

# NWL NEWS

NEVADA WOMEN'S HISTORY Project

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## "Come One, Come All" to the Women's Summit '98

by Claytee D. White

The women of Nevada are preparing to celebrate women!

One hundred fifty years ago women met for the first time in Seneca Falls in upstate New York. That meeting set the agenda for the women's rights movement that followed.

It was organized by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott to outline a coherent program for women's equality. A conference, to be held at UNLV on March 20-21, 1998, is being planned and organized by the Nevada Women's Lobby (NWL) in conjunction with the Nevada Women's History Project (NWHP).

This two-day conference will bring together 70 co-sponsoring organizations to focus on the spectacular history of American women's rights. Every person who attends will participate in educational workshops, innovative panels, and creative projects.

Motivational speeches, an art exhibit, and a dramatic stage production will be presented during the Summit. The exciting mid-day session (mid-day madness) on Saturday will allow participants to rub elbows with Sojourner Truth, Lucretia Mott, and many historical Nevada women as well as many of

today's living legends.

Panels organized by NWL will document past and current issues in the fight for financial empowerment, quality child care, an end to

**The (1848) Declaration of Sentiments spelled out many injustices that mankind had imposed upon females and ended with this summary statement: "He had endeavored, in every way that he could, to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life."**

domestic violence, improved healthcare, corporate advancement, and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Workshops sponsored by NWHP will feature women who participated in the 1977 women's conference in Houston, highlight organizations that have been instrumental in advancing the fight for women's rights, and depict the contributions of women in the Las Vegas workplace.

In 1848 the nascent women's movement based their program on the achievement of legal equity. They espoused a bold claim for full citizenship including the right of suffrage.

What made the Seneca Falls Convention special and powerful was its Declaration of Sentiments written by Stanton and modeled after the Declaration of Independence.

The Declaration of Sentiments challenged the nation to be true to its tradition. It spelled out many injustices that mankind had imposed upon females and ended with this summary statement: "He had endeavored, in every way that he could, to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life."

American women have come a long way. Discover just how far at the Women's Summit '98.



Meet a lady with "an unerring eye for quality livestock", page 4.



# Editor's Note:

When Jean Ford and Joyce Marshall asked me to be editor of the Nevada Women's History Project Newsletter I felt honored, to say the least.

I assumed, because I produce newsletters for a variety of clients who never want to pay for more than four pages, that this newsletter would be only four pages as well.

Silly me! Of course, I didn't even ask; I simply said, yes.

Then Jean tells me it's twelve pages! I immediately call my oldest and dearest friend, Joyce, and cry, "What have you gotten me into?"

What I got into was enjoying reading about all of the interesting projects associated with preserving women's history in the state I've called home for the past 25 years.

However, I still suspect this is payback on Joyce's part for getting her "into" history in the first place. She says it's all my fault.

Back in 1986 when I thought I wanted to be a history teacher, I was taking classes at UNLV, working towards a teaching credential. Joyce and I had taken some classes together (bread-baking is one I particularly remember), so I called her and said, "Why don't you take this class, 'History of Germany From



1850' with me this summer? It'll be fun!"

Next thing I knew, Joyce was studiously engrossed in getting a B.A. in history, while my own interest in a teaching credential had waned. I forgot all about that German history class until she reminded me.

Joyce and I met when the MGM Grand in Las Vegas when it in December, 1973, and we were cocktail waitresses on the day shift. She's seen me through a couple of husbands and I've watched her children grow into charming, productive young women with children of their own. (You can meet Joyce on page 7)

I'm happy to be working with Joyce again. I like to think we're a lot more responsible than we were 25 years ago...and I wholeheartedly support her commitment to the NWHP.

*Carolyn Hamilton Proctor*

*In Celebration of Women's History Month, the Northern Nevada Region of the Nevada Women's History Project cordially invites you, your family and friends to our*

## **First Annual Soiree & Fundraiser**

**Saturday, March 14, 1998**  
**National Automobile Museum**  
**Corner of Lake and Mill Streets**

**No-Host Social Hour 6:30 p.m.**  
**Dinner 7 p.m.**  
**Auction & Raffle following dinner**  
**\$35 per person**

**Attire: Dressy Casual**  
**RSVP Kathleen Clemence (702) 849-3665**

# March is National Women's History Month

National Women's History Month began as a special week in 1977 by a Sonoma County, California Commission on the Status of Women. It has had the official endorsement of the United States Congress since 1981 and is now celebrated as a regular part of the school curriculum in communities nationwide.

The primary goal of National Women's History Month is to promote an equitable portrayal of women in US history. Those involved in Nevada, as well as throughout the country, have seen how learning the true stories of women's history has positively affected everyone.

For girls and women, empowering stories from our shared past generate feelings of personal strength and new possibilities. Correspondingly, boys and men gain increased respect for women by knowing more about their individual accomplishments and about the female experience across time.

Nevada women's history is filled with women whose lives

and work have transformed Nevada communities and helped shape the ideas of their day. Nevada women's history also includes countless women who quietly lived out their lives at the center of their families.

Together, these women represent various cultures, faiths, aspirations and beliefs. They have all contributed significantly to building our society and culture.

There are many ways to celebrate National Women's History Month. One of those is to join the Nevada Women's History Project and the Nevada Women's Lobby at the Nevada Women's Summit in Las Vegas, March 20-21. For more information on the Summit, refer to the article on page 1.

Join us in celebrating Nevada Women's History, not only in March, but year round. See the Calendar for NWHP sponsored events as well as special activities provided in the coming months by a wide variety of organizations and institutions.

## **WOW! What a Website!**

*A report on the action  
by Janet E. White*

Friday, January 23, 1998 was a truly exciting website visit for the eighteen NWHP members who attended. The event was held in the new College of Education at UNR and its state-of-the-art computer lab. After nibbles and bites of crackers, veggies and dip, each of us sat at an individual computer and "moused" around until Jean Ford greeted us with an ex-

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- Back Issues \$5
- Editor: Carolyn Hamilton Proctor



# Nevada Book Assessments: A Major Contribution to Education For All

As we go to press, the Nevada Book Assessment Project moved into the final phase of preparing a camera-ready manuscript for the printing of *Nevada Women's History: An Annotated Bibliography of Published Sources*.

The Nevada Department of Museum, Library and Arts is giving serious consideration to the printing and distribution of this important new resource guide to libraries and teachers throughout the state, and NWHP is negotiating the printing of additional copies to be sold in the museum and university bookstores as well as through the NWHP office in Reno.

In addition, the data is being prepared as an addition to our Website which currently features a biographical database of Nevada women in history. Watch for this new material on the Internet at [www.unr.edu/sb204/nwhp/](http://www.unr.edu/sb204/nwhp/)

Our goal? To identify and "make visible" to teachers, school librarians, and the gen-

eral public comprehensive information on published works that include or feature the activities, lifestyles, contributions and voices of women in Nevada history.

The *Bibliography* contains over 300 titles and descriptions of published works with a focus on biography, fiction, poetry, reference, community or regional history, etc.

The annotations are informative and consciousness-raising. Researchers made many exciting discoveries of Nevada women's stories they had not known before. At the same time, they found many instances where women were totally excluded from well-known chronicles of Nevada history or were included in texts but invisible in indexes. In many instances, women in photographs were unidentified alongside men whose names were clearly indicated.

Inclusion of African-American, Asian-American, or Hispanic women are noted when found. Discussion of is-

ssues relating to race, gender, and/or class are also indicated when found to be part of the published work.

Betty Glass and Martha Gould of Reno have acted as co-editors of the forthcoming *Bibliography* and contributed annotations along with Carol Corbett and Jean Spiller of Las Vegas, Frankie Lukasko, Jean Ford of Reno, and Darryl Morris and his upperclass students at the UNR College of Education.

Thanks to the overwhelming interest and cooperation of all individuals and institutions involved, the NWHP Nevada Book Assessment Project is making a major contribution to the availability of information about Nevada women in history that will enhance educational activities throughout Nevada and beyond.

In turn, we hope this will trigger new research and publication on additional aspects of Nevada women's history that will make our knowledge more complete.

planation of the contents of our website, introducing us to the two men who made it possible: Larry Gilbert, technical director of the lab, and Dave Ragsdale, multimedia director. Both men remained during the program to assist us wherever possible—an act of sincere devotion to their field.

Dana Bennett showed us how to point and click the mouse and we viewed her results on a big screen facing us so we'd know where we went wrong. Some of us didn't know the "mouse" from the "modem" but we all learned at least a little about computers—enough to make us brave enough to try it from home.

Gilbert and Ragsdale have

designed a fantastic site for NWHP—one which contains far more than this writer had even faintly considered. At the top of our "page" is our logo, a full 2.25 inches high, under which six sites are listed for visiting: WOMEN'S BIOGRAPHIES, NEVADA HISTORY DAY, ABOUT THE NEVADA WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT, ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY, OTHER WOMEN'S HISTORY LINKS and OTHER NEVADA LINKS. Each of these blue, underlined titles may be accessed by a single click of the mouse.

The internet address is <http://www.unr.edu/sb204/nwhp/>

Remember that your

equipment is case sensitive and you must use all lower case letters with no spaces between.

If your browser lists search engines, YAHOO will locate the website quickly using the address without the http. Clicking once on any of the blue, underlined titles will reveal our page.

Don't be afraid of your computer, just sit down and click away—you can't erase or damage anything you see on the screen, but you can certainly have a lot of fun reading about Nevada's women. It is a beautifully designed educational website.

## "Women's History Resources on the Internet" Class to be Taught

This spring the University of Nevada Reno will be offering a one-credit course titled, "Women's History Resources on the Internet."

Taught by NWHP member Dana Bennett, the class will focus on identifying the numerous women's history resources that are available through the Internet and integrating that information into curriculum, papers and projects.

The number of students is limited to 20 so that each student will have access to a computer terminal during each class, which ensures that the course will be "Hands-on."

There are no prerequisites for this course so that anyone with an interest in the topic, regardless of computer experience or lack thereof, can participate. The class will meet on three Saturdays: February 21, March 7 and March 14 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at UNR.

To pre-register or for more information, call the UNR Division of Continuing Education at (702) 784-4062 or 1-800-233-8928. The course numbers are WS497 (undergraduate) and CI506B (graduate).

Instructor Dana Bennett holds a MA in Women's History from the State University of New York and uses the Internet extensively for personal and professional research projects. She can be reached by phone in Reno at 323-6002 or by e-mail at:

[BennettDRB@aol.com](mailto:BennettDRB@aol.com).



# Josie Alma Woods

By Jean Ford



Josie Alma Woods

At a glance:

Born: December 29, 1889

Died: February 19, 1983

Race/nationality/ethnic background:

Caucasian

Primary city and county of residence and work:

Eureka (Eureka county)

Major fields of work: state government (elected member, Nevada Assembly), ranching

Other role identities: civic worker, dental technician, women's club member

house in Eureka.

Molly Flag Knudtsen, in her book, *Here is Our Valley*, described Woods as having an unerring eye for quality livestock: "In the years that she lived in the neighborhood, Grass Valley sold registered Hereford range bulls. Many of the neighboring

ranchers bought them from us. It was Dick Magee's practice to bring in all the calves he had for sale and let the rancher take his pick.

"With the exception of an old Indian called Frank Rogers, who lived in Smoky Valley, Alma Woods was the best judge of anyone who bought our bulls. Not only could she select the top individuals from the herd, but once she bought them, she knew how to take care of them and use them to the best advantage.

"She lived...first with her partner, a lady dentist, and later alone...in a little logcabin which reminded me of the gingerbread house in the fairy tale. Every nook and cranny was crammed with objects she had accumulated in the course of her life. Dried flowers and grasses sprouted from purple bottles, and ox

shoes and rock specimens were displayed in a tangled jumble that would have driven an interior decorator crazy. But the overall effect was cozy and oddly agreeable, rather like Queen Victoria's sitting room at Windsor Castle, on a smaller, more rustic scale.

"One day a man came walking up the winding dirt track from the highway (now Highway 50, known then as the Lincoln Highway) and asked Miss Woods if he could do some chores to pay for a meal and a night's lodging in her barn. The man's name was

Josie joined the state and national livestock associations and was a director and vice-president of the Eureka Farm Bureau. According to a biography of Woods published in 1975 by Mary Ellen Glass, it was in the summer of 1940 that she filed as an Independent candidate for the short-term county commissioner's post, but received less than 25 percent of the vote that year as she ran third against a Republican and another Independent — both men.

In 1942, with renewed determination and the lessons

learned in 1940 as her guide, she filed for the state assembly on the Republican ticket. She conducted a personal campaign, spending no money for advertising in the local newspaper.

She won the election, receiving more than 60 percent of the vote over her male opponent and achieving the distinction of being the first woman elected to the state legislature in Eureka County. She

took her seat in the 1943 Legislature along with one other woman, Democrat Mary Sharp of Nye County.

Woods was re-elected in 1944 over her same opponent, becoming the second woman in legislative history to achieve a second term. She served on committees dealing with ag-

.....  
• **The "ghost writer" sold her memoirs "to a movie outfit in Hollywood." The result was a motion picture titled, "The Ballad of Josie," starring Doris Day in the leading role. Josie Alma Woods - the real "Josie" - received only the vicarious satisfaction of seeing her life dramatized on the screen and later on television.**  
• .....

Campbell. He was a Scot, taciturn and hard working. He stayed on to help around the ranch, and twenty years later he was still working for Miss Woods. Alma valued him highly, as well she might. When she retired, Campbell was financially able to retire, too."

According to her obituary, Josie Alma Woods was born in Clyde, Texas on December 29, 1889, though other sources indicate 1888 and 1892.

Arriving in Nevada in the early 1900s, Josie spent five years riding a circuit between mining towns in a buckboard, assisting her business partner, Dr. Mabel Young, in her dentistry practice.

During this time Josie purchased forty head of cattle at an estate auction and acquired a former stagecoach and Pony Express station located between Eureka and Austin, which she named "The Willows."

Though she had no previous ranching experience, Josie soon became known as an expert judge of cattle and transformed the 320-acre homestead into a successful cattle ranch, encompassing 1,200 square miles by the time it was sold in 1954. Dr. Young shared the log cabin home as well as a



# An Evening with Sandy Miller: Remembering Children In The Mansion

By Patt Quinn-Davis

After years of interviewing the now-adult children of Nevada governors, First Lady Sandy Miller presented intriguing and entertaining stories at "An Evening with Sandy Miller: Remembering Children In The Mansion" at the Governor's Mansion in November.

One hundred and fifty people attended the evening of informal tours through the mansion, various displays showing some of the mansion's history, a video of the interviews which was produced by Truckee Meadows Community College, and refreshments.

Sandy Miller presented two separate talks during the evening, sharing the research on family life that she has gathered during her time at

the mansion. Docents from area volunteer organizations were stationed throughout the mansion, providing visitors an introduction to rooms and telling stories about family life in the historic building.

One highlight of the evening was Megan Miller's tour of her bedroom, where she delighted audiences with her knowledge of the family stories.

The evening was developed as a fund-raiser to benefit the development of education programs on Nevada history for primary grades throughout the state, the ongoing research on life in the Governor's Mansion, and the Nevada Women's History Project, a co-sponsor of the event.

Among the guests who

attended the evening were eight members of various Nevada governors' families. And, with the emphasis on children's education, the evening included 19 children who visited the mansion. Gross sales of \$2,565 were collected from the evening.

Many people worked together to produce this very successful evening. We extend acknowledgements to:

- The planning committee: Ruth Aberasturi, Joan Andreas, Mary Anne Convis, Jean Ford, First Lady Sandy Miller, and Patt Quinn-Davis.
- Refreshments and mansion coordination: Bette Nyswonger and Helen Wiemer, mansion staff.



ILLUSTRATION: SANDY MILLER

- Docents for the evening: members of American Association of University Women, Carson City; Delta Kappa Gamma, Nu Chapter, Carson City; Soroptimists International of Carson City, and the Nevada Women's History Project.
- Video: T.W. Landis, Phil Kowalski, and Creel Snider of the Truckee Meadows Community College Media Services.

riculture, banks and banking, counties and county boundaries, livestock and state publicity. In the 1945 session there were two additional women in the Assembly: Martha Woolridge of Nye County and Edna Montrose of Mineral County.

She introduced no legislation in either session, made one recorded speech, and generally voted "aye" with the majority. She ran for a third term in 1945, but lost to a veteran returning from the War, Lester Bisoni. According to Glass, Woods herself believed she had been used in a political "deal."

The incumbent state senator, she said, planned to run for reelection himself and she had originally determined to challenge him. The senator visited her, promising the local political organ-

ization's support for another term in the assembly if she would give up her desire to run for the state senate. She agreed, but lost her election, and the 1947 Nevada legislature convened with no women lawmakers.

Back home in Eureka, Josie became active in the Business and Professional Women's Club, serving as legislative chairman and then President.

Josie Woods sold The Willows in December, 1954 and spent her last years traveling or living in retirement in Arizona. In her later years, she was somewhat victimized in one more "deal." She wrote the story of her life, and being by her own admission "not a writer," she somehow contacted a professional in the field.

The "ghost writer" sold

her memoirs "to a movie outfit in Hollywood." The result was a motion picture titled, "The Ballad of Josie," starring Doris Day in the leading role. Josie Alma Woods - the real "Josie" - received only the vicarious satisfaction of seeing her life dramatized on the screen and later on television.

Josie Alma Woods died on February 18, 1983. Her life was memorialized as one who "embodied the true spirit of the pioneer"... and "personified the contributions that women have made in our state" by the passage of Assembly Concurrent Resolution by the 69th session of the Nevada Legislature on May 28, 1997.

## From the Web

There are over 30 Nevada women's biographies available to educators, students and other interested persons via the internet.

The NWHP website has been up and running since October 1997. Many NWHP members were involved in gathering information, writing biographies, collecting pictures and putting all of the information together.

NWHP News will preview the website and print one of the sketches in each issue. You can find Josie Alma Woods and other women at [www.unr.edu/sb204/nwhp/](http://www.unr.edu/sb204/nwhp/)



*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.*

## Lenore H. Kosso

Lenore (Lee) Kosso now lives in northern California. An historian, she is a former manuscript curator at the Special Collections Department of the Gatchell Library at the University of Nevada Reno.

In that position, Lee and Mary Ellen Glass collected biographical information on Nevada women from all walks of life as well as information on the Equal Rights Amendment battle in Nevada.

These materials are currently housed in the Special Collections Department.

## Sylvia Ontaneda-Bernales

Although born in Lima, Peru, Sylvia Ontaneda-Bernales has become a significant figure in Nevada women's history. She arrived in the U.S. for the first time in 1965 with a one-year scholarship from the American Field Service. She returned to America in 1972 and made her home in Reno.

Sylvia has studied at Catholic University in Lima, the University of Cambridge in England, and the University of Nevada Reno. She has earned a fistful of degrees and certificates of higher education, most of them in journalism. In 1966 she earned an M.A. in journalism from the University of Nevada Reno.

Sylvia has worked at Reno television stations KOLO and KNPB and for the *Reno News and Review*. She has contributed to several documentaries, but

her most important work in women's history was "Making a difference/a Celebration of Women in Politics", a documentary first broadcast in 1995. It has since been rebroadcast as well as shown before groups around Nevada and at a film festival in Canada.

Many scholarships and honors have been bestowed upon Sylvia. In 1995 she received the first Nevada Women's Role Model Award given by Attorney General Frankie Sue del Papa.

## Nona Parkin

Nona Parkin was born April 14, 1921 in Saginaw, Michigan and died September 1, 1995 in Reno, Nevada. For forty-two years she worked as a secretary at Sierra Pacific Power Company. Although she lived in Reno, her project took her into all areas of the state, including very small towns.

In the mid-sixties Nona began the project that consumed most of her hours outside her job for over twenty years—collecting information from headstones in cemeteries throughout Nevada.

Referring to herself as, "Nona, the Nutty Necrologist," she transcribed and compiled over 100 three-ring binders of this information, much of it on women, which would otherwise be lost to historians. She also collected vital records, births, marriages, obituaries and short newspaper articles concerning local residents. The information she collected and transcribed was also indexed.

Upon her death, her collection was donated to the Reno LDS Family History Center. The collection was sent to Salt Lake City, where it was micro-filmed. The original and micro-film copy have been returned to the Reno LDS Family History Center, added to their col-

lection, and are open to all researchers.

Nona Parkin preserved a tremendous amount of information on women, mostly unknown, that will be a treasure for historians writing on women and women's issues.

## Helen J. Stewart

Known as "The First Lady of Las Vegas," Helen J. Stewart was born April 16, 1854 in Springfield, Illinois. Her parents, Hiram and Delia Gray Wiser, brought their family across the country to Galt, California. Helen attended the public schools in Sacramento County, California and Woodland College in Yolo County, California.

At eighteen, Helen married Archibald Stewart and moved with him to Nevada. Stewart had been in Nevada as early as June, 1868, when he was operating a freighting business in the eastern part of the state. In addition to hauling ore for the Pioche mines to mills in Hamilton, he operated a wood ranch, contracting for the cutting of wood and selling it. In 1869 he began dealing in cattle. The Stewarts moved first to a lonely ranch north of Pioche and then for a few years lived in Pioche.

In 1882, Helen moved with Archibald to the Las Vegas Ranch on which he held a loan. He had foreclosed when the loan was not paid. At the time of the move, Helen had three children and was expecting her fourth. Two more children were born at the ranch.

Archibald Stewart was murdered in 1884, and 30-year-old Helen, mother of five, was faced with the choice to sell the ranch in the Las Vegas Valley or learn how to operate it. She became so proficient as a cattle rancher and business woman that at one time she was the

largest landowner in southern Nevada.

In 1902 Helen sold most of the ranch to the San Pedro, Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railroad. Shortly after, the town of Las Vegas was begun. Helen remained in Las Vegas for the rest of her life, taking an active role in the life of the town. She was the first woman elected to the school board, was one of the first women to sit on a murder trial, and was a charter member of the Christ Episcopal Church and the Mesquite Club.

Helen J. Stewart was considered an authority on the history of southern Nevada and wrote a portion of Sam Davis' *The History of Nevada*. With the help of Jeanne Wier, she organized a branch of the Nevada Historical Society in Las Vegas. Active in several women's clubs, she encouraged women to record their stories and their history.

Living on the isolated ranch for over twenty years, Helen became friends with the Paiute women in the area. They told her stories of their lives, the meaning of their work on baskets and how the baskets told the stories of their lives. She gave many lectures to women's clubs and conferences on her collection and the history of the Native American women. Her collection, containing over 550 baskets, was considered the finest in the state. She was in the process of turning her work and the basket collection over to the state of Nevada when she died of cancer in Las Vegas on March 6, 1926. Her heirs sold the collection out of the state.

Helen J. Stewart's papers reside in the Nevada Historical Society and the Special Collections Department of Dickinson Library at the University of Nevada Las Vegas.



# JOYCE MARSHALL; Setting & Achieving Many Goals

by Frankie Williams

The biography of Joyce Rasmussen Marshall, Oral Historian who chairs NWHF in the south, begins in Chicago, Illinois following WWII, and evolves into a tapestry that could be made into a movie. It's the best of the "coming to Las Vegas" stories.

Agnes Holt, spirited young nurse, a First Lieutenant in a Veterans' Hospital, met a street smart fellow who had served with merit in the Tank Corps in North Africa. Though he suffered from wounds from which he never fully recovered, they fell in love and married. They had two sons and a daughter: Joyce.

Joyce Rasmussen was connected; he was "Mousey" in the streets and the floating crap games. Now with a family, he needed a day job, but gambling was all he knew. When luck was with him the family would be at the Pump Room or Ciro's, but the rest of the time they lived on soup.

A gruff and distant man, Mousey demanded a lot from the children. He had rules, most of them good, and infractions earned a belting.

Among the mobs in Chicago, favors could be called. Mousey called an old friend who had gone out to Las Vegas, where gambling was legal, and obtained the promise of a good job, if he could get there. Mousey packed his family into a borrowed car loaded with all they could carry.

Arriving in Las Vegas, Rob's Motel rented the family a room with a hot plate. But then they learned that the friend had died before he told anyone about Mousey. Agnes cried and Mousey, flat broke, began making the rounds, searching for a job.

Joyce and her brothers



would go to Fremont Street and watch the slot machines nearest to the sidewalk. If coins were dropped, they would scramble for them and run back to the motel. One day they came running down Fifth Street and saw Mousey sitting outside waiting for them. Joyce remembers screaming, "They've kicked us out of the motel!"

But then her father flipped them a silver dollar and they went to the "White Bunny" for three hamburgers. Banana splits were 25 cents, but they did not have enough street coins to buy one.

One day Mousey was walking down Fremont Street when he heard someone call, "Hey, Mousey, is that you?"

"Itchie, is that you?" Mousey replied. Itchie was a floorman at the El Rancho, and that same day Mousey started work there, too.

Agnes found a nursing job at the Las Vegas Hospital, so during the summer when school was out, Mousey often took the children with him to work. He would give the life

guard a ten dollar bill and they would spend the day at the pool. At lunch the life guard ordered them each a burger with fries and a Coke. Mousey would always remind them, "Don't embarrass me. I'll be checking on you on my breaks."

Joyce went to the

Fifth Street School, Sunrise Acres and Rancho High School. At UNLV, she earned a degree in History. She has been active in Baptist Youth Organizations, trained in Dance and English Riding. As an Oral Historian, Joyce has done research on the Las Vegas Show Girls and Dancers. Thirteen interviews have been completed and two more are in progress.

Having lived in Las Vegas during the prime youth culture of the fifties and sixties, Joyce is involved in a formal study of that group. At UNLV she has been a Teacher's Assistant, worked in Special Collections and been President of the Graduate Student Association.

Joyce notes her mother, Agnes Rasmussen, as her prime mentor. Agnes is now a vigorous, interesting and delightful lady of 82. Mousey died in the seventies. Jean Ford has also become an important person in her life. "Jean is my window to the past and the future," Joyce says.

In 1967 Joyce worked at the Aladdin front desk. In 1971 she wanted to work at newly-

opened Circus Circus, but was told she was too young and lacked experience. She pestered them daily until she got the job as head cashier at the front desk.

In 1973, when MGM was scheduled to open, three friends talked her into applying with them for jobs as cocktail servers. Though she knew nothing about drinks, she knew this would be a way to make much more money. She was hired and donned the red, short-skirted, hotel-page-style costume for the time limit she set for the experience, five years.

With a friend and partner, Joyce opened a ceramic business, "The Firing Squad," on West Sahara in 1980. They had a paint distributorship, cast their own greenware, did all the firing and taught classes. A time limit of three years was also set on this venture, at the end of which the business was advertised and sold in less than a week at a profit.

Joyce's husband of 25 years, John Marshall, died in 1995, and she speaks of how "lucky (she) was to have him to support her many ventures and encourage her to go back to school."

Genealogy is another of Joyce's interests. She likes classical music and admits she cleans to the music of Aaron Copeland. Joyce has traveled all over the world and is planning a trip to Russia in September. Asked to describe her personal philosophy, she says, "To try to make a difference."

As a mother of three, dedicated grandmother of ten, Joyce Marshall has come a long way from Rob's Motel to her home today in Desert Shores.



## Profiles of Members

### Sheryl Kleinendorst

It all started in 1991 with a class at UNR, Introduction to Women's Studies, and its professor, Jean Ford. That semester we were transformed into a dynamic group of people struggling with women's issues. We read, discussed, dissected, re-rerad, argued and journaled until we could accept what being a woman yesterday, today and tomorrow means.

After that, being a woman had a new place in my life—it came first. It came before work, school and relationships. Women's studies became my focus in college even though my diploma reads BA in journalism.

Not many people understood at the time. My parents asked, "What are you going to DO with women's studies?" It wasn't what I was going to do with it; it was what women's studies was doing for me.

I worked with Jean in the Women's Studies Department for a couple of years. I collated papers, ran errands, filed and

took messages in the office. I saw many projects flow through that office—some were my own.

Jean and I co-wrote a booklet titled *The History of Women's Studies at UNR*. I helped research a group of women who started the College Equal Suffrage Club on campus in 1913.

I also researched the history of lesbians in Nevada for the Nevada Women on the Frontier course. Remarks have been made about how little was researched and written about women in this state. Well, even less has been researched or written about lesbians. These and other projects constantly remind me of how much work is still to be done with women's history in this state.

My work with Jean and women's studies continues with the Nevada Women's History Project. I have photographed some of our events and created displays to compliment our functions. I am now the regional newsletter editor for the north. I feel privileged to be handed this challenge.

I look forward to working with all of you to help publicize and record the activities of this organization and to keep women's history alive in our minds and our hearts.

*Sheryl Kleinendorst, 25, is a Carson City native. She currently lives in Reno where she works for Costco wholesale and shares her home with two beloved males—Zooka and Ziggy, her pug dogs.*

## Family Treasures Find Last Home

By Frankie Williams

My mother was a Hickman. The name was brought to England in 1066 by Wilhelm Hickman, aide to William the Conqueror; our motto is always given in Latin, "Semper Fidelis," and in French, "Toujour Fidele."

We became Americans in 1653 and lived near Peter Jefferson, father of Thomas Jefferson, until the middle of the Revolution when the family moved to North Carolina. Bounties for Revolutionary service moved us to Kentucky and Tennessee, but by 1850 we were ranching in Texas. Our registered brand was Lazy H.

In 1934 a curious thing happened. Someone gave my grandfather a Rambouillet buck and two ewes. They were docile, didn't eat or drink too much and they multiplied. One of the ewes always had triplets who also had multiple births.

We were in the sheep business with all the ribbing that went with it: "There's nothing dumber than a sheep but the man who owns it."

Later we said, "The wool check came; we can go to the Fat Stock Show!"

A traditional Christmas gift became a fine blanket made from our wool at El Dorado Wollen Mill, dyed in rich colors. Ours were burgundy or peach and found their way to bags on closet shelves with the coming of better times and king-sized beds.

Mother fretted about her "treasures" when she had to go to the nursing home. I had them cleaned every year. When she died I brought her treasures home to my closets in Las Vegas. I found comfort in fam-

ily traditions, romantic and mythical, and in the outgrown material things which overfilled my space.

This year, at Christmas time, in the spirit of sharing, I contacted Mark Ryzdyski, Curator of the Clark County Heritage Museum about a home for some family treasures: two wool blankets and a handmade flower garden quilt.

Mark is a delightful man with a twinkle in his eye and a hearty laugh. He has great reverence for antiques and collectibles and great knowledge of Americana. He tends the Nevada Homes on Heritage Street at the museum site; each is a treasure.

I don't know where the blankets and the old quilt will finally be placed, but in my heart I know my mother's treasures, symbols of our family pride and industry, have moved west from Texas to another place I love, Nevada.

## New NWHP Order

by Sheryl Kleinendorst

Official meetings have begun in which the future direction of NWHP will be determined. The first in a series of brainstorming meetings took place January 26 at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Reno.

A professional facilitator was hired to guide the discussion and keep time. Several models of operation were presented to the state board members and steering committee members who were present. The three discussed were:

-Keep non-profit status under the umbrella of the Nevada Women's Fund

-Incorporate our projects





# State Board Report

by Sheryl Kleinendorst

Leadership, finance and the future were the focus of NWHP's first 1998 state board meeting. The State Board Video Conference held January 16 generated positive results in these areas.

Major actions were taken by board members to reorganize leadership positions. Jean Ford resigned as part-time State Coordinator. She was appointed to the state board as a member at large, a voting member. Kay Sanders resigned as State Chair and member of the board. She was hired as part-time State Coordinator. Kathleen Noneman was elected to fill the position of State Chair and Vikki Ford was appointed as State Secretary, a voting member.

A finance report given by

Kathleen Clemence, State Treasurer, revealed that NWHP must raise \$5,000 to meet general operating expenses between now and the end of June. This led to a discussion of the finance plan from Mary Anne Convis, North Finance Chair, regarding fundraising options.

Convis acknowledged the need for long-term financial planning and the immediate need for short-term financing to cover expenses until June. A long-term fundraising plan—such as applying for state grants, grants recommended by members and those dealing with education or children—would fit into the financial future of the organization.

Meanwhile, funds will come from member donations solicited in a letter, a fundraiser being planned by Kathleen Clemence in March in Reno, a tea with First Lady Sandy Miller in Las Vegas, and any money generated from sales of NWHP merchandise during the March 21 Nevada

Women's Summit.

The board approved printing of the second in a series of postcards in time for the conference. Copies of the Annotated Bibliography will be another new item for sale this year. NWHP North will have a booth at the conference where these items can be purchased.

It was decided that the first in a series of brainstorming meetings concerning the future of the organization would be held on January 26 in Reno. One representative from the south is required to attend. Several avenues of operation will be explored in these meetings. Follow-up meetings will be held all over the state.

It was determined that March 20 in Las Vegas on the UNLV Campus will be a perfect opportunity to hold a meeting when people from all over the state will be gathered to hear the results of the small group meetings that will have occurred regarding the future of NWHP.

## Las Vegas combines December Board Meeting With Lunch at Country Inn

A holiday social gathering was held in Las Vegas on December 20th in conjunction with the monthly board meeting. The group met at the Country Inn on Sunset Boulevard in Green Valley. Frankie Williams introduced her special guest, Billie Bates from BoulderCity.

A nice lunch was served and there was plenty of time for exchanging stories and talking about our latest projects.

into existing agency agreement entities that operate under the Division of Continuing Education at the University of Nevada Reno such as the Nevada Humanities Committee or working in cooperation with ElderCollege to sponsor our tours and lecture series

-Downsize to an all volunteer staff with no office or paid coordinator until funds are gathered to cover these expenses.

There was a general consensus of the group that NWHP cannot operate without an office and a hired state coordinator.

The meeting was initiated with a discussion of accomplishments in the past years and members' initial reactions to events. At the conclusion of the meeting, members were asked to volunteer for one or more areas that will need immediate attention such as fundraising and the small

group meetings which will be scheduled to be held in February. It was stressed that for the organization to continue as successfully as it has, a major commitment is needed from the members.

Reaction to the brainstorming session was upbeat. "I came away with a positive feeling that the organization will continue well into the future," said Phyllis Cudek, Membership Chair for Northern Nevada. "I felt this was a very successful strategy. There was a great feeling of cooperation going on."

The small group meeting to be held in Reno is scheduled for February 28th. Time and place will be announced. Other small group meetings will be held in Las Vegas, Fallon, Elko, and Carson City prior to the March conference.

## Jean Ford Honored at Mesquite Club Luncheon

At a recent Mesquite Club meeting, former state senator and director of the Nevada Women's History Project, Jean Ford, related to members just how much Nevada women contributed to the advancement of the women's suffrage movement.

Ford displayed history books from the early 1900s showing pictures of groups of men and women, where only the names of the men shown were mentioned.

She informed members that there are now new profiles of 65 Nevada women on the

Internet – women such as Delphine Squires who organized the PTA in Nevada; Helen J. Stewart, the first woman on the school board; Isabelle Blackman, whose history of the Mesquite Club is now in UNLV's Special Collections; Frances Farnsworth and Mrs. Givens, who founded the Mesquite Club in 1911 with the original purpose of self-improvement and community service. As a state senator, Jean Ford was an advocate of improving state parks, libraries and prevention of child abuse and neglect.

The Mesquite Club's first vice president, Pat Duncombe, presented Jean with a certificate of appreciation, and Cathi Poer, president of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, conferred on her an honorary membership in the GFWC.



# Hannah Clapp Lecture Series

By Patt Quinn-Davis

The Hannah Clapp Lecture Series continues in March with an evening on railroad women in the American West by Sacramento photographer, lecturer and historic researcher Shirley Burman.

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*. **Railroad Women in the American West, Wednesday, March 4, 5:30 p.m., Nevada State Library and Archives, 100 Stewart Street, Carson City.**

In April there will be a reenactment of pioneer educator Hannah Clapp, presented in Chatauqua style by Eileen Cohen. Cohen's memberships include the Carson City Preservation Coalition, NWHP, and the League of Women Voters. 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.

**Hannah Clapp reenactment presentation, Wednesday, April 1, 5:30 p.m., Nevada State Library and Archives, 100 Stewart Street, Carson City**

In May, Ronald M. James, long-time Nevada historian, will speak about his latest book, co-edited with C. Elizabeth Raymond, *Comstock Women: The Making of a Mining Community*. The book is a collection of essays by various writers, combining traditional

historical research with demography, ethnic studies, architectural history, material culture, and literary studies. James offers historic insights based on his previous books and historic articles. The emerging chapters include the history of Chinese women on the Comstock, prostitution in the district and the economic roles played by women in the mining West.

James is an officer and administrator for the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office. In addition to previous research which has culminated in such books as *Temples of Justice*, James has published numerous articles on preservation issues, archeology, and folklore. There will be a book-signing as part of the evening's lecture.

**Ronald M. James Lecture, Wednesday, May 6, 5:30 p.m., Nevada State Library and Archives, 100 Stewart Street, Carson City.**

Historical and geneological researcher, Cindy Southerland, will conduct a tour of many of the intriguing historic sites of the Carson City cemetery in Virginia City. She has worked as the historical photograph curator for the Humboldt Museum in Winnemucca and as the contract photograph cataloger for the Nevada State Library and Archives.

**Carson City Cemetery Tour, Saturday, June 6, 11 a.m., Lone Mountain Cemetery, 919 Beverly Drive.**

For more information on any of these Hannah Clapp presentations, please call Isabel Espinoza at (702) 883-9035.

# Nevada Women's History Forum

By Sheryl Kleinendorst

Reno Research Roundtable has changed its name to Nevada Women's History Forum. It was discussed by members of NWHP and the coordinator, Susan Roberts, that the former title might not be doing its job. "Research Roundtable" implied that one might be going to a presentation on how to do research in some area of women's history.

The Forum, however, is intended for anyone interested in women's history to come and listen to someone else's presentation on the research they have done.

"People can come to the forums for fun and an education and it doesn't have to be painful," Roberts said.

Roberts would like some input on the direction the Forums might take in the future and has scheduled "Where Are We? Where Are We Going?" for March.

Members and their guests are invited to discuss the way the group has functioned and ways it could be improved in the future. She would like to see members bring their thoughts, ideas, and support for proposed changes such as reaching out to the community, building a broader base, and making sure topics are of interest.

The March forum will be facilitated by Roberts, who would like those who can't make the meeting to call her at (702) 747-2306 so their opinions will be voiced.

"Where Are We? Where Are

**We Going," Friday, March 13, noon to 1:30 p.m., YWCA, #5, 1301 Valley Road, Reno.**

In April, Esther Early explores the extraordinary life of Jean McElrath (1917-1967), a blind and paralyzed author, poet and journalist whose articles about Northern Nevadans were published nationally.

Early considers McElrath "an outstanding representative of women who did so much for this state," and would like to see her legacy of articles, poems and books passed on to future generations.

**"Jean McElrath," Friday, April 10, noon to 1:30 p.m., YWCA, #5, 1301 Valley Road, Reno.**

In May, Mary Rusco will provide an illustrated slide presentation from original photographs of Paiute and Shoshone women in Southern Nevada mining and agricultural communities from 1875 to 1920.

**"Paiute and Shoshone Women," Friday, May 8, noon to 1:30 p.m., YWCA, #5, 1301 Valley Road, Reno.**

Kathleen Noneman will kick off the summer series of Nevada Women's History Forum this June with a presentation on women lawyers in Nevada history. See the next issue of *NWHP News* for more details on this interesting presentation by our acting state chair.

Nevada Women's History Forums are held at the YWCA, 1301 Valley Road, #5, Reno, from noon to 1:30 p.m. and are FREE.

New members and guests are welcome. For more information, call Susan Roberts, (702) 747-2306



# CALENDAR

## SOUTHERN REGION MEETING DATES

### February 21, 1998

Executive Committee and general membership meeting, 11 a.m., Clark County Library, 1401 East Flamingo, Las Vegas

### March 20-21, 1998

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

### April 4, 1998

Frankie Williams & Mary Gafford present "Fanny-With the Eye of an Artist & the Heart of a Fashionist-She Made Las Vegas Beautiful" Roundtable Workshop, 11 a.m., Nevada State Museum and Historical Society, 700 Twin Lakes Drive, Las Vegas.

## NORTHERN REGION MEETING DATES

### March 12, 1998

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

### April 23, 1998

Joint meeting of Executive and Steering Committee, 5:45 p.m. NWHP, 1301 Valley Road, Reno. Please bring a snack to share.

### May 14, 1998

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

### June 1, 1998

Northern Nevada Annual Business Meeting, 5:30 p.m., location TBA.

## Research Registry

**Frankie Williams, Las Vegas:** Seeking orphan train riders and their descendants. 59 children were left in Nevada. Telephone (702) 876-3586.

**Frankie Williams, Las Vegas:** POINTers (Pursuing Our Italian Names Together) Telephone (702) 876-3586.

We welcome anyone doing research on Nevada women to share that topic or focus with us. If you would like your research topic shared with others, please call 322-7743 in Reno, or write us at NWHP, 1301 Valley Road, #5, Reno, NV 89512. To hear and discuss, in an informal setting, the research underway, join the Nevada Women's History Forums (see related article on page 10)

# POTPOURRI

## Thanks

- Eleanora Sanders of Yerington for sending us historical materials for our files about the Yerington Women's Club.
- Jim Thorpe for his video coverage of two NWHP events, *An Evening with Sandy Miller* and historian Willa Oldham Ramsden's *Complexities of Research*, a talk she gave at the Hannah Clapp Lecture Series in Carson City. We appreciate this major contribution to our video collection.

## Congratulations

- The following NWHP members whose research and writing became *Comstock Women: The Making of a Mining Community*.
  - C. Elizabeth Raymond, co-editor
  - Ronald James, co-editor
  - Kathryn Dunn Totton
  - Janet Loverin
  - Bernadette Francke
  - Anita Watson
  - Jean Ford
- Vikki Ford who brought the history of the YWCA to the present in *Making Their Mark: Reno/Sparks YWCA History*.
- Georgia Hedrick whose article on the Daughters of Charity was published in the January/February issue of *Nevada Woman* magazine.
- Jill Atkins whose article about the re-creation of the habit worn by the Daughters of Charity was published in the January/February issue of *Nevada Woman* magazine.

## Condolences

- The family of Florence Robinson, one of our members who died November 7, 1997. She was a retired assistant superintendent of schools for Nye County and an active member of her community.

## Correction

- Last issue in Role of Honor, Part III, it was misprinted that Mary Freeman "died in 1920 in Stillwater, Nevada." Mary Freeman actually died in 1943 in San Francisco. We apologize for the misinformation.

## Wanted

- The NWHP News would like to continue the "Research Registry" feature in the next issue. If you know anyone who is researching some topic related to Nevada women's history or you are researching some topic yourself, please submit these items to Sheryl Kleinendorst (North) at (702) 324-6732 or Frankie Williams (South) (702) 876-3586.

The life and art of JEANNE JANISH, botanical illustrator well-known in the west for such works as *Flowers of the Southwest Deserts*, is being prepared by the Nevada Women's Archives for exhibit at UNLV Library's Special Collections Department in celebration of Women's History Month.

An opening reception, co-sponsored by the University Library Society, will be held on National Women's History Day, March 8, from 2 to 4 p.m.

For more information please call (702) 895-3954 in Las Vegas.



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: Bonnie Dietrich

Dayton: Laura Tennant

Reno: Donna Odell

Incline Village: Miriam  
Shearing

East Ely: Jennifer Schwenk  
Nelson

### New Organizational Member

Henderson: St Rose Dominican Hospital Women's

Committee-Mission Services

Las Vegas: League of Women  
Voters of Las Vegas Valley

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

The southern membership  
chair of the NWHP may be  
reached at PO Box 28206, Las  
Vegas, NV 89102.