

Our Mission:

To provide visibility and support for the gathering and dissemination of history about the roles and contributions of all Nevada women of every race, class and ethnic background.



Reno's Petticoat Trial

By Sue H. Davis

The "Petticoat Trial" began on June 2, 1952, in Judge John S. Belford's courtroom and lasted for four days. The press dubbed it the "Petticoat Trial" or the "Battle of the Petticoats" because for the first time in Washoe County both opposing attorneys were women: Charlotte Hunter Arley and Nada Novakovich. In 1952 there were only three practicing female lawyers in Washoe County: Felice Cohn, Charlotte Hunter, and Nada Novakovich. It wasn't legal for a woman to practice law in Nevada until 1893. By 1941, only 24 women had been admitted to the Nevada Bar.



Lawyer Charlotte Hunter Arley
Source: NWHP biography website

Both Nada and Charlotte were not married at the time of the "Petticoat Trial." It was the first jury trial for Charlotte Hunter Arley and her opponent Nada Novakovich, as well as for Judge Belford.

Charlotte Hunter was a graduate of Northeastern Law School in Boston, Mass. and was licensed to practice law in Nevada in 1947. She was born in Massachusetts and came to Reno when her father was seeking a divorce from her mother. She was hired to represent Horatio "Scotty" Nelson.

Nada Novakovich grew up in Tonopah and Reno. After graduating from Reno High School in 1942, she attended Armstrong College in Berkely, Calif. and in 1950 graduated from George Washington School of Law in Washington D.C. Nada was hired to represent defendant Ethel B. Kaupp.

An article that appeared in the *Reno Evening Gazette* on June 3, 1952, described the trial as follows: Elderly 72-year-old Horatio "Scotty" Nelson (a janitor) was suing Mrs. Ethel B. Kaupp (a ten-time divorce heiress and alcoholic) for approximately \$51,000.00 in medical damages caused by Mrs. Kaupp when she hit him and caused him to fall off the bar stool at The Pastime Club on Sierra Street. Mr. Nelson said he could no longer work and suffered permanent injuries to his back and hip and was hospitalized because of the injuries. Mrs. Kaupp, the 49-year-old heiress, was declared incompetent last year and was under guardianship of Dr. Vernon Cantlon of Reno and did not appear in court for the proceedings. Arley won the case, and the client was awarded \$3,000.00.

In an oral interview of Charlotte Hunter Arley conducted by UNR, she states that the press and men were interested in watching the trial of two women lawyers, especially the way they dressed. Arley said she wore a suit at the trial, but Novakovich was very slender and wore high heels and a slinky dress, cut down the back with long earrings. Arley mentioned that one of the men who came to watch the trial commented on her lovely hands, to which all she could say was "This is my first jury trial and all they can care about is my hands!"

For more information about Charlotte Hunter Arley go to Biographies on the NWHP website at:

<https://nevadawomen.org/research-center/biographies-alphabetical/charlotte-hunter-arley/>

From our Research Desk

Carson Tahoe Hospital Auxiliary

By Marcia Cuccaro

In the 1940's, Carson City, Nev. had a population hovering between 2,478 and 3,000. There were two physicians who provided patient care, Drs. James Thom, and Richard Petty. Dr. Richard Petty was called to war in 1943 and was not going to return to Carson City unless medical facilities were improved. In 1945, Dr. George Ross arrived in Carson City and later Dr. Ontie Hovendon. There was no hospital, and patients were treated at home, at one of the three "lying-in homes," or in a more serious case transported to Reno – not by ambulance but in the physician's car. Charles "Mac" McGuigan owned the local mortuary and realized physician's time was being consumed by driving patients to the hospital in Reno. He converted one of his hearses into an ambulance and began transporting patients to the Reno hospital at no charge. After his death, memorial gateways at the Lone Mountain Cemetery were installed as a tribute to his public service.

On December 24, 1946, Carson Tahoe Hospital was incorporated. Now all that had to be done was to find the funds and the land to build the hospital! Land was donated by Judge Richard Waters and wife, Edith, and fundraising began. Federal funding and government grants were not available but with multiple fundraisers and matching donations from Dr. Petty's golfing buddy Major Max Fleischmann of Fleischmann Yeast Company, the 18-bed hospital (of which



<https://wnhpc.com/details/photo0101/f>

The Western Nevada Historical Photo Collection
By Permission of Scott Schrantz

only 10 beds were initially available) opened its doors on May 2, 1949. By 1950, plans were underway to enlarge the little hospital. This was a hospital built and furnished by the community with major donations from Major Fleischmann and later from the foundation created by his widow, Sarah, after his death in 1951.

On June 16, 1952, Lucille Petty, wife of Dr. Richard Petty held an organizational meeting to discuss a proposed women's auxiliary which led to the first meeting of the Carson Tahoe Hospital Auxiliary (CTHA) on July 1, 1952. On July 31, officers of the newly formed organization were elected, and Peggy Arnold (later Peggy Ruggles) became the Auxiliary's first President. Other officers that year included Ruth Russell, Genevieve Cory, Ruth Kelley, Naomi Bernard, and Kay Winters. On September 23, 1952, the charter was closed with a membership of 122 women from Carson City, Minden, Gardnerville, and Lake Tahoe.

Carson City did not have a blood bank and one of the first duties Auxiliary members performed for the new hospital was transporting blood to and from Reno, Nev. New fresh blood for use by the physicians on staff was picked up by these women on a weekly basis and old unused blood to Reno was returned in exchange. The number of physicians on staff now numbered six.

The Carson Tahoe Hospital Auxiliary sponsored and trained a group of women hospital volunteers called Grey Ladies. These individuals were a resource to both the hospital and the patients as they delivered mail and flower arrangements to patients as well as read to patients and assisted with feeding them as needed. A transition from Grey Ladies to Pink Ladies occurred in the late 1950's after Hospital Administrator, Helen Allison, learned of that program at a hospital conference in Chicago. Pink pinafores and white blouses easily designated the new Pink Lady volunteers. The CTHA later sponsored volunteer groups for teen age volunteers - Candy Strippers for young women and Medic Aids for young men.

The CTHA raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for the hospital throughout the early years. They provided nursing scholarships, worked tirelessly on petitions for hospital expansions and on bond issues to finance new hospitals. Carson Tahoe Regional Medical Center is the third medical facility that grew out of the original little hospital built in 1949. The Carson Tahoe Hospital Auxiliary has provided an incredible amount of equipment, a gift shop, furnishings, parking lot shuttles, community wheelchairs and so much more. Since its inception, it has provided millions of dollars to Carson City’s only hospital.



Photo from NWHP Collection: D. Knapp

The original founders would be astonished to see how their efforts have expanded to become the Carson Tahoe Healthcare Auxiliary, now a designated a 501(c)(3) organization which is continuing to provide volunteers, money, and services to a first-class regional healthcare hospital.

Bibliography

“Carson Tahoe Health Auxiliary: A Legacy of Friendship, Volunteerism, and Community Support.” Carson Tahoe Health, September 19, 2019. <https://blog.carson Tahoe.com/carson-tahoe-health-auxiliary-a-legacy-of-friendship-volunteerism-and-community-support/>

Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare Auxiliary Inc.” Publication ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer, <https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/886007118>

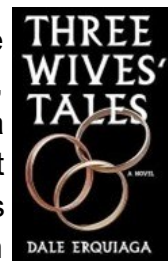
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Basque Luncheon with Guest Speaker Dale Erquiaga

By Sue H. Davis

On July 13, 2024, 31 NWHP members and guests gathered for a Basque Family Style lunch at Louis Basque Corner restaurant. Our guest and speaker, Dale Erquiaga, discussed his experience working with family memoirs and oral histories to create a novel of historical fiction, *Three Wives’ Tales*. The novel details the immigrant experiences of Victoria Urrutia Rubianes and Eladia Aguirre Erquiaga, the author’s grandmothers, as well as the life of his mother, Anita Rubianes Erquiaga. Woven



together as a work of historical fiction, the memoirs and family lore of three Nevada women tell wonderful “wives’ tales.”



After Mr. Erquiaga’s presentation, he brought his books for purchase in which all proceeds went to the UNR Basque Studies Program. The NWHP raffle was won by long time member Catherine Cuccaro, which included a \$25.00 gift certificate to Louis Basque Corner and a copy of the *Three Wives’ Tale* book signed by the author.

Pictured: Standing Dale Erquiaga, seated to right Jon Hamel, seated in front of Dale is Terry Horgan and Mary Baldacchi: Photo from NWHP Collection

NWHP NOW AND THEN

KATHY NONEMAN LOOKING BACK OVER 30 YEARS.

I recently had the honor of participating in the Women of Diversity podcast series, "The Women Who Saved History." Episode Six of this series highlighted the life and contributions of Jean Ford, the founder of NWHP. It will begin airing at the end of August, in honor of the 28th anniversary of Jean's death on August 26, 1998. When I was first asked to be interviewed about Jean and told that I was expected to talk for about 45 minutes, I panicked that my 86-year-old memory would fail me, and I would have little to say. I need not have worried. They could not shut me up as I remembered how much fun we had in the early days of this project.



To prepare for my interview, I reviewed my files and our old newsletters. In doing so, I remembered some fun adventures we had back then. By the summer of 1996, we were 18 months old and were a statewide organization of over 270 individual members. Jean had assigned research projects to many of us, and we met weekly for a brown bag lunch up at the YWCA on Valley Road in Reno, Nev. to share research tips and report on any new information we had found. That was the location of our first office courtesy of the YWCA and the beginning of our long association with the Nevada Women's Fund. Jean Ford had written a play for

womenofdiversity.org



Source: Susan Mantle

the 75th anniversary of Nevada Women's Suffrage and we were presenting it throughout Nevada. I was thrilled to play the part of Bird Wilson when we presented it at Piper's Opera House in Virginia City. We had our first annual meeting at the Health Department and Kathleen Dickinson presented a program on the handwriting of notable Nevada women. Mary Lee Fulkerson introduced her Nevada Women's History story basket. New members with exciting ideas were finding NWHP then as they still are today. **Next year we will celebrate our 30th anniversary** and will remember all our important milestones, the activities we have enjoyed and the talented and interesting people who have contributed so much to our discoveries and celebration of the lives and accomplishments of Nevada women.



Join the NWHP Board

Have you ever considered joining our board? Here are a few reasons why you might want to!

- You will gain a deeper understanding of women's history.
- You will represent a worthy organization in our state.
- You will join a community dedicated to preserving women's history.
- You can contribute your special skills to our organization.
- You will meet new people and find new friends with similar interests.

If interested, please join us at one of our board meetings to see how we operate. Our meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 1:00 p.m. in our office at 770 Smithridge Dr., Suite 300, Reno, Nev.

Dates of upcoming 2024-2025 NWHP Board Meetings: December 10, January 14, February 11, March 11, April 8, May 13, June 10, July 8, August 12, September 9, October 14, November 11, December 9.

Questions? Email Sue Davis at: shdavis4364@att.net



*Featured Historic Nevada Woman***MINNIE NICHOLS BLAIR**

Photo Credit:
Churchill Co. Museum

At A Glance:**Born:** September 9, 1886**Died:** August 26, 1972**Maiden name:** Nichols**Race/Nationality/Ethnic Background:** Caucasian**Married:** Ernest Blair**Children:** three (one daughter, two sons)**Primary City and County of Residence and Work:**

Fallon (Churchill), Goldfield (Esmeralda), Tonopah (Nye)

Major Fields of Work: civic affairs (Red Cross, public playground, charity relief for miners), business (turkey farmer, restaurant owner)**Other Role Identities:** Wife, Mother**Biography**

Minnie Blair was born in Folsom, California, on September 9, 1886. She had a strong pioneer heritage. Her maternal grandparents came to California around Cape Horn, while her father's parents crossed the plains to settle in California. They thought the trip was too dangerous for their six-year-old son (Minnie's father), so they sent him on a ship with a baggage tag around his neck explaining he was to be sent via the Isthmus of Panama to California by Wells Fargo Express.

Minnie spent her childhood years in Folsom and Sacramento. After the death of her mother, she moved to Placerville to live with a married sister. It was there that she met and married Ernest Blair, an express messenger for Wells Fargo. Their wedding ceremony was held on December 26, 1908, at 5:30am so they could catch the train to Goldfield, Nevada. Minnie and Ernest lived in the boomtown of Goldfield from 1908 until 1918. Ernest became a teller with a bank and Minnie was a homemaker. She gave birth to her first child, a daughter, in 1910. Her son, Seward James, was born in 1912.

From 1918 until 1924, the Blairs lived in Tonopah. There she was a community leader who was responsible for getting community support to buy playground equipment for the Tonopah school. She also kept alive the only tree in Tonopah, a Russian Olive, with leftover dishwater. Her second son, Ernest Blair, Jr., was born in Tonopah in 1922. When the gold slump of the 1920s came, Minnie worked to provide relief through charities to old prospectors. She was one of the first to be on the Red Cross roll call.

In 1924, Ernest was transferred to Wingfield's Churchill County Bank in Fallon, and it was there that she would spend the rest of her life. She bought a ranch, sight unseen, on the outskirts of town because it had water rights, and she knew she could have a garden. She remained busy with her

family and community. She was known as a friend to the local Indians and helped to collect donations to buy a transformer for the Rattlesnake Hill Colony. One of her early projects—raising turkeys for Thanksgiving dinner—turned into a business when she started a poultry farm on her ranch. Eventually, she shipped her birds to thirty-eight states and to Canada and Mexico. At the same time, Minnie supervised a truck garden and eight hundred laying chickens. During this time, she provided jobs for local people, sustaining them through the Depression. With a dwindling market, she finally quit the turkey business in 1947.

After tasting a spudnut (a doughnut) brought home from the grocery store one day, Minnie decided to open a restaurant. She was not able to purchase property downtown, so she decided to open the shop on the ranch. Despite speculation that she would not be successful, her Spudnut Shop was opened August 27, 1947. With her delicious pies and fresh coffee, the business flourished. Her daughter, Helen, took over management in 1953, the same year that Ernest died.

Mrs. Blair was a cooperative and enthusiastic memoirist for the Oral History Project of the Center for Western North American Studies. Her memoirs are in the special collections at the University of Nevada, Reno, and contain her reminiscences about her early days in California; accounts of social, economic, and political affairs of Goldfield and Tonopah; and descriptions of ranch work and other activities in Fallon.

Minnie Blair was known as a loyal friend and community leader who opened her heart and home to those who lived around her. In 1967, she was given the Distinguished Nevadan award by the University of Nevada. In 1977, the Minnie P. Blair Middle School was named for and dedicated to her. She lived her life with courage and inventiveness. She died on August 26, 1973. She is an example of women who lived their lives fully in support of themselves, their families, and their communities.

Biographical sketch by Sally Wilkins from unpublished research by Katie Langley

Published Works:

- Blair, Minnie. *Days Remembered of Folsom & Placerville, California: Banking and Farming in Goldfield, Tonopah, and Fallon, Nevada*. Oral History Project, University of Nevada, Reno, 1966-67.

<https://nevadawomen.org/research-center/biographies-alphabetical/minnie-nichols-blair/>



Photo Credit:
Churchill Co. Museum



Holiday Time in Nevada

Join us for soup, salad and dessert during the Holiday season.

When: December 7, 2024 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Where: Home of Patti Bernard

Why: Conversation, Camaraderie, Conference, Calories

New Membership & Renewals

June through September 2024

Membership: Individual Cont'd

Individual - \$30

Jody Baden
Angie Bauer
Terry Cookro
Betty Holcomb

Patricia Husnick
Barbara Wall
Dianne Watts
Hope Williams

Friend:
Nancy Nagel

Planning for the Future

By Joy Orlich
Membership Chair



At a recent board meeting we took a hard look at our operating costs, which continue to rise. It was determined it has become necessary to increase annual dues for our Individual and Family membership categories. We have worked hard to keep costs low while providing and maintaining the high-quality information that you rely on, and this change will help us to continue to deliver women's history to our members.

We trust that this modest increase will be more than offset by the value you find in our website, programs, newsletters, and our ongoing research to write Nevada women back into history. The new rates will take effect with the 2025 renewal cycle.

Thank **YOU** for your continued support!

Individual:	\$40.00
Organization:	\$50.00
Family of Two:	\$70.00
Friend:	\$100.00
Good Friend:	\$250.00
Best Friend:	\$500.00
Best Friend Forever:	\$1,000.00



2024-2025 NWHP Board of Directors

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Treasurer's Report

The Year-to-Date (YTD), as of September 30, 2024, financial report shows a checkbook balance of \$51,446.51, \$0.00 liability and a net annual income of \$-7,373.76. The total Certificate of Deposit equity plus liability of the NWHP is \$72,870.32.

Donna K. Knapp – Treasurer

NWHP News

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The Nevada Women's History Project newsletter is published in Carson City, Nevada. Annual subscription rate is included in dues. Non-member subscription rate is \$20 domestic, additional overseas. Copyright NWHP. All rights reserved. Under copyright law, this newsletter and the contents herein may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, by any means, electronic or otherwise, without permission from the publishers, except in normal use as provided by law. Opinions

NWHP Name Badge



Cost: \$15.25

Contact Mona at renomrl65@gmail.com

Send instructions on exactly how you wish your name to appear on the badge.

In This Issue

Reno's Petticoat Trial	1	Planning For the Future	7
Carson Tahoe Hospital Auxiliary	2-3	Board Members Contact information	7
Basque/Three Wives' Tales Luncheon	3	Membership and Treasurer's Report	7
NWHP Now and Then	4	Get Your Name Badge	8
Join the NWHP Board	4		
Featured Historic Woman: Minnie Nichols Blair	5-6		
Mark Your Calendar	6		