

***Our
Mission***

To provide visibility and support for the gathering and dissemination of history about the roles and contributions of all Nevada women.

Kay Sanders

By Kathy Noneman



On November, 18, 2019, the NWHP family lost one of our treasured founding members. Catharine Downer Sanders (Kay) was a fourth-generation Nevadan who spent her formative years traveling rural Nevada while her father was an engineer for the Nevada highway department. Her travels led her to a lifelong interest in her native state and its history. She was editor of the Reno high school newspaper and graduated in 1953. This experience led to her interest in journalism and she began writing for local newspapers.

She married O'Neil Sanders in 1955 and while raising three sons, Kay obtained BA and MA degrees in education and worked at UNR. In 1982 she became director of Continuing Education. She

was instrumental in forming the Nevada Adult Education Association and this brought her to the attention of our founder, Jean Ford.

Jean immediately recognized Kay's talents and enlisted her as a member of the newly formed Nevada Women's History Project. Kay in turn brought in her mother Alice Downer and her aunt Gertrude Gottschalk. These three formidable women were already involved in women's rights issues and Nevada politics. Kay became a member of the Project's Board of Directors where she served as State Coordinator, Vice Chair of the North, Newsletter editor, and biography website writer and editor.

Kay was a powerful leader and diplomat and served the project well during many difficult years. She had a remarkable ability to keep activities running smoothly because members held her in high respect and affection. Kay was firm in her belief that courtesy and kindness coupled with hard work brought results. Nevada Women's History Project honored Kay as their Woman of Achievement in 2007.

She will be forever remembered and missed by this organization which benefited for so long from her tireless efforts on our behalf. Biographical information used here was taken from the obituary written by Kay's son Chris Sanders and posted on Facebook.

Profiles of Members

Lynn Bremer

By Marcia Cuccaro

Meet Lynn Bremer, one of the original founders of the Nevada Women's History Project.

Lynn was born in Chicago, Illinois but as a young girl she moved with her parents and three sisters to Palm Springs, California. She attended San Diego State University graduating in 1967 with a degree in history. She married in 1969 and was a widow by 1974. She taught special education in various California school districts including Santa Barbara, Los Angeles and Sacramento. In 1991, she entered the Peace Corp for two years in Costa Rica where she taught Special Education courses through an extension university to teachers in Limón. Lynn's parents had a summer home in Incline Village, Nev. and Lynn often visited there during her years in California. When she returned from the Peace Corp, she moved to Incline Village and began her residency in Nevada.

One day she decided to visit the State Capital and State Legislature and during that visit she ran into our founder, Jean Ford who was leading a tour. Many of you know how Jean Ford worked. Once she had a susceptible individual in her grasp, she drafted that individual into working for the women of Nevada. Lynn became one of Jean's acolytes. She traveled with Jean when she talked to groups about the importance of women's history and was with her when the Nevada Women's History Project was officially formed. Lynn was elected the first Secretary/Membership Chair in June of 1996. By September of 1996, the NWHP had 44 individual members, 14 organization and 9 State organizations listed on its membership rolls. Today NWHP has grown its membership to 127 members, 3 life members of which Lynn was the first one, 10 honorary members and 6 organizations.

Lynn has also been active in the Reno Chamber Orchestra and served as President of the Board from 1999-2002. She funded the first study center for student-athletes at UNR, in the Old Gymnasium and a women's golf scholarship. She is currently one of the Directors of the Twentieth Century Club, the oldest women's organization in Nevada. She and her sisters sit on the board of the Mary Bremer Foundation, which currently supports the Mary Bremer Teen Center of the Boys and Girls Club in Palm Springs, Calif. The Foundation gives a scholarship annually to the Club's Youth of the Year. She supports the Women and Children's Center of the Sierra (WACCS), an organization that provides services



to women to help them move from poverty. One of the basic needs for young mothers are diapers and Lynn has made providing that necessity a goal. This organization also assists women with ESL classes and assistance in obtaining their GEDs as well as job education, job search and preparation.

Lynn worked with the Nevada Historical Society for about three and a half years researching the published stories, essays and poetry of Reno educator, Mary Stoddard Doten who arrived in Nevada in the 1870s. Mary S. Doten was a woman of many achievements, among them, she was a teacher, school administrator, a member of the State Board of Education, a suffragist, and an author! Lynn was able to put the many facets of Mary S. Doten into a two-volume collection of stories, essays and poems (a total of 1,038 pages!). The two volumes, *From This Land of Sagebrush and Alkalai: The Writings of Mary Stoddard Doten* were published in 2015.

Lynn can often be found working behind the scenes in helping build a better Reno Community. She has a wide range of interests and abilities to make things happen when needed. NWHP is very fortunate to count Lynn Bremer as a member and supporter. When you get a chance to meet her, please introduce yourself and you will find yourself talking with a woman of great compassion and intellect. You'll be very glad you chose to meet her. Getting to know Lynn is like finding a hidden treasure and I'm so glad I had the opportunity to write about her in this newsletter.

Toni Lowden Artist in Action

By Catherine Cuccaro



This past Saturday, October 12th, artist and designer Antonia Lowden opened her home and studio to NWHP members and guests for an up close and personal Artist in Action event.

Toni took us on a tour of her beautiful home and regaled us with stories of artwork she's collected over the years, bringing each piece to colorful life. We also saw some of Toni's own artistic creations, before venturing into her studio.

In the studio, we were witness to where the magic happens. The studio houses a 10 foot wall frame loom and an AVL 16 harness floor loom. Both seriously impressive, as well as the materials used to create her work. Toni graciously described her creative processes and entertained questions.

Toni is an MFA/Graduate of Fiberworks/JFK University, an award winning artist, and is known for her woven tapestries and oil pastel paintings. If you want to check out more of Toni's artwork, her tapestries are included in three local permanent collections; The Nevada Museum of Art, The City of Reno, and The University of Nevada, Pennington Health Science Building.

You can also find more information on Toni, her art and her classes on her website: <http://antonialowden.com/>

Many thanks to Antonia Lowden for hosting and to the NWHP for organizing this fascinating, fun and informative event.

Photo by Mona Reno

President's End of Year Message

By Patti Bernard

This issue completes another year of NWHP Newsletters and culminates our 2019 NWHP activities. We hope that you have enjoyed reading about all the marvelous women that the staff has showcased over the months for you. We enjoy researching, and presenting information about Nevada women in a variety of formats, but this newsletter is one of our favorites. We always welcome, and are open to your comments, and suggestions for future topics.

We are entering into the Centennial year of the passage of the nation's 19th Suffrage Amendment. There will be many avenues, both within our organization and state-wide celebrations, to mark this momentous occasion when most women could now take greater control of their lives through the right to vote. Our hope is that you will participate in many of them.

As NWHP Chair, I thank you for your support over this past year and wish you all a most happy and healthy new 2020.

Presentation to Zonta

By Patti Bernard

On October 25, Mona and Patti made a presentation to the Zonta Club of Greater Reno, on the mission and activities of the Nevada Women's History Project. We were pleasantly surprised when Zonta President Joy Orlich, presented us a copy of a NWHP committee membership report from their files with the date 1995. Zonta was one of the first organizations who joined the fledgling women's history organization that Jean Ford had envisioned only a year before. Zonta Club of Greater Reno is celebrating their club's 27th anniversary of chartering on October 28, 1992.

The Zonta organization has had a global impact in supporting the empowerment of advocating that women's rights should be recognized as human rights, and that every woman should be able to achieve her full potential. We are honored to have them as a partner.

Membership and Donations - October—December 2019

For 2020 Membership Year

Renewing Members:

Individual - \$30

Cheri Abbott
Dr. Byllie Andrews
Nancy J. Bakley
K. Ellen Barkow
Karen L. Benna
Linda Clements
Joyce Cox
Sue Davis
Isabel Espinoza
Jacki Falkenroth
Mary Lee Fulkerson
Abigail Johnson
Lois Kelly
Virginia (Ginnie) Kersey
Bertha Mullins
Maggie Thomsen
Dorismae Weber

Family of Two- \$55

Jean & Dave Carbon
Catherine Cuccaro & Jeff Milligan
Bonnie & Katherine Drinkwater
Jon & Christianne Hamel
Andre Roy
Jocelyn Roy

Honorary Members:

Mary Anne Convis
Dawn Gibbons
Betty Glass
Dema Guinn
Kathy List
Sandy Miller
Kathleen Sandoval
Holly Van Valkenburgh
Linda Wyckoff

Best Friend Forever

Lynn Bremer
Vida D. Johnson-Keller
Mona Reno

Organization - \$50

Nevada Women's Fund
Zonta Club of Greater Reno

Friend - \$100

Faye I. Andersen
Marcia Cuccaro
Barbara Finley
Michelle Gardner
Dr. Jaculine C. Jones

Good Friend - \$250

Patricia D. Cafferata

Best Friend - \$500

Patti Bernard

Donations: General Fund

Karen L. Benna - \$10
Linda Clements - \$20
Joyce Cox - \$100
Sue Davis - \$20
Mary Lee Fulkerson - \$70
Virginia (Ginnie) Kersey - \$20
Maggie Thomsen - \$20

Donations in memory –

Catharine (Kay) Sanders

Patti Bernard - \$100
Mona Reno - \$500
Holly Walton-Buchanan - \$100

Memorials:

NWHP regret the passing of our members from January to December 2019.

Ken Davis
Gertrude Gottschalk
Catharine Sanders
Linda Hiebert Sekiguchi

Thank you All!
You are Critical to the
Success of the Nevada
Women's History Project!

South Reno Rotary Rocks!



In October, in celebration of Nevada Day, Reno South Rotary hosted Nevada Women's History Project, requesting a presentation on one of our remarkable Nevada Women. With the help of awesome Nevada Women's History Project's researcher, Patti Bernard, I presented on Lydia Adams-Williams. Lydia (I feel we are now friends) was such a remarkable woman. Teacher, writer, conservationist, political candidate, lecturer and, yes prospector. Although she spent many years in Washington, D.C. she called Genoa her home.

The Reno South Rotary were such gracious hosts and a wonderful audience. I think they were impressed with Lydia and her achievements. They asked me three questions about the Nevada Women's History Project I could not answer. I followed up with our President, Patti Bernard, the next day and answered the questions. One long-time Rotarian knew our founder Jean Ford very well and shared a few stories about her with us all. I believe he was smitten by her charms!

I feel more confident, so if you know of an opportunity to speak to a group about a remarkable Nevada woman, let me know and I will do my best to accommodate. If you are interested in doing a presentation on a Nevada Woman, contact Patti Bernard as she is such a great teacher/researcher and she will provide any support needed to make your presentation successful.

Onward! Lisa-Marie Lightfoot

JFRC Members Treated to Guided Cemetery Tour in Dayton

Text and Photos By Janice Hoke



Margee Richardson, Karen Howe and Laura Tennant

A rare treat, a guided tour of the Dayton Cemetery by a very knowledgeable researcher, was a reward for NWHF members of the Jean Ford Research Committee this fall.

Karen Howe, a volunteer at the Historical Society of Dayton Valley who has dedicated many hours to creating a complete catalog of the gravestones and histories of past residents of Dayton, offered to guide us around the grounds of the cemetery. Laura Tennant, HSDV historian, was also our guide.

"The wealth of knowledge under her (Howe's) bonnet really impressed me," said Margee Richardson. "It made a wonderful, delightful connection to our efforts."

Richardson and other members of the JFRC, Patti Bernard, Mona Reno, and I, have been diligently collecting names of Nevada women from the Dayton museum, including Howe's cemetery census.

The historic women's names are input into the NWHF website section, under the Research Center tab, named the "Interviews -Alpha Index," which can be accessed online by any person interested in where information about a Nevada woman can be found. There are now 11,047 references available to the public on the website, www.nevadawomen.org.

"I saw some familiar names" on the cemetery tombstones, Richardson said. Among them are those of District Judge Clark J. Guild and his daughter, Marjorie Guild Russell, the wife of Nevada Governor Charles H. Russell. Clark Guild, born in 1887 and raised in Dayton, followed a familiar Nevada pattern of employment in the mines, the railroads and the law, but is best known as the

founder of the Nevada State Museum in 1939.

Another famous personage buried in the cemetery, one of the oldest and constantly maintained cemeteries in Nevada, is a miner, James Finney, known as "Old Virginny" and the namesake of Virginia City, Nevada.

Howe pointed out to our group the wagon tracks that can still be seen directly in front of the cemetery on the trail to the Comstock gold and silver fields.

Many of the oldest tombstones are a bit dilapidated, but the overall impression is of a serene, desert resting place among the sagebrush hills. Fences and walls enclose family plots, some of which are maintained by current family members. Lyman Crockett started the cemetery in 1851 and dug the first grave. Later two of his children were buried there.

"Some graves need a little more love," Richardson observed.

Howe explained that, while Lyon County provides a grounds-keeping crew for common areas, there is an effort to recruit more people in the community to tend to the gravestones themselves.



NWHF - Membership Report December 2019

This report represents memberships for the 2020 year.

As of December 5th, NWHF currently has 38 members in good standing and 84 in arrears. NWHF has 2 organizations in good standing and 4 in arrears. NWHF has 3 Life Members (Best Friends Forever).

Thank you,
Sue Davis, Membership

NWHF - Financial Report December 2019

The Year-to-Date, as of December 2019, financial report shows a bank and PayPal balance of \$65,656.72, \$426.72 in fixed assets, \$0.00 liability and a net YTD income of - \$704.72. The total equity plus liability of the NWHF is \$66,082.90.

Michelle Gardner, Treasurer

Featured Historic Nevada Woman:

AGNES HUME SCOTT TRAIN JANSSEN

*Nevada State Museum curator
devoted her life to natural history,
Genoa's Pink House*

At a glance:

Born: March 4, 1905, Seattle, Washington

Died: July 17, 1991, Carson City, Nevada

Maiden Name: Agnes Hume Scott

Race/Nationality/ethnic background: Caucasian

Married: Percy Train, June 7, 1928
John Janssen, May 28, 1944

Children: None

Primary city and county of residence and work:

Genoa, Douglas County; Carson City

Major Fields of Work: Nevada State Museum
curator, naturalist, author

Other Role Identities: Artist



52, hiked up Lone Mountain near Lovelock, Nev., where they were married at sunrise. The couple would go on to spend much of the next 11 years collecting fossils, minerals and plants in the remote areas of Nevada and Death Valley.

Agnes used her art talent for sketches of the specimens that were sent to the Smithsonian

Agnes Train Janssen, one of the first curators of the Nevada State Museum, made significant contributions to Nevada natural history, preserved important pieces of Genoa history, and donated artifacts to many organizations to ensure public access for research and reference.

Agnes Hume Scott was born March 24, 1905, in Seattle, the first child of Margaret Hume and Walter John Scott. Margaret, a talented musician, emigrated from Scotland with her family. Walter, born in Ohio, worked for U.S. Steel, eventually becoming a manager. The family moved to Chicago where a son, Wallace Bay Scott, was born in 1908.

In 1924, Agnes graduated from Austin High School in Chicago, where the yearbook indicated she was one of the more active members of the senior class. Nicknamed "Scotty," her interests included many art-related activities with future plans to become an "Artist Extraordinary."

Agnes didn't attend college, but worked as a librarian in the Chicago Public Library civics department. This training would provide invaluable skills she would use in the future for cataloging Nevada fossil and plant specimens, managing collections of the Nevada State Museum and recognizing the importance of selecting the proper storage for such fragile items as historic newspapers.

Saving her earnings to buy two train tickets, Agnes and her mother traveled to Seattle in 1926 to tour the area of her birth. But a chance meeting in the dining car with Percy Train, a renowned fossil hunter, archeologist, mining engineer, and field representative of the Smithsonian Institution, would lead to correspondence and an engagement.

On June 7, 1928, Agnes, age 23, and Percy, age

Institution, the University of Nevada and museums across the country. In 1937, the Trains joined a statewide survey, originally sponsored by the University and the Carson Indian Agency, to identify and collect native plants. One important aspect was the interviewing of tribal members on the medicinal and other traditional uses of these plants, an area in which Agnes excelled. The 1941 publication of a major work, "Medicinal Uses of Plants by Indian Tribes of Nevada" by Percy Train, et al., a groundbreaking study, unexpectedly led to a breakthrough discovery in 1942 by the University of Minnesota's pharmacological research team that helped preserve food rations in the Pacific during World War II.

On August 2, 1928, the Trains had passed through Genoa on the day of Judge Daniel Webster Virgin's funeral where they glimpsed the Virgin house that would become their home in April 1939. Purchased with all of the Virgin/Finnegan family possessions — such as furniture, clothing, housewares, trunks, saddle, papers, books, portraits and records — the house was restored to its original pink color in July 1941 and was known once again as the "Pink House."

Agnes quickly became an active participant and officer in community groups such as the Carson City chapter of the Business and Professional Women's Club. She also enjoyed such events as the Admission Day parades, receiving first-place honors two years in a row for authentic period costumes and riding in Genoa's award-winning historical floats. She was a founding member of the Nevada Academy of Natural Sciences, attended the Astronomical Society of Nevada events, and was an accomplished artist. She often showcased Genoa history by hosting club

meetings in the Pink House that sometimes included a “show and tell” of the house’s artifacts.

One of Agnes’s most lasting contributions was her 1941 volunteer work three to four days each week tagging and cataloging the donations to the not-yet-opened Nevada State Museum. She was abruptly summoned a week before the October 31 scheduled grand opening by the Chairman of the Museum Board Judge Clark J Guild. As recounted in her 1977 book *“Nevada through Rose Colored Glasses,”* the Judge tasked her and a carpenter to unpack “pioneer treasured items brought to the Museum on loan from Carson Valley ranches” that had been left stacked in the basement in unopened boxes since the Museum Office staff thought they were too “folksy.” Judge Guild told her: “It is inconceivable these not be in view...none must be stolen, each must bear a label carrying the owner’s name. The integrity and honor of the Museum Board is in your hands. We cannot demean the generous motives of loyal Nevadans; they are the basic fabric of our future plans.”

Agnes, along with a carpenter, built display tables and finished moving all of the Carson Valley relics on the afternoon before Admission Day. The opening was a success with an estimated 5,000 people visiting the new museum.

Because of her work and background, Agnes was offered the position of Museum Curator six weeks after the opening—an achievement that was soon moderated by the sudden death of her husband Percy less than two months later.

Agnes became a tireless promoter of the museum by writing newspaper articles about the collections and by speaking to community organizations in Carson Valley and Carson City about Nevada history, museum collections and the Trains’ work with fossils and medicinal plants. She also oversaw the acquisition of the 1875 Glenbrook steam locomotive that would stand outside the museum for almost 40 years before being moved to the Nevada State Railroad Museum for full restoration.

Agnes would leave her Nevada home and career in May 1944 after she and John Janssen were united in marriage by Judge Clark Guild. Agnes and John, a Dutch immigrant and California dairyman, had met by chance when he sought shelter in the museum from the snow. The Janssens would continue in the dairy industry before turning to land development in Santa Rosa, Calif., and cattle ranching in Mendocino County, Calif. After retiring to Salem, Oregon, Agnes resumed her career as a librarian. In both California and Oregon, she held officer positions in civic, social and special interest clubs and organizations.

Agnes visited Genoa and Carson City regularly, often scheduling trips around Nevada Day and Candy Dance celebrations. She continued to own

the Pink House until 1956, providing a place for her parents to live and to act as caretakers of the residence and its contents, only selling the home after her widowed mother moved to Oregon.

As early as 1951, Agnes began to take actions to preserve both the Percy Train collections of fossils, minerals and flowers and the Pink House artifacts. In November, the fossil collection went to the Mackay School of Mines. Five years later, another Train collection of specimens was given to the school, including hundreds of pressed flowers and grasses from all over the state.

In summer 1956, she and her mother donated a collection of historical items belonging to Judge Virgin to what is now Mormon Station State Park. Also in 1956, the Nevada State Historical Society received a file of early Nevada and California newspapers from 1865 into the 1930s that were found in the Pink House. Some of the old Genoa ones were to be kept for the “Genoa Fort Museum” but because of the lack of display or storage space, they were placed in a Carson City vault until the museum could care for them properly. In 1979, Agnes donated another collection of Judge Virgin papers, correspondence, financial reports to the Nevada Historical Society.

In 1977, Agnes published *“Nevada through Rose Colored Glasses,”* the story of her life with Percy Train. One of the most important parts is the detailed description of the Pink House rooms and grounds when the Trains took possession in 1939. This in itself has helped preserve an understanding of the house and the families who lived there.

From 1974 to 1979, Agnes donated over 216 artifacts to the then Carson Valley Historical Society, further ensuring the preservation of the Virgin/Finnegan family and the history of the Pink House. Other objects were saved by keeping them with the house, where many, such as framed family portraits, were donated to the Historical Society by later owners.

Agnes spent the last two years of her life in Carson City, where her niece Ann Scott Cameron lived. On July 17, 1991, Agnes died at age 86 and is buried next to her beloved Percy in Genoa Cemetery. His headstone reads “Geologist ... Botanist” and hers “Librarian ... Curator.”

Even in her California and Oregon years, it was evident where her heart was. She ended her 1957 letter to the Nevada Historical Society that accompanied the newspaper donations with: “We shall not forget our sagebrush years. There is only one Nevada!”

Researched and written by Debbie Nye.

Sources of Information can be reviewed with her online biography.

<https://www.nevadawomen.org/research-center/biographies-alphabetical/agnes-train-janssen/>

From our Research Desk

NWHP historical research brings clarity to enigmatic photo

By Patti Bernard

The photograph

Hanging on the wall of the NWHP office is an iconic photograph of a large group of women behind a rope barrier, all dressed in what appear to be early 1900's driving "dusters" that early car enthusiasts wore while they traveled muddy roads in those "newfangled" automobiles.

The photo obviously is over 100 years and photo copyrights expire, unless a long dead photographer's collection of prints is purchased by a contemporary individual or company. Although a scan could be found on the internet, no provenance was attributed to it. The largest and most well-known copy seemed to be on our office wall and, indeed, when the photograph was reproduced in articles in the *Reno Gazette-Journal*, the credit was given to NWHP. No museum or archive claimed ownership of the original photo.

Clearly the reason our founder Jean Ford acquired and framed it many years ago was that it portrayed a rally of women supporting suffrage, for which they fought for decades before achieving the right to vote in Nevada in 1914.

We at NWHP tried to identify the photo in the years running up to Nevada's Suffrage Centennial Year 2014 but were unsuccessful. Close inspection showed the photograph was taken in Carson City and near the state Capitol. We identified the Raycraft Silver State Stable directly north of the Capitol and could date that business between 1900 and 1921. The clothing of the only male in the photo, a policeman, indicated the date to be closer to 1914 than 1920.

I searched, not only once but twice, every suffrage event that ever appeared in the local newspapers in circulation between 1900 and 1920 but with no success.

I knew the organizations associated with suffrage and searched both original records and newspapers but failed to find definitive information. I hypothesized many scenarios of why these women were in mass in Carson City, but the only reasonable explanation still led back to the theory that they were suffrage supporters in Carson City to witness the occasion of Governor Emmet Boyle signing the 1920 Nevada Suffrage legislation. But definite documentation was still needed.

The original is found

Last October, at the state museum, I was staring at multiple photographs of events and years taken at the approximate location of my photo, in the company of Curator of History Bob Nylen and Registrar Mary Covington, when Mary suddenly announced that she *had seen* that photo before, and dove back into the museum photo files. She proudly brought back an original photo of the identical copy I had brought with me. On the back was the date July 4, 1915.

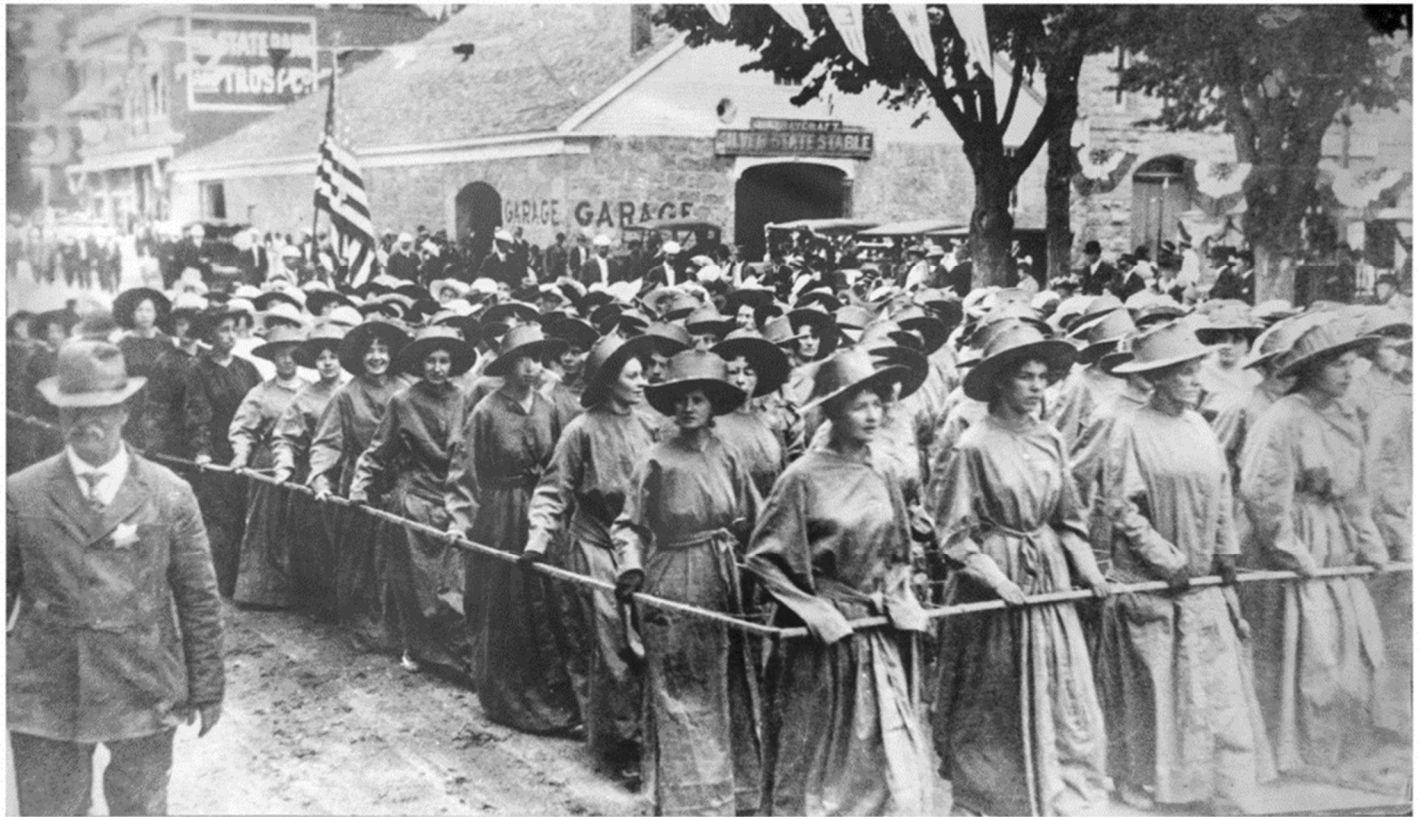
July of 1915? I needed November of 1914! Was the photo dated incorrectly? Mary returned to the files and pulled out the archival envelope that the museum photo had been stored in, with additional information written on it. From that information, and some additional research, what follows is a wonderful glimpse of national and Nevada history, lost long ago.

The G.A.R

Patriotism following the Civil War was at an all-time high. One of the organizations that promoted patriotic activities was the G.A.R. (Grand Army of the Republic), founded in Springfield Illinois in 1866. This was a fraternal organization, composed of veterans of the Union Army, Navy and the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service who served in the Civil War. The organization grew to include hundreds of "posts" (local community units) across the nation. It held a "National Encampment" every year in various cities where members gathered in comradeship and shared experiences. The G.A.R. National Encampment events ended in 1949 when most of their members had died, and the organization was dissolved in 1956 at the death of its last member.

The G.A.R. was one of the first advocacy groups in American politics. Among its other issues was promoting patriotic education, and it really was the driving force for helping make Decoration Day (1868), an unofficial national day of Civil War dead remembrance. This day evolved into the nationally recognized Memorial Day in 1971.

Women also played an important role in the G.A.R. As many Civil War veterans aged, a women's group was organized in 1881 called the Loyal Ladies League (later renamed "The Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic") and the mission of this organization also promoted patriotism and



loyalty to the union through participation in community service, especially to aid veterans and their dependents. A local link to this organization is one of Reno's most important suffrage leaders and author of "The History of Suffrage in Nevada," Mrs. O.H. (Minnie) Mack and her Civil War veteran husband who are both buried in the historic, but mostly forgotten, G.A.R. Cemetery next to the Hillside Cemetery in Northwest Reno.

A widow and the Fourth of July

Back to that "suffrage" photograph hanging on our office wall. Written on that museum photo envelope was,

"Taken on the Fourth of July 1915, Carson City, Nevada on the southeast corner of Carson and Musser Streets."

That date gave me definitive information to go back to the *Carson Daily Appeal* and BONANZA! I found several newspaper entries that explained the photograph. It was of an entry in the 4th of July parade and that really piqued my interest. The entry was originated by a middle-aged lady who owned a millinery shop in Carson. She proposed it, sought out 150 local girls to portray it, sewed and fitted the duster-like garb in the varying flag colors, provided each girl with a similar hat, and devised and rehearsed how to keep the girls in order as they marched down Carson Street.

The July 6, 1915 *Daily Appeal* writes:

"The Living Flag however was a feature that was inspiring and provoked tremendous applause all along the line of march. It was the creation of Mrs. Minnie H. Crisler and that lady is to be highly complimented for the manner in which she carried out the idea."

More questions arose. "Why did she create this particular entry? Exactly what was a "Living Flag" and where did her idea come from? Another thought came to me. We never would have figured this out without the additional information.

History of the Living Flag

My research led me back to the G.A.R. As stated before, the organization did much to organize activities in towns and cities nationwide and, I suggest that all "Living Flag, i.e. Human Flag" activities can be traced back to them. The organization was responsible for many of the patriotic programs in communities on "remembrance" days, such as Memorial Day (formerly Decoration Day), July 4th, "Labor Day", and a mostly now forgotten September 16th, 1876 "Constitution Day."

U.S. flags were used in many ways throughout our nation's histories to celebrate events, but the oldest newspaper article found with individuals portraying the American flag using this format is dated Sept. 14, 1889 in Chicago, Illinois.

Continued on Page 10

Continued from Page 9

"At the Milwaukee encampment this post represented with colored umbrellas the flag of our Nation ... The incident will not soon be forgotten by those who witnessed it. –The Inter Ocean (Chicago, Illinois.)

These were very early formations of G.A.R. men. By 1900 the terms "Living Flag" and "Human Flag" were used. As the groups increased in size, many formations had to become stationary; on risers or in field venues and the format transitioned into using children. Those that actually marched were usually female and smaller in number, ranging from 100 to 200 girls. The stationary flag participants were of both sexes and often were in numbers up to 5,000 students.

The July 5, 1895, *San Francisco Call* writes,

"But the company that drew forth more admiration than any was the Living Flag composed of a number of girls dressed in solid colors and marching in straight lines. They were costumed in red, white, blue, silver and gold, and so arranged as to form a perfect flag of the United States."

The year 1914 saw Living Flag formations at several notable venues. The largest gathering of children was on September 12, 1914 when 6,500 students formed a stationary "Human Flag" at Fort McHenry National Monument in Maryland.

Sometimes moving pictures companies were hired to film the events. In June of 1914, Stahl's Bakery, of Reading, Penn. contracted with Kiralfy Historical Pageant Production Co. of Chicago to present and film "A Living American Flag" composed of children, and the resulting "moving picture" was shown "all over the country."

Nevada connections

Nevada Senator Key Pittman, nephew of Frances Scott Key, made an address at Frederick, Maryland on the centennial of his uncle's writing our national anthem. At the close of his Sept. 14 remarks, a Human Flag was formed in front of the Frances Scott Key Monument by 100 school children, who sang "The Star-Spangled Banner." In this case the newspaper referred to the formation as a "human flag." Senator Pittman was moved.

And what was the association of Governor Oddie of Nevada with Living Flag? The committee in charge of arrangements for the 1914 Panama-Pacific Exposition that was to be held in San Francisco planned to have a G.A.R. Living Flag in their Exposition.

"The field of the flag will be represented by girls in blue dresses with blue hats topped with a white star; the stripes of the flag will be the girls in alternate stripes of red and white dresses and hats."

"Each star representing a State on the Blue background will be represented in the Living Flag by a native daughter of the State. The motto and State song of each will be given by the entire flag."

"Governor Oddie of Nevada was one of the first Governors to signify his intention of sending in a motto and doing all he could to help further the project. His promise was made during the G.A.R. encampment held in Reno a year ago"

So, how did Mrs. Crisler come up with this entry idea? The format was common throughout the U.S. and had occurred in near-by California cities such as Salinas, Los Angeles and San Francisco. She could have seen one of the "moving pictures" that might have been shown in a local theater, or as the G.A.R. encampment was held in Reno in 1913, her veteran husband could have brought the idea back from Reno.

Finding out about such an event wouldn't have been that remarkable, but for a widow woman, into her 40s, entirely on her own, to make such an event happen is absolutely phenomenal. In reading through her newspaper pleas for young women to come by for personal fittings, to pick up their uniforms and hats, to attend practice sessions – I imagine that her perseverance, most notable for weeks before the event, would have driven most individuals batty. Besides being remarkable, the woman should have been given a medal.

The picture becomes clear

As colored photography was nonexistent, our copies of the marchers were in shades of grays and off-white. And because the photograph was taken at street level instead of from a building top, the entire flag could not be photographed; just a segment of the marchers. Now that we know the photograph's theme, details that we missed before now become quite obvious.

The Living Flag format died out over the years but was revived in 1983 by the American Flag Foundation at Fort McHenry until 2008 when school budget cuts made it too difficult to transport school children to the fort.

As far as can be ascertained, this Living Flag format was never again reproduced in a Nevada parade again. However, stay tuned. It just well might again be revived in Carson City during the year of 2020. It would definitely be a sight to see. If you would like to march in the flag, please contact us.

Contact Patti Bernard for the Bibliography at awtuv1@gmail.com.

NEVADA WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT

Membership Form

(Membership is for January thru December of each year)

Thank you for your ongoing support of the Nevada Women's History Project. You are vital to maintaining our educational website of women's biographies and interviews, having special events and to offset the operational costs of the NWHP.

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In Search of Nevada Suffrage Women

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In This Issue

Kay Sanders Passes Away	1	Profiles of Members: Lynn Bremer	2
Toni Lowden - Artist	3	President's End of Year Message	3
Presentation to Zonta	3	Membership and Donations	4
South Reno Rotary Rocks!	4	JFRC Members Tour of Dayton Cemetery	5
Membership Report	5	Financial Report	5
Featured Historic Woman: Agnes Scott Train Janssen	6-7	Rom our Research Desk: Nevada Living Flag	8-10
Membership Form	11	Board of Directors	11
Suffrage Women Word Search	12		