

Historic Reno PRESERVATION SOCIETY

FootPrints

Dedicated to Preserving and Promoting Historic Resources in the Truckee Meadows through Education, Advocacy, and Leadership.

VOL. 11 NO. 2 ❖ SPRING 2008

100 Years: Mackay School of Mines 1908—2008

by Leanne Stone

Mackay Centennial Week, April 20-26, 2008, will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Mackay School of Mines building on the University of Nevada, Reno campus. The School of Mines, a gift to the university from John Mackay's widow, Marie-Louise, and their son, Clarence, was dedicated on June 10, 1908. The building was constructed in honor of John Mackay, one of America's foremost mining, railroad and communications capitalists.

John Mackay was a nineteenth century mining entrepreneur. He came to Virginia City and the Comstock Lode in 1860 from the California gold fields.

He and his partners owned the Consolidated Virginia Mine that produced over \$100,000,000 in gold and silver. He subsequently invested in an ore processing mill, a lumber and fluming company, the Nevada Bank of San Francisco as well as other San Francisco real estate, and the Commercial Cable Company. He was instrumental in building an international trans-oceanic telegraph cable system by improving the Atlantic cable and establishing the groundwork for the Pacific Cable. When he died in 1902, his personal fortune was estimated at \$30,000,000.

His son, Clarence, became the president of The Mackay System, a company that combined cable and land-line systems to establish electrical communications throughout the world. In 1927, the younger Mackay acquired the Federal Radio Company, which was the first communication company in the world to operate cable, telegraph and radio. In 1928, it merged with International Telephone and Telegraph. Clarence Mackay was a financier, an industrialist, and a patron of the arts, as well as a noted breeder of race horses. He assumed the responsibility

for the development of the University of Nevada's master plan and was directly involved in the construction of eight campus buildings and two landscape features between 1906 and his death in 1938.

Clarence Mackay's contributions to the university are extensive and include money, land, stocks, and his own time, all donated in memory of his father, John Mackay. His involvement began with the commission of a statue that was originally intended to be located in Carson City, Nevada's state capital. Although the state legislature authorized funds for the statue, a place

for it could not be found. University president, Joseph Stubbs, offered a site for the statue and Clarence Mackay decided to commission a mining building to go along with it. The life-size statue of John Mackay was created by painter and sculptor Gutzon Borglum in 1903, and was placed in front of the school of mines building upon its completion. Borglum is widely known for his bust of Abraham Lincoln, which sits in the United States Capitol Rotunda, and the National Monument at Mount Rushmore.



*Mackay School of Mines dedication, 1908.
Photo courtesy of Nevada Historical Society.*

Clarence Mackay engaged Stanford White, of the prestigious New York architectural firm McKim, Mead and White, for the construction projects at the University of Nevada. Mackay and his wife, Katherine, had commissioned White to design their home, Harbor Hill, in Roslyn, Long Island, New York, in 1899. After Stanford White's death in 1906, William S. Richardson took over architectural duties, and the San Francisco firm of Bliss and Faville continued with the landscape design work.

Stanford White took his idea for the University of Nevada's landscaping project from Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson's

100 Years: Mackay School of Mines (continued)

Continued from page 1

University of Virginia master plan calls for university buildings oriented toward a quadrangle that is categorized as a "Jeffersonian academic village." The original university building at the south end is Morrill Hall and Mackay School of Mines anchors the north end of the quadrangle. Formal landscaping of the quad and campus began in 1906, when the construction of Mackay School of Mines began, and was completed in 1908.

The School of Mines building is an excellent example of the Georgian Revival architectural style and may be the only remaining example of a McKim, Mead and White building west of Kansas City. The front portico is notable as a Guastavino tile-arch system. It is believed to be the only remaining example of Guastavino's design in the western United States. Rafael Guastavino's (1842-1908) arch system uses interlocking terra cotta tiles. Guastavino eventually held twenty-four patents on his system. Guastavino's first major commission in the United States was McKim, Mead and White's Boston Public Library in 1889. Guastavino, a native of Spain, died in 1908, the year the Mackay School of Mines was dedicated.

The School of Mines building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982, thanks to the efforts of Professor Don Fowler and others. The National Register plaque is on the original front door, which was altered in 1959, when it was cut through horizontally to a "normal" height.

In 1982, Professor Don Fowler and one of his historic preservation classes undertook the nomination of the original university complex of approximately forty acres to the National Register of Historic Places. The University of Nevada, Reno Historic District was formally listed on the Register in 1987. The district comprises twelve buildings, including Morrill Hall and Mackay School of Mines, and two landscape features, the University Quad and Manzanita Lake.



Landscaping what became the quad in front of newly completed Mackay School of Mines, 1908. Photo courtesy of Nevada Historical Society.

By the mid-1980s, the School of Mines building was in need of repair and seismic retrofitting. In 1985, Nevada's United States Senator Paul Laxalt introduced a bill to appropriate funding for the construction of a new mineral research center, and the refurbishment of the Mackay School of Mines building. The Reno architectural firm of Casazza, Peetz, and Hancock won the commission. For the seismic work, the firm selected the base isolation system, which was executed with care in consideration of the historical significance of the building.



Statue of John Mackay in front of Mackay School of Mines building. Photo courtesy of <http://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WM64>.

Still a prominent and important building on the UNR campus, the School of Mines building now houses the Mackay School of Earth Sciences and Engineering, the state-of-the-art DeLaMare Mines and Engineering Library, and the Keck Museum. The Keck Museum is a classic example of nineteenth-century museum practices patterned after the Minerals Museum at Columbia University.

At the April 2008 HRPS meeting, Leanne Stone will make a presentation on the reconstruction of the Mackay School of Mines building with slides she took of the project from November 1990 to July 1993.

For information on the events during Mackay Centennial Week, call the Director's office at 784-6115 or visit the website at www.mines.unr.edu/Mackay.



Information for this article was taken primarily from the National Register nominations completed by Dr. Fowler's classes, with supplemental information from other sources.

Leanne Stone is a charter member of HRPS, a former HRPS tour guide of the University Historic District and was HRPS Walking Tour Director.

Authors Note: The nomination to the National Register of Historic Places for the Historic District encompasses the original university complex, approximately 40 acres. The Historic District has 12 buildings: Morrill Hall; Mackay School of Mines; Lincoln Hall (Mens Dormitory); Manzanita Hall (Womens' Dormitory); the original Library, now Jones Visitor Center; Veterinary Building was east of Laxalt Mineral Engineering, now gone; original Agriculture Building, now Frandsen Humanities; original Education Building, now Thompson Building; the Federal Mining Experimental Station, now Facilities Services; second Library, original Memorial Library, now Clark Administration; Mackay Science Hall; Palmer Engineering; and two landscape features: the University Quad and Manzanita Lake.

The Downtown Post Office Mystery Mural Hunt

by Debbie Hinman

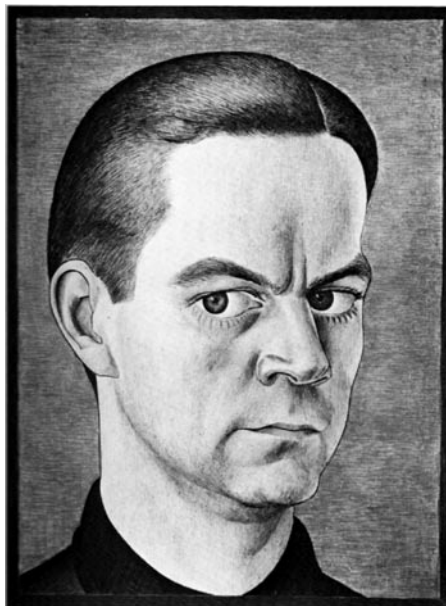
Could there possibly be a hidden Sistine Chapel-type painted ceiling in the historic Reno downtown post office? Some very strong clues point to yes, although no pictorial record seems to exist.

Our Tale of the Missing Mural begins in Reno in 1936. It was the Works Progress Administration/New Deal era, and there was a strong federal government push to employ talented craftsmen and artists—both with a view towards supporting these individuals during a depressed economy, and to exposing the public to art. The idea was to—hopefully—engender a new appreciation in those who had neither the time, inclination nor money to seek out art in museums. One way of doing this, the theory went, was by employing artists to decorate public buildings with colorful murals depicting local historical events or ways of life. One of the most common public buildings selected for this art was the local post office.

A small item in the *Reno Evening Gazette* on September 16, 1936, reads: "Ben A. Cunningham, former Reno artist now living in San Francisco, has been awarded a contract for painting murals in the lobby of the Reno postoffice (*sic*) building. He will be paid a total of \$2200 for the work, officials of the treasury's procurement division at Washington announced." The article went on to describe the proposed artwork: "(The murals) will depict the history of the mails from the first post carriers to the modern airmail and streamline train delivery." But did this ever occur? A search of *Reno Evening Gazette* and *Nevada State Journal* archives brought no further mention of the mural to light. A researching of numerous volumes on WPA Murals, Post Office Mural Art of the Depression era, and an inquiry to the United States General Services Agency, depository for Post Office art records, failed to uncover any record of a mural in the building.

The artist in question grew up in Reno and attended the University of Nevada for one year as an architecture student. He then left Nevada for the Bay Area, enrolling in the Mark Hopkins Art Institute (now the San Francisco Art Institute). He became

involved with WPA mural art in California, beginning as one of the 26 artists chosen to record their impressions of the time on the walls of the interior of Coit Tower in 1934. A mural in the post office in Ukiah, California, painted in 1939, was also the work of Cunningham. Both murals are stunning in their use of color and their skillful execution; both are still in existence today (see mural on page 11). Is it possible that Cunningham returned to Reno in 1936 to accept a commission for a post office mural?



Self Portrait, 1935, of Ben A. Cunningham, an artist known for painting WPA mural art and a former Reno resident.

Photo courtesy of Cindy Nemser's biography of "Ben Cunningham: A Life with Color," 1989.


His obituary claims he did. Reads the *Nevada State Journal* tribute of April 7, 1975: "Shortly after the new Reno downtown post office was built, Cunningham painted a mural on one of the walls, but it has since been painted over."

However, not one of the growing number of locals who have been questioned about the mural in the past year recalls seeing it or knows anything of its existence. This number includes long-time local residents,

many of whom have a keen interest in and knowledge of local history, and even some former postal employees of the World War II era. Local historian Philip Earl recalls hearing something about a post office mural but has no additional information.

As testimony to the fact that Cunningham became a significant figure in the American art world, author Cindy Nemser published a beautifully illustrated biography of Cunningham in 1989, describing his early life in Reno and his contribution to WPA projects. But there is no mention of a Reno mural, even in this comprehensive overview of his work.

Just when it was beginning to seem as if the whole thing was an urban myth, an article in the Volume 33, Number 2, 1990 issue of the *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, written by Reno artist Ingrid Evans on Ben Cunningham, revealed the following: Evans had interviewed another local artist, Richard Guy Walton, who told Evans about the mural. Walton said that Cunningham painted it in 1937, in oil. Evans reports that the mural was obliterated soon after its completion by the postmaster for reasons unknown. She quotes Walton as saying "He had stripped Nevada of a great piece of art, the most beautiful ceiling I ever saw." Walton, unfortunately, is now deceased, so that avenue of inquiry is closed.

Will this mystery ever be solved? It's possible. There may still be someone out there who recalls the mural and, possibly, the circumstances around its creation and destruction. Or perhaps a written record of the commission will come to light in some obscure government depository. With plans for the renovation of the building underway by the City of Reno, it seems like an appropriate and even critical time to try and uncover both the mystery and the mural. What a treasure we might have right in our own backyard—buried for 70 years. 

Debbie Hinman is a HRPS Board Member, a HRPS Tour Guide and a member of HRPS Editorial Staff.

Finding My Great-Grandparents' House, 57 Boyd Place

by Linda Sievers

During the winter of 1985-86, my mother, Rhoma Jane Mitchell Sumner, made it her mission to transform boxes full of old letters and photos into coherent family albums. She thought it was a good project to keep her occupied through the long winter months at Tahoe City. Our phone conversations during that time included tidbits about a long-lost cousin who helped with some genealogy background and trips to Reno to get negatives made from old Tonopah photos. When she realized her project was getting bigger than anticipated, I sent her two flashy red three-ring binders to keep her spirits up.

The results of her efforts were several large binders she numbered and labeled with a family surname. All were overflowing with letters, daguerreotypes, bits of lace, postcards, hair samples and hundreds of photos. The sixth was labeled "Stoddard," the Reno family album.

Her mother, Dorothy Lothrop Stoddard Mitchell, was not an organized person so I knew my mother had worked hard to assemble this tome. As a teenager, I had discovered a chest of drawers overflowing with memorabilia at my grandparents' home in Sonoma, California. Digging through it, I had found a wonderful three-page hand-written biography of my great-great-grandfather, Charles Herman Stoddard. He was born in November 1845, in Camden, Alabama, served as a confederate soldier in the War of the Rebellion and worked for the Southern Express Company as an express messenger between Cairo, Illinois and Mobile, Alabama until 1870. Then his uncle, Charles H. Swift of Sacramento, lured him west, where he soon was working for Wells Fargo, making express-messenger runs to Reno. He eventually settled here, working as an agent for the V & T Railroad under H. M. Yerington and D. A. Bender. When the mines played

out, the opportunity to enter politics allowed Charlie Stoddard to become one of the leading office holders of Washoe County, being elected repeatedly as assessor and county recorder for more than thirty years.



Daisy Stoddard with her daughters Dorothy, left, and Marion on the porch at 57 Boyd Place, Reno, circa 1912.

Photo courtesy of Linda Sievers.

This was pretty impressive stuff—even from a dim teenager's point of view. I asked my grandmother who wrote it, as there was no signature. She told me Charlie's wife, Cora Cross Stoddard did. So, I copied it in my crabby 18-year-old handwriting onto a piece of my grandparents' stationery to take home,



Roy and Daisy Stoddard, the author's great-grandparents.

Photos courtesy of Linda Sievers.

being careful to note who the original author was, when and where it had come from. On the back of the last page, Cora also promised: "Will write mine up soon." Sadly, I have never found Cora's autobiography.

Since moving to Reno in early 2001, I have found myself thumbing through this Nevada album containing the Stoddard relatives' history. Thanks to Cora's letter and many others, I've been able to fill in the blanks pretty easily. As for photos, there are few images of houses but one in particular captured my attention. Posing on the front porch of a shingle-clad house were my great-grandmother, Daisy Lothrop Stoddard, with daughters, Dorothy and Marion. The address number "57" was visible over Daisy's left shoulder and a hammock hung from the extended covered porch. The unlandscaped yard was

corralled behind a low chicken-wire fence. One other home is visible in the background, perhaps a block away. This photo was enlarged and mounted on black board, perhaps even framed at one time. After scrutinizing many smaller photos, I found a second one of the same house. But this one showed three women wearing overalls, including Daisy, sitting on top of a tarp-covered wagon. Standing in front are two little girls along with the driver and horse nearby. Maybe this was moving-in day?

Based on the size of the children, I knew the photo had to have been taken around 1911 when my grandmother was about seven years old. The address meant nothing to me as I knew only of the family home at 1077 Riverside Drive (now an apartment building). A look at the city directory of 1910 revealed my great-grandfather, Roy Stoddard, residing at 57 Boyd Place. A legal document from the recorder's office

Finding My Great-Grandparents' House (continued)

had Roy applying for a right-of-way to build a sewer line to Lot 19, Block "Z" of the Powning Addition in January 1911.

After identifying the street name, I did a drive-by, not knowing if the home would still be recognizable in a neighborhood I knew had everything from a gated condo building to some sad little houses and apartments that need TLC. Fifty-seven Boyd Place was one block off Riverside, almost behind Charlie's and Cora's long-gone house at 1077 Riverside Drive. I turned right off Keystone onto Jones, then left on Boyd. Amazingly, the house was basically intact. One owner had painted the once dark shingles on the sides of the house a bluish-gray color and blue awnings arched over the windows. The porch steps had been rebuilt in concrete. A beautiful iron fence enclosed the yard full of flowering roses, iris and lilacs that border the house. From the outside, it looked like the homeowners not only had a green thumb but were in love with the architecture.

I am sure the yard never looked this good when Roy and Daisy lived there. They had just moved to Reno after living in Tonopah and Goldfield from 1903 to 1908. Roy had owned a drygoods store and been a telegraph operator. My grandmother Dorothy was born in Tonopah during the gold rush years. While the Boyd house was being built, they all lived with Roy's parents in the big house on Riverside Drive. Roy worked as a deputy recorder and auditor for Washoe County under his father, Charles H. Stoddard, who was the county recorder. He was also preparing to take the state bar exam. The girls attended grammar school at the newly-built McKinley Park School, just two blocks away. Based on city directory listings, they lived in the Boyd Place house until around 1918.

At the county assessor's office, I got the names of the current owners of 57 Boyd Place and



Moving-in day with Daisy Stoddard sitting between two unidentified women on the wagon. Daughters Marion, left, and Dorothy, stand in front of the wagon, summer 1911.

Photo courtesy of Linda Sievers.

e-mailed Debbie Hinman, former HRPS walking tour director, with the names. She discovered the owners were HRPS members and gave them a call. Michael Nelson and Bruce Atchison were thrilled when Debbie called to ask about their home. They had done research when they purchased the house eight years ago and discovered Roy Stoddard was the original owner. But inquiries led nowhere when they tried to find relatives still living in



Current owners Michael Nelson and Bruce Atchison pose on the same front porch in July 2007.
Photo by Linda Sievers.

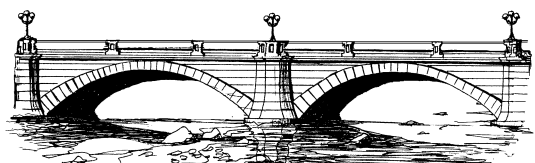
Reno. She let them know of my work to identify the house and asked if they would be interested in being part of a historic walk in the Powning Addition. Prior to the walk, my husband, Wayne, and I met with Michael and Bruce to talk about the house and to give them a copy of the one photo I had with my relatives sitting on the porch.

Last July, Michael and Bruce graciously opened their home to more than 40 HRPS members as part of the walk led by HRPS President Felvia Belaustegui. They graciously gave us a tour and told of the challenges of refurbishing and updating the home. While the exterior is pretty much intact (including leaded-glass windows), they opted to install central heating and air, thanks to plentiful basement space. To replace the roof, contractors had to remove three layers, including the original roofing made with fruit crates! The 1,400-square-foot house had been used as an office and the kitchen had been partially remodeled. The original built-in dining-room china cabinet, butler's pantry storage and linen armoire were all intact as were the wainscoting and interior doors.

Both Michael and Bruce are fans of Victorian period decor, so the pair decided to tackle wallpapering the kitchen, dining and parlor rooms in stripes and florals that reflect the era. The dining room has red walls above the chair rail, the parlor red drapes and the lone bath retains the original six-foot cast-iron claw-foot tub.

Both men believe my great-grandparents remain spiritually connected to the house. Michael and Bruce's dedication to restoring this little house preserves my great-grandparents' memory as well.

Linda Sievers is a former copy editor of the Anchorage Daily News. She is a member of the FootPrints Editorial Staff.



Historic Reno PRESERVATION SOCIETY

May 2008 Historic Preservation Month HRPS Walking Tours

Historic Reno Preservation Society will present eight historic walking tours and one bus tour during the month of May in honor of Nevada Historic Preservation Month. Walking Tours are \$10 per person; tours are free for HRPS members except for the bus tour. Tours generally last about 2 hours. The bus tour takes 6 hours and costs \$45. No dogs on tours, please. We would appreciate it if you would call 747-HIST (4478) to reserve space so we can better plan for the appropriate number of guides.

Saturday,
May 3
10:00 a.m.

NEULANDS NEIGHBORHOOD - An architectural walk through one of Reno's oldest and most prestigious neighborhoods. Meet at My Favorite Muffin, 340 California Avenue. Tour guides, Scott Gibson and Bill Isaef.

Tuesday,
May 6
6:00 p.m.

UNR HISTORIC DISTRICT - Visit Morrill Hall, Mackay School of Mines, the Keck Museum, and learn the history of this beautiful campus. Meet at Honor Court, Ninth and Center streets. Tour guide, Jack Hursh.

Saturday,
May 10
10:00 a.m.

BEYOND THE ARCHES - Hear stories about the last 150 years of Downtown Reno—railroad and mining, immigrants, the notorious divorce and gambling mecca, and now as a livable cultural hub. Learn about Bill Harrah, Myron Lake, Baby Face Nelson, and Frederic DeLongchamps. Meet at the National Automobile Museum, 10 S. Lake St. Tour guide, Sharon Honig-Bear.

Tuesday,
May 13
6:00 p.m.

WELLS AVENUE NEIGHBORHOOD - Take a stroll through a working-class neighborhood along the path of the Wells Avenue streetcar, across from the V&T tracks, past the homes of the "Thoma Street Gang." Meet at Southside School, Sinclair and Liberty streets. Tour guide, Mark Taxer.

Saturday,
May 17
10:00 a.m.

DELONGCHAMPS ARCHITECTURE - Stroll through Reno's oldest neighborhoods noting the masterpieces of our famous home-grown architect, Frederic J. DeLongchamps. Meet at the Hardy House, 442 Flint Street, northeast corner of California Avenue and Flint Street. Tour guide, Anne Simone.

Tuesday,
May 20
6:00 p.m.

UNR NEIGHBORHOOD - Take a walk through a historic and possibly endangered neighborhood at the foot of the campus, with vintage Queen Anne homes and charming bungalows, and visit Reno's "Little Denmark." Meet at the base of the Ninth Street University steps. Tour guides, Debbie Hinman and Jack Hursh.

Saturday,
May 24
10:00 a.m.

MANSIONS ON THE BLUFF - View high-style architecture in Reno's most politically significant neighborhood. Meet at McCarran House, 401 Court Street. Tour guides, Ed Wishart and Tracy Soliday.

Tuesday,
May 27
6:00 p.m.

MONROE STREET NEIGHBORHOOD - Stroll along Monroe and Joaquin Miller streets, savoring the history and architecture of this lovely residential area south of the Newlands Neighborhood. You will see the Hart House, the Patrick Ranch House, Greystone Castle and other distinctive homes. Tour guides, Elsie Newman and Anne Simone.

Saturday,
May 31
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

WALLS OF WRATH BUS TOUR - Join us for a fun and comprehensive tour of Reno's important New Deal treasures. See historic bridges, roads, parks, schools and—yes—walls. The \$45 cost of the tour includes lunch outdoors at a local WPA-era park. For reservations, call Cindy Ainsworth at 747-0340.

Trinity Episcopal Church

by Kim Henrick

Some called it the *potato cellar*. It was a term of endearment (or irreverence, depending on your view) for the low-profile crypt, or basement, that faithfully served as the Trinity Episcopal Church along Rainbow Street and Island Avenue from 1929 until 1948. The plain but sturdy crypt was used for nineteen years until church finances allowed the completion of the beautiful Gothic-style church you see today.

Protestant Episcopal Church history in this area began around 140 years ago, when Reno was no more than a village along a rail line. On October 16, 1870, Rt. Rev. Ozi William Whitaker (Nevada's first bishop) came down from the Comstock to hold the first Episcopal church service in Reno's little schoolhouse on the northwest corner of First and Sierra streets (see a photo of this schoolhouse in the Spring 2005 *FootPrints*, pg. 4). Bishop Whitaker also built the three-story brick Bishop Whitaker School for Girls where Whitaker Park is today.

Bishop Whitaker held occasional services in the schoolhouse until 1873, when he used the more spacious Hall of Justice, where the Washoe County Court House now stands.

Also in 1873, Rev. William Lucas arrived from Ohio to serve as the church's first rector and he worked quickly to start construction on the church's first official building. In July of that year, the lot on the southwest corner of Sierra and Second streets was purchased for \$400 and building soon began on the church in that quaint neighborhood with its wooden sidewalks and large elm trees. In 1878, Rev. Lucas resigned because of ill health and was replaced by Rev. W. R. Jenvey, who saw to the completion of the church.

The completed building, facing Sierra Street, was a single-story wood structure, 32 x 70 feet, with a high-pitched roof and a sixty-foot high square tower on the northeast corner (see a photo of the northeast corner of this church in the Winter 2006 *FootPrints*, pg. 11). The building costs

were around \$6,000. Luckily, the new church was spared the ravages of Reno's terrible Great Fire of 1879—it stopped just yards away, kitty-corner to the church. When completed in June 1879, and free of debt, thanks to the church's



Trinity Episcopal Church at Rainbow Street and Island Avenue, 2007. Construction in 1929 and was completed in 1948. Photo by Kim Henrick.

generous members and admirers, Bishop Whitaker consecrated the building in an impressive rite. A *Nevada State Journal* article published on June 24, 1979 about Trinity's 100-year history, includes a flippant observation by the *Gazette* journalist who attended the service. The article reads like this:

To the Gazette journalist who attended the solemn occasion, the Episcopal services possessed a peculiar interest, 'from the fact that their churches are never consecrated until they are free from debt.' According to the reporter, 'the Lord does not want any second hand mortgages.' He also added that 'newspaper offices are never consecrated. That shows that it is better to be a floorkeeper in the house of the Lord than to run a daily.'

Rev. Jenvey took another position in 1883 and Rev. Lucas returned in better health to serve for another nine years. Rev. Samuel Unsworth became rector on June 1, 1894, and served, to the delight of the community and church, for the next twenty-six years. Like the clergy before him, he nurtured and guided the church with skill and compassion, but in addition, Rev. Unsworth was a great scholar who even taught Greek and Latin at the University of Nevada. One account by church vestryman (committee member) Gordon Sampson quotes a former state governor as saying, "There are few men who have walked up and down our streets, who gave a greater influence for good than Dr. Unsworth."

The church and the city grew and in June 1894, another piece of property was purchased at the northwest corner of Fifth and Sierra streets. There, a two-story brick parish house was built in 1903, but the trend for growth by this time was south so a church was never built. The building was rented to the University of Nevada for use as a biological laboratory for many years and then, around 1949, it was sold to the Sewell family interests.

Between 1922 and 1924, Bishop George C. Hunting, planning for a larger church, arranged for the sale of the property at Sierra and Second streets for \$25,000 and the purchase of a piece of property at Rainbow Street and Island Avenue, south of the Truckee River, for \$10,000. In the summer of 1923, the bishop and Rev. Tanner Brown, rector from 1920-1927, moved the church building to the northeast corner of Eighth Street and University Avenue (now Center Street), to be used as a spiritual center for the students at the University of Nevada. The building was remodeled and the name changed to St. Stephen's Chapel. The Trinity parishioners continued to use the chapel, however, until the first phase of the new Trinity Episcopal Church, the *crypt*, was completed in 1929.

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Trinity Episcopal Church (continued)

According to the deed filed April 9, 1924, the large piece of property purchased at Rainbow Street and Island Avenue was made up of seven lots (#8-#14), as shown in the Riverview Survey filed in August 1896. The church then deeded to the City of Reno the lot closest to the river (#8), so the city could continue Island Avenue farther west to Belmont Road (now S. Arlington Avenue). Until that time, Island Avenue only ran along the river between Virginia Street and Rainbow Avenue. That left a large rectangular piece of land measuring 129 x 293 feet—ample room to build a cathedral.

In what could easily be called the contentious years, between 1918 and 1934, two battles raged in the church: (1) Should the new church building be a pro-cathedral (a parish church that is also used as a cathedral for the presiding bishop), an idea favored by Bishops George Hunting, Arthur Moulton and Thomas Jenkins and (2) Should it be built in a Gothic or Spanish style? In January 1926, an agreement was finally reached to build the new Trinity Memorial Cathedral.

The first phase of the cathedral (the basement or crypt) was completed in late 1929, but the building was never used as a cathedral and finally in 1934, after sixteen years of planning and nine years as a cathedral, Trinity abruptly reverted to being a parish church. Bishop Jenkins explained that a pro-cathedral never was practical because the relationship between the local parish and the bishop must be extraordinarily close and continuously strong for it to ever work. To this day there has never been an Episcopal cathedral in Nevada.

As for Gothic or Spanish, it is reported that Rev. Tanner Brown resigned over the troublesome issue. According to the "Inventory of the Church Archives of Nevada, Protestant Episcopal Church," written in 1941 by The Nevada Historical Records Survey Project, Charles N. Sumner, an architect from San Francisco, submitted plans in a

Classical Tudor style, but for several reasons, those plans were abandoned. The same source explains that Bishop Jenkins arrived in 1929 and pushed the project forward and at this point, "alterations in the plans resulted in the adoption of a mixed style of Spanish and Gothic worked out by Fred J. DeLongchamps, Reno architect." (This resource does not say exactly whose plans DeLongchamps supposedly altered—Sumner's Tudor plans or another's?) What is clear is that Frederic

covered with tar paper and that is how the crypt sat for nineteen years until the upper portion was built. The cornerstone was placed on the east wall near the northeast corner of the crypt on January 25, 1930, with the following inscription: "Trinity Cathedral, Erected to the Glory of the Eternal Trinity, 1929." In May 1931, the San Francisco chapter of alumnae of the Bishop Whitaker School for Girls donated a 900-pound bronze bell to the church in memory of Bishop Whitaker.

1ST TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH (1875-1923)



Rough sketch by Kim Henrick of the 1st Trinity Church at Sierra and Second Streets.

DeLongchamps' blueprints for the Trinity Cathedral, dated August 26, 1929, definitely display a Spanish-style church complete with several low-pitched rooflines to be covered in rounded Spanish-style tiles and with a heavy mission-style wood door with ornate iron hinges. There are also hints of the Gothic style as well—the upper windows running along the east and west sides of the church had a distinctive rectangular design with the pointed arch.

The Walker Boudwin Company was the builder of the crypt using DeLongchamps' basement-level designs. They completed the basement in 1929. Due to the Great Depression (the church lost \$15,000 at a defunct bank) and other problems, construction came to a stop. The wood planks installed on the roof of the crypt, intended to be the flooring for the cathedral, were

Bishop Jenkins resigned in 1942 and was replaced that year by Bishop Fisher Lewis. In 1946, after WWII was over and the effects of the Great Depression were subsiding, Bishop Lewis and Rev. Garth Sibbald dove into a planning and fund-raising period that would lead to the new above-ground church finally being built. Sadly, Rev. Sibbald died of a heart attack in March 1946 and the project again came to a halt. When Rev. John T. Ledger began his tenure as rector in September 1946, the project moved forward. Beginning in May 1948, Rodney W. Boudwin, son of Walker Boudwin, began building the concrete church above.

By the end of 1948, the beautiful Gothic-style church was nearly complete. John N. Tilton Jr., renowned church architect with the firm Armstrong, Furst and Tilton in Chicago, drew the plans. The blueprints for this church (stored at the Trinity Parish house, in a huge, green George Wingfield Reno National Bank safe) are personally initialed by Mr. Tilton and dated August 17, 1945. The following notes are included on the crypt drawing: "Survey Plan of Crypt, Information from basement plan of F. J. DeLongchamps, Archt. (Aug. 26, '29)...." Mr. Tilton's note seems to confirm that Frederic DeLongchamps did design the crypt portion of the church. Rev. John T. Ledger assisted Bishop Lewis on September 25, 1949, in consecrating Trinity Church. According to Rolfe Chase, in his *History of the Episcopal Church in*

Trinity Episcopal Church (continued)

Nevada, the final cost was reported as \$250,000, with no debt.

The Garth Sibbald Memorial Tower (named for Rev. Garth Sibbald) was completed at the same time as the church, in 1948, and the spire and cross were set on the tower in 1950. It was reported to be the highest mechanical lift made in Reno at that time. Accounts vary, but the structure from the ground to the top of the cross, is approximately 115 feet high.

During the following decades many interior projects were completed, such as furnishing the church, and in 1950, the three-paned Trinity window made by Cummings Studios of San Francisco was installed over the altar. Between 1966 and 1984, William Rundstrom of California made twenty-five of the beautiful mosaics and stained-glass windows for the church.

In 1985, several exquisite needlepoint alter cushions, with Nevada scenes such as Mount Tallac and Piper's Opera House, were donated to the church by seven talented women.

Edward S. Parsons, another prominent Reno architect, played an important role in the growth of Trinity. In 1958, he designed the Parish House that sits to the south of the church. He also remodeled the Bishop Lewis Chapel and reinforced the bell tower to accommodate a thirty-five-bell carillon of Flemish bells (weighing nearly 6,000 pounds) donated in 1973 by Bonnie Jean Richardson. The Bishop Whitaker Memorial Bell that they replaced now sits in the garden by the Parish House. In 1977, Parsons also redesigned the church's front steps to make them wider at the top and split into two directions closer to the ground.

Larry Kirk, Trinity property manager, is a wealth of information on church history and here are some interesting tidbits he shared. The flood on January 2, 1997, sent

sixteen feet of water, mud and debris into the crypt, totally destroying it. Q & D Construction and church personnel completely remodeled the basement into a fine educational facility in only four months. The west wall of the church now has high-pressure windows near the



*Large pipes of the Casavant Opus 3778 pipe organ installed in Trinity Episcopal Church in 1999.
Photo courtesy of Paula Riley.*

ground and a shallow culvert to carry water to the street. The beautiful wood doors on Island Avenue were donated by the Boudwin family in memory of Walker Boudwin. Above the doors are three seals, those of the State of Nevada, the Trinity, and the United States. The horizontal stone tile border that snakes around the outside of the church about head height marks the demarcation between the crypt roof and church floor. Two cornerstones are mounted on the north end of the east wall. The 1929 stone is described above and the other reads "Trinity Parish Church, 1875." No cornerstone was placed for the building when completed in 1948.


The latest addition to the Trinity Church is the wonderful Casavant Opus 3778 pipe organ installed in the spring of 1999. The hand-built pipe organ from the Casavant Frères Company in St. Hyacinthe, Quebec, has 2,177 pipes and cost more than \$300,000. (Remodeling to accommodate the organ cost about the same as the organ.) According to Art Johnson, music director, it is the second largest pipe organ in the

state, the largest now being in Las Vegas. An excellent way to experience the art, music, talent and exquisite craftsmanship of this beautiful church is to attend a free-to-the-public organ concert given every Friday, except Good Friday, at noon.

The Episcopal Church marked a significant milestone in 2006 when Bishop Katharine Jefferts Shori, a scientist, professor, pilot and Nevada's Episcopal Bishop for six years, became Most Rev. Doctor Shori, making her the first female "primate" (head of church) in any of the world's Anglican churches.

Locally, Rev. James Jeffery retired in 2005 after serving thirty-two years as the rector of Trinity Episcopal Church (pleased that he broke Rev. Samuel Unsworth's record of twenty-six years). Dan Edwards was just elected this October, 2007 to be Nevada's next bishop

and Rev. John Goddard is the present interim rector.

I would like to thank Mella Rothwell Harmon of the Nevada Historical Society and Trinity Church's Larry Kirk, Holly Ortiz and Art Johnson, for sharing their time and information with me on this wonderful building and church history. 

Information for this article, not previously mentioned, came from: numerous Trinity Episcopal Church documents at the Nevada Historical Society (Manuscript collection 470) including "A History of Trinity Episcopal Church," and "Welcome to Trinity Episcopal Church," and Trinity brochures; numerous local newspaper articles; Thomas Jenkins, *The Church in Nevada*; Thomas Wren (Editor) *History of the State of Nevada*; Wikipedia (Online Encyclopedia).

Kim Henrick is a volunteer at the Nevada Historical Society and a member of the HRPS Editorial Staff.

From Your HRPS President

The Reno City Council has included the Powning Addition in the City of Reno Master Plan as a conservation district. A conservation district provides methods of achieving preservation without the regulations of a traditional historic district. A conservation district can include historic resources that share a similar form, character, unique elements and/or visual qualities derived from a combination of topography, vegetation, space, scenic vistas, architecture, unique features or a place of natural or cultural significance. These features create a district that exhibits stability, livability and specific identity.



*Felvia Belaustegui
HRPS President
Photo by Debbie Hinman.*

A conservation district is designated through the establishment of precise boundaries. The Powning's District extends from Arlington Avenue to Keystone Avenue, and Riverside Drive

to Second Street; slightly over 127 acres. The area was first patented by Horace Countryman in 1865 and later conveyed by deed on February 20, 1866. Christopher Columbus Powning purchased the area in 1888 for \$7,500 and improvements, such as sewers and fire protection, were made.

The conservation district designation does not impose on property owners any regulatory requirements other than those currently required through zoning.

Conservation districts can provide educational opportunities to residents and property owners. Simple design changes are often made by rights-of-way including signage, lighting, corner monuments, street signs, etc., and give the area a cohesive feel, while maintaining individual property rights.

HRPS Treasurer Roger Steininger

I was born in Detroit when I was very young. Watching the iron ore ships moving up and down the Detroit River is probably what pointed me toward becoming a rock star—geologist, that is. With an undergraduate degree in geology from Western Michigan University and a Ph.D from Colorado State University, my first concert was at the Climax Molybdenum Mine in central Colorado. During the last 40 years I have had many engagements, with the last 20 years as a consultant focusing on metals exploration and development, mostly in western North America.



LuAnne and I have been married for more than 41 years, and have two married children and two grandsons. LuAnne is on the faculty at UNR's Sanford Center for Aging. For the last 26 years, Reno has been our home.

History has always been a favorite subject of mine so when the metals markets experienced a slowdown recently, I took the opportunity to participate in a number of history classes at UNR. I am a volunteer at the Nevada Historical Society where I am indexing the Nevada-related mining literature in the library. I am the chair of the board of the Geological Society of Nevada Foundation. I have been a member of HRPS for several years and, when Felvia asked me to serve as treasurer, I felt it was time to contribute to the organization; I couldn't turn down such a gig.

New Membership Guidelines

Because of our expanding membership and related administrative issues, HRPS has decided to change its membership period to a fiscal-year cycle. All memberships will run from July 1st through June 30th of the following year. In order to move our members to this cycle, everyone joining or renewing before July 1st will receive extra time on their memberships. Your 2009-2010 dues will not be due until July 1, 2009. You should have received either an email or a postcard if you are past due, but if you have questions regarding your membership status, you may call membership chair Gordon Foote at 329-6455 or send him an email at gorfoote@charter.net.

HRPS Looking for a Home

HHRPS is seeking inexpensive office space, large enough for a desk, filing cabinet and maybe some storage. It doesn't have to be fancy, but we would like a downtown location. If you can help, please call Felvia at 329-0149 or Sharon at 786-7424.

Correction

In last issue's "Reno's Downtown Post Office" story in *FootPrints* Vol. 11 No 1, Tasker Oddie is erroneously identified as governor at the 1932 groundbreaking. Actually, he served as governor from 1911-1915. From 1921-1933, Oddie was Nevada's United States Senator.

HRPS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Join HRPS or renew your membership and help HRPS preserve historic Reno!

Please make checks payable to **Historic Reno Preservation Society**, and mail along with this application to:
P.O. Box 14003, Reno, NV 89507

☐ New Member

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☐ HRPS Angel \$250.00

Additional donation: _____

Thank you for joining HRPS. An organization is only as strong as its members. There are many areas in our organization where your enthusiasm, skills, and dedication will be invaluable to historic Reno and future generations. The goal of the Historic Reno Preservation Society is to preserve the historic resources of our community. What would you like to contribute to HRPS?

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Membership Report August 23, 2007— March 10, 2008

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*"Resources of the Soil," mural by Ben A. Cunningham, 1939, located in the Ukiah, California post office.
Photo courtesy of <http://www.wpamurals.com/californ.html>. See story page 3.*



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SPRING PROGRAMS, 2008

Jack Hursh Jr. – Program Chair: 746-3252

All program events are on the 4th Wednesday of the month at 7 pm, at Mt. Rose School (Lander Street between Taylor and LaRue, just off Arlington), unless otherwise noted.

Wednesday, April 23, 7:00 pm. Leanne Stone offers a slide presentation of the preservation, restoration and reconstruction of the Mackay School of Mines, including digging out a new basement and setting the building on a base isolation system. Leanne took periodic photos from the beginning of the project, November 1990, to its completion, July 1993.

Saturday, May 31, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm. WALLS OF WRATH BUS TOUR - Join us for a fun and comprehensive tour of Reno's important New Deal treasures. See historic bridges, roads, parks, schools and—yes—walls. The \$45 cost of the tour includes lunch outdoors at a local WPA-era park. For reservations, call Cindy Ainsworth at 747-0340.

Tuesday, May 20, 7:00 pm. Nevada Historical Society presents the film “Virginia City” (1940), Short: “You Asked for It: Virginia City” (1975), at 1650 N. Virginia St., 775-688-1190.

Wednesday, May 28, 7:00 pm. Mella Harmon speaks about How Soup and Sin Saved the Silver State: a look at how state and federal initiatives shaped Nevada during the Great Depression. Mella Harmon is curator of history at the Nevada Historical Society.

Tuesday, June 17, 7:00 pm. Nevada Historical Society presents the film “The Covered Wagon” (1923), Short: “Silver Spurs Award,” at 1650 N. Virginia St., 775-688-1190.

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