

# News February 2010

Volume 15, Number 1

OUIP.

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

# Ladies of the Carson City Mint

On January 23, Bob Nylen, Curator of History at the Nevada State Museum in Carson City, gave a lively presentation on the building's

original purpose as a federal facsilver tory of coins, most notably the now rare Carson City dollar. Early photographs show several small chimneys and one huge stack poking up from the roof of the Carson City Mint, an indication of the many assay and coin-making fur-

naces where a rather

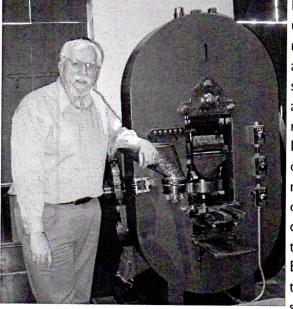
large number of young single ladies toiled away for many years until the silver ore ran out on the Comstock. Old drawings and photographs show long tables surrounded by "adjustors" equipped with precise scales, who methodically weighed each coin and trimmed off a few flakes of silver or gold if necessary. Those trimmings were so valuable that their workclothes were burned to recover each tiny filing.

The original coin stamp, which

had been carted off to San Francisco years ago after the Mint was closed, was brought back to the Mint when it was transformed into the Nevada

> State Museum. It sat immobile until the train mechanics down at the V&T museum worked on and got it up and running again. Now it is used often to strike medallions commemoration coins. The photograph shows Bob Nylen with the famous coin stamp machine.

Member Holly Van



Bob Nylen and the coin stamp

Valkenburgh did a great job of organizing the program at the State Museum and then lunch afterwards at B'Spaghetti's Restaurant.

A few days after the event, Bob Nylen was asked by the U.S. Mint to send them a copy of his presentation so that they can do an article for their newsletter in honor of Women's History Month in March. He's also grateful for our paying the entrance fees, as every little bit helps in these dire economic times.

#### Inside this issue

maide tilla lasut	-
Remembering Mary Ruthsdotter (1944-2010)	2
Message from Lisa Marie Lightfoot, State Chair	3
2010 Calendar	4
Heidi Englund: New Program Chair	4
State Membership Report	5
New Opportunity for People Who Love to Write and Edit	5
State Treasurer's Report	5
Historic Nevada Woman: Hannah Keziah Clapp	6
Newsletter Changes	8
RGJ to Feature 23 NWHP Historic Women in March	8
Talking the Walk: Literary Reno	9
Test Your Knowledge of Women's History	9
Nevada Historical Society High Noon Video Series Calendar - 2010	10
Harriet Williams Strong (1844-1926)	11
Membership Application	12

### Harriet Williams Strong

Inventor, Civic Leader and

advocate of Women's Rights & Women's Higher Education





### Remembering Mary Ruthsdotter (1944-2010)

(from National Women's History Project website)

Our friend and cofounder, Mary Ruthsdotter, passed away on January 8th. Mary was the ultimate women's history convert. The work she did to ensure that women's history would be recognized, honored, and celebrated is a great gift to all of us.

Mary Ruthsdotter was born on October 14, 1944, in Fairfield, Iowa. Her family was "strong Midwest stock," and Mary followed in the footsteps of her mother Ruth and grandmother Esther. Both women were smart and independent, and Mary was no different. Mary's father was a pilot in the U.S. Marine Corps, and the family moved to many new places. She has lived in Arizona, California, Florida, North Carolina, Texas, Virginia, and overseas in Taiwan. Mary attended UCLA in the early 1970s and threw herself into those exciting times at the beginning of the feminist movement. Mary was determined to raise her daughter Alice to be brave and bold. Mary and husband Dave Crawford traveled with four-year-old Alice through South America for several months. She also helped Alice be fearless about math, unlike her own experience in school, when girls were "not supposed to" be good in math.

So Mary was a feminist and activist from early on. But it was when she moved to Sonoma County, California in 1977 that she learned about women's history. She went to a slideshow presented by Molly MacGregor, Bette Morgan, and Paula Hammett. As Mary later said, "Seeing all those pictures of so many

women involved in such momentous events was an awakening. Women had a long proud history that had been invisible in my schooling. Virtually all the accomplishments and contributions of people like me women, half the world's population! - had been blatantly ignored!"

Mary became passionate about bringing women's history into public consciousness. She was a volunteer embroiderer for Judy Chicago's art installation, "The Dinner Party." And along with MacGregor, Morgan, Hammett, and Maria Cuevas, she co-founded the National Women's History Project (NWHP) 1980. Her in enthusiastic optimism, good humor, ever-expanding knowledge, and dedicated work added immensely to bringing women's history to wide attention.

As Projects Director, Mary gained funding for materials for students, teachers, librarians, parents, workplace organizers, and the media. She produced curriculum units, organizing guides, teacher training sessions, and videos on U.S. women's history. She wrote thousands of press releases to promote women's history through radio, television, magazines, and newspapers throughout the nation When the Women's History Network was created in 1983, Mary linked historians, librarians, performers, community organizers throughout the country. She produced the quarterly "Network News," packed with facts, practical ideas, and program strategies. These eight-page newsletters documented the exciting expansion of women's history in the late 20th century.

Largely because of Mary's efforts, the NWHP became the national clearinghouse for women's history, both in print and on the Internet. Mary built a library of over 6,000 books about women in U.S. history, and filled cabinets with articles and photographs. She and her husband Dave created two award-winning websites. Mary was an expert at finding and delivering the information people wanted!

We are grateful that among Mary Ruthsdotter's legacies are the women's history movement she helped create and the organization she co-founded.

We extend our heart-felt condolences to Dave Crawford, Mary's husband of 46 years, and to her mother Ruth Moyer, to her daughter Alice and son-in-law Geoff, and grandsons Marcus and lan, as well as to the rest of her family, and to her extraordinary network of friends. Her daughter, Alice, described Mary best when she wrote, "my dear mother was an amazing gal, kick-ass activist, friend, maker of fun, spreader of wisdom - a truly remarkable rare bird indeed."

A memorial service and celebration of her life is being planned for a future date.



### Message from Lisa Marie Lightfoot, State Chair

# Hello NWHP members and Happy New Year!

It is with the resignation of past state chair Dianne Steel that I, as former vice chair, am now chair of the Nevada Women's History Project. I will be completing Ms. Steel's term as chair until the next election cycle.

In Asian culture, this is the Year of the Tiger. Tiger years are said to be full of power, passion and adventure. I hope together, we can tame this tiger and make this a great year for NWHP and the dissemination of women's history in Nevada.

Over 15 years ago, when Jean Ford called me to her bedside and asked me to help the continuation of NWHP after she was gone, I was never sure what I had to contribute and I'm still not sure. I have stayed an active member and worked with some of the most incredible women this state has to offer-I've learned a lot from them. So please know that I will do my best until the next person steps in to serve.

As you have all read in previous communications, several members of the South Chapter of NWHP have chosen to start their own organization. Southern Nevada members will still be members of NWHP. As 2010 progresses, leadership will try and find new ways of supporting them and all our other sisters (and a few brothers) around the state in their women's history missions for their areas. If you have questions on the separation of the South Chapter, reorganization or any

questions, please contact me (775-849-2050, lightfeet@charter.net).

My first job involved replacing southern members who have resigned. Here is our new leadership structure and the names of those in positions:

Chair-Lisa-Marie Lightfoot, Past Chair-Mary Anne Convis, Vice-Chair-Marcia Cuccaro, Secretary-Patti Bernard, Treasurer-Linda Wycoff, Project Review-Holly Van Valkenburgh, Programs-Heidi Englund, Webmaster-Lisa-Marie Lightfoot, Newsletter-Holly Walton-Buchanan, Marketing/ Publicity-TBD, Membership-Grace Davis. Education, Outreach Review a n d Committee-Grace Davis, Jean Ford Research Center-Kay Sanders and Archivist/ Parliamentarian-Carrie Porter.

I cannot thank them enough for their time, talent and commitment to NWHP. Most of these leaders have committees with additional devoted NWHP members helping. All are deserving of our thanks for their support. A special thank-you to Karen Benna for getting out those emails blasts to our members.

Second, we are still blessed with the support of Nevada Women's Fund and NWHP is financially well, but our nation, our state and our communities are all struggling and our members are also feeling this financial stress. Over the recent holiday season, our treasurer and others created an operating budget to help us develop long-term strategies to assure we have

a place and the means continue mission in the our future. We are continually striving to be a superior organization, capable of being accountable to our parent organization-the Nevada Women's Fund, our members and our community. This may mean more paperwork, procedures, communication or just plain more work, but we will be a stronger group for the efforts.

Thirdly, we need to grow in membership and member participation. As chair, my job is to facilitate meetings and help guide the implementation of members/leadership ideas and goals towards our mission. I welcome new faces and new ideas at the leadership meetings.

I'm asking our members with the ability to give just a small contribution of their time and talents to something in NWHP-something they have an interest, passion or talent for, so no one member will be over-burdened and so NWHP will grow and be sustainable for the future.

# That's all! Kung Hoi Fat Choy



### 2010 Calendar

February 20 (Saturday): Presentation of Historic Reno Preservation Society's film by NWHP member Pat Ferraro Klos, "Literary Reno." Member Gwen Clancy filmed and edited the movie, which features selected houses where authors and poets lived and worked. 10:00 a.m., Nevada Historical Society, 1650 N. Virginia St., Reno (near Planetarium on UNR campus). Free. Pre-register: Holly at mtjudah@aol.com

March 7 (Sunday): International Women's Day Scholarship Fundraiser Lunch and Program, Siena Hotel Spa Casino, 12:00 - 3:00 p.m. Catered lunch, music, raffle, round-table discussions with International Women's Delegation from U.S. State Department and Northern Nevada International Center. \$35 in advance, \$45 after February 26. Registration information: Donna Clontz, 240-2745.

April 24 (Saturday): Tour of four Douglas County barns plus wine tasting/hors d'oeuvres at Tahoe Ridge Winery. Meet at Carson Mall at 10:30 a.m., in front of the closed Gottschalks store on Hwy 395 (South Carson Street). Preregister with Isabel at 883-9035.

donnanorm I @yahoo.com.

May 8 (Saturday): Pink Tea, Governor's Mansion, Carson City. Pre-register with Maryanne Convis, maconvis@att.net.

**June 5** (Saturday): Annual meeting and luncheon, Silver Oak Golf Country Club, Carson City. Further details in May newsletter.

**July 10** (Saturday) Annual Wildflower Hike. Watch May newsletter for details.

August 21 (Saturday): Women's Suffrage Movement Celebration, Capital Building, Carson City. Details in May newsletter.

October 23 (Saturday): Nevada Museum of Art luncheon and program. Details to be announced.

# INVITATION TO HELP WITH MARKETING AND PUBLICITY

Can you do marketing or publicity with little or no funding? Would you like to learn? If so, you are you might be the perfect choice for the NWHP Marketing and Publicity Committee. Contact Lisa-Marie Lightfoot at 775-849-2050 or lightfeet@charter.net.

### Heidi Englund: New Program Chair

We welcome Heidi Englund to the Leadership Committee of the NWHP. She just started her new job as a Library Technician in the Research Library for the Nevada Historical Society, in Reno, after running the Research Library for the Nevada Department of Transportation for four years. Heidi grew up in Gardnerville, and has lived in Carson City, Las Vegas and Ely, before moving to Reno, where she now lives with her husband Eric. She attended school at Western Nevada Community College, and has been a member of the Nevada Women's History Project for five years.

Articles for the May 2010 newsletter are due to Newsletter Editor, no later than April 22, 2010. E-mail her at: mtjudah@aol.com

### State Membership Report

Thank you to all of our individual members, supporting clubs, organizations and corporate members for your ongoing support. All of you are truly appreciated.

### We are delighted to welcome our New and Rejoined Members

Byllie D'Amato Andrews Margaret Barthel Todd Borg Karen Brinkoetter Vicki Erickson Jeanne Fowler Dyanne Hayes Stanley Paher Sue Smith William Walker Sally Wilkins The Membership Chair always has the fun job of reminding everyone to pay their dues. So here's the reminder: Membership dues for the period of January 1st through December 31st of 2010 are due. We very much want to continue to send you this newsletter, so the little red sticker on the face of the newsletter is a reminder to send your dues in, if you haven't already.

We value each and every member and hope to continue to see all your names on our roster!

Grace Davis Membership Chair

### State Treasurer's Report

### December, 2009

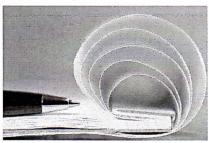
This past year's income included dues for the year of \$5,597 and program income of \$12,401. The November Author's Luncheon was the most profitable program, contributing over \$3,000. Our yearly net income for 2009, after expenses, was \$7,366.

A preliminary 2010 budget has been drafted and will be added to as program planning for 2010 continues.

Linda Wyckoff

# New Opportunity for People Who Love to Write and Edit

The position of editor of the newsletter will be vacant by the end of May. If you love to write and edit other members' articles, this is the job for you. If you also have a knack for taking photographs and formatting them for inclusion in the newsletter, so much the better! Luckily, you don't have to do the formatting and layout, since we have a professional staff at LRP Printing who does that. This is not a time consuming position, either, because the newsletter is published only three times a year (February, May, and October). Other volunteers produce and apply the mailing labels and take the newsletters to the post office, for bulk mailing. As an added perk, you will be a member of the leadership committee for the Nevada Women's History Project, intimately involved in creating new projects and programs. Please contact Lisa Marie Lightfoot (lightfeet@charter.net) if you are interested in this interesting opportunity.



### Save This Information for Missing Newsletters

For missing printed newsletters, please contact Grace Davis @ 853-3200 or kandgdavis@pyramid.net.

For missing digital newsletters, please contact Marcia Cuccaro @ 883-1454 or vergato l@sbc.global.net. One of the most common problems with the digital newsletters comes when an email address is changed.

### Featured Historic Nevada Woman: Hannah Keziah Clapp

Born: 1824, Albany, New York
Died: 1908, Palo Alto, California
Maiden Namo: samo: payer

Maiden Name: same; never

married

Race/Nationality/Ethnic

Background: Caucasian, family

from Eastern U.S.A. **Married:** never

Primary city and county of residence and work: Carson

City and Reno

Major fields of work: Educator

and librarian

Other role identities: Organized first private school in Nevada; first instructor and librarian at new University of Nevada; co-founder of Nevada's first kindergarten; activist and feminist in education and women's issues; co-founder of Reno's Twentieth Century Club.

Hannah Keziah Clapp was born in up-state New York in 1824 and at the age of 25 began her teaching career in a private seminary in Michigan.(i) soon became a principal of the Lansing Female Seminary, and later taught at Michigan Female College. Like many other Midwesterners, she answered the beckoning call of the American West and joined her brother's family on a wagon train going to California. She was 35 years old when she passed through the Truckee Meadows on her way to a teaching position in Vacaville, near Sacramento. But within a year she returned to Nevada, where she spent the next 41 years. In 1860 she accompanied the Perkins family to Carson City, where there were no schools for the growing number of children in the capital of the Nevada Territory. Seeing the great need for a school, Hannah Clapp organized a private coeducational school, with the blessings of the Territorial Legislature and powerful supporters such as Governor James W. Nye and Comstock mining baron, and soon-to-be U.S. Senator, William M. Stewart. By the end of 1864, her Sierra Seminary was already very successful, and had been visited twice by Mark Twain, whose observations of her

teaching methods and final examinations were grist for some scenes in *Tom Sawyer*.

After an expensive expansion financed by the new State Legislature in 1864, the Sierra Seminary needed additional professional staff. Hannah Clapp hired Miss Eliza C. Babcock, a Latin and English

teacher from Maine, as her assistant principal. The relationship lasted 35 years, until Eliza's death in 1899. They built a home together on the northwestern edge of Carson City, which had an extensive surrounding fence and a landscaped garden cared for by a hired gardener.

The two women made the Sierra Seminary one of Nevada's most outstanding schools, graduating many students who went on to influential positions around the nascent state of Nevada, as well as to prominent universities around the country. Their investments in a number of

mines, including the Belcher mine, helped fund many of their endeavors as well as long trips across the country. After a cross-county trip in 1876 to the kindergartens in the East, they returned home to Nevada determined to replicate the innovative program for six year olds. In 1877 they opened the first kindergarten in Nevada, in the basement of the Sierra Seminary in

Carson City. 1895, after they had moved to Reno, they persuaded the new Twentieth Century Club to organize the Reno Kindergarten Association. Reno's first kindergarten soon opened, in the annex of the Bishop Whitaker's School for Girls, on the site of today's Whitaker Park. After Eliza's death in 1899, Hannah raised funds to

build a new home for the school, named the Babcock Memorial Kindergarten, at the corner of Fifth and Walnut Streets in Reno. The beautiful two-story brick school remained in service for many years.

One of the duo's most famous business transactions was the construction of the iron fence around the Capital grounds in Carson City. Because of the unsightly muddy field in front of the Capital, which attracted stray cows, loafers, and garbage, the 1875 Legislature set aside funds for landscaping, driveways, pipes

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

for fountains, and a fence with a stone work foundation and iron railing. The bid was submitted under the name "H. K. Clapp of Carson City." It was the lowest bid for the fence by \$350. After they won the contract, Hannah and Eliza ordered the wrought iron from Philadelphia. After it was delivered and erected by local workers, they pocketed a \$1,000 profit, to the amazement of many who must have doubted the power of the two businesswise women. The Carson City newspaper applauded the lucrative business deal, in a May 1875 article:

"Let there by no further complaints about the nonenjoyment of their rights by the women of Nevada. The contract for the furnishing of iron fencing for the Capitol Square has been awarded to Misses Clapp and Babcock, Principals of Sierra Seminary; their bid of \$5,500 in coin for the delivery of the fencing upon the grounds is the lowest by some hundreds of dollars of those submitted."

Despite these facts, a colorful legend circulated around the state for many years, which argues that "no one knew that the bidders were women," and that they toiled under the hot summer sun, dressed in long woolen skirts, as they "built the fence themselves." The myth persisted until 1996, when Guy Rocha and Dennis Myers put it to rest in their "Historical Myth a Month" series, which tells the true story.

When the new University of Nevada was moved from Elko

to Reno in 1886, President Leroy Brown hired Hannah Clapp as the University's first staff member, to teach history and English, in addition to overseeing the University Library in newly-constructed Morrill Hall. Because there was no electricity or gas in the campus' first building when classes began, as she later recalled, they literally "burned the midnight oil" in the rooms to make the "blackness more palatable."

Despite her boundless energy and devotion to the nascent University, she ran afoul of a new president who replaced her with a Harvard University graduate, in an attempt to upgrade the academic qualifications of the professors. Some had criticized her appointment in 1887, citing her "lack of education, age, etc." and notwithstanding her friendship with the powerful Senator William Stewart, she never again felt at ease on the campus. Meanwhile, Eliza became seriously ill, putting a further strain on Hannah, who transported her to the care of doctors in San Francisco. Hannah worked hard to improve the University library, which was the safest assignment under the circumstances. By the time she retired at the age of 77 in 1901, the library had 6,000 books and 5,000 pamphlets.

When her life-long companion Eliza died in 1899, Hannah was profoundly distressed. Shortly thereafter she requested a leave of absence from the University. She was 77 years old by then, and decided to return to California after 41

years in Nevada. She moved to Palo Alto, to the home where she and Eliza had planned to retire. She passed away in Palo Alto in 1908, at the age of 84.

Hannah Clapp is remembered today as one of Carson City's most interesting figures, but she also was the co-founder of Reno's first kindergarten, and, being an ardent feminist and suffragette, was one of the founders of the Twentieth Century Club, a progressive women's organization that planted the trees along Riverside Drive and worked to make Reno a safer and cleaner city (among their accomplishments: outlawing spitting in the streets).

Today, Hannah Clapp's efforts are memorialized by the annual Hannah Humanitarian Award presented by the Committee to Aid Abused Women to a deserving citizen.

Researched and written by Holly Walton-Buchanan, November 2008.

### Volunteer Help Wanted!

We need someone to help pick up NWHP telephone messages. Can be done from your home. Please contact Kay Sanders at 747-1740 or Grace Davis at 853-3200.

### Newsletter Changes

This year we will change the look of the newsletter as well as the number of issues. In order to show off color photographs, the newsletter will now be printed on light grey paper, instead of beige. The new formatting changes will include fully justifying the margins, where possible, for a neater appearance.

The number of issues per year has been reduced to three: February, May, and October. The print editions are usually mailed out during the second week of those months, while the digital versions are e-mailed a few days earlier.

We thank you for your continuing loyalty to the only

statewide organization for women that honors Nevada's pioneer women and First Ladies, as well as today's thoroughly modern women who are active in business and community affairs. The reorganization from two regional groups to one statewide organization has been difficult but well worthwhile.

Please encourage your friends, neighbors, and colleagues to join our ranks and take advantage of the active calendar we have each year, offering conferences, outings, special projects, and biography publication. Our annual Authors' Luncheon is having a strong impact on local writers and pub-

lishers, as well as becoming our most lucrative fundraiser.

Remember, the Sarah Winnemucca statue would not be gracing the Capitol Rotunda in Washington, D.C., if not for this organization. We're that powerful.



# Reno Gazette-Journal to Feature 23 NWHP Historic Women in March

Web Your site biography editor Kay Sanders and NWHP member Donna Clontz are busy organizing the 23 biographies of historic Nevada women that will be featured in March 2010 in the Reno Gazette-Journal, Monday through Friday in the Local Life section. March is National Women's History Month a n d this outreach is part of our celebration of that event. The year 2010 marks NWHP's fourth year of working with local newspapers, beginning in 2007 with the Nevada Appeal, followed by

three years with RGJ.

In January we contacted the original authors of the 23 selected biographies ascertain whether or not they were interested reducing their biographical profiles to 250 words, which is the number requested by RGJ. Most of them were willing to do so. Fortunately, we have a talented number of members who write well and were willing to take on the task of reducing the original biographies when necessary. A follow-up article will be given in the May NWHP newsletter.

Be sure to watch for these featured Nevada women next month in the RGJ. We can be proud of our accomplishment of making these histories available to the public and promoting interest in the rolls women played in all areas of our state.

By Kay Sanders NWHP Web site Editor



### Talking the Walk: Literary Reno

Nevada Women's History Project Presents a Special Showing of A New Documentary

> Talking the Walk: Literary Reno

Come explore Reno's authors' haunts, where novelists Walter Van Tilburg Clark, Robert Laxalt and Will James lived and worked. You will be intrigued by Reno's unique sense of place as seen through the eyes of several writers as you

stroll through residential streets, back alleys, high school parking lots and casino doorways.

Funded by Historic Reno Preservation Society, City of Reno, and Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs.



Filmed by NWHP member Gwendolyn Clancy and presented on-camera by Sharon Honig-Bear and NWHP member Pat Ferraro Klos, who will also host this presentation.

## Saturday, February 20, 10:00 a.m.

Nevada Historical Society
UNR North Campus, near
Planetarium
Free Admission
Pre-registration: Holly at
mtjudah@aol.com

### Test Your Knowledge of Women's History

This section draws from a series of rather tough questions about famous – and infamous – women in American history, gathered from the National Women's History Project Web site (www.nwhp.org) as well as our own Nevada Women's History Project Web site (www.nevadawomen.org). In case you need to check your responses, the answers are found on page 10.

- I. Who was the first Hispanic woman to serve as U. S. Treasurer?
- 2. Who was the Shoshone woman who served as guide and interpreter on the Lewis and Clark expedition?
- 3. Who was Chair of the Board and publisher of The Washington Post and Newsweek magazine, and who also oversaw six broadcasting stations?
- 4. About 20,000 mostly Italian women shirtwaist workers staged a strike for better

- working conditions. Their action was called the "Uprising of the 20,000." When and where did this strike occur?
- 5. When did officials of Little League Baseball announce that they would "defer to the changing social climate" and let girls play on their teams?
- 6. As vice president of the United Farm Workers, what woman has been vital in speaking for civil and economic rights for farm workers throughout the U.S.?
- 7. When did Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 go into effect, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender in federally funded school programs and activities?
- 8. What woman was invited to teach nuclear physics at Princeton University, even though no female students were allowed to study there?



- 9. What woman served as a "conductor" on the Underground Railroad, freeing hundreds of southern slaves and leading them to safety in the North? A \$40,000 reward was offered for her capture.
- 10.What woman is credited with helping free more than 2,000 Chinese women and children smuggled into San Francisco to be sold as slaves?

[Ed. Note: More information on these fascinating women can be found in Wikipedia and Google.)

# Nevada Historical Society High Noon Video Series Calendar - 2010

Special History-Oriented Films and Discussions
Nevada Historical Society (North UNR Campus, near Planetarium)
12:00 Noon, Free Admission

### 2010 CALENDAR

DATE	SUBJECT
February 24	Treasures of the Mint: Highlights of the treasures found at the Nevada State Museum, which occupies the old U.S. Mint building in Carson City.
March 24	Everyday Mysteries: Photography of famed local photographer Roy Curtis; discussion led by Dr. Lee Brumbaugh
April 28	Talking the Walk: Literary Reno (if you missed our special NWHP showing on February 20 <sup>th</sup> , this is for you)
May 26	Building History in Genoa and Mesquite: Step back in time to old Nevada
June 23	Thunderbird Lodge: Go behind the scenes at this stunning Lake Tahoe retreat
July 28	On the Road: Nevada Touring Initiative
August 25	Under One Sky: Nevada's Native Americans
September 22	Virginia City Outer Limits: Ron James leads us through places not normally seen by the average tourist
October 27	100 Years of Nevada Historical Society History: Our Birthday Celebration
November 24	Carlton Watkins, 19 <sup>th</sup> Century Photographer; discussion led by Dr. Lee Brumbaugh
December 22	Built Treasures of Rural Nevada: Old buildings with new lives

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Knowledge of Women's	9. Harriet Tubman (c. 1820-1913)	
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Dolores Huerta (b. 1930)

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### Harriet Williams Strong (1844-1926)

(extracted from National Women's Hall of Fame and National Women's History Project Websites)

Once a resident of Carson City (1861), Harriet Williams Strong was the primary innovator of dry land irrigation and water conservation techniques in late 19th century southern California. With no formal engineering or business school training, she became a renowned inventor, agricultural entrepreneur, civic leader, philanthropist, and advocate of women's rights and women's higher education.

Born in Buffalo, NY, and raised in the mining towns of the California-Nevada border. she married a mine superintendent. However, her husband suffered a breakdown from overwork and worry because he had invested in a large mine that had been "salted." He committed suicide in 1883, leaving her widowed at a young age with four daughters to support. All she had was a struggling family ranch on semi-arid land near Whittier, California, but after studying irrigation methods, she pioneered new ways of watering farmland using a sequence of dams which allowed water to back up to higher dams when necessary. Her patents on this process allowed her to plant walnut, olive, citrus, and pomegranate trees, which thrived under her skilled management. She also planted fast-growing pampas grass and sold the plumes to the millinery trade. In less than five years, she rescued



her family and land from debt, became the leading commercial grower of walnuts in the country and was known as the Walnut Queen. The Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce elected her as their first female member, after which she exhibited her water storage schemes and pampas grass at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

She tirelessly advocated for water conservation and new approaches to arid land agriculture, leading her to testify in Congress for the damming of the Colorado River in Grand Canyon. A major spokeswoman for the education of women. women's independence, and for women's suffrage, she traveled across the continent with Susan Anthony to promote women's causes. Mrs. Strong became the first woman Trustee of the University of Southern California Law School. passed away at the age of 85 in automobile accident.

NWHP
Leadership
Steering Committee:
Lisa-Marie Lightfoot: Chair
Mary Anne Convis: Past Chair
Marcia Cuccaro: Vice Chair
Patti Bernard: Secretary
Linda Wyckoff: Treasurer
Holly Van Valkenburgh:
Project Review
Heidi Englund: Programs
Lisa-Marie Lightfoot: Webmaster
Holly Walton-Buchanan: Newsletter
TBD: Marketing and Publicity

Grace Davis: Membership
Grace Davis: Education,
Outreach and Review
Kay Sanders: Jean Ford
Research Center
Carrie Porter: Archivist/
Parliamentarian

#### Some NWHP News Contacts

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NWHP is a program of the Nevada Women's Fund



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