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# FootPrints

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

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## The Barengo Homes — Lost Corner?

by ZoAnn Campana

The southwest corner of Center and East 7th streets is something of a lost corner, overlooked in our city's relentless march into the future. The corner is situated on the 600 block of North Center Street, a bleak and unassuming assemblage of vacant lots, Mid-Century triplexes, a motel, and scattered early-20th century residences. It is a study in the failed redevelopment and speculative demolition that has plagued downtown Reno from the 1950s into the present day. On the southwest corner of the block, two brick bungalows—nearly identical to one another—sit side-by-side. The pair of houses is easy to miss, a blip on the approach to Interstate 80, but their provenance is well-documented. The houses were built by immigrant brothers who would go on to build a wine and liquor empire in Reno. Their story is deeply interconnected with that of Prohibition and its repeal, as well as with the subsequent renaissance of winemaking in California.

Brothers Camillo and Natale Barengo arrived in Reno in 1914. After immigrating to the United States from his native Italy in 1906, Camillo Barengo rested in New York for a beat before journeying south to join the well-established Italian community in New Orleans, where he picked up work as a carpenter. After the Great Earthquake of 1906, Camillo traveled west to San Francisco, sensing that there would be a wealth of carpentry jobs as the city rebuilt. He worked as a scaffolding foreman on the Tower of Jewels, which was being constructed for the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition. He also worked for the Molinari Factory, which manufactured and distributed traditional Italian foods throughout the greater Bay Area. Soon thereafter, Camillo sent for his brother, Natale, who arrived in San Francisco in 1910.

The brothers relocated to Reno with a plan to open an Italian foods store. They knew that the town—despite its thriving Italian community—had no such business at the time, and the contacts that Camillo had made with Molinari would help stock their shelves and get their business off the ground. Soon after their arrival, the brothers opened the Reno Italian & French Sausage Factory, a sausage manufactory and grocery store, on Commercial Row across from the train station. The brothers made their sausage by hand, overseeing the process from beginning to end: they purchased hogs from local ranchers, slaughtering and butchering them in-house before transforming the meat into Italian-style salumi.



The Barengo homes on Center at E. 7th Street in 2017. Built in 1922, the future of these well-loved homes is in doubt.

Photo by ZoAnn Campana.

By 1916, the brothers diversified their grocery business by purchasing California wine grapes, and reselling them to home winemakers in Nevada. Before they became involved in the grape trade, their customers—whom Camillo's son Pete Barengo described as "good Italians [who] needed grapes for making wine"—had to travel to California to acquire quality grapes. Little did the Barengo brothers know that this side

gig would end up supporting them through Prohibition and, later, the Great Depression.

The Nevada Supreme Court certified Nevada's vote on the 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and ushered in Prohibition as Nevada law as of midnight December 17, 1918. Despite the sudden unlawfulness of commercially manufacturing, selling, and transporting alcohol, it remained legal to produce up to 200 gallons of wine per year for personal consumption. Grape growers pivoted to sell their grapes directly to consumers. In some cases, the grapes were pressed into bricks

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# The Barengo Homes

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of concentrated juice and packed into boxes that were printed with instructions on how to dilute the concentrate with water. The instructions also included a coded warning to consume the juice within 21 days, lest it turn into wine. These packages of grape juice concentrate became known as “wine bricks,” which were shipped from California to Eastern markets. The resulting wine did the trick, although it was barely palatable.

Despite the increasing prevalence and ease of wine bricks during Prohibition, other growers sold unadulterated wine grapes to distributors, who tied up many a rail line with the bounty of what would eventually be made into home-fermented wine. The price of grapes increased tenfold between 1919 and 1921, from \$9.50 per ton to \$82 per ton. Taking note of the increasing lucrativeness of supplying grapes, the Barengo brothers sold their grocery business in 1921 in order to expand their grape distribution business nationwide, selling high-quality California wine grapes to markets as far east as New York and Boston. Operating as Barengo Brothers Grape Shippers, they sourced their grapes—usually zinfandels—from the Lodi-Stockton area. They would also broker for other farmers and shippers in the San Joaquin Valley.

As their grape distribution business grew, the Barengo Brothers built identical brick houses next door to one another, at 655 and 661 University Avenue (now Center Street), in 1922. The brothers used a team of horses and a scraper to excavate eleven-foot basements beneath the houses. Heavily influenced by the Craftsman style, which was popular in Reno from the early 1900s into the 1930s, the houses both feature dark red

brick walls, cut stone foundations, and low-pitched gabled roofs. The interior walls were finished with lathe-and-plaster. Both residences have experienced alterations that obscure the fact that they were identical when first built. For example, the porch of 655 N. Center has been enclosed, whereas 661 N. Center retains its generous front porch. Upon inspection of the side and rear elevations, the uniformity of the houses

becomes clearer. Each features a long dormer window on its backside, and the north elevations both have a small bay window that corresponds to a breakfast room. The houses also share matching plans. In 1924, the City of Reno issued a building permit to the Barengo Brothers for a garage valued at \$450. The flat-roofed, two-car brick garage, shared between the two houses, also remains in its original place on the lot.

Despite the houses' location in what is now a bustling

stretch of road linking downtown Reno with the University, Pete Barengo recalls the rural character of the neighborhood in the 1920s. A pasture of grazing cows and horses was located on the corner of University Avenue and 6th Street, which Pete would pass every morning while walking to school at Orvis Ring. Overall, it was a pleasant and quiet quarter whose character was altered irrevocably by the introduction of Interstate 80 in the 1970s, which essentially ripped the neighborhood in two.

When the United States Congress passed the Blaine Act in 1933, effectively repealing Prohibition, the Barengo Brothers intuited another business opportunity. In April 1934, Sierra Wine opened for business. According to Camillo's son Pete



The rear view of the Barengo homes on Center at E. 7th Street. The homes share matching house plans and physically share a two-car brick garage built at the back of the lot in 1924.

Photo by ZoAnn Campana,

**GROCERIES—DELICATESSEN**

Imported goods of every description: Cheese, Imported Pasta, Olive Oil, Sausage, Sardines, etc. San Francisco Prices.

**Reno Italian & French Sausage Factory**

Commercial Row      PHONE 616      Next to Overland Hotel

An advertisement for the Barengo Family Grocery Store on Commercial Row from the January, 7 1915 *Reno Evening Gazette*.

(Pierino), who dropped out of UNR that year to manage the family's new wholesale and retail wine enterprise, "It was phenomenal. The day liquor was finally legal, the line of customers stretched around the block. Everyone paid cash." Sierra Wine was headquartered on an alley off of Lake Street at 107 Peavine Place. The warehouse was well-suited for wine storage, featuring a dirt floor basement stuffed with rows of oak barrels and redwood tanks. The Barengos' new wine enterprise supplemented their booming grape business, and it also offered an ingenious contingency plan when grapes threatened to spoil during shipment. If bad weather jeopardized a crop of grapes, they could be crushed for wine instead of transported to market.

Sierra Wine supplied wine, primarily in the Burgundy style, to various bars, restaurants, and gambling houses—some of which had only recently transitioned from speakeasy to legal operation. In his 1986 memoir *Bottles of Joy*, Pete Barengo insists that most of his early customers were "ex-bootlegging joints gone legit." Early customers included the Grand Café, Hale's Drug, the Northern Club, the Golden Hotel, the Bank Club, the Alley, and the Palace Club. As the years went by, Sierra Wine's patron list grew to include Harrah's, Harvey's, Colombo's, the Grand Buffet, and the Dog House.

In 1938, Sierra Wine expanded to include wholesale and retail liquor, and the business was renamed Sierra Wine and Liquor. Company offices were relocated to 308 East 2nd Street, which is the present site of the parking garage and office building south of the Greater Nevada Field. With this expansion, Sierra Wine became exclusive distributors for National Distillers, whose labels included Old Crow, Old Grand Dad, Gilbey's Gin, and Gilbey's Vodka. Sierra Wine and Liquor moved into the Nevada-California-Oregon Railway Depot on East 4th Street (now the Depot Craft Brewery Distillery) in 1958, using the building as its headquarters into the 1990s.

The Barengo Brothers eventually acquired interest in the Acampo Winery and Distillery near Lodi, which would supply the majority of their wine into the 1970s. During their time in the San Joaquin Valley, the Barengo Brothers' fates intertwined with that of the Mondavis, who are among California's first wine families. In 1940, Cesare Mondavi assumed presidency of Acampo Winery. Cesare, also an immigrant from Northern Italy, settled in the 1920s in Lodi. He earned his living selling wine grapes to eastern markets for home wine-makers during Prohibition. When Prohibition ended, he also invested in Acampo Winery, which led to his eventual


appointment as president. In 1943, Mondavi sold the winery to the Gibson Wine Company, who appointed Dino Barengo—Camillo's son and Pete's brother—as manager. Dino had graduated from the University of Nevada with a chemistry degree, which he translated into winemaking with overwhelming success.

Dino purchased the Acampo Winery outright in 1946, renaming it Barengo Cellars. The same year, the Barengo Brothers Grape Shippers Company disbanded. Two years later, Acampo Winery's chianti won the silver certificate—the highest honor

for the chianti style—at the 1948 California State Fair in Sacramento. Dino ran the winery until 1976, producing interesting and unique varietals, including Muscadelle du Bordelais and Muscat of Pantelleria. The winery produced table and dessert wines, most notably cabernet, port, sherry, muscatel, and tokay. Dino's traditional red wine vinegar, also produced through the winery, was known as one of the best vinegars on the market at the time.



*From the Nevada State Journal, March 10, 1948.*

Camillo's and Natale's families lived side-by-side for almost 40 years. According to city directories, 1961 was the last year that 655 and 661 North Center Street were both occupied by the Barengo family. By 1964, 655 was either purchased or rented to a Robert Dodgson. However, Rosmino Barengo, son of Natale, lived at 661 until at least 1981. At the time of this writing, the Washoe County Assessor's records indicate that 661 North Center Street remains in the family, and is owned by Natale Barengo's grandson. In August, the University Housing Group announced their plans to construct a six-story student housing development on the block. It is not immediately known how this might affect the twin Barengo houses. 

Sources for this article include Pierino Barengo's book *Bottles of Joy*, historical newspaper articles, oral histories conducted through the University of California system, Census data, City Directories, and personal communications with Bob Barengo, Natale's grandson.

ZoAnn Campana is a local Historic Preservation Consultant who serves on the HRPS Board of Directors and is the architectural historian on the City of Reno's Historical Resources Commission.



# Recap 2017 Reno Harvest of Homes Tour

Pictures by David Lowndes and Cindy Ainsworth

After the iffy weather week starting September 17, 2017 in the Truckee Meadows, this year's Home Tour can be recalled as a great day with perfect weather, a wonderful variety of homes and happy crowds. There was positive feedback on every home on the tour and on the ever-popular vintage cars. All these positives contributed to a very well-run and extraordinary event.

Almost 600 people visited the homes, and special thanks are extended to the generous folks who opened up their homes for the Home Tour, to our 130 volunteers who are needed to make the tour a successful operation, and to the owners of the vintage cars that added interest to every home on the tour.

Some "factoids" about the Tour:

- The house that was overwhelmingly selected to begin the tour was Aspen Glen. We rushed to other sites to get more supplies for the crowd.
- The most popular homes were Aspen Glen, 643 Manor and Greenfield. Clearly there is a great interest in mid-century homes.
- Sales were greatest on the internet and at Sundance Books.
- Final accounting awaits but it looks as if we will add about \$11,000 to the Neighborhood Preservation Fund for our next grant cycle.

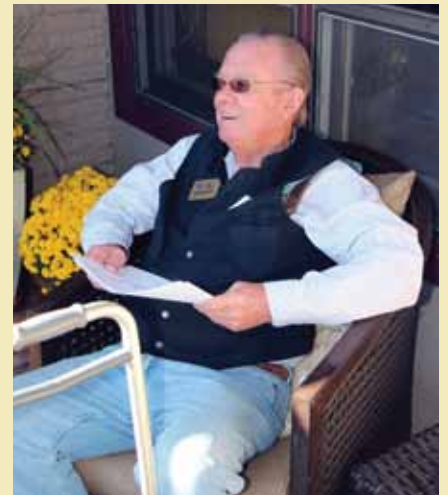
We made an extra effort this year to add more maps to the program and to the website. Thanks to all of you who managed the delightful trip to the "other" side of the Truckee River and took the walking bridge to Aspen Glen.

If you would like to be a new volunteer for the Home Tour next year, please contact Carol Coleman at [CarolC@galenaforest.net](mailto:CarolC@galenaforest.net) or call 775-849-3380. Volunteers are a critical component of the Home Tour and we need home volunteers for the day of the event as well as some computer experts for behind the scenes.

*Carol Coleman, 2017 Home Tour Chair*



785 Manor



1680 Greenfield







643 Manor



548 California

205 Urban



7090 Aspen Glen





# AAC / Historic Preservation Issues

by Barrie Lynn, AAC Chair

*The role of the HRPS Advocacy and Advisory Council is to identify, research and obtain facts on current historic preservation issues in the Reno area and recommend a plan of action and outreach to the HRPS board.*

## Center Street Homes (Gateway)

The HRPS Advocacy and Advisory Council met on October 30, 2017. The primary topic of discussion was the fate of the N. Center Street homes near UNR. Over the past year and a half, there has been an ongoing discussion between UNR, the City's Historical Resources Commission, and members of the public over development in the UNR "Gateway," the area bordered by Virginia Street on the west, Evans Avenue on the east, 9th Street on the north and Interstate 80 on the south. The University has plans to construct a College of Business in the Gateway, and RTC has plans for a multi-modal transportation hub. There are more than a dozen nineteenth century and very early twentieth century homes located in the Gateway, six of which are all in a row in their original location on N. Center Street and are all owned by UNR. Twelve of the homes in the Gateway are eligible

for the National Register of Historic Places, based on a survey commissioned by the City of Reno. These notable homes include the Humphrey House, Jones-Nenzel House, A.T. Donnels House, Riegg House, Mack House and Atcheson House. The histories of all these wonderful homes can be found at [renohistorical.org](http://renohistorical.org). The Mary Sherman house at 847 N. Center Street is on both the State and City Historic Register. The home at 821 N. Center Street, now the Northern Nevada International Center, was a gift from Joanne de Longchamps to UNR on the condition that it be used for visiting professors and dignitaries.

University President Marc Johnson attended a Historical Resources Commission meeting on September 19, 2017 and stated that the six homes on the west side of N. Center Street were definitely going to be moved to make way for campus growth in the Gateway. He showed some slides illustrating how the homes may look if moved to a narrow strip of land abutting the Interstate currently in use as 8th Street Park. There was an idea that was being considered by Washoe County and a nonprofit to move the homes to this site and turn them into transitional housing

for people coming out of drug rehab. This plan was recently abandoned.

At a University Board of Regents meeting on November 30, 2017, there was an agenda item specifically aimed at approving the relocation of these homes. According to the *Reno Gazette-Journal*, the Regents approved the "sale" of the homes, but required the buyer(s) to pay all costs of moving the building(s).

Due to the architectural and historical significance of the homes and their relationship to the University, HRPS has advocated for preserving the homes in place. However, if UNR wants to move the homes, HRPS would like to advocate for an open and transparent process involving the Historical Resources Commission and the public. We feel that the University should make a public request for proposals and see what public or private entities may have an interest in moving and repurposing the homes. These homes in the University Gateway are important pieces of Reno's nineteenth century history. If they must be moved, they deserve careful consideration and the public should be made aware of all parties who may have an interest in relocating and preserving

them. This process should involve consultation with the City's Historical Resources Commission and input from the public. Any action regarding the Mary Sherman house must receive a certificate of appropriateness from the Historical Resources Commission due to its status on the City's Historic Register.

#### Other topics that were discussed at the AAC meeting:

##### Lear Theater

Artown has taken the lead on the future of the Lear Theater. A public meeting was recently held to gather input about proposed uses of the facility, how to fund and who would fund its operation. HRPS will support Artown's vision for renovating the Lear Theater.

##### Ralston Street Homes

Demolition permits filed for 345, 347 and 375 Ralston Street: Jacobs Entertainment has been in the public spotlight recently with their plans for a large entertainment district in downtown and their high profile demolition of three downtown motels. Jacobs Entertainment has purchased several nineteenth century homes on the 300 block of Ralston Street across from the Sands Hotel. The houses at 345 and 347 Ralston have already been demolished. A demolition permit was recently filed for 375 Ralston which was built in 1877. The stately 1875 Gothic-style house known as the Nystrom Guest House is just two doors down at 333 Ralston. It was also purchased by the developer. It is on the National

Register of Historic Places as well as the City of Reno's Historic Register. It is known for its role in Reno's divorce trade. Further outreach is needed to find out what Jacobs Entertainment has planned for this iconic property. Read more about the Nystrom Guest House at [renohistorical.org](http://renohistorical.org).

##### Southern Pacific Railroad Depot

Discussions regarding turning the Southern Pacific Railroad Depot on Commercial Row into a Heritage Center have been underway; however, a new development has occurred, and that is that the roof of the historic depot is leaking badly. This property is owned by the City of Reno. Due to the need to immediately secure and repair the facility, a request for proposals will be issued to see if anyone has a plan to make this building economically viable. This historic railroad depot is positioned between the Virginia Street corridor and the Aces Stadium and could function as a conduit between the two.

##### Reno Mercantile/ Masonic Lodge #13


You have all likely seen the fence around Reno's oldest commercial building built in 1872, located at 98 W. Commercial Row at Sierra Street. This building is owned by the Whitney Peak Hotel and suffered water damage during our most recent wet winter. Efforts are underway to stabilize the structure. Here is an update from the engineer working on the project. "The west parapet wall has

just been stabilized and tied into the roof and ceiling framing. This measure was necessary because the interior framing of the roof and floors has deflected over 6 inches at the center of the building, resulting in an outward pressure on the parapet and west wall that threatened to collapse the parapet. There are over 15,000 linear feet of new shoring in the building to keep the roof, ceiling, and floor framing from failing. The building is essentially in an arrested state of collapse."

##### Federal Historic Tax Credit Program

We have learned that the proposed House Tax Reform Bill involves cutting the federal historic tax credit program in half. This program is integral to making historic preservation financially feasible. Anyone who would like to speak up about this is encouraged to contact their representatives in Congress.

##### Caughlin Ranch House/ Mayberry Gardens

Caughlin Ranch is back on the Historical Resources Commission agenda for December 14, 2017, with "a request for a certificate of appropriateness to allow for the construction of five new commercial office buildings" to be within the Open Space/Historic Landmark Overlay Zone. The new buildings would be on the side of the ranch house and bunk house. The property itself is located on the City of Reno Register of Historic Places. 

## HRPS Endangered Building Watch List

- Freight House on Evans St.
- Nevada Brewing Works on 4<sup>th</sup> St.
- Regina Apartments on Island Ave.
- First Masonic Building (Reno Mercantile) at Sierra and Commercial
- Center Street Homes (Gateway)
- Buildings in the University Neighborhood
- The Hotel El Cortez at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Arlington
- Hill/Redfield Mansion on Mt. Rose St.
- Lear Theater
- Flick Ranch House
- Two El Reno Apartments at 1461 Lander St.
- Hillside Cemetery
- WPA Projects at Plumas, Stewart and Virginia Lake Parks
- Mid-century Motels
- Burke's, Belli and Mountain View Additions
- Caughlin Ranch House
- Ralston Avenue 300-block homes



# HRPS 2018 Fourth Sunday Programs

Sheryl Hayes-Zorn & Kimberly Roberts, Program Chairs

Historic Reno Preservation Society's free programs offer an assortment of Reno historic topics. HRPS Sunday Program events are held at the **Sierra View Library, 4001 S. Virginia St., in the Reno Town Mall**. HRPS Programs are held at 1:30 p.m. on fourth Sundays from January through April. More HRPS information can be found at [historicreno.org](http://historicreno.org) or on Facebook.

**Sunday, January 28, 1:30 p.m. (fourth Sunday):** Jeff Auer, American History and Humanities instructor and LGBTQ Scholar presents **"History of LGBTQ Reno."** Researchers of LGBTQ history in the United States have focused predominantly on major cities such as San Francisco and New York City. This focus has led researchers to overlook a rich tradition of LGBTQ communities and individuals in small to mid-sized American cities that date from at least the late nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century. Reno is one of many examples of a small but thriving LGBTQ community from this time period. As far back as 1882, Reno had an LGBTQ presence, which will be covered through the Great Recession, including the history of the Reno Gay Rodeo and its effects on the world.



**Sunday, February 25, 1:30 p.m. (fourth Sunday):** Edan Strekal, Project Archivist, Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno, presents **"Reno Chinatown."** Reno, Nevada had a Chinatown that originated with the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad. The Sacramento-to-Reno section of the Central Pacific Railroad was completed in May 1868 and the first train traveled the route on June 18, 1868. The displaced Chinese laborers were paid off and left along the tracks. They built a bare-wood shantytown along the Truckee River out of any available material. First Street between Virginia and Center streets became Chinatown. Reno's Chinese population existed along the periphery of the larger white community for nearly 40 years, although Chinatown burned down and was relocated several times. *Image: Chinese Railroad workers in the Sierra.*

**Sunday, March 25, 1:30 p.m. (fourth Sunday):** Kelly Rigby and Joyce Cox present **"Flick Ranch."** In 1857, a trading post opened east of Reno on the Truckee River, and in 1860 a toll bridge was built across the river at Stone and Gates Crossing. By 1862, George Alt purchased the property for a ranch. George Mapes, grandfather of Charlie Mapes of the Mapes Hotel, bought the property in 1918. Margaret Flick and family bought the property from Mrs. C. W. Mapes in 1941. The ranch house was built in 1942 (right) and purchased by the Reno Catholic Diocese in 1948 to become the first Bishop Manogue High School. From 1958 to 1997 it was used as their monastery. In 1997, SageWind opened an adolescent substance abuse treatment center, and then became Bristlecone Family Resources. The Truckee River Flood Project bought the ranch house and property in 2007, planning to terrace the land to reduce flooding, requiring demolition of the ranch house. Kelly Rigby, President of the Flick Ranch Project, is attempting to save the Flick ranch house from demolition.



**Sunday, April 22, 1:30 p.m. (fourth Sunday):** ZoAnn Campana, Historic Preservation Consultant and HRC Architectural Historian, presents **"Reno's Early Meatpacking Industry."** Reno's early meatpacking industry will be described by the rise and fall of the Nevada Packing Company on E. 4th Street. Founded by Patrick Flanagan as the Nevada Meat Company in 1902, the Nevada Packing Company grew into Nevada's only Federally-inspected packing plant. More than just a slaughterhouse, the company manufactured butter and ice, distributed beer and liquor, and smoked its own bacon and hams. Most notably, the company foreshadowed the locavore movement as we know it today, sourcing its animals and other materials from local ranches and farms.





# HRPS 2018 Third Wednesday Programs

Sheryl Hayes-Zorn & Kimberly Roberts, Program Chairs

Historic Reno Preservation Society's free programs offer an assortment of Reno historic topics. **NEW LOCATION:** HRPS Wednesday Program events are held at the **Northwest Library, 2325 Robb Dr., Reno.** These Programs are held at 5:30 p.m. on third Wednesdays from January through May. More HRPS information can be found at [historicreno.org](http://historicreno.org) or on Facebook.



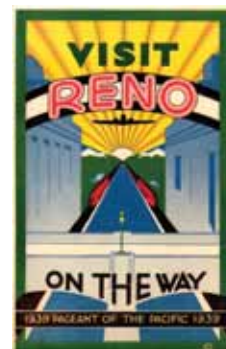
**Wednesday, January 17, 5:30 p.m. (third Wednesday):** **Fran Tryon**, Hillside Cemetery Activist, presents **"Families of Hillside Cemetery."** In 1875, the State of Nevada granted a patent of 40 acres on the north side of Reno for use as a cemetery—to be known as Hillside Cemetery. It was a privately-owned cemetery—not the best plan for perpetual care and maintenance. Sanders, the owner, sold plots but maintained ownership of the area between the plots—a complicated ownership structure. Frances Tryon will take us on a virtual tour of Hillside Cemetery, featuring stories about the founding families of Reno. She will discuss the importance of saving historic cemeteries for future generations and their importance in understanding our past, present and the journey into our future.

**Wednesday, February 21, 5:30 p.m. (third Wednesday):** **Dana Munkelt** presents **"Truckee Meadows Irrigation Ditches."** Did you know there are nine hand-dug irrigation ditches still operating from the Truckee River in Reno? From short ones for the hydroelectric plants at Verdi, Fleisch, and Washoe, to the big one, the Steamboat Ditch, more than 30 miles long. Most have access along at least part of their routes, winding through suburbs and golf courses, north past Kiley Ranch and south to Steamboat Hot Springs. Come to a talk about the history of these water channels and how they have survived today.



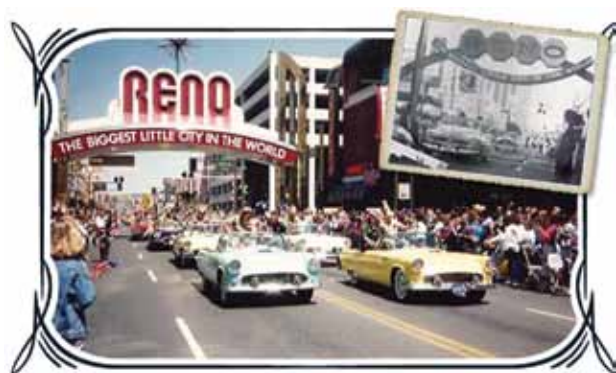
**Wednesday, March 21, 5:30 p.m. (third Wednesday):** **Debbie Hinman**, HRPS *FootPrints* Editor and HRC Commissioner, presents **"A Tale of Two Cities."** Historian, author, walking tour guide and Reno expert, Debbie Hinman will present "A Tale of Two Cities, Virginia City and Reno." It's an overview of the beginnings of Nevada, the two significant early towns, Virginia City and Reno, and the symbiotic relationship between the two. Starting with the events that brought these early Nevada towns into existence, we learn how their survival depended on coexisting.

**Wednesday, April 18, 5:30 p.m. (third Wednesday):** **Joyce Cox**, Author and Research Librarian, presents **"Visit Reno on the Way: the History of the Reno Chamber of Commerce."** The Reno Chamber began as the Reno Improvement Society in 1898 and the Reno Commercial Club in 1906. The goals of these two groups, typical for any small community, were to support local businesses and to make Reno, Sparks, Lake Tahoe, and Northern Nevada a good place to live. But the way the Chamber promoted the area was unique and innovative with such slogans as "You'll Like Reno" in 1924, "Visit Reno on the Way" in 1939, "Reno, Let's Tell the World" in 1949 and "Reno Gateway to Wonders" in 1968.



**Wednesday, May, 16, 5:30 p.m. (third Wednesday):** **David Hansen**, Emeritus Director of Hot August Nights, presents **"The Hot August Nights Story."** During an evening on August 1, 1986, the

Reno-Sparks Convention Center was bursting at the seams with hundreds of revelers who were partying, cheering and pushing to be let in to a first-time event of a magnitude yet to be realized. Inside, 10,000 spectators were massed together in anticipation of seeing and hearing a live event of the Righteous Brothers, Wolfman Jack, and Jan & Dean! It was that night when nostalgia was unleashed among an audience who excitedly relived their childhood years of the 50s and 60s—a time of innocence, prosperity, cars and the birth of Rock and Roll. The weather was HOT, the month of AUGUST was right, therefore, HOT AUGUST NIGHTS was born! The memories flooded back and so did the desire for more! 🚗



# Goodbye, Old Friend

by Debbie Hinman

It happened on a cold, sunny morning in early December — one hundred and forty years of Reno history disappeared in a matter of hours, as the Bender house at 375 Ralston toppled over in a cloud of dust amid groans of protest from the wooden framework.

It was certainly no beauty after years of remodels and “remuddles,” sad neglect and abuse, but still featured a lovely original front door and window with a leaded-glass diamond pattern, impressive pillars and a wide porch with a clinker brick foundation. This home of one of Reno’s most significant early families still held its proud place in a once fashionable neighborhood within the Western Addition. Until now.

Charles Bender had the home built in 1877 on an acre of land at a cost of \$5000—no paltry sum in that era. Just the year before, he had married Julia Fassett of Elmira, New York. Though he came to know and much admire her when she was visiting her Hatch relatives in Reno, he was too shy to propose. As his future daughter would tell the story, “So he wrote his proposal on paper, came into the room where she was and threw it at her, immediately beating it out of the room. She had to run after him to give him her answer!”

In addition to the home, Charles purchased an additional acre in the next block, used for a pasture for the Benders’ two cows, horses, and chickens. He was given the opportunity by his wife’s cousins to purchase many acres on the Virginia Road, including a house on the court house square for \$5,000, but he did not have the money. This purchase would have made him a very wealthy man in the years to come.

Charles’ two older brothers had come to Nevada in a covered wagon in 1862 in response to the Comstock boom. They



saved money to send for the rest of the family to follow them. The family was well connected; Julia Bender’s aunt lived in Sacramento and was married to Judge Edward Crocker, brother of Charles Crocker (one of the “Big Four”) who made the agreement with Myron Lake to place the railroad stop in Lake’s Crossing, soon to become Reno. Another railroad connection occurred when Charles Bender’s niece Clara married Henry Yerington, Superintendent of the V&T Railroad.

Charles Bender worked as a telegrapher, then took a banking course at Heald Business College. Coming to Reno, he found interested partners and with them opened the first independent bank in the state of Nevada, the Washoe County Bank. He was first cashier, then manager of that bank, spending 44 years there.

Often when the bank turned local residents down for loans, Charles would loan them funds from his own pocket. According to Charles daughter, Bertha Bender, Charles once made a loan to a woman in the eastern part of the valley, struggling to get by raising chickens, who wanted to educate her son. Through Charles’ generosity, this son became educated and later a United States Senator from Nevada. His name was Patrick McCarran.

The Benders raised six children in the Ralston Street home, four girls and two boys. Clara, the eldest, named for Charles’ niece, married a very successful stockman, Frank Humphrey. Frank built a lovely, mission-style home for Clara, a rarity for Reno at that time. Designed by Fred Schadler, it still stands just a few blocks north of the Bender home, on the corner of Ralston and Fifth streets. Clara bore Frank two sons, Marvin and Frank Ellis, but died before the younger son reached two years of age. Bertha married Dr. Henry Alexander Brown and lived in a large home on W. Liberty Street. She wrote her family history that was published posthumously by her son, Vinson, in 1964. Kate Bender was educated at the University of Nevada and became a teacher. The remaining daughter Florence married Jay Carpenter, who later became Director of the Mackay School of Mines. The Bender boys were Homer and Edwin.



The Bender house stood for 140 years at 375 Ralston.  
Photo by David Lowndes.

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## Beauty to Beast—The Reindeer Lodge

Article and Photos by Kim Henrick

On December 19, 1957, the *Nevada State Journal* reported: “Located in the giant horse-shoe bend below the Christmas Tree is the expansive new Rosemount Lodge. Built around a fabulous lounge and fireplace, the newest addition to the rapidly expanding Mt. Rose recreational area will feature complete dining, cocktail lounge, gaming, and room accommodations.” [Note: The “Christmas Tree” mentioned above, situated about 10 miles up the Mt. Rose Highway from Highway 395 South, is now the Tannenbaum Event Center. More history about the Rosemount Lodge can be found in the Winter 2008 *FootPrints* newsletter.]

In the fall of 1956, my father and

two business partners purchased 200 acres on the east side of Mount Rose, and at the “horseshoe bend” proceeded to build the Rosemount Lodge. The 1960 Olympics in Squaw Valley were expected to bring huge crowds to the area and my parents were hoping to take advantage of that tourism boost. The Rosemount was to be a place for skiers to enjoy a hot drink after a day at Reno Ski Bowl (later called Slide Mountain), but also a place for fine dining, gambling, and rustic motel accommodations. Opening night was on December 20, 1957, and guests were shown to their tables by maitre d’ Abby Schwartz. The menu was short and featured filet mignon (\$4.50) and lobster tails (\$3.75) broiled on a huge mahogany-fed grill by a professional chef.


Comfortable circular couches sat in front of the large stone fireplace and the cedar-decorated lodge was warm and inviting. Many evenings found the children of the mountain singing in front of the large stone fireplace. My family only owned the lodge for three years, then we moved down to Reno. It’s had some different owners and leasors and a few name changes (Rosemount, Starlite, Sundance and Reindeer) and has remained open most of the last 60 years. The current owner, Gary Schmidt, bought the lodge around 40 years ago, renamed it the Reindeer Lodge, and for some time brought many popular bands to the lodge for our area’s entertainment.

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## Beauty to Beast

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Buildings are not designed to last forever, but those built on our nearby mountains have the additional challenge of surviving heavy winter snows. I remember during Easter week in 1958, all the lodges on the hill were literally buried by the amount of snowfall. At the Rosemount Lodge my family and some employees spent days shoveling out of the lodge, looking for buried cars and trucks, and clearing a path to the nearby water tank. The lodge roof was new at the time, but we still had to clear the snow load off as quickly as possible. This past winter, the snow accumulations were too much for the old roof and the enormous weight crushed it like an aluminum can. In a *Nevada Appeal* newspaper article dated August 24, 2017, Schmidt said: "It was too much snow...A 25 by 25 by 25 cube of ice broke through and went down to the floor, crushed the couches down to six inches." The same article also quoted Schmidt as saying, "I was hoping someone would come along to preserve the property."

The time to preserve the lodge has passed; it's beyond repair and arguably a safety hazard. I hope Mr. Schmidt does the right thing and bulldozes the lodge—leaving its glory days to our memories. 



Rosemount Lodge at Easter 1958.



Reindeer Lodge in August 2017, following the winter of 2016-2017.

Kim Henrick is a member of the HRPS Editorial Board and is a regular contributor to HRPS *FootPrints*.

## Goodbye, Old Friend

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Homer paid his own way to go to school at MIT in Boston, against his father's wishes. He graduated with a degree in Engineering. Edwin enlisted in the Naval Air Force in WWI. He married Adele Norcross, who opened a very successful business in Reno, The Wedding Shop.


Among the Reno Bender descendants today are Ellie Humphrey Riley and Ann Burgess. Ellie is the daughter of Marvin Humphrey, son of Clara Bender and Frank Humphrey. Ellie is saddened by the demolition of her grandmother's family home though she is fortunate that her father's early home is still standing, the mission-style home at Ralston and Fifth, referenced above. Ellie and her husband Tim were able to salvage the front door and accompanying leaded glass window. They are not sure what they will do

with these treasured elements of the house, but at least a small part of its history was saved. Ann Burgess is the granddaughter of Florence Bender. Ann is a lifetime member of HRPS and volunteers as a docent for the annual Harvest of Homes tours. Both women are also "legacy" members of one of Reno's oldest women's organizations, The Monday Club.

It is sad to see one of the last residential blocks in the Western Addition disappear, house by house. First to go



On the front porch of 375 Ralston stood a vintage front door and accompanying leaded glass window. Photo by Ellie Humphrey Riley.

on this block was the little porcelain-coated steel building on the corner of Fourth and Ralston, Manford's Gas Station. It was built in 1938 to take advantage of the traffic on the Lincoln and Victory Highways, of which Fourth Street was a part. Just last month, the Mathews House, a Victorian circa 1900, was demolished. The Bender home was next. At this point, the Shoemaker/Nystrom House is destined to be moved, as might be the Borland/Clifford House. Taking historic homes out of context is not an ideal option, but then their context has been disappearing rapidly as commercial use has claimed the neighborhood. Vintage 1875 houses are a rarity in Reno; we hope a new location will be found for them that will showcase their style and give them new life in today's world. 

Debbie Hinman is Vice-Chair of the Historical Resources Commission, a HRPS Tour Guide, and Managing Editor of *FootPrints*.



# HRPS 2018 Neighborhood Preservation Fund (NPF) Grants

HRPS is pleased to announce its eighth round of grants for the enhancement of older structures. Applications will be accepted starting January 1, 2018 for the NPF grants to help Reno property owners to rehabilitate historical structures and landmarks. The structures should be at least fifty years old. Proposed work is limited to the exterior improvements of buildings and must be designed in a manner authentic with the original architectural style of the structure.

Grant guidelines, timeline, and the application will be available through the HRPS website at [historicreno.org](http://historicreno.org) or by calling (775) 747-4478. The grant applications will be due on March 31, 2018.



617 Roberts Street, where a grant was used towards labor to repair the vintage windows. Owner Derek Partridge shows off the repaired windows.



Lifetime Members, Board and Committee members at a November 7, 2017 Lifer's Event.



## Consider HRPS in your End-of-Year Giving

Does your holiday checklist looks something like this:

- ☐ wrap presents
- ☐ prepare favorite family recipes
- ☐ send an end-of-year gift to organizations I support

We know that you support HRPS...so isn't this the perfect time to demonstrate your commitment to Reno history and preservation?  
**Isn't this the time to join HRPS group of Lifetime Members?**

Your Lifetime membership directly benefits the Neighborhood Preservation Fund. Your contribution is tax deductible, will be recognized in each issue of *FootPrints* and will be your ticket to exclusive gatherings with other Lifer's. **Please consider making a Lifetime membership now.** And if the Lifetime level is beyond your reach, please consider making an additional end-of-year donation at this time. Reno is changing rapidly and your donation is a vote of confidence for HRPS's watchdog efforts. Thank you.



## Message From Your HRPS President

### Carol Coleman

#### January is Membership Renewal Time

Please remember that January is membership renewal time for HRPS. Please check the mailing label on this issue of *FootPrints* to see if your renewal date is January 2018. You've had as much as 18 months since the last time you renewed your HRPS membership, as we extended our renewal window to match the calendar year. What a bargain you've had!

Greetings HRPS members  
and friends,

**H**istoric Reno Preservation Society is able to operate thanks to your memberships and the donations that you offer, plus the essential work of many volunteers.

#### Kudos for HRPS

We can all be proud of HRPS' successes in the grants we offer through the **Neighborhood Preservation Fund (NPF)**; the **Reno Harvest of Homes Tour** (which requires 130 HRPS volunteers); the **May, June, July and September Walking Tours** (28 tours in 2017); our **Educational Programs** (9 in Winter/Spring 2018); our quarterly ***FootPrints***; and our **Advocacy efforts** in so many areas: Virginia Street Bridge, El Cortez, Caughlin Ranch House, Center Street Homes, Hillside Cemetery, Mid-Century Motels, Stewart Park, First Masonic Building, the Ralston Street homes and more; and our increased efforts on our **website, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram!**

Even with our successes, we know HRPS could do so much more. To do this, we need to increase our volunteers and people in leadership positions, as well as our financial support. HRPS needs all of you to support HRPS any way that you can!

#### HRPS Needs Volunteers

HRPS is a totally volunteer-run organization—there are no paid positions among those who work so diligently for the HRPS organization and for historic preservation. We encourage you to consider becoming one of our volunteers, whether it's volunteering for one day for the Home Tour, helping on the Walking Tours or taking on more responsibility. There are currently two open positions on the Board of Directors and that will total three when **Kim Roberts'** term expires in May. These are working positions with each Board member expected to "watch over" an area of interest for HRPS. Contact HRPS President **Carol Coleman** if you are interested in assisting HRPS as a volunteer.

#### New HRPS Endeavors Need Support

There are new areas HRPS would like to move into—and existing functions needing more support. It is Reno's Sesquicentennial celebration this year, with the 150th festivities on May 9, 2018. We need ideas and people to join in the planning of a HRPS event. We could use assistance in telling the preservation story, through conventional and social media—and our Publicity efforts need a champion. A new task HRPS would like to take on is researching properties for the City of Reno Historic Register, help-

ing people investigate their properties, which then provides an oversight process for preservation. Another new endeavor HRPS is involved with is a HRPS and Nevada Historical Society (NHS) cooperative 4th Grade Museum Tour, where NHS offers their Nevada Gallery Tour and HRPS provides a glimpse of Reno history and a tour of the NHS Reno Gallery. HRPS is building a strong advocacy team as Reno's historic buildings are threatened by new development, and help is needed in that arena. We are working towards offering you monthly email and website updates on historic preservation in the Reno area.

HRPS continues to follow its mission, "Dedicated to Preserving and Promoting Historic Resources in the Truckee Meadows through Education, Advocacy and Leadership." We have added tours and programs. With recovery from the 2008 recession, development is expected, but it is important to advocate for those historic properties and places which add character, quality and beauty to our natural and our built landscape.

#### Many Thanks to Jacquie's Foundation

Longtime HRPS member and Lifetime member since 2012, **Jacqueline Black** passed away in September 2017. Jacquie was a Reno native and proud of her Nevada heritage. HRPS was fortunate to have Jacquie's support as a member during her lifetime and is extremely fortunate that the **Jacquie Foundation**, set up to honor Jacqueline, has seen fit to give HRPS a \$1,000 donation. Many thanks to the Foundation; HRPS will ensure that Jacquie's confidence in this organization is recognized and is fulfilled.

Carol Coleman, 775-849-3380  
carol@galenaforest.net

## Membership Renewals are Due in January



## HRPS Lifetime Members

Darleen Azizisefat  
 Jacqueline Black (\*)  
 Jacque Foundation  
 Laurie & Greg Boyer  
 Lynn Bremer  
 Florence Ann Burgess  
 Phyllis & Tom Cates  
 Jan Chik  
 Becky Czarnik  
 Joan Dyer  
 Betty Easton  
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 Hannah Satica  
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 Robert Stoldal  
 Tom & Leanne Stone  
 Terry & Fran Terras  
 Mike & Karen Traynor  
 Charlotte Voitoff  
 Sharon Walbridge  
 Betty Watts  
 Kathy Williams  
 (\*) *Deceased*

## HRPS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

**Historic Reno Preservation Society** celebrates its 20th anniversary as an all-volunteer non-profit organization in September 2017. The **Historic Reno Preservation Society (HRPS)** is "dedicated to preserving and promoting historic resources in the Truckee Meadows through education, advocacy and leadership."

All Membership Levels include the HRPS quarterly historical publication, FootPrints; HRPS walking tours during the summer months; and educational programs in fall and winter.

You may pay by check, cash, Paypal or credit card. To pay by Paypal or credit card, please log on to our HRPS website: [www.historicreno.org](http://www.historicreno.org).

☐ New Member ☐ Renewing

### Membership Levels:

- ☐ \$15.00 Student  
☐ \$25.00 Individual  
☐ \$45.00 Family  
☐ \$100.00 Supporting  
☐ \$200.00 Business  
☐ \$250.00 Preservation Patron  
☐ \$500.00 Benefactor  
☐ \$1,000.00 Lifetime Member

### My Additional Donation:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Pat Klos Annual  
 Volunteer Award Fund  
 \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Neighborhood Preservation  
 Grant Fund  
 \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Overall Program Support

### HRPS Quarterly FootPrints Preference (Please check one):

☐ Hard Copy ☐ Email Only

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

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

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

HRPS respects your right to privacy. We will **NOT** share your email address.

### PD LIKE TO VOLUNTEER TO WORK ON:

- ☐ Home Tours ☐ Walking Tours ☐ Board ☐ Research  
☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to:

**Historic Reno Preservation Society**

and send with this form to:

HRPS  
 P.O. Box 14003  
 Reno, NV 89507

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#### BULK RATE MAIL

Bulk Rate mail is not forwarded. FootPrints is mailed using a Bulk Rate Mail permit. If your address changes, please notify us at HRPS, P. O. Box 14003, Reno NV 89507, with your address change, to keep *FootPrints* coming.



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*Thanks to the following HRPS  
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supporting the works of HRPS*

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