GOLD CAÑON, CARSON VALLEY – Continued Emigration Through Gold Cañon
From a register of the Immigration of the present season, by the Carson route, kept by Mr. J. B. Ellis, we have the following aggregate of wagons, &c , that have passed over this route since the first of July: Wagons. 808; Cattle, 30,015; Horses and mules, 1,903; Sheep, 8,550.
- June-July 1857 SALT LAKE CITY – LDS President Brigham Young Calls LDS Colonists in Carson Valley to Come 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.
- July 1, 1857 GOLD CAÑON – Chinese Arrive to Begin Digging Chinese Ditch
About 150 Chinese had arrived at Gold Cañon from El Dorado county, with a view of engaging in extensive mining operations. They propose cutting a ditch from Carson river to Gold Cañon for this enterprise, and are encouraged in their labors by the settlers.
- July 1858 PLACERVILLE, CA – George Chorpenning Renews Mail Service Across Sierra to Salt Lake City, Hires “Snowshoe” Thompson
Service started in July 1858 and ran weekly across the Sierra, coming through Gold Cañon. By December he altered the route east of Gold Cañon to the more southerly and shorter Egan Trail, which was later the approximate route taken by the Pony Express. Chorpenning hired Norwegian John A. “Snowshoe” Thompson to bring the mail across the Sierra in winter.
- July 7, 1859 NEW YORK, NY – New, Shorter Emigrant Route Reported in *New York Times*
The new route explored by Simpson the year before leaves the standard trail east of Ruby Valley and rejoins it only when it comes to Chinatown and is claimed to shorten the trip by more than 300 miles.
- July 1859 GOLD CAÑON – Gold Mining Thriving
The correspondent for the *New York Times* reports, “In Gold Canon, also, (over towards Carson Valley,) one company, on Wednesday of last week, took out about \$1,000 in less than half a day's washing with a common rocker.”
- July 20, 1860 FORT CHURCHILL – Construction of Fort Begun
- July 22, 1861 CARSON CITY – Hiking to Carson from China Town, Thomas Flavel Sends a Letter to His Wife and Young Son in Utah
Irishman and former Army bookkeeper Flavel had left his family behind to go to the booming Comstock area and hoped to make enough money to bring his family to join him. He may have been mining but had a good letter of recommendation from his former commanding officer so may have gotten a job as a bookkeeper for one of Dayton's many mills. He had had no luck getting his letters home from China Town so went to Carson to try. Only half this letter survives today and he was never heard from again. A rumor came that he may have drowned and indeed that fall massive flooding changed the course of the Carson River in Dayton. His wife waited and hoped for 10 years before having him declared dead

- July 26, 1861 FORT CHURCHILL – Telegraph reaches Fort Churchill from the west and Fort Kearney, Nebraska, from the east. The remaining distance between is now covered by the Pony Express in seven days.
- July 13, 1862 GOLD HILL – Post Office established
- July 5, 1864 DAYTON – Playbill Announces the Como Amateurs at Doyle’s Theater on Main Street
The evening will include a “Burlesque Circus” with a visiting elephant and will be followed by a Grand Ball.
- July 1, 1866 DAYTON – Great Fire of 1866
Fire broke out about 4 pm in Empire Hay Yard (J.C. Hinds and Samuel Hamilton, owners) near bridge over Carson River, reportedly due to the negligence of a drunken man who fell asleep while smoking. Driven by a strong wind it swept up Main Street consuming all in its wake on the north side including at least 27 businesses and homes, including the offices of the Lyon County Sentinel, the Roberts House, and Doyle’s Theater. Early in its march the fire even burned “fireproof” Sigo & Hazeltine’s store on Main Street. The fireproof Odd Fellows Hall on the south side was scorched but left standing and the fire even jumped over to Birdsall’s but again scorched but did not burn it. Some buildings on the south side of Main near the bridge were also saved. One man slightly injured.
- July 25, 1866 WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Congress Grants Sutro Tunnel Company Exclusive Charter
The U.S. Congress granted the Sutro Tunnel Company an exclusive charter on July 25, 1866. The charter gave Sutro the right to purchase public land at \$1.25 per acre to use for construction of the tunnel, and \$5.00 per acre for land within 2,000’ of the tunnel which contained mineral veins and lodes. It also specified that all persons, companies or corporations owning claims benefitted by the tunnel would be required to contribute to the costs of its operation.
- July 31, 1866 PALMYRA – Post Office Closed (in Como Mining district)
- July 18, 1870 DAYTON – Great Fire of 1870
The fire started about 10 pm, in an unoccupied building next to Pinschowers’. The fire swept along Pike Street and down Main Street to the river. Fifty-two buildings were destroyed, including most of the business district. Businesses lost included Norton’s saloon, Fraul’s carpenter shop, Smith’s restaurant, Bonhan Bros., the Post Office building, Pinschower Bros.’s dry goods store, Carling’s saloon, Brant’s variety store, Davis’s restaurant, O’Malley’s drug store, the Telegraph office, Seaton’s grocery, Fisher’s brewery, Pratt & Shaw’s hay yard, Gruber’s Lyon House, Cross’ National Hotel, Kean’s dry goods store, Gouldin’s barber shop, Hamilton’s livery stable, Franklin’s house, Franklin’s saddlery, Higg’s taylor shop, Migdley’s boarding house, Byron & Crockett’s Odeon Hall, and numerous smaller buildings. A year later the *Nevada State Journal* reported that the business district of Dayton had been significantly reduced due to the effects of the fire.
- July 14, 1875 DAYTON – Businesses Advertised in the *Lyon County Times*
In spite of fire-borne economic decline Dayton still had an active business district. The businesses included the Union Hotel (J.C. Gruber, proprietor), Golden Eagle Hotel (Mr. Jaqua, proprietor), Traveler’s Home (boarding house run by Mrs. Swart), Meyers & Stegman (fireproof building; groceries, hardware, clothing, liquors, etc.), Union Market (Winzell & Campbell), Crane’s Market (Noah & Sims Crane, on Main), Post Office Bookstore (J.A. Bonham; stationery, tobacco and cigars, watches, jewelry, silverware, fancy goods, etc.), J.R. Shaw (corral, stable, hay, grain, wood), Parke Barnes (livery), C.G. Fish (new: lodging and chop-house), Delta Saloon (Jacob Hanson; liquors, billiards, etc.), Carson Beer Depot (M. Ebner), Odeon Saloon (Mr. Coddington), J. Leversee (funeral supplies), Dr. J.C. Hazlett (pharmacy and physician). Walter & Newman were selling out and going to close, while J.C. Franklin had a shop for sale.
- July 6, 1878 DAYTON – Fierce Fire Burns Dayton Home, Kills One
Fire was again on the loose, driven by strong winds. Near the Carson River bridge a spark from a fire at the back of Randall’s blacksmith shop ignited nearby hay stacked and gale-force winds quickly spread it to the nearby residence of George P. Randall and family. The residence was completely destroyed, killing Randall’s sister-in-law, Mrs. William Williamson (Jennie). Although volunteers were directing water within two to three minutes of the first cry of “FIRE,” Mrs. Williamson ran back into the dwelling to rescue her two-year-old, whom she saved, but then unseen again entered the house and was not missed until the entire structure was completely engulfed. Her charred body was found in her bedroom. In her early twenties, she and Mr. Williamson, who was in Aurora at the time, had moved to Dayton from Markleeville, CA, a few months before.
- July 11, 1881 DAYTON – Lyon Mill Welcomes its First Engine, the Ernie Birdsall; a Spontaneous Excursion Ensues
When the narrow gauge Carson & Colorado Railroad reached Dayton from Mound House in late 1880, Birdsall replaced his horse-drawn “railroad” with one having the same 3-foot track gauge, and replaced his horses with two small engines. The first was a Porter that Birdsall named the “Ernie Birdsall” for one of his sons. Excited citizens

piled all over the little engine and rode it through the U-shaped track through town, with a few stops at local watering holes that made the excursion all the more pleasant. Later it was joined by "Fred," named for Birdsall's other son.

- July 8, 1882 DAYTON – *Weekly Nevada State Journal* Reports Not One Unoccupied Habitable Dwelling
In the boom brought on by the arrival of the Carson & Colorado Railroad "families hunting houses must either build, repair, or go further."
- July 11-12, 1883 KEELER, CA – William Sharon of the Bank of California Takes His Business Partner, Financier Darius O. Mills, on a Train Ride from Mound House, NV, to Keeler, CA
At the end of this dusty, rough, and primitive ride on their newly opened Carson & Colorado Railroad, Mills supposedly utters the famous phrase, "Gentlemen, we have either built this railroad 300 years too soon or 300 miles too long!" Regular passenger service commences in August.
- July 1890 VIRGINIA CITY – Census Estimates Indicate about 650 Residents in Dayton
Lyon County is estimated to have dropped in population by 1/3 since 1880, in part as a result of Comstock mines playing out. Storey County is estimated to have dropped by almost half .
- July 1891 CARSON CITY – Rock Point Mill is Sold to the Union Mill & Mining Company
The sale came in settling the estate of the late Governor Stevenson, from which his widow received \$5000. The mill was sold for either \$5000 or \$8000, depending upon the reporter.
- July-Aug. 1892 CALIFORNIA – The Three Divisions of the Carson & Colorado Railroad Company are Sold to the Carson & Colorado Railway Company
In a largely paperwork reorganization that allowed debt refinancing, the three separate divisions are consolidated as one company incorporated in California.
- July 23, 1900 DAYTON – Rock Point Mill Closes for Summer Due to Lack of Water from Carson River
The Rock Point mill closed down by first of the week, there being no water to turn the wheel. The company is still running the cyanide plant, and has enough tailings on hand to keep the plant in operation until winter.
- July 1904 TONOPAH JUNCTION, NV – Narrow-Gauge Tonopah Railroad Completed
This new railroad connected to the old Carson & Colorado Railway at Tonopah junction, 9 miles south of Mina, NV, allowing Tonopah ores to be shipped north to mills including the Rock Point in Dayton. Since 1900 the C&C has been owned by the Southern Pacific.
- July 1905 MINA, NV – Old Carson & Colorado Standard-Gauged from Mound House to Mina
116 miles of rails through Dayton from Mound House to Mina are standard- (rather than narrow) gauged, while 10 miles of narrow-gauge from Mina to Tonopah Junction is equipped with a third rail for standard- or narrow-gauge operation. The 16 miles of narrow-gauge through Hawthorne—founded by the C&C in 1881—is abandoned. Mina is made the terminal for both standard-gauge and narrow-gauge trains. (Tonopah Railroad followed and standard-gauged their 60-mile line.)
- July 19, 1909 CARSON CITY – Attorneys for Dayton and Yerington Clash in Supreme Court Over Relocating Lyon County Seat to Yerington
Following the loss of the Lyon County Courthouse in Dayton to fire in May, mandamus proceedings were directed on a petition for an election by citizens of Yerington against the Lyon County Commissioners.
- July 1911 DAYTON – Rock Point Mill Flooded but Damage Slight
Rushing water from a cloudburst did damage estimated between \$5000 to \$6000. However, while a lot of mucking of debris and repair of the concentrators, windows, and doors was needed, structural damage was slight.
- July 1924 DAYTON – Large Family Reunion for 83rd Birthday of Mrs. Caroline Gruber
Mrs. Gruber, born in Prussia in 1841, married J.C. Gruber in 1867. After buying and losing to fire the first Union Hotel, in 1870 they built the current Union Hotel on Main Street. After J. C. died in 1886 Caroline ran the hotel until at least 1910
- July 4, 1925 DAYTON – *Mason Valley News* Reports Shooting in Dayton
A fight broke out late one Sunday night between blacksmith A. Gianni and L. Venturi, former owner of the Barrett Ranch, at the Quiriconi soft drink emporium. Blows were exchanged and near Elgin's corral Venturi took a shot at

Gianni with a pistol. The bullet penetrated organs and lodged near the spine but at the time of the article had not been removed and the patient had gone home. (from Laura Tennant article)

July 16, 2008 DAYTON – HSDV Plans for C&C Depot Restoration Finalized Following a Series of Community and Stakeholder Meetings

In a final community meeting on this day the decision made was to restore to its original 1880s appearance as a C&C RR depot and to rotate it on the property to be roughly in alignment with the original alignment. A Railroad Working Group was formed to push forward to accomplish these tasks.

July 24, 2012 DAYTON – HSDV Event Honoring First Responders

The event, “7 (days) 24 (hours) 12 (months),” included a BBQ and presentations and was held at the main Central Lyon County Fire District Sta

