

Project News

Calendar

Northern Nevada Schedule

FEB. 22 - Evening at Gold Hill Hotel, Member Peggy Lear Bowen will discuss her photography and show slides of Nevada. 5:30-7:30 dinner, show at 7:30. Those needing transportation or carpooling call 853-8393. Make reservations for your own dinner at 775-847-0111.

MAR. 9, 10 AND 11 - Washington, D.C. NWHP conference and statue dedication ceremony.

MAR. 19 - Evening at Austin's Restaurant in Reno with Jan Cleere and Dixie Westergard signing their new books. Some of the historic women featured in the books will make an appearance and introduce themselves. Dinner at 6:00. Choice of entree: Lemon Chicken, Mountain Rainbow Trout or Tahoe Pork Chops. Payment and registration due by March 15, 2005, to Kathy Noneman, 853-8393. For \$25 you get beverage, cornbread, Caesar Salad, choice of entree and dessert, tax and tip included. Come for a fun "Meet the Authors" dinner. Call if you need directions or transportation. Austin's address is 7671 S. Virginia St.

APRIL 6 - Oasis Conference and State Statue Dedication Ceremony, Carson City.

APRIL 16 - Steering Committee meeting, noon at state office, 770 Smithridge Dr., Suite 300, Reno. Lunch will be provided.

Southern Nevada Schedule

FEB. 19 - So. Region Luncheon, Golden Steer, 308 W. Sahara, 11AM, \$20. Program is Entertainers during the '50's. Call SuKim Chang at 702-837-6584 for reservations.

MAR. 9-11 - Dedication of Sarah Winnemucca Statue and D.C. NWHP

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It's Official - Sarah Winnemucca Statue Dedication Set for March 9th

Plans are being firmed up every day for our exciting Nevada Women's History Project Washington D.C. Conference. So here's the latest:

Wednesday, March 9:

10 am: **Welcome to the Capitol by Congresswoman Shelley Berkley**, followed by VIP Tour of the United States Capitol, including National Statuary Hall. Staff members from the Office of the Capitol Architect and Nevada's Congressional delegates will lead this informative and unique tour.

Noon to 4 pm: **Lunch on your own and free time.** This will be an opportunity to enjoy lunch at one of the restaurants in the various Capitol buildings or in the surrounding area before your have an opportunity to rest and relax or do some sightseeing.

4 - 5 pm: **Sarah Winnemucca Statue Dedication Ceremony.** Please keep in mind that this is an "invitation-only" event so if you are not registered for the Conference or have not made arrangements to be included on the invitation list, you cannot attend the ceremony. The formal invitations will be sent on or before February 9. Upon receipt, invitees **must** RSVP by calling the number on the invitation and attendees **must** have their invitation in hand to gain entrance to the event. Dress for the event is business attire (coat and tie for men and equivalent for women) or traditional Native American dress. For those back home, be sure to tune in to one of the CSPAN cable channels to watch the Dedication live!

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Great News - Biographical Encyclopedia has a Publisher

The Bio Encyclopedia is at the publisher! Finally, all of our hard work has come to fruition. Last week we had a meeting with Stephens Press here in Las Vegas and they loved our project. We have delivered the manuscript to them as of Friday, January 28, 2005. I cannot tell you what a resounding shout of joy echoed throughout the LeMere household to finally have this completed after five years of meeting and mentoring the writers. Originally it was a project that Rose Irwin started and I helped her with, but when Rose became ill it became mine. You all know how that goes. Anyway we found a generous benefactor in Bernice Fischer at our last Southern meeting and that gave us the right amount of monies to find a publisher. I know that Stephens Press will do a great job and I can't wait to see the results. Am I done with this project now? Not at all. This is only volume one!! A sincere thank you to all of you writers and others who made this dream possible for the Southern Region.

Joan LeMere, President, State Committee

Grant Awarded by Nevada Women's Fund

A \$700 Jean Ford Research Grant was awarded to our organization by the Nevada Women's Fund. The funds will be used to support the creation and placement of the Sarah Winnemucca statue in the National Statuary Hall in the United States Capitol Building. This award was announced in that organization's annual NWF News. A special thanks to NWF from NWHP and its members.

NWHP Leadership

NORTHERN REGION STEERING COMMITTEE:

Kathleen Noneman: Chair
Cherry Jones: Vice-Chair
Holly Van Valkenburgh: Treasurer
Jeanne Larson: Secretary
Kay Sanders: Communication Co-Chair/Newsletter Editor
Lisa-Marie Lightfoot: Communication Co-Chair
Isabel Espinoza: Finance Chair
Kathleen Allred and Carrie Townley Porter: Membership Co-Chairs
Mary Anne Convis: Project Review Chair
Cherry Jones and Carleen Ernest: Program Chairs
Holly Van Valkenburgh: Past Chair

SOUTHERN REGION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Anne Reck: President
Mary Gafford: First Vice President
Kaye Gray: Second Vice President
Pat McNutt: Recording Secretary
Jean Baker: Corresponding Secretary
Su Kim Chung: Treasurer

NWHP STATE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Joan LeMere: President
Cherry Jones: First Vice-President
Kaye Gray: Second Vice-President
Mary Anne Convis: Third Vice-President
Mitsi Johnson: Treasurer
Mary Gafford: Secretary
Carleen Ernest, Northern Region Representative
Anne Reck, Southern Region Representative
Fritsi Ericson: Nevada Women's Fund Representative
Kay Sanders: Editor for State Newsletter
Lisa-Marie Lightfoot: Webmaster
Mary Anne Convis: State Project Review Chair

Announcement

NWHP member Susan Paslov has agreed to take over the job of Editor of the NWHP Newsletter for both the May and August 2005 issues. She can be reached at: email – susanpaslov@gbis.com; phone – (775) 841-0729. Please contact her starting this month with any articles, suggestions, or information for the May and August newsletters. Your current editor Kay Sanders will be on vacation and will resume the editorship beginning with the November 2005 issue.

Oasis 2005 – Sarah Winnemucca Statue Unveiling in Carson City

The Oasis Conference will be April 5, 6, and 7. The title of this year's conference will be "Creative Communities Making a Difference in Nevada." The highlight will be the unveiling of the Sarah Winnemucca Statue in the Capitol. The unveiling will be late afternoon on April 6th. You will all receive an invitation to both the conference and the unveiling along with the reception following the unveiling. I hope all of you can come. It will be a wonderful opportunity for everyone to see the results of the years of our hard work.

Mary Anne Convis, Project Review Chair

South Membership Report

We would like to welcome Mari Harris, Penelope Husson and Sondra Lynch as new members. We are pleased to have these enthusiastic women join the Nevada Women's History Project. It is always gratifying to see our membership grow.

Membership renewals for 2005 are due. We express our appreciation to all who have sent in their renewals and thank them for their continued membership. Every member is important to the success of the organization. If you have not renewed, please make your check payable to NWHP and send to Kaye Gray, 8109 Bay Pines Avenue, Las Vegas, NV 89128. If you have any questions about membership or need a membership application, call Kaye at 702-242-6622.

Kaye Gray, Membership Chair

NWHP State Committee President's Message

As you read this we are within weeks of seeing our dream come true. All of our hard work for the past two or more years will come to fruition when on March 9th in Washington, D.C. we see the statue of Sarah Winnemucca dedicated in our nation's capitol. I cannot tell you how proud I am of this wonderful group of women that I am fortunate enough to be a part of. As I went from organization to organization this past fall speaking about Nevada Women's History Project, thanking them for their donations to the Sarah Winnemucca Project, I was filled with emotion, realizing that we women stood together for a cause and made it happen. We have made history again, ladies, just as we did in the time of suffrage. That statue of Sarah Winnemucca will stand in the United States Capitol through time and our children and their children will know that we put it there.

You all will receive information in the mail soon on the Oasis Conference. This information will be mailed to all members from the Department of Cultural Affairs in Carson City. Our second 7 foot bronze statue of Sarah Winnemucca is to be dedicated in Carson City on April 6, 2005 at 5:30 p.m. as part of this conference. This statue is an exact replica of the one in our nation's capitol. So those of you who were unable to attend the Washington, D.C. dedication will have an opportunity to attend the event in Carson City. A reception will follow the dedication. We are expecting about 1500 attendees. Don't miss this opportunity to celebrate with us.

Finally, your State Committee has requested from Governor Guinn that the remaining 3-1/2 foot bronze statue of Sarah Winnemucca be placed in the Grant Sawyer Building in Las Vegas. Governor Guinn has approved this request and the statue will be dedicated in Las Vegas most likely after the 2005 Legislative Session is over, which is in June. We are presently checking with Governor Guinn and Mayor Goodman for a firm date. We have also asked Governor Guinn to declare a Sarah Winnemucca Day.

I know all of you are busy with projects and meetings in your respective regions as the work goes on. Every day I get emails with new ideas and proposals. Keep up the good work out there. Every one of you are so valuable to the organization.

In friendship,
Joan LeMere, State Committee President

Sarah Winnemucca Books Donated to Nevada Schools and Libraries



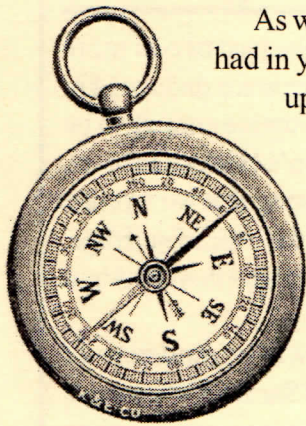
The Nevada Women's History Project and the Nevada State Library and Archives recently sent copies of Sally Zanjani's book, Sarah Winnemucca, to public libraries and public secondary schools in Nevada. Eighty copies of her book were given to public libraries and 163 copies to public secondary schools. Financing of this project was provided by donations received by the Sarah Winnemucca Statue Fund.

In addition, copies of the biography will go to Washington, D.C. to be given as thank you gifts in appreciation of the congressional staff efforts to make the dedication ceremony and reception possible.

Many letters have been received from schools thanking our organization for donating the books to their libraries. Among them is one from Lynda Badger, Librarian, Basic High School, Henderson. She thanked NWHP and NSLA for the book and wrote "We currently have three classes using it in their Nevada history research papers."

Kay Sander, Editor

News From The North



As we deal with more snow than we have had in years our north members try to keep up with all our commitments while we slide around in ice and fog. Oh well, that's why I have lived in Nevada for more than 25 years. We always tell everyone that we love our four seasons. We would just like a little less of this winter season to love. Everyone is so excited about our trip to Washington, D.C. for the statue dedication on March 9th.

Kathleen Clemence is still working hard putting out fires so the trip will go without a hitch. We owe her so much for putting this all together as we do Dema Guinn without whose help we wouldn't have exceeded our goal in raising the money. At our March 10th Conference our keynote speaker will be General Wilma Vaught who was the driving force behind the establishment of the Women in the Military Memorial where we will hold the conference. The Nevada Women's fund has already sold two maquettes of the statue and has contacted many other interested people. NWHP is also holding a drawing on April 6th for the project's maquette and opportunity tickets are still available. That is the date for the Oasis conference in Carson City. A copy of the Sarah Winnemucca statue will be presented to the state then. Mary Anne Convis is in charge of sales of the maquettes and the presentation at the Oasis conference. Cherry Jones is in charge of the opportunity tickets and the drawing here in the North. My thanks to both of them who work tirelessly.

To continue our celebration of Women's History Month we will have a book signing dinner on March 19th for some of our author members. Two of our members have new books.

Dixie Westergard has a new book about Dr. Mary Fulstone, and Jan Cleere's long awaited More Than Petticoats: Remarkable Nevada Women is out. This book is part of a series published by Globe Press and features Nevada women born before 1900 who lived unusual lives or made remarkable contributions to the state.

Thank you letters continue to pour in from libraries across the state as they receive their gift of a hard copy of Sally Zanjani's book about Sarah Winnemucca. A plate in each book indicates that the book is a gift from NWHP and the State Library and Archives. My thanks to Holly Von

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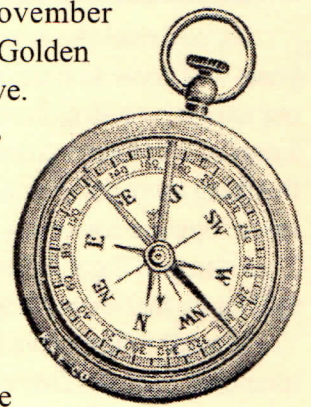
News From The South

NWHP-South Region's November luncheon was held at the lavish Golden Steer Restaurant on W. Sahara Ave. Speaker was Kathleen Clemence, Chair of the NWHP Conference being held in D.C. in March. A retired Lieutenant Colonel, USAF, Kathleen shared with the 38 attendees her personal experiences serving as lobbyist to bring about approval from the Nevada Legislature of \$10,000 toward the Women in Armed Forces War Memorial which is located at Arlington National Cemetery. Kathleen's slide presentation of the dedication of this magnificent structure was used in conjunction with a glimpse of some of the sights that will be viewed by those Nevadans attending the dedication of the Sarah Winnemucca Statue on March 9 as well as the NWHP Conference which is to follow on March 10.

NWHP-So. Region's Saturday, February 19, 2005 luncheon meeting is destined to be another winner! To further NWHP's mission to recognize all Nevada women of all races and ethnic backgrounds, speakers are to be D.D. Cotton, a dancer at the Cotton Club, followed by D.D. Jasmin who was a dancer at the famous Vegas Moulin Rouge. Title of the program is "Being an Entertainer in the '50's." Presentation is to include displays. And what a wonderful way to honor Black History Month with attendance of these two ladies!

This lavish luncheon at the renowned Golden Steer Restaurant, 308 W. Sahara, commences at 11AM. Social hour is until noon. After the luncheon at noon the program will follow. Price is \$20 a person. This amount may be paid at the door on February 19. Simply make reservations with NWHP-So. Region's secretary Su Kim Chung at 837-6584 by Thursday night, February 17. Hope to see you there!

*Mary Gafford, 1st Vice President
Southern Region Executive Committee*



Maquette Sale Announced

Fritsi Ericson and the Nevada Women's Fund have assumed responsibility for marketing the maquettes of the Sarah Winnemucca Statue. There will be both 36" and 18" maquettes available. An order form is printed below. If you know of anyone who has expressed an interest in ordering a maquette, please inform the Nevada Women's Fund, so that they may be contacted. Their address is 770 Smithridge Dr., Suite 300, Reno, NV 89502. Phone number is: (775) 786-2335.

We thank the Nevada Women's Fund for their assistance.

NEVADA WOMEN'S FUND NEVADA WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT SARAH WINNEMUCCA SCULPTURE ORDER FORM

Yes, I'd like to have a piece of history by:

- ☐ Purchasing a 36" Sarah Winnemucca sculpture for \$14,000
☐ Purchasing an 18" Sarah Winnemucca sculpture for \$5,500

Name _____ Phone (day) _____ (evening) _____

Address: _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Fax _____ E-mail Address _____

Shipping Address (if different from above)

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Payment:

- ☐ Single - shipping charges will be waived ☐ Two installments - shipping charges will be assessed
☐ Check enclosed (made out to Nevada Women's Fund)
☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard

Card # _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature (required if using a credit card): _____

For additional information call (775) 786-2335

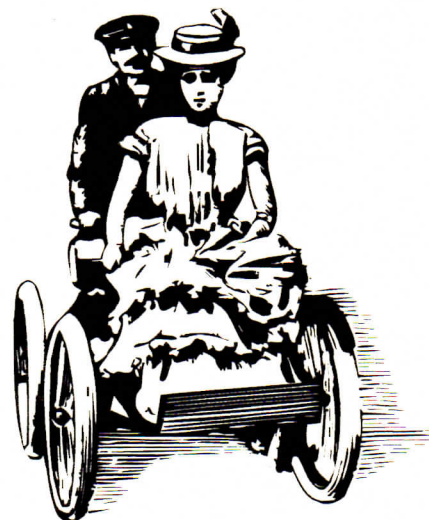
Mail order form to: NWHP, 770 Smithridge Dr., Ste. 300, Reno, NV 89502.

News from the North

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Valkenburgh for doing all the work on this project. Kay Sanders continues to do such a wonderful job on the newsletter and the website with Nancy Oakley. Grace Davis is always so gracious about taking charge of distributing the newsletter. Kay and Carrie Porter are really getting the Jean Ford Research Center organized and user friendly. Helping them are Georgia Hedrick and Patti Bernard. We have such a wonderful group of women who are devoted to this project, but we always need fresh ideas and new people to serve on our Board and committees. Please call me and let me add your name to our list of volunteers. We need your help and ideas for a better organization.

Kathleen Noneman, Chair, Northern Region Steering Committee



Featured NWHP Member: Kathy Noneman



As my term on the NWHP Board draws to a close, I can't help but look back to how my involvement with this organization began. Then District Court Judge, Deborah Agosti, invited a group of us Court House workers to a brown bag lunch to meet Jean Ford who was starting a new organization about women in Nevada history. That was in 1993 and Jean invited me to join her in her efforts. Since then I have served in many capacities on both the Northern and State Boards. This organization was a natural for me because I have always been interested in families, especially women and children and their lives and history. This interest has led me to my several careers, as wife, mother, teacher, family law attorney and Family Court Master.

I was born in Woodland, California and grew up on a farm in Yolo County. I was fortunate to have a family who valued education and sent me to Holy Rosary Academy in Woodland where I first developed my interest in History. I graduated from Chico High School and from Chico State College where I majored in English and History. I was lucky enough to marry Charlie Noneman, a career Air Force Officer, have two great sons and travel the world. I was able to teach in most places where I lived and taught everything from kindergarten through

junior college. In Turkey, I discovered ESL teaching which I was also able to do here in Reno for seven years at Traner Middle School. Along the way, I acquired an MS in Business and a Law Degree. I left teaching and set up a family law practice with Barbara Finley and then joined the Family Court in 1992. I still serve as a Court Master part time. I come from a long line of strong-willed, intelligent and hard-working women and was greatly influenced by them. I enjoy researching and writing about the women in my family and also about the women of Nevada. I am particularly interested in researching and writing about the women who have become attorneys in Nevada. I still love to travel and enjoy doing so with my husband, children and three grandchildren.

Kathleen Noneman, Chair, Northern Region Steering Committee

NWHP Authors and Researchers Produce New Works

Our members have been busy. The happy results of their efforts are books being published and research made available. Dixie Westergard, author of Dat-so-la-lee, Washoe Indian Basketmaker and The Lake Tahoe Story, recently announced the publication of her latest book, Dr. Mary: The Story of Mary Hill Fulstone, M.D., A Nevada Pioneer. Copies are available for sale at the Sundance Bookstore and the Nevada Historical Society in Reno, the Nevada State Museum in Carson City, and the Carson Valley Museum and Cultural Center in Gardnerville. Dixie also donated a copy to the Jean Ford Research Center.

Robert E. Stewart updated his book, Aurora: Nevada's Ghost City of the Dawn, which was first published in 1994. The new edition is more than double its original size with information on Samuel Clemens' experiences in Aurora; descriptions of women's lives in the camp; and stories about the town's designation as county seat of both Mono County, California, and early-day Esmeralda County, until it was decided that Aurora was in Nevada.

Elko native Cyd McMullen completed her dissertation on Nevada women's clubs between 1860 and 1920. The title of her work is, "Work Worth Doing: Nevada Women's Clubs and the Creation of Community, 1860-1920". Copies can be reviewed at the University of Nevada, Reno Getchell Library, Special Collections Department at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and the Great Basin Community College in Elko.

She plans to do a book on this topic soon.

One of our members, Jan Cleere, who resides in Arizona, authored More Than Petticoats: Remarkable Nevada Women. A separate article on her book appears in this issue.

Congratulations to the four of you. To all of our members and friends currently doing research on Nevada women, keep up your good work. NWHP's mission is being accomplished thanks to your efforts.

Kay Sanders, Editor

OPPORTUNITY for NWHP Members

WIN YOUR VERY OWN SARAH WINNEMUCCA STATUE

The contract between the State of Nevada and Benjamin Victor, the artist who created the statue, gives NWHP the **opportunity** to purchase the original 18" maquette for \$2,800 (these maquettes are available to the public for \$5,500). The NWHP State Board made the decision, that to be fair, an **opportunity** to own this special maquette should be offered to the whole membership.

Tickets for a drawing to win the statue are now available, at **\$50 per ticket.***
Only **56 tickets** will cover the cost of the maquette!

The winning ticket will be drawn by Benjamin Victor in Carson City on **April 6**, when the second Sarah Winnemucca statue will be installed in the State Capitol Building.

To purchase your
OPPORTUNITY TICKET:

North:

Cherry Jones

775 267-3410

cljnvquail@charter.net

South:

Joan LeMere

702 456-9242

NOKOMIS100@aol.com

(Or any member of your North Steering
Committee or South Executive Committee)

*** These tickets are available to the public, so be
sure to purchase yours soon!**



It's Official - Sarah Winnemucca Statue Dedication Set for March 9th

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6 pm: **Gala Reception** – Congresswoman Shelley Berkley honors and welcomes all Nevadans to Washington D.C. atop the Government Printing Office. Again, this is an invitation-only event for registered Conference attendees or those who have made prior arrangements to be on the invitation list. The appropriate dress for the Reception is the same as the Dedication.

Thursday, March 11:

10 am – 4 pm: **Annual NWHP Conference** will be held at The Women in Military Service for America Memorial. The keynote address will be given by Brigadier General Wilma Vaught (United States Air Force, Retired), President of The Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation, Inc. and one of the most-decorated military women in U.S. history. Attendees will also enjoy a catered lunch in the Memorial's Hall of Honor and a private tour of the Memorial.

Spouses and guests not attending the NWHP Conference will enjoy a VIP Tour of the Udvar-Hazy Center of the National Air and Space Museum and also be treated to lunch at the Center.

6:30 pm: A Capital Feast to include drinks, a 3-course dinner, and fun will be held at the Old Ebbitt Grill, a Washington D.C. landmark since 1856 and just steps away from the White House.

Friday, March 12:

9 am – noon: **Tourmobile Sightseeing of Washington D.C.** Attendees will get an excellent overview of the major sights of Washington D.C. and Arlington National Cemetery during a 3-hour chartered motorcoach tour. Highlights will include a Changing of the Guard ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknowns and a 45-minute stop at the National Museum of the American Indian where our group will receive a special welcome and tour of the facility, to include the Sarah Winnemucca Exhibit in the Museum's Resource Center.

Noon – 1 pm: **Lunch on your own.**

1 – 4 pm: **"Tracing the Life of Sarah Winnemucca through the National Archives"** and a private tour of the National Archives Experience at the National Archives. This will be a hands-on program prepared especially for the Nevada Women's History Project.

At the conclusion of events at the National Archives, the Conference will be concluded and attendees will be on their own to explore the sights and sounds of Washington D.C.

As the time and date have now been confirmed for the Sarah Winnemucca Statue Dedication, I hope all Conference attendees have begun to make their travel arrangements and confirmed your hotel reservations for your dates as well. Conference packets that will include loads of information will be sent to all attendees around mid-February

Looking forward to seeing you all in Washington D.C. in March 2005!

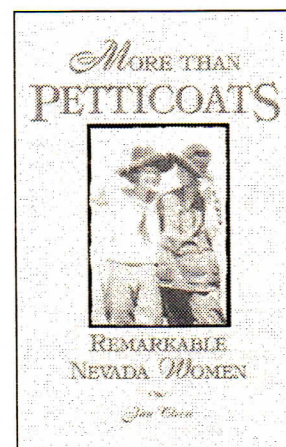
Kathleen Clemence, Chair, NWHP Washington D.C. Conference

Book on Nevada Women Announced

Author and freelance writer Jan Cleere announces the publication of her book, ***More Than Petticoats: Remarkable Nevada Women*** (The Globe Pequot Press). Jan has brought together twelve pioneering Nevada women, plus one remarkable group of nuns, all born before 1900, who displayed extraordinary courage as they broke through social, cultural, and political barriers to advance women's roles. Facing unimaginable challenges, they climbed mountains seeking untold riches, swooped down legislative hallways, wove intricate artistry, and taught the next generation about equality.

Jan also writes freelance articles for national and regional publications. She is a member of the Nevada Women's History Project, the Nevada and Arizona historical societies, the Western History Association, National Federation of Press Women, Women Writing the West, and the Society of Southwestern Authors. She lives in Oro Valley, Arizona, with her husband and a "plethora of desert critters."

Jan will be touring Nevada this year promoting her book. She also offers signed copies of ***More Than Petticoats: Remarkable Nevada Women*** through her web site: www.JanCleere.com.



Featured Historic Nevada Woman

Gue Gim "Missy" Wah

Born: 1900

Place of Birth: Lin Lun Li, a village in a district in the Guangdong province of South China

Died: June 15, 1988, at Prince, Nevada

Race/Nationality/Ethnic Background: Chinese

Married: Tom Fook Wah

Children: Adopted son

Primary City and County of Residence and Work: Prince/Casleton near Pioche in Lincoln County, Nevada

Major Fields of Work: Boarding house operator, restaurant owner and chef

Other Role Identities: Student, garment factory worker

Biography:

In 1870 or 1880, Gue Gim's father, Ng Louie Der (Der Ng Louie in Chinese),¹ immigrated to California, where he established a business in San Francisco's Chinatown. He married before leaving China, but his wife remained behind to serve his parents, as was the custom, while he was away seeking better opportunities. As a merchant, one of the classes exempted from the anti-Chinese immigration acts of the time, Der was able to travel freely back and forth to visit his wife, who bore him five children. When Gue Gim was eight, her mother died, and she was sent to live with relatives. As for Ng Louie Der, he married a woman living in China and started another family there.

In 1912 Der decided to bring his second wife and four of his children, including Gue Gim, to the United States. The family sailed to California by way of Hong Kong and Honolulu. On arriving in San Francisco, they were taken to Angel Island, the immigration station, and detained there for five days. Generally, the Chinese immigration acts excluded from entry Chinese without family connections within the United States. The result was that "paper sons" were born. These were children with papers that falsely claimed they had relatives in the United States for the purposes of immigration, and a rigorous and intensive examination process was created by immigration officials to identify them. At first, the interrogators did not believe Gue Gim was Ng Louie Der's daughter because she was very slender, while her father and brothers were fat. The problem was solved when the family was called together to

see if they looked alike. Fortunately for Gue Gim, "...my face looked like my daddy's face. Because of that, they told me I could go on shore."²

In Chinatown Gue Gim and her stepmother led secluded lives, which was customary for the wives and female children of upper-class Chinese, and for the next four years she probably spent most of her time helping her stepmother care for the growing Der family, leaving the home only to attend church and a private Chinese language school.

In 1916 Gue Gim married Tom Fook Wah, one of her father's old friends. Tom had visited Der the year before while he was on vacation from his job in Nevada, saw Gue Gim and asked her father for her hand in marriage. Tom, born in Marysville, California around 1871, was taken to China as a young child when his parents died. He returned to the United States as a young man and traveled around California, Arizona and Nevada, hoping to find work in the mines. Instead he worked first as a

laborer and then as a cook. In 1911 he arrived in Prince, just outside Pioche in Lincoln County, Nevada, and eventually had a good job working for the Prince Consolidated Mining Company as manager of the mine's boarding house and restaurant. When Tom, a bachelor, injured his leg in 1914 or 1915, the doctor treating him advised him to get a wife to take care of him. But finding a Chinese wife in the Pioche area would be difficult – the Chinese population, which had dwindled since the boom days of the 1880s, was mostly male. His problem was solved when he met Gue Gim.

At first, Gue Gim was not enthusiastic about marrying an older man. However, such marriages were common in Chinese society, and Gue Gim obeyed her father's wishes. Although Tom wanted to get married right away, the wedding was postponed until the following year because Gue Gim's stepmother was pregnant again and needed her help. Gue Gim and Tom had a traditional Chinese wedding,

planned and paid for by Tom, as was the custom.

When the newlyweds arrived in Prince, Tom returned to work, but Gue Gim, being shy and knowing no English, remained secluded in their home. Tom, whose dining room was the town's social center, was well liked in the community and tried to encourage Gue Gim by teaching her a few words in English. She



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Featured Historic Nevada Woman: Gue Gim "Missy" Wah

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learned a few more words from a teacher on a visit to her family in San Francisco. Then one of the mine owners who knew of her desire to learn English made arrangements for her to attend the Prince School, where she learned quickly and passed through eight grades in several years.

During her time at the Prince school, Gue Gim formed two friendships that lasted throughout her lifetime. One friend was Mary Thomas, daughter of Leonard G. Thomas, the superintendent of the Combined Metals Reduction Company of the Prince Mine; the other was Elizabeth Gemmill, whose father purchased the Prince Consolidated Mining Company.

Tom's business, which had prospered during the years of World War I, declined when the war ended in 1918, but revived during the 1920s. Sometime in 1927 or 1928 a fire broke out in the boarding house where Tom, who did not believe in banks, kept all his money. With all their money gone, Tom and Gue Gim decided to go to South China, hoping to collect some of Tom's inheritance and to liquidate some of his investments there.

In China Gue Gim enrolled in a teacher's training course in order to continue her education while Tom took care of business. The Wahs had planned to return to the United States within the year, but remained for another year because Tom became ill. While in China, Tom and Gue Gim adopted the two-year-old boy of a poor family. The Wahs were forced to leave the child behind with relatives when they returned to the United States in 1929 because American government officials did not recognize the adoption.

Back in the United States, Gue Gim stayed in San Francisco with her relatives and went to work for the first time doing finishing work at a garment factory. Meanwhile, Tom returned to Prince to reestablish himself and find a permanent home, but when he got to Prince, he discovered that the Depression was making an impact on the activities of the Prince Mine. He decided to move to nearby Caselton where the mine was doing better. He rented a building and sent for Gue Gim. Being short on cash and needing help, Tom, for the first time, asked Gue Gim to work in his boarding house restaurant.

In 1933 Tom's health began to fail to the extent that medical treatment was needed, and with the community's help, the Wahs traveled to San Francisco. Tom died of cancer on August 17 at the age of seventy-one, and his remains were sent back to China for burial. Gue Gim remained in San Francisco with relatives for a few weeks and then returned to Prince to settle her affairs.

Gue Gim was welcomed back by her friends. Leonard Thomas, the mine superintendent, told her about a planned expansion of the Prince Mine and that boarding house and cooking work would soon be available there. He offered her a place to stay and temporary work in the meantime. Her family in San Francisco wanted her to return there, but Gue Gim decided to stay in Prince. She eventually went to work for the Prince Mine, and when the cook at the Caselton mine quit, she worked both jobs.

The mines began to gear up for World War II, but faced a manpower shortage. To solve this problem, the government exempted from military service men who had mining experience or were willing to work in the mines, and at the larger Caselton mine the government built houses and dormitories for the influx of men. Gue Gim rented a building for a restaurant and set about finding help by advertising that she would pay the fare of anyone interested in coming to the area. Some foods were rationed or in short supply, but Gue Gim found ways to manage. One of Gue Gim's visitors during the war years was former president Herbert Hoover, who had an interest in several of the mines in the area. The former president greatly enjoyed her company and food whenever he visited the area. Gue Gim would later be invited as an honored guest when the Hoover Memorial Library in Iowa was dedicated in the 1960s.

Most of the miners returned home after the war ended in 1945, leaving only a few to eat at Wah's. Then production declined sharply during the 1950s and 1960s as a result of the government's policy of allowing low-cost foreign metals into the country. The Prince area soon had the appearance of a ghost town. Fortunately for Gue Gim, her reputation as an outstanding chef had spread throughout the Southern Nevada area, and people from as far away as Las Vegas made reservation to eat American and Chinese food at her café. In 1971 an article about Wah's Café appeared in the November 25 issue of the Los Angeles Times, which brought regional

recognition for Gue Gim and her café.

Over the years Gue Gim had kept up efforts to bring her adopted son in China to the United States. She appealed to U.S. Senators and other government officials, but without success. Finally in 1971 she gave up and went to visit her son in China instead. Her adopted son was now married and had two sons and two daughters. Eventually Gue Gim was able to bring a granddaughter to the United States.

In 1980 Gue Gim and her restaurant were featured in an article in the May/June issue of *Nevada: The Magazine of the Real West*. Since help was hard to find, Gue Gim did all the work herself and had decided that advance reservations were required before she would start to cook. The reviewer described Wah's



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Featured Historic Nevada Woman: Gue Gim "Missy" Wah

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"not open" establishment as one of Nevada's "most exclusive cafes."³

Also in 1980 Gue Gim was named grand marshal of the Nevada Day parade in Carson City, and newspapers throughout the state carried the story. Reno newspaper columnist Rollan Melton described her as "a little bit of a woman with a great big heart, a heap of courage and a fascinating background."⁴ The local *Lincoln County Record* congratulated Gue Gim on being the second woman in a row (Dr. Mary Fulstone of Smith Valley was honored the previous year) and the first person of Oriental ancestry to be chosen to lead the parade. The paper hailed her as "Nevada's Queen – Our Missy Wah."⁵ On October 31 Gue Gim rode at the head of the parade in an open car, accompanied by her lifelong friend Mary Thomas, her granddaughter, and her granddaughter's husband.

During the 1980s and into the 1990s further recognition for Gue Gim came in newspaper and magazine articles, oral histories, essays in the *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, and Asian immigration and pioneer American women studies.

By late 1985 Gue Gim had essentially retired. She died at her home in Prince on June 15, 1988, and is buried in nearby Pioche.
Biographical sketch by Kathleen Thompson

Endnotes:

1. From page 46 of Sue Fawn Chung's essay, "Gue Gim Wah: Pioneering Chinese American Woman of Nevada"
2. On page 5 of the Lincoln County Town History Project oral interview
3. Jason Rubinstein. "Taste of China." *Nevada: The Magazine of the Real West*. May/June 1980: 36-37
4. Rollan Melton. "Meet Mrs. Wah." *Reno Evening Gazette*, 29 Oct. 1980
5. "Nevada's Queen – Our Missy Wah." *The Lincoln County Record*, vol. 109, no. 22, 6 Nov. 1980

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Loren B. Chan. "The Chinese in Nevada: An Historical Survey, 1856-1970." *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (Winter 1982): 288-291

Sue Fawn Chung. "Gue Gim Wah: Pioneering Chinese American Woman of Nevada." *History and Humanities: Essays in Honor of Wilbur S. Shepperson*. Francis X. Hartigan ed. Reno and Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 1989: 45-79

--- "Savoring History: The Story of Missy Wah and the Nevada Frontier." *Nevada Readings and Prospectives*. Michael S. Green and Gary E. Elliott eds. Reno: Nevada Historical Society, 1997: 252-256

Elizabeth Patrick. "Missy Wah of Prince: American from China." *The Nevadan. Las Vegas Review-Journal*. 7 March 1982

--- "An Interview with Gue Gim Wah." Lincoln County Town History Project. Robert D. McCracken ed. Lincoln County, Nevada: Sept. 24-25, 1984. *Lincoln County Online: Ethnography*. <http://www.lincolncountyonline.com/ethnography.htm> 8/10/03

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Photo credit: *Nevada: The Magazine of the Real West* and Elizabeth Gemmill Frizzell Collection, University of Nevada, Las Vegas Library

New Happenings at the Jean Ford Research Center

Two University of Nevada, Reno students were hired to work with volunteers at the Jean Ford Research Center located at our state office in Reno. They will be working to sort, identify, and catalogue the material on Nevada women that is housed in our office. In addition to boxes of assorted items to be gone through, we have several collections which were donated to NWHP. These will be thoroughly examined, the material itemized, and either turned over to the appropriate repository for researchers to access or kept at the Jean Ford Research Center.

Carrie Porter held a training session on Wednesday, January 19th, for the new hires as well as volunteers who will be working with the students. The volunteers included Kathy Noneman, Patty Bernard, Kay Sanders and Georgia Hedrick. A second training session is scheduled for Tuesday, February 8th. Several of our members who were unable to attend the first session will be present and will be working at the Center for the next few months with the students. We anticipate the work to be completed by next summer.

All of this has been made possible by the receipt of a John Ben Snow Trust grant to NWHP. Thanks to their generosity we have the funds available to hire students and also to continue paying for our Website and long distance access.

Kay Sanders, Communications Chair/Editor

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Conference.

MAR. 19 - Soroptomists International reception to honor women's organizations of Clark Co, (Women's History Month), Lied Library, UNLV Special Collections, 3rd floor, 2:00-4:30PM

APRIL 6 - Dedication of a second Sarah Winnemucca statue, Carson City, 5:30 PM.

MAY 14 - So. Region luncheon meeting. Location to be announced.

State Committee Schedule

APRIL 7 - State Board Meeting, 10:00 AM to noon at state office, 770 Smithridge Dr., Suite 300, Reno.



Articles for the May 2005 newsletter are due to Newsletter Editor Susan Paslov no later than April 26, 2005. E-mail her at susanpaslov@gbis.com.

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Congratulations:

- to Mitsi Johnson on her retirement from the Girl Scout Frontier Council in Las Vegas. A Mardi Gras theme party in her honor was held on February 3rd. She had been employed by the Girl Scouts for 20 years. Her new life will involve doing some traveling but she will remain active in NWHP. A contribution to the Girl Scouts can be made in honor of her retirement. Their address is: Girl Scouts Frontier Council, 2941 Harris Avenue, Las Vegas, NV 89101. More information can be found at: www.frontiercouncil.org.

Thanks to:

- Lisa-Marie Lightfoot and Isabel Espinoza for their help in putting together the information that the Reno-Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority had requested to give to visitors. They gave them brief histories of historic Nevada women in the area as well as where they lived.

Of Note:

- In 1997 the International Women's Forum leadership contacted our founder Jean Ford to help establish a Nevada chapter. At that time only Nevada and one other state did not have a chapter. Since Jean was not able to take on that assignment, Carolyn Sparks took up the challenge and was successful. This past October the World Leadership Conference and Gala of the International Women's Forum was held in Las Vegas. The IWF is a networking vehicle for top women leaders throughout the world in all fields. Jean would be proud of Nevada's involvement.

Condolences:

- To the family of Margaret Wells Butts, NWHP 2001 Roll of Honor recipient. Margaret passed away in Winnemucca on November 14, 2004 at the age of 90. She had been an active member of the Humboldt County Museum and the North Central Nevada Historical Society. Several of her articles were published in the Humboldt Historian.

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



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