

DOCENT NEWSLETTER

Historical Society of Dayton Valley

<http://daytonnhistory.org>

March 2016

GRAND OPENING

By Pat Neylan

As Thanksgiving approached last November, the Dayton Schoolhouse Museum ended an active and busy schedule and quietly closed for the winter. As always, those most involved with the museum looked forward to the coming Christmas Season and set aside their concerns about the museum until we got to the "winter projects" later on. Now winter projects are always very much anticipated. The slow, quiet, undisturbed moments when we can work at our own pace on anything we feel needs to be done at the museum. There is always plenty of time; winter lasts for months; no pressure whatsoever! Then, suddenly, it is noticed that winter is mostly gone; not quite everything has been done and the museum is scheduled to reopen!!

Whoever said history repeats itself sure knew what they were talking about because that's right where we are and the museum reopens on the weekend of March 5th and 6th. Alas, all was not in vain and the "winter projects" were completed....mostly. There is a spectacular new display for the Rock Point Mill. The accessioning project gained a lot of traction including the installation of a new computer program (Past Perfect) that will streamline the accessioning process, give our museum an inventory system consistent with other museums both large and small as well as a simpler method of doing research in the future when it is fully implemented.

There are new volunteers signed up for working the museum. Training sessions have been conducted and all are ready to go. We have already had several "special" tours; a scout troop, a group from Hong Kong, an organized group studying local Nevada historic sites and a television film crew. Not a bad kick off for the new season and we only expect it to get better as the year progresses.

As remarkable as the schoolhouse is, it is still only a building. All of the action, change, progress has to come from the incredible group of volunteers. You make it happen all year long! Thanks!!

When the HSDV sponsored a free giveaway of lilac plants for May's State Historic Preservation Month, it was



Del Minor's idea and it brought more people out than we had ever had that day to the Museum. This was 15 or 20 years ago. I only recall the names of our members, from left, Barbara Peck and far right, Del Minor and next to her Judy Harris. The other folks were Daytonites who visited the Museum and also got a lilac plant. Old Town Dayton was always known for the spring blossoming of lilacs, if they didn't freeze first! (Laura Tennant photo.)

Del Minor's love for youths, family and saving Old Town Dayton will always be remembered

(By Laura Tennant)

My forever friend Del Minor passed away on February 6 and I will always remember the joy of our friendship that lasted 60 years.

Hundreds of friends joined the Minor family on February 13 at the Dayton Baptist Church and community center to recall her lifetime of accomplishments.

Pastor Jerry Peterson noted that during the 86 years that Del graced this earth, her life had been a marvelous journey.

Del loved people and brought happiness into the lives of those around her just by walking into a room. Her infectious laughter and unpretentious treatment of strangers or friends made people feel special. Del did not judge people and she treated the rich, the poor, kings, queens or peons alike.

Del's life cannot be described in words and if so, it would take a book to do her credit; yet, I will do my best.

Most importantly, Del adored her five children, Steve, Cam, Julie, Tom and Mary, grandchildren and great grandchildren, and they adored her and treated her royally during the hardships of her golden years.

A pioneer

Del and her husband Gene moved to Dayton to the Heidenreich-Minor Ranch on a beautiful spot near the Carson River in 1949 and first lived in a remodeled chicken coop. A covered wagon might have been more comfortable; yet, Del sewed curtains, wallpapered, painted and created a home from nothing.

I met Del and her husband, Gene, in the 1950s and after I married, my husband Charles Brantingham and I lived on the ranch in a cabin when our son Darrell was born. When Darrell was around six weeks old, Del was his first baby-sitter.

Dayton 4-H

Del began teaching a 4-H sewing class around 1957 and was an active leader for more than 30 years. Besides sewing and gardening, her numerous club leaderships included a boys' archaeology group, where she taught the kids to bead and the cultural of the local Indians. My sons, Darrell and Matt still have the beaded boxes they made at Del's house many moons ago.

Del then put the tiny town of Dayton on the national map after she formed the Dayton Community Club in the 1970s. We worked side by side and were workaholic volunteers with the 4-Hers and loved it.

It was in 1968 that Del had recruited me to lead a 4-H cooking club, and that was the beginning of more than 20 years of teaching a variety of subjects to Dayton's great kids and becoming a community organizer as well. Del changed my life, my kids' lives and dozens of other peoples' lives through her dedication and hard work in Dayton, Lyon County and state 4-H activities, the Dayton Firebells and preserving Dayton's history.

When my son Matt had a cerebellum brain tumor removed at Stanford 25 years ago, the community held a BBQ for him. Del and many friends presented him with a quilt they made. A few years ago, Matt's wife Tracy had the quilt professionally cleaned and had Del's name embroidered on it. It will be a family heirloom.

Saving Old Town Dayton

Del and Stony helped cultivate my love and obsession for Dayton and Nevada history. If it had not been for the work she inspired with the 4-H Teen Club, who participated in Nevada's bi-centennial by painting old-town's buildings, fences and the Dayton "D" in 1976, no one today would have been volunteering to save this town where Nevada began.

And, the Dayton 4-H won a national Standard Oil award for community service for their bi-centennial projects and won a trip to San Francisco. Del and I chaperoned and had a blast with the teens. Del was rewarded and chosen Nevada's 4-Her of the year and won a trip to Chicago! There are two quilts hanging in the Dayton Museum, one contains large old photographs of historic Dayton, and the other is of a miner on Gold Canyon Creek panning for gold. Del made the miner for me when we celebrated the Sesquicentennial of Nevada's First Gold Discovery in Dayton in July 1999.

Saving Old Town

It was Del and my dream to create a Dayton Museum and that dream came true when Lyon County allowed us to take over the old Dayton schoolhouse and after many volunteer hours, the Museum opened in 1994 and the rest is history!

Memories

Del and I learned photography and silver smithing together, and spent hours hunting arrowheads in the pine nuts, studying Indian history, collecting pine nuts in the fall and roasting them, ice skating in the winter and catching catfish on the ponds at their house, cutting Christmas trees in the mountains, making Christmas popcorn balls for the town community Christmas party and selling hot roast beef sandwiches for the Dayton Volunteer Fire Department's revival of Santa Maria Day and street dance.

Stony and I still have the chess figures in the shapes of the Indian culture that she sculpted of clay!



Being filmed for a live TV show, Stony Tennant, on the left, explains to Channel 2 TV's Jack Sutton this screened box hanging in JohnD's Barn at the Dayton Museum was used for outdoor refrigeration in the olden days. Watch Sutton's Channel 2 TV show, Nevada Backroads, at 6:30 on Sunday, March 6, when Dayton history is featured. Sutton and his cameraman, Steve, filmed the Dayton Museum, JohnD.'s Barn and says he will be back to a story on the doings at the C&C Depot and Firehouse and Jail. Jack was on his way home recently and thought that he had not driven through Old Town Dayton for awhile, so, afterward, he

decided to feature the Dayton Museum and Old Town on his show. Mind you, we were there two hours and the segment lasts 2 minutes! (Laura Tennant photo)

This photo of the Cpt. Herman Davis Chloro-Cyanide plant is not in the new Dayton book just published by Arcadia, but another one is; however, this picture more clearly shows where this plant was located in Dayton, about where Second and Third Avenues join to U.S. 50 today, and how close to the river and the town's residents homes it was. Interestingly, despite the chemicals used around town in Dayton's mining era, most of the old timers born and raised here lived into their 90's.

Davis came to Dayton in 1893-94 to manage a J.H. Rae's river gold dredging project. He built the plant around 1897 with his partner, J.C. Pierson to remill tailings that had been milled in the earliest days of the 1859-60s, mills that were inefficiently run at the time. Davis eventually bought the Rock Point Mill (remnants of the one you see at the Dayton State Park now.)

Davis kept milling going around Dayton until by 1913 when he sold the Rock Point Mill and moved his family to Reno.

Read and see more about Dayton's history in the new book, "Dayton" published by Arcadia Publishing. Buy your book at the Dayton Museum, opening the first weekend in March. All proceeds benefit the HSDV to preserve Dayton's rich and diverse history. (Submitted by Dayton historian, Laura Tennant.)



Docent Letters
By Ruby McFarland

It's better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to open your mouth and remove all doubt.
Confucius

Chester Barton was a man for all seasons. He wore many hats throughout his life in the Dayton area. He came to live in the area in the early 1920s. His mother, Emma Loftus, lived here where she and her husband, Jack Loftus, ran a general store on the corner of Main and Pike Streets.

Chester opened the first auto garage in the area. He had a garage that still stands between the Fox Hotel and the Union Hotel. He moved to the back of the Loftus store and he and his wife Sybil lived in the house next door on Pike Street. The house is still there and occupied.

Sybil and Chester took in Sybil's sister's children, Wilma, Ursula, and Bobby Hankammer after their mother left the area. Bob Hankammer lived with Chester from time to time. He was the kids' father.

Chester was the Deputy Sheriff in Dayton for a very long time. He was a no nonsense sheriff. From what I can glean, he did not always do as he said.

He had many businesses in and around Dayton. He had a trucking company that hauled cement and building materials up to Como to the mining operations up in the mountains. Strangely, after the mining went away, he hauled a lot of the lumber back to Dayton. The Ricci Ranch and his own house that was the Carson/Colorado Railroad Depot still has a lot of the lumber.

Chester was married twice. Helen was his second wife. She helped in the raising of the Hankammer children. She and Chester were always doing something they enjoyed doing. They fished a lot at Lahontan Dam and along the Carson River. They would also go mushroom hunting along the river.

When I moved here, there was a gas station on the corner of Highway 50 and Main Street that Chester had built. He never had a robbery at the station because he kept rattle snakes in a glass cabinet inside the station—better than a watch dog.

He also had wild cats. The first one died and someone gave him another one. Most of the people who remember him also knew the wild cat and that he collected rattlesnakes.

Some say the Robert Laxalt book "Man in the Wheat Field" was written about Chester.

Chester had a lot of wild businesses in his lifetime. One was a resort called Whispering Pines up at Lake Tahoe. His mother Emma ran the operation from late May to late September every year until the late 1930s.

He was a scavenger and tore down the school at Sutro for the lumber. Lumber was hard to come by and he sold all the lumber he salvaged from many places

He did a lot of things for many people in Dayton. He died before his wife Helen, and she lived in the depot until she passed on.