

NWHP NEWS

NEVADA WOMEN'S HISTORY Project

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NWHP Website Up and Running

by Sally Wilkins

www.unr.edu/sb204/nwhp/

Question: What does the above Website address mean to our project? Answer: The first phase of the Nevada Women's History Project's Website is up and running as of early October. Thirty-six women's biographies are now available to educators, students around the state and other interested persons.

The project, funded by the University of Nevada under SB204, has been in process since early last summer. Many people have worked hard gathering information, writing biographies, collecting pictures, and putting all the information together. Special thanks go to Jean Ford, Sally Wilkins, Victoria Ford, Janet White, Esther Early, Tamara Busick, Sandy Young, Charlyne Arosio and others.

Each biographical sketch includes the woman's name, with dates of birth and death, if known, the predominant Nevada county and city in which she lived and worked, and the type of work focus with which she was most closely identified. Most of the sketches include photographs.

There is also an entire lesson plan and suggested activities for teaching the Nevada State Song, "Home Means Nevada," written by

Bertha Raffetto.

The biographies are also categorized by geographic area. Thus, if a student from Clark County wishes to research Nevada women from that area, he or she can call up Clark County and find Mildred Breedlove, an author and poet, or Beda Cornwall, library founder, women's club leader and Las Vegas School Board member, and many others.

The following alphabetical list encompasses the women who are "up and running on the net" at this time:

Minnie Blair
Eilley Oram Bowe
Mildred Bray
Mildred Breedlove
Florence Humphrey Church
Felice Cohn
Beda Cornwall
Dat-So-La-Lee
Nellie Mighels Davis
Hazel Denton
Geneva Douglas

Set Aside March 20-21, 1998

The NWHP will join the Nevada Women's Lobby for their 1998 Women's Summit, to be held at the University of Nevada Las Vegas.

Our theme will be "Living the Legacy—Leading for Change." The NWHP will contribute the "Living the Legacy" portion of the conference by looking at Nevada Women who have made a difference.

Watch for more information as it becomes available, but plan now to attend!

Anna Dressler
Frances Friedhoff
Dr. Mary Fulstone
Wuzzie George
Mary Grantz
Sadie Hurst
Lubertha Johnson
Bertha Knemeyer
Jennie Callahan Mahoney
Lillian Malcolm
Jean McElrath
Laura Mills
Mary Leight Oxborrow
Josie Pearl
Bertha Raffetto (composer of the Nevada State Song, "Home Means Nevada")
Anna Rechel
Olga Reifschneider
Bertha Ronzone
Mary Rose
Ferminia Sarras
Idah Mecham Strobridge
Anna Warren
Margaret "Peg" Wheat
Frances Williamson
Bird Wilson
Alma Woods

See page 4 for an actual biography that appears on our internet Webpage.

For further information, please call Sally Wilkins in Reno at 322-7730.



Can you identify this woman?
See Page 4 for the answer!

Letter from Jean

November, 1997

"Life is what happens to you when you're making other plans."

That saying has hung on my office wall for many years, but took on new meaning with my mid-September diagnosis of pancreatic cancer.

The outpouring of love and concern from friends and colleagues has been overwhelming and reminds me how very lucky I am. I have loved hearing from every one and hope we can spend some time together in the coming months, enjoying each other and our common interests.

My daughters - Janet Spelman (Las Vegas) and Dr. Carla Oberst (Sherborn, MA) - also thank everyone for their love and friendship. While they are coming often to see me and participate in various planned events, they both have careers and families with young children, and it helps them a lot to know I am receiving support in so many ways. I am truly grateful to their husbands for going the "extra mile" at this time.

The pain management

program has, to this date, enabled me to carry out some of the plans I had earlier made for this fall. As this newsletter goes to press, I will have returned, along with other members of the "Saga of Nevada Woman's Suffrage" cast, from our 6-day docudrama tour into rural Nevada, performing in Virginia City, Fallon, Austin, Eureka, and Ely with the assistance of local community groups and the Nevada Humanities Committee. We'll have a full report in the next newsletter.

Then there was a special "party" night on Saturday, October 25, when friends gathered with me in Carson City for sharing memories, food, music, and even contra

dancing! Look elsewhere in this issue for that report. My heartfelt thanks to Sally Wilkins, Joan Kerschner, and the many others who organized the event.

November finds me teaching the one-credit course I had scheduled through UNR Continuing Education in Carson City.

Then I'm planning a trip to



Illustration by James McCormick

Boston, November 17-23, to visit Carla and family, and Janet's family will be in Carson City for Thanksgiving. I plan to be in Las Vegas at Christmas time.

I started a chemo therapy program which, in some cases, has reduced the size of the tumor, thereby aiding in pain management. No nausea, but a tremendous loss of energy was the result for several days. We're holding on future treatments at least until the above schedule is completed.

In addition to the many cards and letters, flowers and food, I have received numerous books and pamphlets related to meditation, alternative medicine, etc. I truly appreciate all these, and am making time to learn more about these options.

I want to give a special thanks to Kay Sanders who has undertaken new NWHP responsibilities as my priorities had to shift. She and many others are making a major commitment to NWHP and need your support.

Again, thanks to all of you for your friendship and support which mean a lot to me. Let's keep in touch!

Love, *Jean*

New Sales Items For NWHP

Nevada women are featured in the exciting new sales items that have been developed for use in advertising our organization and highlighting women in history.

The first of the NWHP postcard series, "Celebrating Nevada Women in History," introduces people to May Bradford Shockley who worked in Tonopah as a mining claims draftsman and surveyor early in this century.

The picture of her, taken in

1908, shows a professional looking, stylishly-dressed young woman, seated amongst the Nevada rocks, reading a newspaper. Her elegant hat is topped with an owl feather.

The notepads celebrate three outstanding Nevada women on the cover. Bertha Bishop Ronzone, mercantile store owner; Bird Witson, attorney and stockbroker, and Alice Smith, civil rights activist are pictured. Inside, the names of several other Nevada women, their dates of birth and death, and a short identifying title, circle the page.

Booklets giving a short history of four women were avail-

able September 27th at the Great Basin Book Fair in Reno. Featured women are: Wuzzie George, Josie Pearl, Jessie Callahan Mahoney, and Bertha B. Ronzone.

"GIVE A GIFT OF HISTORY"

In addition to these items, we still have a few t-shirts from our March conference and a small supply of Saga scripts. The postcards are \$.50 each. Notepads, booklets, and Saga scripts are \$3. each. The remaining t-shirts are \$10. each. Visit our office at 1301 Valley Road, #5, Reno, NV 89512, or call (702) 322-7754 to make your purchase. In Las Vegas call (702) 585-2088.

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Unsolicited articles and photos and requests for Writer's Guidelines should be sent to the editor, NWHP, 7380 South Eastern Avenue, Suite 124-216, Las Vegas, NV 89123

Article Reprints \$2

Back Issues \$5

Editor: Carolyn Hamilton Proctor

Report on August 19, 1997 NWHP State Board Meeting

NWHP Offices, Reno, Nevada

Jean Ford will be our first State Coordinator beginning September 1, 1997. By unanimous vote, approval was given to hire Jean as part-time Coordinator operating from our offices at 1301 Valley Road, Reno. She will work with the regional chairs and the state chair in the planning and implementation of our projects, assist in fundraising efforts, and help with teacher in-service training.

A part time administrative assistant position will be filled and this new employee will report to Jean. Jean presented a list of guidelines as previously discussed with the regional chairs. Her initial contract will be for four months at 60 hours per month minimum.

State Board officers for the program year were elected with Kay Sanders elected as Chair, Joyce Marshall elected as Vice-Chair, and Kathleen Clemence as State Treasurer.

All of these terms of office will run through June 30, 1998.

Mary Anne Convis and Rose Irwin were selected to develop a statewide financial development plan. Mary Anne spoke to the need for a "case statement" to be articulated that would give a clear picture of our major program goals. This "case statement" could be used to accompany funding proposals. It was agreed that this needs to be done as soon as possible, hopefully before the 1998 budgets are formulated.

Several projects were approved at the meeting including: Book Assessment Phase II, Website I, Nevada History Day, and the Sandy Miller (Children of the Mansion) event. Website II was presented but not approved since the proposal must first be submitted to the Project Review Committee.

The regional budgets for July - December 1997 year were approved as was the state budget for same time period. All three budgets for the 1998 calendar year are to be developed and sent to the State Board

prior to its fall meeting.

Whether or not there was a minimum age for membership in NWHP was discussed. It was agreed that at the present time there is none, but it was recommended that we consider creating a special category for young women to join at a reduced rate.

Associate members, those organizations and agencies which do not wish to be organizational members but have paid for an annual subscription for the NWHP News, will begin this status effective with the Fall 1997 News mailing.

For informational purposes, it was decided that meetings of the State Board and Executive and Steering Committees from both regions will be listed in the News calendar section.

The next State Board meeting will be held via video-conference in November, date and time to be announced.

The November State Board Meeting is scheduled to be held November 21st from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. It will be a video conference with the Northern Nevada members meeting in Room 116, Reynolds School of Journalism, University of Nevada, Reno and the Southern Nevada members meeting in the Desert Research Institute video conference room in Las Vegas. Agenda and announcement of the meeting will be mailed in early November.

Research Roundtable Reveals Clothing Worn by Daughters of Charity

by Anita Watson

At a recent Research Roundtable held at the Marjorie Russell Clothing and Textile Center in Carson city, Georgia Hedrick demonstrated the intricacies of the habit worn by the Daughters of Charity, and imparted fascinating information about the history of a special group of religious women.

The garments that the sisters wore in the nineteenth century, and continued to wear until 1964, were essentially identical to the habit recreated by Georgia Hedrick and dressmaker Jill Adkins. Using materials obtained from the Daughters of Charity, and relying on pictures of

the habits, and the memories of Georgia Hedrick, who was a sister for fifteen years, the two women reconstructed a truly remarkable garment.

For the Research Roundtable, Georgia Hedrick dressed a mannequin from the undergarments out-layer after layer of clothing that was pinned, tied, and hooked in the dark at 5 a.m. without benefit of a mirror. The chemise, corset, petticoats, pockets, collar, skirt, chemisette, skirt, and apron were built into an outfit of cotton, linen, and navy wool that weighed twenty pounds and was worn summer and winter.

Each sister was given two

habits to last her lifetime, and the garments were patched, mended, and altered as necessary.

The Paiutes called the sisters the "great white birds," a descriptive reference to the coronet, the distinctive headpiece of the habit. Based on a seventeenth century French peasant sunbonnet, the coronet of the Daughters of Charity was "immortalized" by "The Flying Nun" television program. Georgia Hedrick demonstrated the intricate pinning that turned a heavily starched, 15" by 36" rectangle into the fantastic headpiece that the sisters wore daily.

An apostolic order, the

Daughters of Charity were active in Virginia City from 1864 until 1897. The sisters operated a hospital, orphanage, and school, and were an integral part of the social structure in early Virginia City.

In a forthcoming book, *Comstock Women: The Making of a Mining Community*, a chapter by Anne M. Butler, "Mission in the Mountains: The Daughters of Charity at Virginia City," examines the work and activities of the sisters during their three decades on the Comstock. *Comstock Women* will be published by the University of Nevada Press in December.

Bertha B. Ronzone

By Sally Wilkins



Bertha B. Ronzone

At a glance:

Born: April 16, 1885

Died: November 5, 1969

Maiden Name: Bishop

Race/nationality/ethnic background:
Caucasian

Married: Atilio Benjamin Ronzone

Children: three (two daughters, one son)

Primary city and county of residence and work:
Las Vegas (Clark Co.), Tonopah, Manhattan
(Nye Co.)

Major fields of work: business (Owner,
Ronzone Department Stores)

Other role identities: wife, mother, school
board member, civic leader, women's
club leader.

Bertha B. "Mom" Ronzone was born on April 16, 1885 in a small town near Des Moines, Iowa, to James W. and Sarah Bishop. She came west with her family and settled in Fowler, California, where she received her early education.

On December 12, 1901, she married A.B. Ronzone, who had come to California to prospect for gold, and the following spring they set out aboard a ship bound for Alaska.

Blown off course in a fierce storm, they arrived in Nome three months later than anticipated to find Mr. Ronzone's partner had sold their business establishment and left with both partners' money. Their first child, daughter Amy, was born in Alaska, where the family stayed for two years.

Tales of the Nevada mining boom lured them to Tonopah, Goldfield, and Manhattan. Their second daughter, Esther, was born in 1913 in Manhattan.

Bertha began taking in the miners' laundry to help supplement the family income and it was soon evident the miners were in need of socks and clothing. On a trip to Oakland to visit her mother, Bertha made her first investment in the Ronzone

store of the future. She bought, on sale, socks of odd sizes and shipped them to her daughter, Amy, to sell in Manhattan. The miners didn't care if the socks didn't fit and bought them anyway.

The socks were so successful that Bertha had the idea to open a general store to further accommodate Manhattan's urgent clothing needs. Lacking funds, she arranged to meet George Wingfield, future Nevada banker, whom she had known in Alaska. At their meeting in the Mizpah Hotel in Tonopah, "Mom" discussed her lack of funds with Mr. Wingfield, who promptly wrote her a check for \$500 as a loan. She opened her first store in Manhattan in 1917 and her son, Richard, was born the same year.

However, in 1923, the Manhattan boom was over and the family moved to Tonopah where they re-established the business in the Elks' Building. Later they purchased the E. Marks Clothing Store with its full complement of merchandise.

News that Boulder Dam was to be built brought Ben and Bertha to Las Vegas in 1929 where they opened a new store on Carson Street, selling women's and children's wear. As the town grew during the dam construction period, Ronzone's kept pace. In 1935,

the business moved to 209 Fremont and expanded twice in the next few years.

Following the death of her husband in 1938, Bertha was joined by their son, Richard, in operating the business. He was with her only two years when he entered military service with the Nevada National Guard and did not return until after World War II in November, 1945. He later was elected to one term in the Nevada Assembly and also to the Clark County Commission.

Meanwhile, the Tonopah store, which was being operated by Bertha's son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Al Adams, had been sold in 1939 and the Adams joined the Las Vegas store staff. They remained until 1943 when the Ronzones purchased Gray, Reid and Wright department store in Reno, which they operated for the family corporation until retirement, about 1964.

Bertha's daughter, Esther, married Ed Recanzone and they owned and operated the Emporium Clothing Store in Yerington, independent of the Ronzone operation. In 1946, the Las Vegas Ronzones moved from 209 to 418 Fremont, occupying one-half of a new building constructed by Mrs. Corrine Johnson and her husband, Paul. In 1968 the family opened another store on Maryland Park-

way in Las Vegas in the new, modern Boulevard Mall.

Bertha believed in "prayer, faith and determination," and she believed her success was due to these three qualities. Through her own initiative and hard work, she became the head of the largest privately-owned merchandising enterprise in the state of Nevada, extending from north to south.

Many honors have been bestowed on Mrs. Ronzone in recognition of her accomplishments in business and her assistance in community development. In June, 1967, during commencement ceremonies at Nevada Southern University (now UNLV), she was named as a "Distinguished Nevadan," one of the highest honors the state can bestow.

She was chosen as "Nevada's Golden Rule Pioneer Mother" in May, 1959. She was nominated by the Business and Professional Women's Club of Las Vegas, which described her as "An outstanding living example of faith, courage, and cheerfulness, all of which come through the spiritual and moral strength which makes up her character. Her greatest merit is her love of people, and she gives freely her affection, kindness, and understanding to friends and family alike."

The Women's Guild of the Church of Religious Science named Bertha Ronzone "Mother of the Year" in May, 1967. She was a founder of that church and a past president of the Guild.

Interested in education for herself and for her community, Bertha also served as a member of the School Board in Tonopah, and furthered her own education by studying and graduating from the first year course of the Church of Religious Science, where she received a bachelor's degree.

Bertha Ronzone was still active in store activities until her death in Las Vegas on November 5, 1969.

Leadership Profiles, NWHP North

The following persons have assumed leadership positions:

Chair: Kathleen Noneman (2 yr. term ending June, 1999)

Kathy was born in Woodland, CA. She has a BA in Language Arts and Social Science from Chico State, a Masters in Business Management, and a Law degree from Old College in Reno. She has lived in Nevada since 1977, and currently volunteers at the Family Court in Washoe County, presiding at domestic violence and child support hearings. Kathy also studies Russian at UNR and spent five weeks in 1996 at the Moscow State Pedagogical Institute.

Kathy and her husband, Charlie, have two sons and one grandson. She became interested in Nevada history while researching early women lawyers. She was one of the founders of NWHP and has been serving as Project Review Chair since Fall, 1995.

Secretary: Helen Oster

Helen is a third generation Nevadan. She was born near Mountain City on the Idaho border. Her great grandmother was a midwife there and her mother

was a teacher, and her interest in history comes from her own family's stories, diaries and other papers.

Helen works for the State Fire Marshall, developing fire incident reports for a national fire reporting system. She has been married for 30 years and has two sons and one daughter. One son just passed the Nevada State Bar and the other is UNR's student body president. Her daughter works at K-Mart. She enjoys four-wheeling with her husband and their jeep.

Steering Committee Member at large: Nancy Oakley

Nancy is a fourth generation Nevadan and proudly says, "My boys, 16 and 19, are fifth generation Nevadans." She has an undergraduate degree in political science and a master's degree in public administration from UNR. She is the office manager in Sparks for the Nevada State Department of Employment, Training, and Rehabilitation. Her hobbies include genealogy and hiking. She loves history and made a 12-day trip to Israel in May, 1997.

Steering Committee Member at large: Nancy Holmes

Nancy came to Nevada in 1990 from Palo Alto and earlier had earned her degree in Natural Science from San Jose State University. She worked as a naturalist at the Oxbow Park, has been curator of the gift store at the Wilbur May Museum at Rancho San Rafael and currently works for the National Auto Museum.

She has three children, one of whom lives in Reno. She has traveled to the Yucatan Peninsula and to Costa Rica on archeological field trips. She enjoys the annual Chautauqua in July in Reno.

Organizational representation on the Steering Committee: The following organizations are next in line (based on original date of dues paid to NWHP-North) to be represented on the Steering Committee. They have accepted and designated the following representatives to the Steering Committee:

Northern Nevada Women Lawyers: Nancyann Leeder (2 yr. term ending June, 1999)

Nancyann received her BA in Journalism and English from UNR and her law degree from Southern Illinois University. She has also been a reporter for the Reno Gazette-Journal, has been in private law practice, and currently is the Nevada State Attorney for Injured Workers. She has three sons and nine grandchildren. Her community involvement includes serving as Vice President of Safe Nest, a domestic violence shelter in Las Vegas.

Soroptimists International of Truckee Meadows: Carrie T. Porter (2 yr. term ending June, 1999)

Carrie moved to Nevada in 1962 from Texas. She served for 21 years as historiographer for the Episcopal Church, designing and administering its Archives. Her published works include a

monograph for the University of Nevada Department of Agriculture about the S Bar S Ranch near Wadsworth, Nevada. She now operates a records and information management firm. Carrie has been Chair of the Research Roundtables in the North since their beginning in 1995.

Soroptimists International of Carson City: Joan Andreas (2 yr. term ending June, 1999)

Joan is a native Nevadan, born in White Pine Co. She graduated from McGill High School, attended the University of Nevada, was in banking for several years, and then ran a State Farm Insurance office in Carson City jointly with her husband until their retirement. In addition to Soroptimists, Joan has been active in the Carson-Tahoe Hospital Auxiliary and the Desert Garden Club. She has two children.

In addition to the above, the following positions continue for another year:

Vice-Chair: Kay Sanders, Reno
Treasurer: Kathleen Clemence, Reno

Members at large: Mary Lee, Carson City; Esther Early, Reno
Organizational representatives: Children's Cabinet: Carolyn Widman, Reno; Delta Kappa Gamma, Nu Chapter, Ruth Aberasturi; Carson City American Association of University Women, State: Lynn Ossolinski, Incline Village
Nevada Women's Fund Representative: Fritsi Ericson

Great Basin Book Festival

Saturday, September 27th, was one of those perfect sunny Reno Fall days. The Nevada Humanities Committee presented its first annual Great Basin Book Festival in Wingfield Park and NWHP's booth was one of the best attractions.

Members in costume circulated throughout the park telling people about our organization and directing fair goers to our booth, where we sold new and used books about Nevada women in history.

Our new merchandise had arrived and was well received.

The group sold the first edition of our postcard series which features a 1908 photo of May Bradford Shockley who worked in Tonopah as a mining claims draftsman and surveyor.

We also sold a notepad, T-shirts, and a booklet featuring

short histories of four Nevada women whose stories are also featured on our Website. Profits for the day exceeded \$400.

Our many volunteers enjoyed the day at our booth and were able to greet our present members and recruit new ones.

ROLL OF HONOR, PART III

We continue our feature, begun in the Spring 1997 issue, of individuals and organizations recognized at our March 1997 convention for their commitment and creativity that resulted in tangible contributions to Nevada Women's History.

Jeanne Elizabeth Wier

Few women have made so great a contribution to Nevada history as Jeanne Wier.

Born April 8, 1870 in Grinnell, Iowa, Wier took a degree in diadactics (moral instruction) from Iowa State Teachers College in 1893, and a bachelor of arts degree from Stanford in 1901 before arriving in Nevada.

She earned an LL. D. from the University of Nevada (Reno). She served as a professor and head of the Department of History and Political Science at the University of Nevada for many years. Not only did she encourage her women students to write history, she taught courses in women's history at a time when this was not done.

Simultaneously, she was instrumental in establishing the Nevada Historical State Society (which eventually became a part of state government and dropped the word *state* from its name.) Wier served as its director from its beginning in 1904 for many years. Her work with the historical society took her all over the state, where she persuaded citizens to donate materials of all types to the historical society.

She was the compiler and editor of all of the early Nevada Historical Society publications, which included women as writers, some writ-

ing on women's history. In these publications, she published photographs and obituaries of important Nevada women.

In 1914, to celebrate Nevada's Semicentennial, she wrote and directed a lengthy pageant.

She described the event, complete with photographs, in vol. 1 of the Nevada Historical Society Papers. The material she collected at the society provides sources needed for historians to write the history of Nevada's women.

Celesta Lowe

Celesta Lowe is a long time resident of Clark County, Nevada. She completed her early schooling in Moapa Valley before the family moved to El Monte, California. She attended high school and business college there before returning to Las Vegas to live.

During the first celebration of Helldorado in 1935, she married Deke Lowe. As a mother of four children, she returned to school in 1955 to take Home Economics courses at Nevada Southern University (now University of Nevada, Las Vegas).

She served as the first secretary to James Dickinson, who was in charge of the Nevada Southern University Library. In 1967, she took charge of the Special Collections Department.

A prolific writer and researcher, she wrote "Echoes from the Archives" in the Nevada section published in the Sunday edition of the Las Vegas Review Journal and followed that with a column entitled "Southwestern Bookshelf."

She has been an active member of the National League of Pen Women since

1958 and served as book review editor for Maverick Publications.

Her papers, housed at the Special Collections Department of the Dickinson Library at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, include copies of her articles, as well as correspondence and news letters from the Pen-Hens and the National League of Pen Women.

Mary Freeman

In 1875 Mary Freeman was born into the most prominent family in Woodland, California. She acquired an education in the local schools and received a B. S. degree at Stanford University in 1897.

When she was twelve, her father bought a cattle and sheep ranch in Stillwater, Nevada. The family enjoyed extended visits there while still maintaining a home in Woodland.

Mary Freeman lived a life of privilege that afforded her many options. As a well-educated, artistically-talented young woman, she apparently moved with ease between sophisticated San Francisco, scenic, cozy Woodland and the stark beauty of Stillwater. Within the socially accepted role of socialite daughter, she carved a niche for herself as an early visual chronicler of life in the Stillwater area.

In 1885, Mary's father, John Freeman, sold his holdings in the family business and explored new avenues for economic profit in Stillwater, Nevada. In 1887 he began a ranching partnership there with Charles Kaiser that continued until his death in 1906.

During the 1890s and early 1900s, Mary pursued her hobby of photography in and around

her father's ranch during her frequent visits.

She died in 1920 in Stillwater, Nevada.

Her work reflects life in small town America in a transition period and allow us to see the enormous changes that have transformed both rural Nevada and rural America and in the lives of women. Her photographs document the history of Nevada's women.

Lee Mortensen

A native Nevadan, Lee Mortensen was born in Reno, although her family was living in Fallon. She has lived in Tonopah, Lovelock and Reno.

She earned a degree in Library Science from the University of Denver as well as a degree in education, specializing in home economics. After a brief time spent in teaching in Lovelock, she made library work her career.

Although her work is physically located in Reno, she deals with information from all over the state.

Lee is one of the unsung heroes in the writing of the history of Nevada's women. Her work is behind the scenes. It would be difficult to find anyone working in Nevada women's history who has not relied on Lee's help.

She relentlessly tracks down obscure facts, and is delighted to share the wealth of information stored in her head. Her in-depth knowledge of the collections maintained by the Nevada Historical Society is a valuable tool drawn upon by historians.

Her dedication to helping historians has made it possible for us to have more accurate and complete information on the history of Nevada's women.



Christmas in Las Vegas

By Mary Manning

We always lived on the edge of the desert when I grew up in Las Vegas more than 40 years ago. Most Christmas-times the sunlight would pour through our living room picture window, drowning out the colorful light bulbs on the tree, but dazzling us with reflections from the silvery tinsel.

Once the presents lay opened in all their splendor under the tree, we went outside to play in the desert sands around home. No snow, sometimes cold, but the sharp, dry smell of dust brings me home to those early holidays.

One memorable Christmas, maybe December 1956, I got an Annie Oakley outfit. The red skirt and vest fringed with white was topped off by a red hat with a red-and-white striped band. I had two holsters and two silver pistols.

Annie Oakley was my idol. She protected the good people and took care of the bad ones. Once dressed in that costume, I ran out the back door and into the desert, the tiny brown cowgirl boots kicking up a dust cloud behind me.

In front of me the clear blue sky contrasted with the gorgeous walls of Red Rock Canyon, visible without smog in those days for miles. The world held thousands of possibilities.

I only knew at that moment that Santa Claus had

given me the gift of pretend, and the Annie Oakley outfit gave me a sense of authority, a way to make things right.

My brother, wearing his own cowboy costume, chased me through the desert below Valley View Boulevard, pretending we rode powerful horses to battle invisible enemies.

Our grandparents were 3,000 miles away in Massachusetts, so we visited friends after church. Later we went to the Last Frontier Village, where we rode horses on a merry-go-round and waved our pistols in the air.

In those days, the Las Vegas Strip hotels outdid each other with decorations. The Desert Inn Hotel featured a gigantic Christmas tree rising out of its swimming pool, its tinsel glistening in the sunlight. Neon signs in Vegas are nothing new, but the lights and the shine outdid themselves in those days during Christmas on the Strip.

After growing up, I find something missing in Las Vegas at Christmas. There are no more trees in pools or special lights on the hotels.

The Annie Oakley outfit has joined the dust. And Red Rock Canyon lost its luster in the winter smog.

But I am still here, waiting for a whiff of dust, so it can take me back to that one enchanting Christmas celebration, when the world spilled its richest gift, hope, at my feet.

Carol Corbett-NWHP Historian

by Leslie Shipp

At the first meeting of the temporary steering committee in the South, Carol volunteered to serve as the NWHP-South archivist. Minutes, newspaper clippings, records, and research are being collected by Carol to be housed in the Nevada Women's Archives at the University of Nevada Las Vegas library.

Born in New York city, raised in Mississippi and California, Carol arrived in Nevada in 1969. She earned an Associate of Science Degree in data processing at Community College of Southern Nevada and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration (Finance) from the University of Nevada Las Vegas.

Currently, Carol owns her own consulting firm, Great Basin Research, specializing in archive management and historical research. Carol was formerly an archivist for the Nevada Women's Archives at UNLV and produced a Directory of Collections for the Women's Collections at UNLV. A retired Clark County employee, Carol is a former systems analyst and Assistant County Recorder.

In addition to serving as historian, Carol is the NWHP-South delegate for the Southern Nevada Association of Pride, Inc. (SNAPI), an organization that promotes diversity, addresses gay and lesbian issues and sponsors the Gay Pride event in Las Vegas. Politically, she is active in ending discrimination against gays and lesbians, and achieving same gender marriage legislation.

Nevada holds a special at-



Carol Corbett at the Oral History Network meeting at Lorenzi Park in May, 1996

traction for Carol since her hobbies include backpacking, camping, and hiking. Central Nevada is her favorite place for these activities.

Carol lives with her partner, Tricia Porter, on an acre of land in Las Vegas, where they enjoy gardening, especially raising their own vegetables.

For eighteen years, Carol served on the State Historical Records Advisory Board. She has also served on the County Fiscal Officers Association and the Board of Directors for the Clark County Credit Union since 1980. She is a member of Nature Conservancy and the Sierra Club.

The Nevada Women's History Project attracted Carol on a number of levels; not only did it contribute to her work, but it also offered her another avenue to explore her interest in environmental history and historical geography. Environmental history, gay and lesbian history are not unlike women's history, each having an element of being invisible. The NWHP is a way to make history visible and accessible.

Profiles of Organizational Members

CHILDREN'S CABINET, INC.

1090 S. Rock Blvd.
Reno, NV 89502
(702) 856-6200
Liaison to NWHP:
Carolyn Widman

The Children's Cabinet was organized in 1985. Its mission is to create a lasting, community-wide, cooperative effort between the private sector and governmental agencies in addressing the needs of children and their families.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

Capitol Complex
Carson City, NV 89710
(702) 687-6360
Liaison to NWHP:
Ron Jarnes, State Historic
Preservation Officer

Nevada's Historic Preservation Office has a staff of 10 and was organized in 1976 for the preservation of historic building and archaeological sites. Its most recent contribution to preserving Nevada women's history is its publication of *Comstock Women: The Making of a Mining Community* with the University of Nevada Press.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN

(NOW), NORTHERN NEVADA CHAPTER
P.O. Box 57
Sparks, NV 89432-0057
(702) 358-4577
Liaison to NWHP: Thuy H. Tran (Twee)

The National Organization for Women (NOW) Northern Nevada chapter was organized in 1966 to advocate for women and currently has 98 members. NOW'S ongoing work is to support equality for Hispanic, Black, Asian and all women of color in Nevada and to support

Nevada's military women. Current officers are Secretary Cyndi Kirklin, Treasurer Jim Martin, Membership Thuy Tran.

NEVADA HUMANITIES COMMITTEE

P.O. Box 8029
Reno, NV 89507
(702) 784 6587 or 800-382-5023
Liaison to NWHP:
Judith Winzeler, Executive
Director

In partnership with other organizations, the Nevada Humanities Committee develops and funds humanities activities such as Chautauqua, History Day, teacher institutes, exhibits, documentary films, publications, public discussions and events in which the humanities are central.

NEVADA WOMEN'S FUND

PO Box 50428
Reno, NV 89513
(702) 786-2335
Liaison to NWHP:
Fritsi Erickson

The Nevada Women's fund is a community-based, non-profit organization, committed to raising and distributing funds to help women and children whose needs have not been addressed by conventional sources.

In the form of educational scholarships and grants, The Nevada Women's Fund offers monetary help that women need to develop their capabilities, provides inspiration and assistance to children and encourages the activities of community organizations which share our dreams for a steadily improving world for Nevada's women and children. It also offers an annual professional development series on leadership skills which can help women move into executive levels of management.

Founded in 1982, the Nevada Women's Fund has awarded \$574,550 in scholarships to 487 women and more than \$717,387 in grants to community groups. All projects are supported by the Nevada Women's Fund's own fund-raising efforts. Its 36-member board of directors, an advisory council, president and CEO, executive assistant and records manager are assisted by hundreds of community volunteers.

The Nevada Women's History Project is a delegate agency of the Nevada Women's Fund.

SIERRA NEVADA GIRL SCOUT COUNCIL

605 Washington Street
Reno, NV 89503
(702) 322-0642
Liaison to NWHP:
Sarah Fluetsch

The Sierra Nevada Girl Scout Council is dedicated to the purpose of inspiring girls with the highest ideals of character, conduct, patriotism and service so that they may become happy and resourceful citizens.

To help educate Girl Scouts about Nevada Women's history, the Sierra Nevada Girl Scouts have adopted a Hidden Heroines patch program that helps girls meet, interview and document the experiences of women in their community.

Vicki Wright is the current Executive Director.

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF CARSON CITY

3 Yorktown Circle
Carson City, NV 89703
Liaison to NWHP:
Joan Andreas

Soroptimist International of Carson City is a chapter of the international organization which was founded in 1921 in Oakland, California.

Soroptimist International

has grown into the world's largest classified service organization for executive and professional business women with some 80,000 members in 82 countries around the world. Membership represents over 3,500 occupations and professions and the goal of its members is to serve their communities.

The Carson City club was organized in 1957 and now has 80 members who represent a cross-section of the business, professional and economic life of Carson City.

From its fund-raising events, Soroptimist International of Carson City provides scholarships for students and legal aid to local abused women.

To help with Nevada Women's history, this group will be working on the November 7th fund-raiser at the Governor's Mansion in Carson City, "Children and Pets of the Mansion" presented by Nevada's First Lady Sandy Miller.

Karen Bowers is the current president.

DELTA KAPPA GAMMA SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL, Gamma Chapter

2005 Vegas Valley Drive
Las Vegas, NV 89109
(702) 737-7644
Liaison to NWHP:
Iris S. Torfason

Organized in 1949, Delta Kappa Gamma's purpose is to promote professional and personal growth of women educators; initiate, endorse and support legislation in the interest of education; endow scholarships and inform members of current issues that they may become intelligent, functioning members of a world society.

Gamma chapter officers and members have been active participants in NWHP since its inception. Members have held

offices and chaired committees. The chapter reviewed its historical files and donated a number of items to the Project. Members are advised of current NWHP projects and activities at our monthly meetings.

Iris S. Torfason is the current president.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN (AAUW)

2125 Severn Drive
Reno, NV 89503
(702) 747-6139
Liaison to NWHP:
Barbara Manning

AAUW promotes education for women and women's issues. Their Silver Lining Project, a state-wide AAUW project, urges members to gather family histories, and both personal stories and memorabilia and those relating to AAUA.

SOUTHERN NEVADA ASSOCIATION OF PRIDE, INC. (SNAPI)

need address
Reno, NV 895??
(702) ???
Liaison to NWHP:
Carol Corbett

Originally organized in 1983, SNAPI promotes an appropriate, positive and informative image of the gay community, provide educational outreach, and educate the public about the needs and issues affecting the gay community.

The annual Las Vegas Gay Pride Celebration is produced by SNAPI, and the board, very interested in preserving the history of lesbians, encourages gays and gay organizations to donate appropriate materials.

Sue Melfi is the current president.

Hannah Clapp Lecture Series

A variety of professionals will present intriguing lectures on such topics as women who prospected in the west, life during the early years in Nevada's capital city, railroad women in the American west, carvings among the Basque, and a reenactment of Hannah Clapp as part of this year's **Hannah Clapp Lecture Series** in Carson City.

All of the lectures will be held at the State of Nevada Library and Archives Building, 100 Stewart Street, in Carson City. The talks are the first Wednesday of each month and begin at 5:30 p.m.

Dr. Sally Zanjani, political science educator and author, will present the first of this lecture series with her talk on women prospectors, Wednesday, December 3. Zanjani is the granddaughter of Carson Valley pioneer, Herman H. Springmeyer, and author of numerous articles and books on Nevada history. Her book, *A Mine of Her Own: Women Prospectors in the American West, 1850-1950*, will provide some of the backdrop to her Carson City lecture.

Long-time Carson City

resident and student of Carson City history, **Willa Oldham Ramsden** will again present the history of Nevada's capital city—a talk she also gave during last year's lecture series—on Wednesday, January 7. A native of Southern California, Ramsden has lived in Nevada since 1960. Her historic research has resulted in such books as *Carson-Tahoe Hospital: The Story of a Caring Community*, and *Carson City—Nevada's Capital City*.

In February **Dr. Jose Mallea-Olaetxe** will present the little-known work of the Basque—the carvings sheepherders made on aspen trees which have been found along the remote routes they traveled with their sheep. The vocabulary of the carvings is a mixture of languages. Mallea-Olaetxe believes the carvings present a historical record of the experience of immigration and the sheep industry. Mallea-Olaetxe is a researcher in the Basque Studies Program at the University of Nevada Reno. The lecture will be on Wednesday, February 4.

On Wednesday, March 4, Sacramento photographer, lec-

turer and historic researcher **Shirley Burman** will present an evening on railroad women in the American West. Burman's first book, in which she collaborated with railroad photographer **Richard Steinheimer**, *Whistles Across the Land*, was published in 1994. Her exhibits on women and railroads have traveled across the country and she is presently working on her third book, *Railroad Women's History*.

In April the Hannah Clapp Lecture Series will be a reenactment of the pioneer educator Hannah Clapp, presented in Chautauqua style by **Eileen Cohen**. Cohen is a current member of the Carson City Preservation Coalition, NWHP, and the League of Women Voters, among other organizations. Cohen taught for 17 years in Michigan, spent a year with Rite of Passage in Yerington and has been involved in several businesses. She is currently working on a history endorsement for her teaching certificate. Her Hannah Clapp presentation will be Wednesday, April 1, 1998.

Nevada Women's Archives Continues Jean Ford's Work in Las Vegas

Over the last three and a half years, faculty and staff have had the opportunity to work with Jean Ford and Carol Corbett to establish a strong and vital collection of women's sources at UNLV.

Many of you have helped our efforts by donating your papers, promoting the work of the Archives, and encouraging your organizations to preserve their

documents by donating them to the collections.

Since Jean announced that she has been diagnosed with terminal cancer, several people have expressed concern about the future of the Archives.

The UNLV faculty and staff have continued the work that Jean has started. The History Department and Special Collections at

UNLV's library are committed to continuing a viable collection for future generations and ours.

If you have questions or want to help the Nevada Women's Archives move forward, please contact Professor Joanne Goodwin, History Department, Box 455020, Las Vegas, 89154-5020, or call (702) 895-1026.

Nevada Women's History Contest

The Nevada Women's History Project is sponsoring a Nevada Women's History Contest. This contest will run in conjunction with National History Day held annually in April. The contest is open to Nevada students in grades six, seven, and eight.

The awards include: first place \$150.; second place, \$75.; third place, \$25. These cash and honorable mention awards will be awarded for each grade in both Northern and Southern Nevada.

We are hoping for great participation from all parts of the state in researching some

of the outstanding women in Nevada's history.

Money for the awards came from a special gift to NWHP from Dr. Elaine Enarson, former Director of Women's Studies Department, at University of Nevada Reno.

Patti Bernard is the coordinator for the North part of the state and Laurie Stengler will coordinate the South.

Information will be sent to all districts at a later date. For additional details, contact Patti at (702) 826-3612 (home) or Laurie at (702) 382-8018 (home).

Connections and More Connections

The NWHP is assisting in the production of the Artists Show and Sale *Connections and More Connections; Celebrating Women Artists* being presented to benefit the YWCA in Reno.

Connections and More Connections - Celebration of Women Artists
YWCA, 1310 Valley Road, Reno

SCHEDULE:

Thursday, November 20,
5 p.m.- 8 p.m. Reception

NWHP members please wear period costumes and bring a dozen cookies, if possible.

Friday, November 21,
5 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Saturday, November 22,
10 am - 3 p.m.

Sarah Wellingshoff of the 'Y' and Jill Atkins and Crystal Nelder of the regional artists' group, Connections, have joined together to develop this event.

More than 20 artisans will present everything from Wearable Art to Ceramics, to Graphics to Beadwork and more.

The Nevada Women's History Project will have a table on which to present information about ourselves and to sell some of our own creations. We are asked to wear period costumes and bring a dozen cookies when we come to the Thursday night reception.

A percentage of all sales will be donated to support YWCA projects.

Bobbie Talso is the NWHP liaison to the 'Y' 'Connections' Show.

Aurora, Ghost City of the Dawn

By Susan G. Paslov

On a sunny Nevada Saturday (September 20th) an intrepid twenty-two people, including ghost town historian Bob Stewart and his wife, Phyl, ventured to the legendary ghost town of Aurora. This town has also been known as the "Silver City of the 60s" and the "Queen of Esmeralda County."

We formed a caravan of five hardy vehicles. All-terrain capacity was a necessity, as the road to Aurora was not so much a "wash-board" as an unrelenting series of crevasses!

Although she hadn't intended this, Eileen Cohen's camper/RV provided some of us with an exciting travel adventure. Open drink bottles became geysers, and normal conversation became impossible. Jean Ford wisely discovered the comfort of the camper's raised double bed, and "rode shotgun" over the front cab most of the trip.

En route to Aurora (named after the Greek goddess of the dawn), we stopped at the ruins of the old Peter Nye cattle ranch, which had supplied meat to Aurora for many years. If memory serves, this is also called the "Nine Mile Ranch," since it is located just nine miles from Aurora.

Forewarned by Bob Stewart, we weren't surprised to find Aurora in nearly total ruin. Only a few vestiges of a once-bustling town remain.

As we lunched, Bob painted for us vivid images of life in Aurora at its prime. Large maps helped us envision the sitings of churches, school, business district and residential areas.

We learned of a fascinat-

ing woman named Laura Sanchez, whose letters to her sister in Virginia City give us a wonderful history of life in Aurora.

In August of 1860, large veins of silver ore were found, and the end of that year a townsite had been laid out.

The Spring of 1861 saw a flourishing town, whose population swelled greatly by a raging silver fever. People, including the likes of J. Ross Browne and Samuel Clemens, swarmed to Aurora from nearby Bodie, Wellington, Carson City and other neighboring towns.

A border dispute, with both Nevada and California claiming rights to Esmeralda County's riches, was finally settled in September, 1863. A joint survey crew placed Aurora squarely within Nevada territory, where it has remained to this day.

NWHP member Nancy Oakley discovered the Williams' graves in the old Aurora cemetery. Nancy's great-grandmother, at one time an orphan in Carson City, was indentured to the Williams family, who owned the Sweetwater Ranch outside of Wellington. Several of us joined Nancy in the excitement of her discovery.

Our return to Carson City and Reno included a stop for dinner at the Heyday Inn in Wellington. The Basque feast provided to us did honor to a day full of wealthy imaginings. Thanks to Bob Stewart's descriptions and Jean's fabulous organizing skills, the Ghost City of the Dawn has become ours to keep in memory.

CALENDAR

NORTHERN REGION

MEETING DATES

November 13, 1997

Executive Committee Meeting, 6 p.m., NWHP, 1301 Valley Road, Reno
November 20-22, 1997
 Connections and More Connections Celebration of Women Artists. YWCA 1310 Valley Road, Reno (See related article, page 10)
December 11, 1997

Executive Committee Meeting, 6 p.m., NWHP, 1301 Valley Road, Reno
January 8, 1998
 Joint Meeting of Executive and Steering Committees, 5:45 p.m., NWHP, 1301 Valley Road, Reno. Please bring a simple snack to share. Meeting will begin at 6 p.m.
February 12, 1998

Executive Committee Meeting, 6 p.m., NWHP, 1301 Valley Road, Reno

SOUTHERN REGION

MEETING DATES

November 22, 1997

Executive Committee Meeting, 11 a.m., Eva

Stowers home, 3690 Willow Bond Court, Las Vegas

December 20th, 1997

Executive Committee Meeting & General Membership Holiday Luncheon, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Country Inn Restaurant, 1990 West Sunset Road, Henderson

January 24th, 1998

Steering Committee Meeting, 10 a.m., Joyce Marshall Home, 2529 Cove Road, Las Vegas

February 21, 1998

Executive Committee Meeting, 10 a.m., location TBA

March 20-21, 1998

Nevada Women's Lobby in partnership with NWHP presents "LIVING THE LEGACY-LEADING FOR CHANGE", time TBA, University of Nevada Las Vegas

April 4, 1998

Frankie Williams & Mary Gaffert present "Fanny-With the Eye of an Artist & the Heart of a Fashionist-She Made Las Vegas Beautiful" Roundtable Workshop, time & location TBA

NORTHERN RESEARCH ROUNDTABLE SCHEDULE

December, 1997

No Meeting. Happy Holidays and New Year. ENJOY!

January, 1998 Friday, January 9th or Friday, January 23rd (exact date TBA). NWHP Internet Party. 4 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. UNR College of Education. Our Website will be featured. You will learn how to access our new Website, what it contains and what our future plans are for its use.

February 13, 1998

Former Nevada First Lady Kathy List shares her "Daze in the Mansion" (January 1979 to January 1983).

March 13, 1998

"Where are we and where

do we want to go?" Bring your thoughts, ideas, support, enthusiasm and a brown bag lunch. Facilitator: Susan Roberts (702) 747-2306.

Future Research

Roundtable topic: (April or May, 1998)

Esther Early explores the extraordinary life of Jean McElrath, a blind and paralyzed writer-poet (1917-1967), "The Sagebrush Saint of Northern Nevada."

Research Roundtables are held at the YWCA, 1301 Valley Road, #5, Reno, from noon to 1:30 p.m., the second Friday of every month. They are free and new members and guests are welcome.



Left to Right:

Bonda Lewis, Janice Goodhue, Evangeline Tanner in the "Saga" presentation, Virginia City, Nevada, October 18, 1997. 1915 Overland created by Larry Tanner.

Photo by Sheryl Kleinendorst

The Saga of Sara Bard Field

The Saga of Sara Bard Field, a docudrama featuring historical events in Nevada in 1915, had its opening performance on Saturday, October 18th, at historic Piper's Opera House in Virginia City. The performance provided the entertainment program at the Nevada State Library Conference dinner, attended by more than 150 people.

The audience enjoyed and applauded performances by Roslyn Works as Anne Martin, Kathleen Noneman as Bird Wilson and Bonda Lewis as

Sara Bard Field.

Jean Ford provided the narration and Becky Purkey made a cameo appearance as Mrs. J.P. Langam. Janice Goodhue and Evangeline Tuttle appeared as the Swedish drivers. Sheryl Kleinendorst and Darryl Morris assisted with props and technical expertise.

After this successful performance in Virginia City, the troupe left to bring the production to Fallon, Austin, Eureka and Ely.

Congratulations

- Cindy Southerland of Carson City for the publishing of her guide to Carson City's *Lone Mountain Cemetery*.
- Carley Sullivan for her 1997 Woman of Achievement Award from the Miss Nevada Scholarship Foundation.
- UNLV Special Collections for the new brochure on their Gay and Lesbian Archives; want a copy? call 895-3252.

Thanks

- Sarah Britt for her volunteer time at the office.
- Sheryl Kleinendorst for taking pictures of the "Saga" performance in Virginia City October 18th.
- Becky Purkey for her hospitality to the "Saga" troupe who were able to rest up from their arduous day prior to going on stage in Virginia City.

NEWS

1301 Valley Road, Suite 5
Reno, Nevada 89512

NWHP is a delegate agency of the Nevada Women's Fund

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Membership Application

Individual Membership • Dues \$25/Year

Name _____

Mailing Address _____ Zip _____

Phone (Day) _____ (Eve) _____

E-Mail _____ Voice Mail _____

Organizational Membership • Active Dues \$50/Year

Associate (government agency or institution • No Dues

Corporate Sponsor • \$250/Year

Organization _____

President or Director _____

Mailing Address _____ Zip _____

Phone (Day) _____ (Eve) _____

E-Mail _____ Voice Mail _____

Name of Representative to NWHP _____

Welcome, New Members!

New Individual Members

Carson City: Susan Ballew,
Susan Kendall

Dayton: Valletta M. Parkhill

Reno: Susan Denson, Georgia

Hedrick, Jan Pederson

Wellington: Arlene Oakes

Wells: Geraldine M.

DeGrazia

Minden: Holly M. Frei

New Organizational Member

Northern Nevada NOW

(Thuy Tran)

Additional Contributions

Received by NWHP

Fritsi Ericson, Jean Ford,

Martha Gould, Anne

Howard, Mary Lee, Maya

Miller, Patricia Tripple

Any NWHP member may
receive the full membership
list by sending \$5 to NWHP,
1301 Valley Road, #5, Reno,
Nevada 89512.