

# NWHP

NEVADA WOMEN'S HISTORY

## Project News

### Hats Off to the Ladies of the Mesquite Club

Submitted by Frankie Williams



The NWHP entertained Mesquite Club members and guests with one of the Project's special "windows to the past," a millinery show that unfolded on January 18th in Las Vegas. Project member and the show's writer and producer Frankie Williams and Project member Joan LeMere provided commentary. NWHP members Marion Kohler, Maureen Schnitzer, Sally Wathen, and Joan Fragakis strolled down the runway in various headgear. Clark County Museum Guild member Ruth Wilson joined them.

The extravaganza opened with an impressive collection of feathered hats and moved on to mint-condition headwear of many decades. The models brought to life a collection of beautiful fur headpieces belonging to Maureen Schnitzer, Vagabond hats with large, tall crowns, and scarves to drape over the costumes. Nineteen thirties-era summer straws bearing artificial fruit, sailor hats, "pill boxes," cloches, small hats of tulle, and berets of the film, "Bonnie and Clyde" fame, were showcased. In all, the ladies demonstrated sixty pieces.

Joan Fragakis donned a feather-trimmed negligee and delighted her audience as she strutted in gorgeous high heels. This intimate interlude celebrated the history of shoes and the beauty and appeal of American-made-and-marketed style. Elizabeth Castle was fondly remembered with a presentation of some of her hats. Colleen Schroeder, another of our well-loved "hat ladies," was also fondly recalled. The women modeling also showed Kathryn Simmons' hats, some of which she had made herself. These finely-stitched little jewels sparkled.

There then appeared a collection of Stetsons which Frankie called, "the hat that crowns the west." "Fiesta Rings," ladies' small hats popular in San Antonio, followed. According to Frankie, it's common for ladies there to own several, each in a different color. A Texan, she

*continued on page 5*

### Mrs. Guinn's Pink Tea Date Set!

Submitted by Carrie Porter

Sunday, June 23, 2002. A Pink Tea will be hosted by our First Lady, Dema Guinn at the Governor's Mansion. This will be a wonderful, one-of-a-kind fundraiser for the Sarah Winnemucca Statue Project. Mark your calendars now. Details will be included in the next newsletter.

<i>In This Issue</i>	
Hats Off to the Ladies of the Mesquite Club .....	1
Mrs. Guinn's Pink Tea Date Set .....	1
NWHP Credited for "Inspiration" .....	2
Calendar .....	2
President's Report .....	3
NWHP Biographical Encyclopedia Project Report .....	3
News from the North .....	4
News from the South .....	4
Jean Ford Research Center Update .....	5
Honor Roll Inductee Joyce Marshall's Background Told .....	6
Southern Region Hosts Holiday Fete .....	6
NWHP Honor Roll Honoree Jane Pieplow Reminisces .....	7
NWHP Member Produces Basque American Cookbook .....	7
Featured Historic Nevada Woman, Bird Wilson .....	8
Nevada Historical Society Offers Publications of Particular Interest .....	9
Reno Member Hazel Hohn Passes Away .....	9
Marjorie Russell Clothing and Textile Research Center .....	10
Billie Bates Honored on Her 92nd Birthday .....	10
Bernie Lenz Attends Benefit Fashion Show .....	10
NWHP Southern Region to Meet with AAWU .....	10
Rose Irwin Continues to Improve .....	10
Potpourri .....	11
Women's Summit .....	11
Message from Mitsi .....	11
Dues are Due! .....	11
Southern Region seeks Nominees .....	11
Some NWHP News	
Contacts .....	11
Member Application .....	12



# NWHP Credited for "Inspiration"

Cherry Jones

On March 3, the Carson Valley Historical Society in Gardnerville will present its third annual Women in History program entitled, "Threads Through Time". The Society has credited the NWHP for inspiring the yearly event. A Millenium Quilt comprised of squares featuring figures and places in Carson Valley history will be unveiled. Twelve Carson Valley women will be honored at the event. Biographical sketches of the honorees will then be housed at the Jean Ford Research Center in Reno. The program will begin at 2:00 PM at the Carson Valley Museum and Cultural Center, phone 782-2555.

## NWHP Leadership

### NORTHERN REGION STEERING COMMITTEE:

Holly Van Valkenburgh: Chair  
Sarah Britt: Treasurer  
Kathleen Allred: Secretary  
Kay Sanders: Communication Co-Chair/Newsletter Editor  
Lisa-Marie Lightfoot: Communication Co-Chair  
Isabel Espinoza: Finance Chair  
Kathy Noneman: Membership Chair  
Mary Anne Convis: Project Review Chair  
Cherry Jones and Carleen Ernest: Program Chair  
Patt Quinn-Davis: Publicity Chair  
Carrie Townley-Porter: Past-Chair

### SOUTHERN REGION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Jane Olive: President  
Anne Reck: Vice President  
Joan LeMere: Second Vice President  
Frankie Williams: Third Vice President  
Maureen Schnitzer: Recording Secretary  
Mary Gafford: Corresponding Secretary  
Mitsi Johnson: Treasurer  
Frankie Williams: Acting Nominating Committee Chairwoman  
Alice Pearson: Parliamentarian

### NWHP STATE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Carrie Porter: Acting President  
Joan LeMere: Second Vice President  
Holly Van Valkenburgh: Third Vice President  
Mitsi Johnson: Treasurer  
Eva Stowers: Secretary  
Jane Olive: Southern Chapter Representative  
Carleen Ernest: Northern Chapter Representative  
Fritsi Ericson: Nevada Women's Fund Representative  
Maureen Schnitzer: Corresponding Secretary  
Kay Sanders and Michelle Lord: Editor for State Newsletter  
Lisa-Marie Lightfoot: Webmaster  
Mary Anne Convis: State Project Review Chair  
Jean Baker: State Publicity Chair  
Joyce Marshall: Nominating Chair  
Isabel Espinoza: Finance Chair

## Calendar

### NORTHERN NEVADA SCHEDULE

Northern Region Steering Committee meeting, second Monday of each month - Carson City or Reno.

**MARCH 6, 2002** - Sarah Winnemucca fundraiser with AAUW - "Celebrating Women's History Month - Conversations with History," at the Sienna Hotel, Carson City.

**MARCH 9, 2002** - Carrie Townley Porter will portray Helen J. Stewart and then will discuss the Sarah Winnemucca Statue Project at the Districts II and III Soroptimists International meeting in Genoa.

**APRIL 8, 2002** - Steering Committee meeting, Reno

**MAY 13, 2002** - Steering Committee meeting, Carson City

**JUNE 15, 2002** - Annual Meeting at Thunderbolt

**JUNE 23, 2002** - A Pink Tea will be hosted by our First Lady, Dema Guinn at the Governor's Mansion. This will be a fund raiser for the Sarah Winnemucca Statue Project. Mark your calendars now. Details will be included in the next newsletter.

### SOUTHERN NEVADA SCHEDULE

**FEBRUARY 21, 2002** - Executive Committee Meeting

**MARCH 15, 2002** - Mesquite Club presentation, Joan Fragakis as "Julia Bullet."

**MARCH 20, 2002** - General Meeting, Buffet Dinner, Historic Program, with AAUW

**MARCH 21, 2002** - Executive Committee Meeting

**TBA** - March General Meeting

**APRIL 18, 2002** - Executive Committee Meeting

**APRIL 20, 2002** - Booth for NV Women's Summit at the Stardust

**MAY 16, 2002** - Executive Committee Meeting

**TBA** - May Annual Business Meeting, installation of new officers

**JUNE 20, 2002** - Executive Committee Meeting



# *President's Report*

by Carrie Townley Porter  
Acting State President

We finally made it to the year 2002! I am sure most of us were relieved to put the year 2001 behind us with the hope that this one will be happier and less violent. As we move into the new year, an overview of the NWHP state projects seems in order.

The NWHP is pursuing two large, on-going projects. The \$10,000, John Ben Snow Memorial Trust grant that we received is allowing the Web Site Committee to proceed with turning the Jean Ford Research Center at our state office in Reno into a first-class facility! It is exciting to see the progress being made. NWHP will finally have its own e-mail address, be able to access the web, and communicate with the rest of the world! The Center's scanner will be a most wonderful tool! We will be able to scan photographs. Researchers will then be able to print or download them to a disk. Even better is that we will be able to scan requested materials and send them to a researcher via an e-mail attachment. No copy machine or mail will be necessary. Of course, the Center will require that its patrons credit their sources, including the Center. Our members will be needed there to assist researchers, clip newspapers, and write biographies for our Encyclopedia. Please think about how you could help.

The Sarah Winnemucca Statue Project is our other big project. It moved slowly for awhile. Now that daily life for most Americans has settled down some since September 11th, the Project Committee is moving forward once again. A mailing will soon go to our individual and organizational members outlining how they may help.

Besides these two larger efforts, several other activities can provide opportunities for NWHP members to contribute. National History Day Awards for Nevada's schools is one such possibility. There are still some dedicated funds available for awards. Members living in any place in our state may participate in the awards program. Please let me know if you would like to. The awards events will occur in March or April. Our members who have participated in Las Vegas and Carson City have enjoyed a feeling of satisfaction and of having contributed.

Patt Quinn-Davis, our resident developer of the Sandy Miller Project, has reported that although the terrorist attacks in the east have slowed her progress, the project continues. Patt requests our help in reviewing completed sections to ensure that all pertinent information is included. Help with this oversight can come from members living in any area of the state. If you would like to help, please let me know.

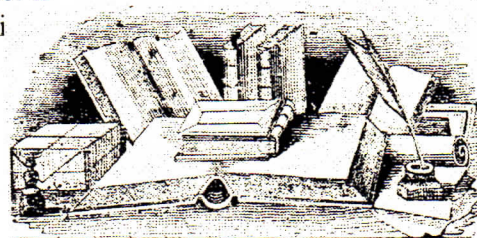
Finally, the NWHP's Annotated Bibliography, produced through the efforts of so many of our members, continues to sell. The proceeds support a dedicated fund in the State Treasury to satisfy reprinting costs. Please continue to make others aware that we have this excellent research work for sale.

As we move forward in this new year, I wish a safe and happy one for each of you.

## *NWHP Biographical Encyclopedia Project Report*

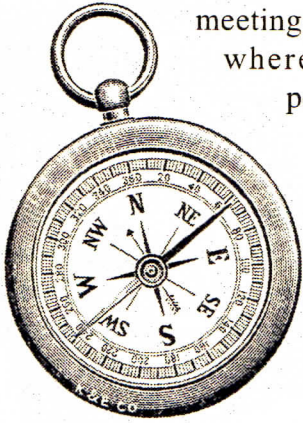
by Joan LeMere

Biographical encyclopedia articles continue to come in. Presently, we have forty four completed in our format. This is a long way from our goal of one hundred for the first edition, however. The project is ongoing and we need more help! Our file of names of notable Nevada women is bulging but we need more writers. We would especially like to appeal to northern NV members to participate. Anyone (especially you northerners) who is writing or has written one, please let me know. I will send you our format so that the bio will include all of the information we would like, please call me at 702-456-9242. Thank you.





## News from the North



Our November Steering Committee meeting took place at the Gold Hill Hotel where we became engrossed in a performance by our member, Cherry Jones, portraying Dr. Eliza Cook. Add to that wonderful food and congenial company which in total made a grand evening!

The Hannah Clapp Event that was held in January brought forth another memorable gathering. We met at the Villa

Basque Restaurant in Carson City for

dinner. Their chef prepared dishes from member Mary Ancho Davis's new cookbook and memoir, *Chorizos in an Iron Skillet: Memories and Recipes from an American Basque Daughter*. After dinner, Mary regaled us with the story of how she came to write her book, a task that took seven years! The treasury reveals history and photographs of Mary's family, along with a bounty of their recipes. The University of Nevada Press published the work which is available through the Press and from *Nevada Magazine*.

We held our January Steering Committee meeting at the NWHF state headquarters in Reno so that everyone could see the state-of-the-art electronic equipment purchased with the John Ben Snow grant. The Project now owns a new computer and combination printer/fax/scanner/copier. Besides all that, we have acquired a desk, chair, and printer stand. Sadly though, the man who arranged for the grant, Rollin Melton, did not live to see the fruitful result of his efforts.

In addition to these "flashy" items, we have added a 1976 reprint of an 1887 Carson City cookbook, complete with medicinal remedies, to our library. Strange as this may sound, the Nellis Air Force Base Library in Las Vegas donated it!

Plans have solidified for a joint program with the American Association of University Women on March 6th, being billed as "Celebrating Women's History Month-Conversations with History," a sure-to-be-interesting fundraiser. Monies generated from the festivities will help fulfill our agreement with the Nevada State Legislature that our fund-raising emphasis this year will go towards the Sara Winnemucca statue.

Kathy Noneman reported at the beginning of the

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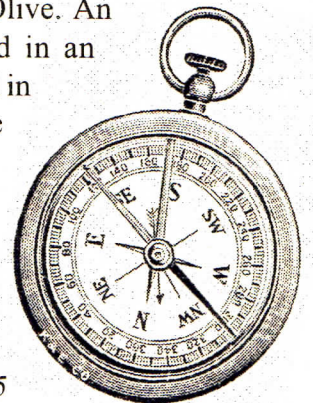
## News from South

What began as a cold, blustery winter has become a mild and lovely season here in southern Nevada. Indeed, the sorrows of September 11th seemed to lessen for many of us as we busied ourselves during the holidays. Now, especially, we rejoice in our many blessings. Here are just a few.

First, may I thank Mary Gafford for becoming our new Correspondence Secretary? Mary has supported the Southern Region group for years. She has steadfastly toiled as Publicity Chairman so we appreciate her having added further responsibility to her life. Mary replaced Frankie Williams who has become Third Vice President. With Maureen Schnitzer as Recording Secretary, the Executive Committee has returned to full strength. Indeed, I also wish to thank Anne Reck, Joan LeMere, Mitsi Johnson, and Alice Pearson for all the effort they give me and this organization. We are especially pleased that Mitsi is regaining her energies after recent surgery.

Once again, our stalwart, Frankie Williams, along with Kevin Laxalt, donated her acting skills to entertain Los Prados Ladies' Club on October 12th. Kevin also charmed the audience with recollections of the years she and her family spent in the Nevada Governor's Mansion during the sixties. Frankie, a Chautauquan, introduced her newest character, "Tillie." Tillie personifies the middle child in a family of fifteen that arrived in Nevada from Texas in 1935. Jean Baker arranged Frankie and Kevin's program. Jean now presides over all presentations given by the NWHF Southern Region. Afterward, the Club's President awarded our members with a check for \$500.00 to use toward the Sarah Winnemucca project.

In November, the Southern Region Chapter decided to honor United States military veterans and publicize our organization at the same time. The Chapter entered the local Veterans' Day Parade. Those "marching" included Frankie Williams, Bill Williams, Mary Gafford, Annette Marcus, Bernie Lenz and Jane Olive. An especially lovely day resulted in an especially long parade! Dressed in red, white and blue, Frankie traversed the entire route passing out Sarah Winnemucca project brochures. The rest of us relaxed in the parade vehicle, brandishing veterans'



*continued on page 5*



## *News from the North*

*continued from page 4*

Steering Committee meeting that we had gained ten members for 2002. Membership had risen even further by meeting's end. Our ranks may expand to include more members this year than last year's one hundred sixteen!

*Holly VanValkenburgh  
President, No. Region*

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## *News from the South*

*continued from page 4*

posters and waving to the patriotic crowd. It amounted to one of the largest and best-attended parades in recent Las Vegas history. Afterward, Frankie and Bill revived us with refreshments in their home. For several reasons, the afternoon remains a "memorable" experience!

The holiday season's highlight was a wonderful "Fork Buffet" given by Frankie and Bill at their home on December 15th. Twenty people joined for this lovely luncheon. The house overflowed with Christmas trees, poinsettias, and cheer from a flickering fire. The table and stove shone with holiday china and porcelain cookware laden with a savory repast. This bountiful event reminded us of the advantages we enjoy in our great land of plenty.

Finally, by the time this newsletter has gone to press, we shall have had our January 12th meeting to revise Policies and Procedures. This business session will have been held at the home of Joan LeMere. Billy Bates, a consummate parliamentarian, will have guided us through changes to be made in our by-laws. Knowing this group, we'll have found ways to make even this task loads of fun!

In closing, despite all the world's conflict and the tragedies in our nation's recent past, let us hope for a wonderfully successful New Year. May each of us find joy, health, and purpose in our lives, and may NWHP continue to grow and achieve the aims set for it by its founders and members.

*Jane Olive  
President, So. Region Executive Committee*

## *Hats Off to the Ladies of the Mesquite Club*

*continued from page 1*

admitted that Lone Star-staters celebrate the pouring of a Margarita, the lighting of the barbecue fire, or even, the striking of a match!

As Frankie had originally written the show several years earlier, a model parading in a hat from the Stardust's Le Lido would have ordinarily closed the show. This time, however, Marion Kohler brought down the house in a hat worthy of being seen in at the Ascot Races! She had purchased the confection in 1972 in a west Los Angeles boutique in Westwood for \$150.00 The large-crowned, picture hat was contrived of chartreuse straw and matching layers of organza, lavishly trimmed with handmade, organza roses. Marion modeled this height-of-fashion piece sporting jewelry she had acquired to appear in at the 1972 Kentucky Derby. The set included large, drop-earrings and a massive pin in dazzling green, handset stones. She continues to turn heads in that incarnation! So ended the fun at the Mesquite Club hat show

## *Jean Ford Research Center Update*

*by Kay Sanders*

Yesterday's (Executive Committee) meeting was most successful. Thanks go to Holly and Mitsi for making the teleconference arrangements and to Carrie for her meticulous planning. The system worked beautifully. Here is the information I promised to e-mail to our Steering Committee members:

Our NWHP FAX number: (775) 826-6865

Jean Ford Research Center e-mail address:  
jfredctr@gbis.com  
password: nev2002

Webmaster e-mail address (Lisa-Marie Lightfoot):  
nwHP@nevadawomen.org

There will be an article in the May NWHP Newsletter giving more details about our Jean Ford Research Center.



# *Honor Roll Inductee Joyce Marshall's Background Told*

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Joyce was born in Chicago, IL and came to Las Vegas with her parents and two brothers in 1953. Her father was in the gaming business and her mother was a nurse. Joyce was married to her husband John until his death in 1995 and has three grown daughters, ten grandchildren, and one great grandson, shown with her.

At age 40, Joyce went back to school and received a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from UNLV. After entering the University's Master's Degree program in History, she developed a passion for compiling oral histories; recording the lives of people who had grown up and had had a part in molding the Las Vegas we know today. Joyce was involved in the "Women in Gaming and Entertainment" program under Joanne Goodwin at UNLV. For it, Joyce interviewed dancers and showgirls from the 1940s, 50s and 60s. She also served as President of UNLV's Graduate Students' Association.

Joyce has served as both Southern Region and State Chair of the Nevada Women's History Project. She continues to help compile the Project's Biographical Encyclopedia. In addition, she gives talks about having grown up in Las Vegas and about the value and process of recording oral histories. The production of her videotaped interviews with Nevada's last seven First Ladies is her proudest endeavor.

Now employed as an Archivist in the Special Collections Department of the Lied Library at UNLV, Joyce Marshall continues to do the work she loves and to secure collections that will aid researchers in understanding the evolution of our unique city.

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## *Southern Region Hosts Holiday Fete*

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By Jane Olive

Third Vice President Frankie Williams and her husband Bill threw open their elegant Las Vegas home for the Southern Region's holiday party on the afternoon of Saturday, September 15, 2001. Approximately twenty guests descended upon the gathering which boasted engrossing conversation, tantalizing food, and a remarkable setting.

Frankie and Bill prepared the wonderful, so-called, "Fork Buffet," while knives and spoons "rested," unneeded. A list of the bountiful cuisine begins with appetizers. They included baba ghanoush, hummus, sliced tomato, cucumber, onions, onion and clam dips, and chips. The buffet table held Duchesse, Camembert, Roquefort, and Gorgonzola cheeses as well as olives, lime, tequila-cured King salmon, sour cream, caviar, crème fraiche, cherries, and wasabi. Besides all that, entrées still beckoned! Not to be forgotten were Chasen's chili with Fritos and diced onion, meatballs in red currant sauce, plain and curried deviled eggs, and Maryland chicken and rice. Potato salad and fruit salad basked beside prize-winning, Eastern Star Jell-O salad. Three kinds of bread for smothering with herb butter, plain butter, strawberry butter and anchovy mayonnaise accompanied the main dishes. For desert, guests forced themselves to choose among chocolate layer cake, white chocolate raspberry cheesecake, zucchini bread, tiramisu, or pumpkin bread. Liquid refreshment flowed in the form of Mimosas, punch, and coffee. Mints and nuts topped off the repast. The entire scene created a twinkling, fairyland atmosphere.

Members and guests who partook of the feast and camaraderie included Alice Pearson, Joan LeMere, Jan Kennedy, Marian Kolar with her husband Alex, Valerie Fisher, Jane Olive, Anne Reck, Kathy Augustine, Michelle Lord, Mary Gafford, Kathleen Hanselmann and her husband, Joachim, Sandra Dinsmore, Jean Spiller, Betty Middleton, Bernie Lenz, Jean Baker and her husband Ron.

The buffet provided a splendid sendoff for the holiday season. NWHP Southern Region members and friends extend their many thanks to Frankie and Bill for a memorable party.





# CONVERSATIONS WITH HISTORY

A FUNDRAISER FOR THE SARAH WINNEMUCCA PROJECT  
CELEBRATING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



DATE: *March 6, 2002 (Wednesday)*  
TIME: *6 to 9 pm*  
LOCATION: *Siena Ballroom*  
*Siena Hotel Spa & Casino*  
*Reno, Nevada*

SPECIAL GUEST  
**LOUISE TANNEHEIMER**  
GRANDNIECE OF SARAH WINNEMUCCA

## *Conversations with History*

proudly presented by  
the American Association  
of University Women and  
the Nevada Women's  
History Project

For more information,  
contact Carleen Ernest at  
775-787-8779 or  
Joyce Destefanis at  
775-852-0285

## *Also Featuring:*

Sue Ballew as *Nellie Mighels Davis*  
Dorothy Dolan as *Annie Roberts*  
Linda Guevin as *Sarah Winnemucca*  
Cherry Jones as *Dr. Eliza Cook*  
Kathy Noneman as *Bird Wilson*  
Cindy Sutherland as *Annie Hudnut Martin*  
Carrie Townley Porter as *Helen J. Stewart*

Please RSVP using the form below. Cost includes salad, entrée with potatoes and vegetable, dessert, non-alcoholic beverage, tax, and gratuity. No-host bar available. Completed registrations must be received no later than March 1, 2002.

I will attend **Conversations with History**. Enclosed is a check for \$\_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ reservation(s) at \$40 per person (\$15 is tax deductible).

Please make check payable to: **AAUW** and mail to:  
**No later than March 1, 2002**

**Carleen Ernest**  
**4790 Caughlin Parkway PMO #194**  
**Reno NV 89509**

Menu choice: Grilled Chicken with Fresh Herbs and Chardonnay Butter Sauce ☐

Grilled Salmon with Balsamic Reduction Sauce ☐

Pasta Primavera ☐

If you cannot attend, a donation to the Sarah Winnemucca Project would be most appreciated. Thank you. ☐ \$10 ☐ \$15 ☐ \$20 ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 Other \$\_\_\_\_\_

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_







# *Nevada Women's History Project Honor Roll*

## *Honoree Jane Pieplow Reminiscences*



November 1, 2001, was my nine-year anniversary as Director of the Churchill County Museum in Fallon, Nevada. What changes have taken place at the museum during those nine years! Of course, some things are still the same, such as the twice-monthly, BLM-sponsored trips to Hidden Cave, and the annual publication of our museum association's journal, *In Focus*. Other things, however, are changing. We now enjoy a larger gift shop area and new exhibits that interpret the Newlands Project, the Stillwater Wildlife Refuge, the Forty Mile Desert, and the Native Americans in our area. The construction of a new building to display more artifacts is coming. Nevertheless, there are still many more goals to accomplish.

I came to Fallon in 1992 as the new Director of the Churchill County Museum. I had interviewed for this job while working as Director of the High Plains Museum in Goodland, Kansas. A Wisconsin native who grew up in Milwaukee, I obtained my undergraduate degree in Visual Communications from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 1977. After spending eight years working as an art director for a small advertising firm, I decided to divert my career somewhat. I went back to school to obtain a Masters Degree in Public History. This allowed me to combine my love for art and design with my interest in history.

Shortly after arriving in Fallon and beginning my duties at the museum, I had the pleasure of meeting Jean Ford. We created an evening program for her University of Nevada Reno class on women's studies that ultimately became a two-part video. The Churchill County Museum Association produced this video which has been purchased by many museum visitors. Jean interviewed us again on her statewide tour when she began searching out archival information on women's history in preparation for starting the NWHP. The museum also hosted the Anne Martin Chautauqua program that Jean and many others put together. I feel fortunate to have worked with her.

What are some of the future projects planned for the Churchill County Museum? Our biggest goal is to raise enough money to add on to our existing building for, after 33 years, we have run out of room! The Churchill County Museum Association has come close to reaching its fundraising goal. We hope construction can begin sometime this year. Other projects will include new exhibits and public programs.

Aside from my museum duties, I have become involved in other local and state projects. In Fallon, I sing in the Lahontan Valley Concert Choir, as well as in a 6-person singing group. I have taught music, art appreciation, and guitar at the Western Nevada Community College. On the state level, I have served on the Board of the Nevada Museums Association in various capacities and have recently been elected to the board of the Nevada Humanities Committee. Nationally, I have been a peer reviewer for the American Association of Museums' Museum Assessment Program for the past five years, consulting for small museums in California, Idaho and Oregon.

I have enjoyed living in Nevada these past nine years, and look forward to spending at least a few more in this state of beautiful, vast scenery and friendly people!

Haven't yet visited the Churchill County Museum in Fallon? Stop in! Winter Hours: Mon.-Sat. 10-4 and Sundays 12-4 (Dec.-Feb.) - Summer Hours: Mon.-Sat. 10-5 and Sunday 12-5 (March-November). **Churchill County Museum \* 1050 S. Maine Street \* Fallon, NV 89406 \* (775) 423-3677 phone \* (775) 423-3662 fax \* e-mail: ccmuseum.org.**

## *NWHP Member Produces Basque American Cookbook*

Cherry Jones and Holly Van Valkenburgh

Mary Ancho Davis of Carson City has recently had her biographical and historical Basque American cookbook, *Chorizos on an Iron Skillet: Memories and Recipes from an American Basque*, published by the University of Nevada Press! Having grown up in Battle Mountain, Mary included not only authentic Basque receipts, but stories from her childhood as well. She presided at a January 9th Hannah Clapp Event dinner and book-signing at the Villa Basque Deli. The compendium is also available through another NWHP member, Isabel Espinoza, of *Nevada Magazine*. This offering of Nevada history and culinaria should make fascinating reading and great eating!





# Featured Historic Nevada Woman

## Bird Wilson

- **Born:** 18??
- **Died:** 19??
- **Race/nationality/ethnic background:** Caucasian
- **Married:** William Hatton, Wendell Wheat
- **Children:** five (four sons, one daughter)
- **Primary city and county of residence and work:** Foldfield (Esmeralda), Manhattan (Nye)
- **Major fields of work:** law (court reporter, stenographer), business, (stock broker), politics (lobbyist, women's rights advocate)
- **Other role identities:** women's club leader

### Biography:

Bird Wilson was born in Sandoval, Marion County, Illinois. Her parents were Susan Dean and Hazen Wilson, a direct descendent of Jeremiah Wilson, a Revolutionary war soldier from Massachusetts. The year of her birth is not known, and there is little information about her life before or after her years in Nevada.

Miss Wilson was the seventh woman admitted to the practice of law in Nevada on June 28th, 1906. She moved to Manhattan in May, 1906, from San Francisco where she had been Secretary for the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. She was the first female attorney in California admitted to practice in Federal Courts. In Manhattan, she practiced civil law, mining litigation, and contract law. When her income needed augmenting, she relied on her skills in stenography as a court reporter, and often worked for the Federal District Courts in Nevada. An article in the Tonopah Bonanza, September 18, 1906, reports:

"Miss B.M. Wilson, the prominent lady broker and attorney of Manhattan passed through this city Friday, en route for a two weeks' trip to San Francisco. She reports everything booming in Manhattan and predicts a still greater increase in the activity there. Miss Wilson is heavily interested in the Happy Hooligan and states that the giving of a contract for the sinking of a shaft on the ledge running through that claim has been attended with the happiest results, ore of a very high grade having been taken

out, and there being every sign of permanence."

Bird was described in an earlier edition of the Tonopah Bonanza:

".....Miss Wilson believed in the wider horizon and greater opportunities to be found in a live mining camp, and selected Manhattan as the most promising opening.....".

She became the first stock broker in Nevada, owned a ranch in Indian Springs, and had mining interests in Round Mountain, Tonopah and Goldfield in addition to the Happy Hooligan in Manhattan.

In January of 1909, she moved her law practice to Goldfield. There she became involved in many civic activities. She was a charter member of the Montezuma Chapter, Goldfield's branch of the Daughters of the American Revolution. She was also a member of the Goldfield Women's Club which later joined the Federation of Women's Clubs on March 10, 1910. She was named to a committee to confer with the county commission about providing a community watering trough for dogs in the summertime, and as chair of the library committee, asked the club to "mother" the question of a public library. Bird supported a Congressional bill outlawing the slaughter of birds for hat plumage and opposed a bill to license draw poker. She also gave programs on Japanese Art and Decoration at meetings and a program about poet Edwin Markham where she read "The Man with a Hoe" and "The Juggler of Luraine."

While practicing law in Goldfield, Miss Wilson became the first woman to serve on the Examining Board of the Nevada State Bar Association. About this time in her law career, she became the divorce attorney for Sara Bard Fields (later to become a nationally-famous suffragist). Fields had written to

Clarence Darrow, for whom her sister Mary was secretary, from a TB Sanitorium in Pasadena she asked his advice on how to get a divorce from her Baptist Minister husband, Albert Ehr Gott, in order to marry Charles Erskine Scott Wood, Portland lawyer and poet. Darrow told her to go to Goldfield, Nevada where there was a liberal judge who might be sympathetic to her plight. With the help of an attorney named Hoyt, Bird succeeded in gaining a settlement for Fields, despite that the divorce



Photo Credit: NV Historical Society Reno

*continued on page 9*



was filed on the grounds of cruelty against a good and moral man by a woman whose lover had encouraged her to believe in atheism, anarchism, and free love! This was considered a miracle - it was the early 1900s.

As vice-president of the Equal Franchise Society during the suffrage campaign of 1913-14, and in charge of organizing the workers for suffrage in southern Nevada, Bird campaigned in Goldfield, Pioche, Caliente, Panaca, and Las Vegas. She wrote a treatise entitled, "Women Under Nevada Law", of which 20,000 copies were distributed between 1913-1914. The pamphlet described the inequities and unjust discrimination against women which could only be remedied when women themselves had the power to make laws. Most women didn't realize that they were politically better off single. A married woman could not operate her own business without her husband's consent or have control over her own earnings or her children. Women had a duty to pay taxes but had no voice in deciding how much or how those taxes would be spent. It was taxation without representation!

In 1913, Bird, vice-president of the State Federation of Women's Clubs, lobbied at the Nevada State Legislature for the interests of women and children. She spoke out for giving women joint guardianship of children, rights equal to their husbands, the establishment of industrial schools for delinquent children, women's suffrage, relaxed divorce laws, anti-gaming legislation, and public kindergartens. After the successful suffrage vote in 1914, she campaigned in 1915 for an 8 hour work day, against capital punishment, and for changes in community property laws. In 1913 she wrote to Governor Oddie and succeeded in having him favor joint guardianship of children, schools for delinquent children, and women's suffrage in his annual message.

Bird Wilson moved to Oakland, Ca. some time before America's entrance into World War I in 1917. Nevada benefited greatly from her pioneering work in the legislature, lobbying for women's rights, and campaigning for woman suffrage. She left her mark upon Nevada during her years here with no uncertainty.

*(Biographical sketch by Sandra Young)*

#### **Published works:**

Wilson, B.M., *Women Under Nevada Laws*, 1912-1913

#### **Sources of Information:**

1. Earl, Phillip I. *Bird M. Wilson*. Nevada Historical Society.
2. Ford, Jean, "Bird Wilson," Dramatic script *"The Saga of Nevada Women's Suffrage,"* 1996.
3. Wilson, B.M. *Women Under Nevada Laws*. 1912-1913.
4. "A Lady Lawyer at Manhattan," *Tonapah Bonanza*. May 19, 1906.
5. "Lady Broker in Town," *Tonapah Bonanza*, August 18, 1906.

## *Nevada Historical Society Offers Publications of Particular Interest*

Submitted by Mitsi Johnson

Las Vegas member Mitsi Johnson urges NWHP members to take advantage of pertinent historical material available from the Nevada Historical Society. As people interested in Nevada's history, we will find helpful resources nearby. The cost of these volumes is unbelievably low! They are listed by number, title, and price and include:

19005	The Nevada Constitution	\$1.00
	with supplemental pages	\$2.95
19015	The Comstock	\$2.95
19019	Lifeline: Nevada's Waters	\$2.95
19020	Guide to Stewart's Papers	\$5.00
19021	NHS Papers-set of five	\$10.00 each
19024	Semi-centennial (hardbound)	\$2.00
19028	Index to NHS Publications	\$2.95
19036	McCarran Statue	\$1.95
19038	Nevada's Heartland	\$3.50
19044	Ghost Dance Winter	\$12.95
19050	NV: Readings & Perspectives	\$17.95
19051	Turn This Water Into Gold, II	\$10.00
90002	NHS Quarterlies 1964-2001	\$6.00 each
90002	NHS Art Quarterly	\$8.00 each
90002	NHS Spirit Cave Man Quarterly	\$12.00 each
90016	Guide to Western Nevada	\$1.50

Contact: Nevada Historical Society  
Attn: Nita Phillips  
1650 N. Virginia St.  
Reno, NV 89503  
(887) 688-1190, ext. 4

## *Reno Member Hazel Hohn Passes Away*

Brought to our attention by Holly Van Valkenburgh

NWHP member Hazel Hohn of Reno died January 15 in Reno. For details of her pioneering and multi-faceted lifestyle, see her obituary in the January 18th, Nevada Appeal. Wonderful photos of Hazel are included.



# *Marjorie Russell Clothing and Textile Research Center*

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by Mitsi Johnson

The Nevada State Museum in Carson City also operates the Marjorie Russell Clothing and Textile Research Center. The Center resides off-site in Carson City. Marjorie Guild Russell, wife of the 1950-1958 Nevada Governor Charles Russell, gave her name to the Center after having served on the Board of Trustees of the Nevada State Museum. Mrs. Russell actively supported both the Museum and its clothing and textile collections. Information from the Center's brochure reveals that the research facility houses approximately ten thousand clothing and other textile artifacts. "The purpose of the Marjorie Russell Center is to enhance the awareness of fashion history as it relates to society, history and material culture," according to the brochure. The Center's collections include women's fashions from the eighteenth century to the twenty-first! Also guarded among the treasures within are quilts, hats, children's wear, political and ceremonial dress, flags, banners, military and men's wear. "The center is open to the public by appointment only... Please call (702) 687-6173 or fax (702) 684-8315," the brochure stipulates.

## *Billie Bates Honored on Her 92nd Birthday*

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Submitted by Frankie Williams

Many NWHP members enjoyed a congenial atmosphere at Billie's birthday gathering in the Boulder Hotel on January 12th. Delicious refreshments, the classic birthday cake, and a refreshing punch were savored by her well-wishers. Billie's family honored her and entertained with a program of classical and patriotic music. A granddaughter who stars in opera at the Venetian Hotel thrilled the audience with an aria from Puccini. The young woman closed the program by performing, "God Bless America." She declared that there is none more patriotic than her grandmother. Then the gathering joined Billie's granddaughter in singing, "America the Beautiful." "There was not a dry eye in the house," according to Frankie Williams who joined in. When the party was over, Billie rose, thanked all who had come, and confessed, "I sure hope there's more birthday cake!"

## *Bernie Lenz Attends Benefit Fashion Show*

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As reported by Bernie Lenz

Las Vegas NWHP member Bernie Lenz, a former fashion model who also operated her own modeling agency, attended a women's fashion show in Las Vegas on October 16th of last year. She reports that Dillard's department store put on the exhibition at the Monte Carlo Hotel, to benefit the Salvation Army Women's Auxiliary. Bernie gives a rundown of winter, 2001-2002 "looks" that include pantsuits with interchangeable skirts, blouses and turtle neck sweaters, in black, wine, and gray. She added that Dillard's also presented two-piece jacket and skirt or pants outfits in leather! Evening wear brought out black, red, green, copper and gray silk crepe, netting, and velvet dresses, skirts, and pants. Shawls topped off the evening ensembles.

## *NWHP Southern Region to Meet with AAUW*

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by Jane Olive

Southern Region President Jane Olive has reported that the NWHP, Southern Region, General Meeting will take place on March 20, 2002, in Las Vegas at the Emerald Springs Holiday Inn at 6:00PM. The hotel sits at 325 E. Flamingo Rd. near Paradise Blvd. The NWHP Southern Region will meet jointly with local members of the American Association of University Women. Dr. Kevin Laxalt will join Joan LeMere to present the program. Dr. Laxalt will perform the role of a "friend" of Sarah Winnemucca. Mrs. LeMere will describe her visit to Statuary Hall where the NWHP plans to erect Sarah's statue in Washington, D.C. The event includes buffet dinner at \$25.00 per person. Please contact Joan at 456-9242 to reserve by March 13th. We look forward to a fascinating evening with a full house of members from both organizations.

## *Rose Irwin Continues to Improve*

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As reported by her daughter Mary Cardell

Rose Irwin, immediate past President of the NWHP, uses the same determination to recover from a stroke that she used to guide this organization. Her daughter Mary Cardell, with whom Rose and her husband are now living in Kansas, said that her mother enjoys "good" health. Rose walks unaided but will start using a cane. She can move her injured arm as well! Rose and Mary will join the Stroke Foundation. Its local center operates down the street from Mary and her husband Jim's home. Rose will concentrate on speech and exercise with the aid of volunteer therapists and physicians. Since the center offers bridge classes, Mary plans to encourage Rose to resume playing. Mary will join the monthly caregiver support group meetings of the non-profit organization.



# Potpourri

as reported by Kay Sanders

## Thanks to:

- Lisa-Marie and Bruce Lightfoot for their generous donation of a work station for our new equipment in the Jean Ford Research Center located in our state office in Reno. Lisa-Marie and Bruce delivered and set-up the furniture which fits perfectly in the coroner spot we had selected for our new computer, printer, fax, scanner, and copier.

## Notice:

- Joyce Marshall's new phone numbers are 702-648-7042 at home and 702-895-2246 at work.

- Articles for the May newsletter are due to Newsletter Editor Kay Sanders no later than April 22, 2002. Email her at [ksanders@unr.nevada.edu](mailto:ksanders@unr.nevada.edu).

## Women's Summit

Information provided by Mitsi Johnson

The NWHP and the American Association of University Women will hold a joint dinner meeting March 20th, from 6:00PM until 8:00PM, at the Emerald Springs Hotel in Las Vegas. This year's theme for AAUW's annual Summit will be, "Women and Work." The NWHP will present a program about Sarah Winnemucca to the gathering. Per person cost will be \$25.00. The hotel is located on E. Flamingo Rd., just west of Paradise Blvd.

## Message from Mitsi

Southern Region member Mitsi Johnson

"I send my best wishes to all NWHP. I'm recovering and will be back to work in the new year. I must take it a bit slow but progress is good. Thanks. You must include a big thank you from me to all who sent get well wishes. I received so much love and support from NWHP women. It's a great bunch."

PLEASE INFORM THE STATE MEMBERSHIP CHAIR AND YOUR REGIONAL MEMBERSHIP CHAIR OF ANY CHANGES IN YOUR ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER, AND/OR E-MAIL ADDRESS. JOAN LEMERE'S ADDRESS IS: P.O. BOX 12184, LAS VEGAS, NV 89112. IN THE NORTH PLEASE ALSO NOTIFY KATHLEEN NONEMAN AT: NWHP, 770 SMITHRIDGE DR., SUITE 300, RENO, NV 89502.

# Dues are Due!

Jane Olive

Southern Region President Jane Olive REMINDS us that dues of \$25.00 per year are NOW due! The NWHP has certainly appreciated and made good use of member dues in the past. The strength of the NWHP relies partly on this resource. Please continue the generosity that our organization gratefully thanks you for.

## Southern Region seeks Nominees

Jane Olive

NWHP Southern Region President, Jane Olive, urges all members of this area to inject some of their energy into the Executive Committee! "Doers" are needed for the two-year terms. If you love history, thrive on organizing and leading, and want to help ensure that Nevada's women get their historical due, DON'T wait a nanosecond longer! RUN to the phone or post office and call Jane at (702) 735-1675 or write to NWHP, P.O. Box 12184, Las Vegas, NV 89112-0184. DON'T wait for regrets about what you COULD have accomplished!

## Some NWHP News Contacts

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Co-Editors: Kay Sanders and Michelle Lord





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## Membership Application

Individual Membership • Dues \$25/Year

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Voice Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Organizational Membership • Active Dues \$50/Year

Corporate Sponsor • \$250/Year

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

President or Director \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Day) \_\_\_\_\_ (Eve) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Voice Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Representative to NWHP \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: NHWP, 770 Smithridge Dr., Ste. 300, Reno, NV 89502

## *New Members North & South*

*As reported by Joan Lemere  
and Kathy Noneman*

NWHP welcomes two individual "newbies" and a new organizational member. Claudia Small of Carson City joins Dale Meyer of Las Vegas as our most recent participants. Joan LeMere reports that Dale is already tackling bios for the Encyclopedia! Kathy Noneman also made it known that the Reno branch of the American Association of University Women has joined as an organization. Thank you Claudia, Dale, and Reno AAUW for your interest, efforts and support!