

The Evans Brothers — Early Reno Pioneers

Article by Debbie Hinman

Many travelers passed through Reno in its early days, some on their way to California and later Virginia City, hoping to make their fortunes; others were seeking land or just a new life in the West. Most stayed a while then moved on, making little imprint on the fledgling town. Then a retinue of brothers from Defiance, Ohio arrived and made Reno their home, each in his own way making a lasting contribution to the city. Today, vestiges of these brothers still exist in place names: Evans Avenue, Evans Park, Evans Creek and Alvaro Street.

Alvaro Evans was the first of the brothers to come west. He married in 1847 at age 20 and in 1850, he and his wife left Ohio and traveled to California by ship, crossing the Isthmus of Panama on horseback, then boarding a second ship. Reaching California, they traveled to Nevada County where Alvaro took up mining. The following year, the eldest of the 11 Evans children, General Orlando, along with his family made the trip to California and settled in San Juan (today North San Juan), Nevada County. Alvaro became one of the owners of the Buckeye Hill Mine and in 1853 convinced younger brother Allen to join him out West.

Allen's focus was on land acquisition rather than mining, so he and Alvaro purchased acreage in Long Valley in Lassen County, California. A descendant's account says the brothers built a "beautiful southern-type mansion" there. They were raising cattle and alfalfa in 1859 when a fourth brother, 23-year-old John Newton, known as "Newt" came west across the plains, driving 500 head of cattle to join the brothers in Lassen County. Their brother Alphonso (who went by Pete) was the final brother to come west when he relocated after being discharged from the Ohio Veterans Infantry in 1865. Their widowed sister, Mary Evans Arrowsmith, and her son Dick joined them all in 1869.

By this time, Reno was growing by leaps and bounds, the town having been officially established on May 9, 1868, as a stop on the Central Pacific Railroad. Wooden buildings

began cropping up along Commercial Row, including various shops, saloons and eateries for train passengers as well as the small local population. The Arrowsmiths and Allen Evans were happy in Long Valley but the other brothers began looking southward at the possibilities a brand new town afforded to those willing to work to establish a thriving community.

In 1873, the brothers (Alvaro, Newt, Orlando and Pete) purchased a tract of 140 acres north of Reno, just outside the town limits from the Auburn Mill Company. Water rights

had come with the land transfer, and they immediately prepared 80 acres for seeding of alfalfa. Orlando was placed in charge of the land and he announced he would be raising and graveling the sidewalks along the North Virginia Road.

Later that year, the Evans brothers took a stance that probably cinched their reputation as important figures in the town. Myron Lake's franchise on the toll road over the Virginia Street bridge had expired in January and he was denied an extension. Being full of his own self-importance and unwilling to let go of this lucrative source of income, Lake placed a heavy gate across the north approach to his bridge and armed with his Colt revolver, took his place beside it

demanding his usual toll on wagon-borne traffic. He got away with this for about a week until coming face to face with the Evans brothers, driving a herd of range cattle and refusing to pay a toll. A shouting match, fistfight and "traffic jam" ensued before the sheriff appeared and took Lake off to jail. At that point, Lake gave in and the ownership of the bridge was assumed by the county, passage free of charge.

As the 1870s progressed, the Evans brothers became more entrenched in Reno. Pete bought the Truckee Stable, a downtown livery business featuring the finest rigs. He organized country dances at Huffaker's Station, south of town, which he greatly enjoyed as a popular local bachelor.



Top, Alvaro Evans (1827-1915); Right, Alphonso (Pete) Evans (1839-1903); John Newton (Newt) Evans (1835-1903). Photos courtesy Nevada Historical Society.

The Evans Brothers

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Newt traveled back to Ohio in 1876 where he met Elizabeth Metcalf, daughter of a judge and 18 years his junior. He must have sent her an engagement ring as a letter from Elizabeth to Newt dated December 31, 1876 thanks him for the “chaste and beautiful” ring which, she says, “suits me exactly.” The letter ends, “With oceans of love and showers of kisses from your loving girl, Lizzie.” The following year they were married.

In 1878, Newt and Alvaro both built impressive homes for their families – certainly “mansions” by 1870s Reno standards. Newt built his in the middle of his large alfalfa field, facing what would become Evans Avenue. Alvaro built farther west, in his newly-established Sunny Side Addition, on the corner of Seventh and Washington Streets. The brothers had very different tastes: Newt’s home was a graceful white Italianate architecture, featuring lovely semi-hexagonal window bays with tall sash windows, while Alvaro’s was an eclectic brick structure, a less ornate Italianate with Stick and Queen Anne influences. Both men lived in their respective homes until their deaths, their descendants occupying them well into the 20th century.



The Evans Ranch, Long Valley, Lassen County, California Occupied by the Evans family 1853-1883. Photo courtesy Willie Evans.

Alvaro and Newt purchased land just west of Newt’s home, which they would sell to local financier A. G. Fletcher in the late 1880s. Fletcher would subdivide the land into lots and build a row of Queen Anne cottages that would grace UNR’s south entrance until late 2019, when the current university administration demolished them in the name of progress.

In 1879, Alvaro made an even larger investment in the community by purchasing the Reno Water Company, then owned by a local named George Hill. Pete partnered with his brother, laying out his plan to supply Reno with water direct from the river by use of the hydraulic ram and turbine wheel. The *Nevada State Journal* [NSJ] claimed this as “another step for Reno on the road to metropolitan greatness.” The article went on to describe improvements the Evans brothers were making on the Highland Ditch, in which they had purchased a controlling interest in 1875, “employing about eighty men, including Chinamen.” They built a large reservoir on a knoll at Washington and College streets. In June of 1880, Alvaro and Pete celebrated the filling of the reservoir in downtown Reno, shooting a 150-foot column of water into the air and providing a keg of beer for onlookers. They built a suspension frame to hold a pipe across the river near Sierra Street, supplying water along Mill Street and south of the river.

Though their efforts certainly improved distribution of water to local homes and businesses, little could be said about the

quality of the water. Animal carcasses, discarded garbage and fish would find their way into the reservoir and the filtering device would sometimes fail, causing what came out of the faucet to be a malodorous brown sludge often referred to as “Reno chowder.”

During this time, Newt was occupied with his alfalfa field, the *NSJ* reporting that he would “cut on his home ranch this season 200 acres of alfalfa as fine as ever grew on the meadows.” As for Orlando and Pete, Orlando served as Reno Postmaster from 1884-1886. In 1887, Pete became Deputy Washoe County Assessor, and kept busy both with his involvement in the Water Company and with traveling throughout the county, attempting to collect taxes.

In the 1870s, a momentous event occurred in Nevada. Led by Governor Lewis Bradley, the second governor of the state of Nevada who served from 1871-1879, the decision was made to establish a state university to be eligible for federal land grants. The governor who was at that time a resident of Elko, selected that city as the location for the institution, founded in October of 1874, almost exactly ten years after Nevada was granted statehood. A university building was erected built with

money raised by the townspeople. From the beginning, the chosen location elicited anger and scorn from Reno residents. An 1876 *Reno Evening Gazette* [REG] editorial aptly expressed the opinion of many: “Any ordinary amount of reflection would have shown these good men that a university should be placed in a popular portion of the state where it might draw students from its vicinity, and where its growth would be assured.”

In 1885, the legislature voted to relocate the school to Reno. Newt offered to sell the Board of Regents 10 acres of his ranch on a sage-covered hill at the north end of town for \$125 an acre, and the Regents accepted. The body of water that was once a reservoir on the ranch became Manzanita Lake. The first entrance to the school was via the private Evans Road. Before the Mackay interests donated funds to the school for a stadium and training quarters, the students practiced on one of Newt’s fields which became known as Evans Field. Newt later sold the university additional land, as the campus grew. He would go on to fill two terms on the Board of Regents.

In 1890, the Reno Evanses received word that their brother Allen had died in San Francisco. In 1891, Newt and Alvaro had a falling out over their adjoining alfalfa fields. One account says that Alvaro had erected a fence between the two fields; there must have been some disagreement as to

boundaries because Newt instructed his crew to take down the fence and begin harvesting. Alvaro arrived on scene with a rifle loaded with bird shot and used it on Newt. This caused a rift between the two brothers that was never resolved.

General Orlando Evans died in 1897 at the age of 79, at the home of his brother Alvaro. His body was moved to Newt's house, where an elaborate and well-attended funeral was held. The *NSJ* reported, "At an early hour yesterday morning the spirit of General Orlando Evans took its flight from its earthly home and a long and useful life was ended."

A short six years later, two other brothers would join him in death. Alphonso A. (Pete) Evans, who had been elected Washoe County Assessor in 1894, died in early 1903 at age 64, following an illness of some months. In mid-November of that year, Newt and his son Pierce were up at the reservoir in a blowing gale. Newt had mounted a stack of baled hay to secure it when he either slipped or was blown from the top of the stack, falling to the ground 16 feet below, striking his chest. He died the following morning. The *REG* headlines were huge and the obituary heartfelt and in the elaborate verbiage of the day. It began, "John Newton Evans is no more...Like an oak he lived among us, and like an oak he was stricken by the storm and hurled to the ground to destruction." Upon his death at age 68, he was President of the Board of Regents. He left his wife Elizabeth and five children.


The surviving local Evans brother, Alvaro, would pass away in 1915 at age 88, of carcinoma of the jaw, amid accolades of all he contributed to Reno. Sister Mary Arrowsmith would be the longest lived of the original pioneering Evanses; she passed away in 1941, just six months after her 100th birthday.

Newt's widow, Elizabeth Metcalf Evans, remained in the family home until her death in 1924 at age 71. As a memorial to her husband, the *REG* reported: "Mrs. Evans had just completed arrangements for a park, oval in shape, between Eighth and Ninth streets on Evans Avenue, with a driveway eighteen feet wide on the west between two rows of the beautiful trees on the home place; and twenty-two feet wide on the eastern side of the park.

A fountain in the center with a bronze tablet was to have borne the inscription 'In Memory to John Newton Evans,' but since the plans were not completed the children intend to make it a memorial to both Mr. and Mrs. Evans."

The Newt Evans home was sold to the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity, who occupied it until it was demolished in 1953 for a brick ranch-style structure designed by local architects, Russell Mills and Edward Parsons. The Alvaro Evans home survived until 1977, when following years of neglect and abandonment, it went up in flames one August evening. Fire fighters immediately suspected arson. The *RGJ* reported, "Ironically, it had been doomed to the wrecker's ball after two Reno doctors bought it as a site for a new apartment complex."

Evans Park is still at its original site, though quite different from how Mrs. Evans envisioned it. It is a quiet place now, the fraternity under suspension for two more years. The impending decimation of the neighborhood by the University, both the homes along Evans Avenue and those on the stretch of Lake Street facing the park has

seemingly cast a pall over the park as well. Its future is uncertain. The bronze tablet memorial to John Newton and Elizabeth Metcalf Evans has been relocated to a shaded corner of the concrete walkway separating Manzanita Lake from the Orr Ditch. You have to look carefully to find it. It's worth the search, however, as so little remains to honor a family who contributed so much to our city. 



The John Newton Evans Family residence with Morrill Hall to the right (above), 1878-1924; SAE Fraternity House 1924-1953. Demolished 1953. Photo courtesy UNR Special Collections.
The Alvaro Evans Family residence (below), 1878-1958. Demolished 1977. Photo courtesy Nevada Historical Society.



Information for this article came from Thompson & West's *History of Nevada; Tough Little Town on the Truckee* by John Townley; letters from the NHS Evans collection; and various newspaper articles from the *NSJ*, *REG*, and *RGJ* 1873-1977.

Debbie Hinman is on the City of Reno's Historical Resources Commission, is a HRPS Board member, Tour Guide, and Managing Editor of *FootPrints*.

Reno Historical comes to HRPS!

by Dr. Alicia Barber

We're delighted to announce that one of Reno's most informative and engaging historical resources, the Reno Historical app and website, is now managed by the Historic Reno Preservation Society. Reno Historical (renohistorical.org) was developed and launched in 2014 under the auspices of the Special Collections Department of the University of Nevada, Reno Libraries, with HRPS serving as a key community partner, providing initial technical and financial assistance.

This exciting shift in management of the free app and website, which will not impact its function or appearance, will allow HRPS to more deeply integrate Reno Historical into its programming, activities, and digital presence, while expanding its content. The University of Nevada, Reno Libraries remains a valuable community partner, along with the Nevada Historical Society, the City of Reno's Historical Resources Commission, the Institute for Museum and Library Services, Nevada Humanities, and RTC Washoe.

The brainchild of professional historian Alicia Barber and UNR librarian Donnellyn Curtis, Reno Historical is a map-based digital platform that provides information, photos, and multimedia features about historic sites throughout the city. Now featuring nearly 200 historic locations with infinite room for expansion, it has become a valuable and trusted resource for residents, visitors, business owners, preservation advocates, and media outlets.

Historian Alicia Barber, who has served as the editor of content for Reno Historical from its outset, has now joined the Board of Directors of HRPS, where she will continue to supervise the project and head a new committee that will include Reno Historical co-creator Donnellyn Curtis, longtime Reno Historical contributors Debbie Hinman, Sharon Honig-Bear, and Rosie Cevasco. We hope that other researchers, writers and a photographer might join us.



Plans are already underway to expand the platform with new entries about the Wells Avenue neighborhood, historic downtown casinos, Reno city register properties, and digital versions of several HRPS walking tours.

"I'm thrilled that HRPS will now be the institutional home of Reno Historical," Barber said. "With the continued support of UNR Libraries and our other community partners, I think we'll be able to expand our content and reach even further into the community and beyond, raising even more awareness of Reno's beautiful historic buildings."

HRPS President Carol Coleman noted, "The community will recognize some of our traditional walking tours as well as some of our most beloved stand-alone buildings now in digital form on Reno Historical. This means that you will be able to revisit some of your favorite tours and buildings during the autumn and winter months when walking tours are on hiatus. HRPS and RH are the perfect match and truly compliment each other."

Reno Historical was the winner of the 2015 Historic Project award from the City of Reno's Historical Resources Commission. The website has been integrated into historical displays throughout Reno, including history-themed transit displays and bus shelters along East 4th Street and a historical display on the median adjacent to the West Street Market. HRPS will continue to seek new partnerships and collaborations in order to give more exposure to the digital platform and the information it contains.

Mansions on the Bluff Tour


A major recent addition to Reno Historical is the Mansions on the Bluff tour, which corresponds to the popular HRPS walking tour of the same name. Featuring 28 historic houses, the tour focuses on the Newlands Heights area of California Avenue, Lee Avenue, Ridge Street, and Court Street. To create the tour, the longtime leaders of the HRPS Mansions on the Bluff walking tour, Donna and Paul Erickson and ZoAnn Campana, worked closely with Alicia Barber to conduct original research, craft stories, locate historic photos, and take new photographs of each of these grand homes. The result is a colorful and informative tour of one of Reno's most exclusive and beautiful enclaves.

How to Use Reno Historical

Reno Historical provides a number of ways to explore Reno's heritage. One is through an interactive map that displays markers indicating historic points of interest. Clicking on a point reveals the name of the site, and links to a brief description, photos, and when available, audio and video about that location.

Another option is choosing a thematic tour which range from "Tying and Untying the Knot" (about Reno's wedding and divorce industries) to "Sacred Landmarks," about the city's religious heritage. Other tours are structured as walking tours, including features about East 4th Street and the Historic Riverfront.

On the free smart phone app (available for both iPhone and Android), historical sites are listed by proximity to the user in order to encourage on-the-ground exploration. The website is optimized for mobile use, to accommodate all types of smart phones, tablets, and computers.

You can follow Reno Historical on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram for highlights and news about the latest additions. 

Reno Heritage Fund (RHF)

by Cindy Ainsworth

HRPS will be making some changes to the former Neighborhood Preservation Fund (NPF) grant in the new year. Now called the Reno Heritage Fund (RHF), the enhanced program will enable HRPS to expand how the organization's charitable funds are distributed. The launch date for the RHF will be January, 2020. The following explains the changes:

The Reno Heritage Fund is a redesign of the Neighborhood Preservation Fund, and now has two goals:

Home Improvement Projects: this funding continues our commitment to helping property owners rehabilitate their buildings through small matching grants.

Special Heritage Projects: this funding will allow the HRPS Board to initiate history-related projects of importance to the Reno community.

Home Improvement Projects (HIP)

As with the Neighborhood Preservation Fund (NPF), projects will be initiated by the community.

- A letter of intent, containing a basic description of the project, will first be required by the applicant.
- Once the applicant's letter is received, it will be reviewed by the RHF/HIP committee.
- The applicant will then be notified. They must review the funding guidelines and complete the full application (first established with the NPF program) within 90 days. The guidelines and application will be updated annually.
- The RHF/HIP committee will review the completed application and then offer their recommendations to the

Board. The Board will have the final approval.

- A rolling grant deadline will be used in 2020.
- The grant will remain a 1 to 1 match, with a maximum of \$5,000 per application.

For 2020, Cindy Ainsworth will remain as the administrator for the RHF/HIP.


Special Heritage Projects

Projects are initiated by the Board to serve a specific and valuable need.

Examples in the past have included repairing the Nixon Pillars, underwriting costs for conservation district research, and the Powning Pillar.

Future examples might include funding for oral histories, historical markers, the Reno Historical app, photo exhibits, speakers, educational initiatives.

A HRPS Board member or its Executive Director will act as the liaison for any projects.


Ideas may generate from the membership or other community sources. In this case, as in the Home Improvement grants, a letter of intent would be submitted for consideration by the Board. If the idea is favorably received, the HRPS liaison will work with the community source to accomplish the project. 

Cindy Ainsworth is a Past President of HRPS, a HRPS Tour Guide, and the Administrator of the Reno Heritage Fund.

2019 Neighborhood Preservation Fund Winner

The winning recipient of the 2019 Neighborhood Preservation Fund (NPF) was Caryn Parker who owns 214, 216, and 218 Moran Street. This complex of homes share the same lot and date between 1928 through 1946. The owner reported that it is rumored that the houses served as divorcee cottages for women trying to

gain independence in a time when that was extremely difficult. The homes retain many of the original interior features such as a hallway rotary telephone niche with a pull out bench. The well maintained homes are long-term rentals but the owner and tenants have made a great deal of effort in repairing and preserving the histori-

cal features of all three properties. The NPF committee along with the HRPS Board awarded the grant that helped repair, prep, and paint the trim for 218 Moran (below right); repair the stucco and wood trim and paint 214 Moran (center); and repair, prep and paint 216 Moran (below left). 



A Gateway Save

Article by Debbie Hinman and Photos by David Lowndes

It is sad to report that the destruction of our once lovely and historic university neighborhood is underway. As of this writing, four houses on N. Center and two on Lake have succumbed and others are sure to follow in short order. One bright spot in the midst of the Lost Battle of the Gateway Homes is the recent relocation of the distinctive Garat-Humphrey house from 127 E. Eighth Street to the corner of S. Arlington and St. Lawrence avenues.

For this save, we have locals Tim and Nancy Gilbert to thank. The Gilberts have been purchasing and restoring unique properties in the Old Southwest for some years, returning them to their original glory, but with updates that make them attractive to modern residents. The Humphrey House is the latest of their acquisitions and was successfully moved and restored this year.

While the Gilberts love all of their small pieces of Reno history, this one has special meaning for them. Tim is actually related to a former resident/owner of this delightful home and remembers visiting it first as a small child and throughout his adult life. For Tim, it was a journey back in time to step inside the home after so many years and he is gratified to be the one to return it to its original beauty, and to honor the memory of his first cousin twice removed, Frances Humphrey.

The second daughter of Frank and Marguerite Humphrey, who purchased the home in 1917 from Silveria Garat, Frances came to the home as a young girl and lived there throughout her career as an educator and counselor at Reno High School. When her parents passed away, Frances continued to live in the home even through the first decimation of the neighborhood in the 1970s, when the construction of I-80 cut through town removing portions of 7th

and 8th streets, turning her quiet, historic street into a ledge overlooking a noisy freeway. She passed away in 2001 and in 2008, the university acquired the property. As often goes with rental properties, it was not well cared for, so the Gilberts not only had to fund the move of the home and purchase an appropriate lot on which to place it, but had to engage a work crew to remediate this neglect.



Porthole window on the front of the house (top).
The intricate woodwork (above)
found throughout the home.

Aside from the sentimental aspects of this home, this Asian-influenced Craftsman is stunning, with its porthole windows, dramatically upturned eaves and the intricately-carved symbols atop the porch posts (see photos this page and next). Constructed around 1910, the style is architecturally significant to Reno. Craftsman was the

dominant style for smaller houses built throughout the country during the period from about 1905 until the early 1930s. The style originated in Southern California and spread rapidly throughout the country, aided by popular magazines and pattern books. Often the Asian influence is visible only in the slightly upturned eaves but this builder took it a step further. The result is an elegant interpretation of the Craftsman style that must have been the envy of many Reno residents.

The home's new location was an excellent choice. Its neighbor to the north is a ranch house that belonged to the MacDearmid family in the early 1900s. The relocated home now sits atop a high foundation which provides the house with a finished full basement, including a bath and laundry facilities. In the main body of the house, all of the walls are being resurfaced and painted to emulate the finish of the home's era. The interior woodwork, much of it with the Asian design elements found on the exterior of the home, is being carefully restored.

Tim had two requests in restoring this home—that the push button light switches that he remembered and the curved benches at the entrance be saved or replicated. With the Gilberts' usual attention to detail, push button light switches to match the originals were found and the curved back benches were reinstalled in the entry.

Many of the overhead light fixtures were lost, but the Gilberts have replaced them with ones echoing the home's Asian influence. A later addition to the rear of the home was removed prior to the relocation but a bedroom has been added with flooring and window trim to match the original house.

Again, the attention to detail that is the



The push button light switch.

hallmark of Gilbert-restored homes cannot be over emphasized. As the original bathtub had long been replaced, the Gilberts found a 1917 bathtub weighing 325 pounds to complement the bathroom. Tim pointed out that if you add a 200-pound person and 100 pounds of water, the weight would seriously stress the average floor. The bathroom floor has therefore been reinforced.

As for the home's basic construction, if you have ever planned a project using



Exterior details of Asian-influenced Craftsman on porch pillar and roof.



One of the curved benches under repair.

2x4 lumber, you know it's never actually 2" by 4". But the Humphrey House is full of 2x4's that really are still that exact dimension and Tim has recovered additional vintage 2x4s used in the new bedroom. Many of the windows are original, such as the "portholes," and others which feature 12 lights over one, or 16 over one. Those needing replacement will be of a similar style.

With the careful restoration and stewardship provided by the Gilberts, this wonderful house should stand another 110 years, quite at home in the Old Southwest, surrounded by homes of a similar vintage.

Debbie Hinman is on the City of Reno's Historical Resources Commission, is a HRPS Board member, Tour Guide, and Managing Editor of *FootPrints*.



HRPS Endangered Property Watch List

ENDANGERED PROPERTIES (Listed Alphabetically)

HRPS is concerned about the fate of the following historic properties

- El Reno Apartments at 1461 Lander Street
- Hillside Cemetery
- Lear Theater
- Remaining Mid-century Motels
- Nevada Brewing Works on 4th Street
- Regina Apartments
- Reno Police Department Building on 2nd Street
- Sinai Building/Howell House
- Southern Pacific Depot

LOST PROPERTIES (Listed by date of demolition)

- Mapes Hotel (1947 - 2000)
- Virginia Street Bridge (1905 - 2015)
- Downtown Motels Block (c. 1940 - 2018)
- Ralston Avenue 300-block homes (c. 1875 - 2018)
- Masonic Mercantile Building at Sierra and Commercial (1872 - 2019)
- Flick Ranch House (1942 - 2019)
- Mary Sherman House (1896—2019)

Historic Reno Preservation Society with Washoe County Library System

1st Sunday 2020 Educational Programs

Downtown Library, 301 S. Center St., Reno

Co-Chairs: Sheryl Hayes-Zorn & Kimberly Roberts

Historic Reno Preservation Society's free programs offer topics related to Reno's history.

The last Sunday program will be on May 3 and included in Spring *FootPrints*.

More HRPS information is available at historicro.org or on Facebook.



Sunday, January 5, 12:30 p.m. (first Sunday)

Speaker: Matthew Makley, PhD, Professor of History, Metropolitan State University of Denver, discusses his book, "The Small Shall be Strong, A History of Lake Tahoe's Washoe Indians" —

This lecture will give a brief, historical overview of the Washoe (Wáshiw) people whose ancestors began occupying the Tahoe region up to 10,000 years ago. Washoe history is an important, and often overlooked, part of the region's history, as well as the national historical narrative. Topics covered include the legal battle over Cave Rock, and the Washoes' unique use of the General Allotment Act in 1887. **Matthew S. Makley** was born at Lake Tahoe and graduated from Douglas High School. He earned a PhD in Native

American History from Arizona State University and joined the faculty at Metropolitan State University of Denver the same year, where he is currently a Professor of History.



Sunday, February 2, 12:30 p.m. (first Sunday)

Speaker: John L. Smith, Author and Journalist, discusses his book, "The Westside Slugger: Joe Neal's Lifelong Fight for Social Justice" —

The Westside Slugger is the powerful story of civil rights in Las Vegas and Nevada through the eyes and experience of Joe Neal, a history-making state lawmaker in Nevada. Neal rose from humble beginnings in Mound, Louisiana, during the Great Depression to become the first African American to serve in the Nevada State Senate. **John L. Smith** is a longtime journalist and the author of more than a dozen books on significant characters in Las Vegas history. He spent three decades as a daily columnist with the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, and garnered many state and national awards for his work.



Sunday, March 1, 12:30 p.m. (first Sunday)

Speaker: Dr. Christine Johnson, Collection Manager, Nevada Historical Society, discusses the Nevada State Board on Geographic Names—How Do the Mountains Get their Names? —

Did you know that Nevada is considered to be the most mountainous state in the country? With more than 300 named ranges, Nevada's topography contains thousands of peaks, valleys, mounts, buttes, bluffs, cutoffs, mountains, points, and more. The Nevada State Board on Geographic Names advises the U.S. Board on new name suggestions, researches current names of features, and weighs in on controversies when presented. This talk provides a look at why and how features get named and highlights a few interesting

and noteworthy features on the Nevada landscape. **Dr. Christine Johnson** is the Collection Manager at the Nevada Historical Society and adjunct faculty in the departments of Anthropology and Geography at the University of Nevada, Reno.



Sunday, April 5, 12:30 p.m. (first Sunday)

Speaker: Sharon Honig-Bear presents A Taste for History — Come savor a visual history of local food, drink and the industries that surround them! "Edible Traditions" columnist **Sharon Honig-Bear** has fashioned a presentation based on her past four years of columns in *edibleRenoTahoe* magazine, with new images never published in the magazine. Discover unknown stories like sugar beet production in Fallon, Chicken Soup Hot Springs in Washoe Valley and the turkey farms near where Park Lane once stood. The presentation is fast-moving and full of surprises about your backyard—the food that was once enjoyed in the area. **Sharon Honig-Bear** is a long-time Board member, Past President and tour leader for Historic Reno Preservation Society. She was a restaurant columnist for the *Reno Gazette-Journal* and is now a columnist for *edibleRenoTahoe* magazine.

Historic Reno Preservation Society with Washoe County Library System

3rd Wednesday 2020 Educational Programs

Northwest Library, 2355 Robb Dr., Reno

Co-Chairs: Sheryl Hayes-Zorn & Kimberly Roberts

Historic Reno Preservation Society's free programs offer topics related to Reno's history.

**The last Wednesday program, and HRPS' Annual Meeting
will be on May 20 and included in Spring *FootPrints*.**

More HRPS information is available at historicro.org or on Facebook.



Wednesday, January 15, 5:30 p.m. (third Wednesday)

Speaker: Neal Cobb, Reno Historian, discusses Harold's Club – World's Largest Casino – Harold's Club emerged from a hole in the wall operation at 236 North Virginia Street to become the largest casino in the world and helped to put Reno on the map. **Neal Cobb** is a Reno native and was involved in his family business, Modern Photo, from 1940 to 1955. Neal fell heir to fourteen large boxes of old Reno and Northern Nevada photos and printable film after his parents died in 1985-6 and subsequently co-authored two books with Jerry Fenwick, *Reno Now and Then*, Books I and II.



HRPS: Wednesday February 19, 5:30 p.m. (third Wednesday)

Location: Northwest Library, 2325 Robb Dr. Reno

Samantha Szesciorka, Assistant Curator, Wilbur D. May Center, discusses Wilbur D. May – Born on December 28, 1898, Wilbur May was the third son of David May, founder of The May Department Stores Company. Wilbur was a rancher, pilot, artist, philanthropist, and world traveler who lived in Reno from 1936 until his death on January 20, 1982. The museum's collection derives from over 40 trips Wilbur made around the world, and include T'ang Dynasty pottery, African masks, statues and artwork, Inuit scrimshaw, Egyptian scarab figures, Greek icons, wildlife dioramas and a shrunken

head from South America. Also featured is a re-creation of the living room, bedroom, tack room, and big game trophy room from Wilbur's 2,600-acre (1,100 ha) Double Diamond Ranch in South Reno. **Samantha Szesciorka** is the Assistant Curator at the Wilbur D. May Center and the Editor in Chief at Sagebrush Rider.



Wednesday, March 18, 5:30 p.m. (third Wednesday)

Speaker: Jerry Wagner discusses ALOS: The Hunt for Hitler's A-Bomb – German scientists split the atom in 1938; by all accounts their nuclear program is 2-3 years ahead of any other country. As war breaks out in Europe, Einstein writes to Roosevelt warning him about the development of a Nazi atomic bomb and imploring the president to begin a similar effort. Even as victories mount, General Eisenhower fears the German will deploy radioactive bombs against advancing Allied troops. In 1943, as part of the Manhattan Project, a clandestine group of scientists and military personnel, ALSOS, are tasked with finding and capturing German nuclear scientists and their labs before Hitler can change the outcome of the war. Unforgettable and unlikely characters, poignant moments, suspense and even comedy

characterize this piece of history. And a special twist: the Reno connection? **Jerry Wagner's** interest in the WWII ALSOS operation stemmed from reading a book about the Hotel Ritz in Paris and it became a minor obsession after discovering the Reno connection to the story.



Wednesday, April 15, 5:30 p.m. (third Wednesday)

Speaker: Debbie Hinman discusses Alice's Journey – In 1909, intrepid 22-year-old Alice Ramsey made history as the first female cross-country motorist, driving a Maxwell DA from New York to San Francisco in 59 days. Coming through Reno in August, she stayed overnight in the Riverside Hotel. Hear about her amazing journey in a time before interstate highways and before most women had even considered learning to drive. **Debbie Hinman** is a Reno native and UNR graduate. Active with HRPS since 2004, she is a researcher and writer for HRPS's quarterly *FootPrints*.



Harvest of Homes Tours 2019

Article by Carol Coleman, Tour Chair and
Photos by David Lowndes & Cindy Ainsworth

HRPS held its Tenth Annual Harvest of Homes Tour on a lovely fall day – Saturday, September 19, 2019. The weather was perfect: not hot, not cold, not rainy and best of all not windy! We couldn't have asked for better. Thanks again to the six generous owners of the historic homes we celebrated on the year's Homes Tour. The variety of architectural styles, décor and ages of the homes made for an exciting day for the happy crowds that viewed the interiors of the homes (and some exteriors). On this day, 142 volunteers supported the Home Tour, each working either a morning or an afternoon shift. Without the gracious homeowners offering their homes and without the volunteers, this tour simply couldn't happen. We appreciate you all!

Our theme this year was art, from painting and crafts, woodcraft, garden design to interior decoration. Guests explored the art studios and collections at 937 Jones and 3310 Sunnyvale, owner John Farrow's handcrafted furniture and built-ins at 145 Mark Twain, the local art collections at 6 Bret Harte and 611 Forest, and décor at the totally redone home at 1895 W. Plumb.

From the exit evaluations, two homes

stood out as favorites. First was 1895 W. Plumb, once part of Plumb Ranch, with owner and interior designer Sandy Kelly's totally redone interior and her spectacular collection of furnishings. Second was 3310 Sunnyvale, a 1963 ranch-style home filled with the artwork of owner Charlotte Voitoff and friends, stunning patio and views and a fascinating yard that Charlotte has created over 50 years. All six of the homes received many "favorite" nominations this year, thanks to the care and love shown by the homeowners.

Almost 600 people toured the historic homes from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm this year, including 404 who paid for their tickets, 28 who received free tickets (homeowners, antique vehicle owners and local stores who sold tickets for us) and our 142 volunteers, each of whom received a free ticket. With income of \$12,350 from the ticket sales and expenses of \$2,545, principally for printing costs, the Home Tour contributed almost \$10,000 to our newly named Reno Heritage Fund that supports small grants for historic homes and special heritage projects in the Reno community (see page 5 of this issue).



At each home, ticket takers were ready to check in attendees, hand out materials and welcome people to the home. In the background a Channel 4 photographer is chronicling the day and attendees are wandering about the yard at 3310 Sunnyvale..



Storytelling is a critical component of conveying our cultural heritage to others. HRPS' storytellers were at three locations during the 2019 Home Tour. Jerry Fenwick (above right), Reno author, entertained at 145 Mark Twain; Neal Cobb (left with Jim Smith), Reno historian and author, told stories at 937 Jones and Karl Breckenridge (right), newspaperman and author, greeted visitors with Reno stories at 3310 Sunnyvale. It's a wonderful tradition the Home Tour will continue in 2020.



Homeowners with great homes, antique vehicle owners and their cars, local stores willing to sell Home Tour tickets, and volunteers are the essential components of our home tour. We show you a smattering of all !

From the top right clockwise, volunteer Jan Pederson tells attendees about the living room and art work at 611 Forest, our adaptive reuse home.

Volunteer ticket takers Donna and Paul Erickson greet volunteer host Jen Johanson at 1895 W. Plumb.

An animated volunteer entertains attendees as she describes the kitchen addition and window at 3310 Sunnyvale. Birds are always visible in the arbor right outside the window.

A tour volunteer describes the modifications, furniture and décor in the living room at 1895 W. Plumb.

We match an antique vehicle to each home, except this year we couldn't find a match for Joan Arrizabalaga's 1902 home at 937 Jones Street — we did try for an antique bicycle!

The cutest little red truck is parked by 1895 W. Plumb alongside cars 90 years younger. This special vehicle is Derek McDonald's 1930 Ford Model A pickup.

Volunteer host Mark Hugret looks like he is dressed to drive away in Joe Trombley and Connie Brown's 1931 Ford Model A Deluxe Roadster.

Morning volunteer Jean Fernandez talks about the collections at 937 Jones with afternoon volunteer Judy Frederick, who is touring the homes before her shift.

Volunteer Director and host Karalea Clough displays the special dress she created from a Horseshoe Casino table felt for the home at 937 Jones St. She worked a double shift this Home Tour and also had a special costume for 1895 W. Plumb.

Volunteer host Caroline Asikainen greets attendees at the door of 145 Mark Twain.





Reno MoMo Successfully Completes Phase One

by Sharon Honig-Bear

As the fall comes to a close, so does the first phase of Reno's celebration of Modernism: the Reno MoMo initiative. Conceived by HRPS, with a coalition of other groups and individuals, a number of activities took place during the past months:

- Reno MoMo, in partnership with the City of Reno, hosted the reception for "Icons of Mid-Century Nevada," paintings and prints by Greg Allen. The photorealism of Greg's art is breathtaking and it was an honor for us to support a Reno artist whose work highlights some of the vanishing architecture and design that we treasure.
- Alan Hess, a leading advocate for mid-century architecture, presented a well-attended lecture on October 10th at the Nevada Museum of Art. Thanks to Bradley Carlson, Alicia Barber and Barrie Lynn for enhancing his experience in Reno; he couldn't have had better hosts.
- The social media campaign Uncommon Reno took place over the summer and we had almost 100 entries. These photographs can still be viewed on the Reno MoMo Instagram page @reno_momo and we welcome more contributions!
- An Awards Ceremony and exhibit of those entries took place at the Pioneer Center for the Performing Arts on October 22. The winners are included on page 13. Clay Carlson, Karalea Clough, Steve Bamberger, and Charlotte Voitoff contributed special prizes for the event. Thanks to Nate Hudson, AIA, for a doing a superb job hosting the ceremony. A special thanks also to The Pioneer Center, whose iconic architecture provided a wonderful backdrop for the event, and whose generous and gracious staff offered their time, the event space, and even provided tours of the building.



Nate Hudson, AIA, presenting awards at the Pioneer Center, accompanied by Sharon Honig-Bear (center) and Lauren Culleton, HRPS Executive Director.

- At the Awards Ceremony, Pioneer Board members Nettie Oliverio and Alicia Barber presented a mockup of a historic marker for the Pioneer Center that will debut in 2020. This collaborative effort works towards our ongoing goals to see modern architecture included on the Reno Register of Historic Places and highlighted with historic markers.
- *4th Street: A Legacy of Change*, a powerful photo exhibit of several motels before they were demolished, had its premiere at this event. The next showing will begin February 3, 2020 in the McKinley Art Center Gallery. Thanks to Jacobs Entertainment for funding the framing of the artwork and Sierra Arts for the use of easels.

The overall project, Modernism—the Reno MoMo Initiative, received funding from the Nevada Arts Council, Nevada Humanities, Councilmember Jenny Brekhuis, and the City of Reno.

Thanks to our leadership team: ZoAnn Campana, Lauren Culleton and Sharon Honig-Bear!

There are other activities planned for 2020. If you are interested in learning more or getting involved, contact us at renomodernmovement@gmail.com.

Sharon Honig-Bear is a HRPS Past President, current Board Member and Tour Guide. She is Chair of the City of Reno Arts and Culture Commission.



City Council member and Uncommon Reno sponsor Jenny Brekhuis speaks to the attendees at the Awards Ceremony.



Winner of Commerce
by kelsey3000



Winner of Best In Show and Public,
by basinlightphotography



Winner of Lighting Effects
by giomartinez



Winner of RIP
by keeprenodirty



Winner of Dwellings
by giomartinez



Winner of Details
by verdiviewfinder

Volunteers needed for Reno MoMo

Like photography? Like to walk? Like mid-century architecture? Like to help? These are four good reasons to step forward for an exciting new project to survey some of Reno's early modern design. HRPS is putting together teams to capture this disappearing legacy. Interested? Contact Sharon Honig-Bear at sharonbear@sbcglobal.net

Harolds Club Historic Marker Placed on Virginia Street

The City of Reno unveiled its first historic marker on August 2, 2019, in its new marker program to help commemorate the history of the City of Reno.

The marker is a tribute to the old Harolds Club which used to be on the site where Harrah's Casino now stands. Council member Jenny Brekhus spoke about how the casino helped put Reno on the map and usher in the modern age of gaming in Nevada.

"We wanted to leave something that's going to celebrate what Harolds Club did for the state, for gaming, for the City of Reno, for the whole works," said Neal Cobb.

Speaking at the marker ceremony were Twyila Whear (Pappy Smith's youngest daughter), Neal Cobb of the Harolds Club Pioneers, Melinda Gustin of the Historical Resources Commission (HRC), Reno City Council member Jenny Brekhus, and Brad Carlson of HRC.



Picture and text courtesy of KTVN, Channel 2 Television



Message From Your HRPS President

Carol Coleman

Welcome Two New Board Members

Brett Banks has joined the HRPS Board of Directors and brings with her a large Instagram following featuring at pictures of historic Reno and Nevada. Her collection of over 1,500 images (and descriptions) is named @historicrononevada.

Alicia Barber is now a HRPS Board member and will chair HRPS' Reno Historical committee. Alicia is the originator and editor of Reno Historical. She is the author of *Reno's Big Gamble: Image and Reputation in the Biggest Little City*. Welcome to you both.

Review of the Old Movie on October 9

The Old Movie in October, Captive City, is old news by now, but I want to give you the stats. With the new seating at Reno Little Theater (RLT), 69 people had good seats to watch this movie which included a long section of riding in and out through Reno streets. After settling with RLT and the movie licensing company, HRPS came away with \$362. RLT did that main bulk of the work as well as advertising for us. Look for at least one Old Movie in 2020.

New Memberships and Renewals

In November 2018, the HRPS Board voted that from that point forward, renewals would be due on the anniversary of a member joining HRPS. If you joined after November 2018, you will renew during your anniversary month. If you joined before that date, you have a January 1 renewal date as a holdover from a time when everyone renewed on the first of the year. You should have received your membership renewal notice by late December.

If you receive *FootPrints* by mail, you will find your membership expiration date on your address label. Members will receive a renewal notice through the U.S. mail when membership renewal is due. You can always use the membership form on page 15 of any *FootPrints*. Or, you are may

visit our website www.historicreno.org and renew online using a credit card.

Stay informed with HRPS! Please continue your previous support of Historic Reno Preservation Society with your membership.

Address Changes and Bulk Mail

In order to save dollars when we send our quarterly *FootPrints* through the U.S. mail, we make use of USPS Bulk Mail, which we qualify for as a non-profit. One of the "features" of Bulk Mail is that mail is not forwarded. So to continue to receive your *FootPrints* when you move, please be sure to change your address with HRPS. Email membership@historicreno.org or call our phone service at 775-747-4478 to tell them of your new address.

Looking for a New HRPS President

It's time for a changing of the guard—that is a new HRPS President. Over the last four years (as of May 30, 2020) that I've been your HRPS President, I like to think we've created a stronger HRPS with a great future.

With HRPS' hiring of an Executive Director (E.D.), albeit part-time, coming up to speed as President will be much better facilitated. Lauren Culleton, HRPS E.D., is managing several areas that fell to the HRPS President and is familiar with many more. I look forward to a smooth transition. If you or anyone you know is interested in the position, please contact me. June 1, 2020 is turnover time!

Surprise, A New Lifetime Member

As this issue went to press, we received a Lifetime membership from Linda Burke, a longtime supporter and volunteer for HRPS. Her \$1,000 membership is split half to the Reno Heritage Fund, and half to HRPS operating costs. Many thanks, Linda.

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

Help Wanted: Walking Tour Co-Chair

Bill Kolton has chaired HRPS' Walking Tours since 2017, and Co-Chair John Farrow joined him in 2018. What a wonderful job these two have done, supporting the Tour Guides and Volunteers, managing in rain and wind and heat to greet Walking Tour attendees and get them signed up for HRPS historic walks. We appreciate you both!

Bill and John retired effective September 2019. But the good news is that HRPS Executive Director Lauren Culleton will be taking over a portion of the task — she will manage the initial scheduling of the walks. Another good news item is that HRPS Board member Alexis Thomas has agreed to be one Co-Chair. However, we need another Walking Tour Co-Chair.

Walking Tours are HRPS' major effort, where we are educating people about Reno's historic neighborhoods and culture. The position of Walking Tour Co-Chair is critical to our mission. We need someone will come forward to volunteer for this position. Please tap somebody on the shoulder and convince him or her to volunteer!

Thanks to Departing Board Members

Holly Walton-Buchanan and Jen Johanson have retired from the HRPS Board, each serving for four years. Holly is very busy with her work on the Reno Chamber Orchestra Board and Jen has started a PhD program at UNR in addition to her full-time teaching load — both felt they couldn't give adequate time to HRPS considering their current schedules. Holly worked on the HRPS brochure and the Home Tour. Jen was an energetic host at Home Tours and worked on our social media presence. Thanks to you both.

HRPS Lifetime Members

Darleen R Azizisefat
Sharon Honig-Bear
Jacqueline Black (*)
Laurie & Greg Boyer
Lynn Bremer
Holly Walton-Buchanan
Florence Ann Burgess
Linda Burke
Tom & Phyllis Cates
Jan & Phil Chik
Press & Delores Clewe
Karalea Clough
Becky Czarnik
Joan Dyer
Betty Easton
Fran Bryne Fricke
Marilyn Fuetsch
Francine & Ted Gray
Melinda & Dan Gustin
John & Susan Hancock
Carol Haydis
Jacquie Foundation
Alan Lee & Ivey Johnson
Pat & Mike Klos
Laurence & Linda Kutten
Katherine Latham
Jan & Jim Loverin
Jon & Linda Madsen
Catherine Magee
Francine Mannix MD
Charlotte & Dick McConnell
Wayne & Patty Melton
Marilyn Melton
Prudence Gould Muran(*)
Peter & Renate Neumann
Al & Nancy Pagni
Butch & Susan Peachy
Pioneer Center
Marshall & Pat Postman
Jonnie Pullman
Hannah Satika (*)
Michael & Karren Smith
Robert Stoldal
Tom & Leanne Stone
Fran & Terry Terras
Mike & Karen Traynor
Charlotte Voitoff
Sharon Walbridge
Betty J. Watts
Kathy Williams
Reg & Shelley Willison
(*) deceased

*Thanks to the following HRPS
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Dube Group Architecture

HRPS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

By joining **Historic Reno Preservation Society**, you are a member of a community group that celebrates Reno's history by sharing information and advocating for our endangered properties.

In the summer, you may attend as many as 25 different Walking Tours. In winter, twice a month we bring you Educational Programs. You receive our quarterly, *FootPrints*, to keep you informed about HRPS events, articles about endangered properties, people and homes of interest. HRPS' information is on our website, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and occasional eblasts.

You may pay by check, cash, credit card or PayPal. To pay by credit card or PayPal, please log on to our website: www.historicreno.org. We use PayPal to process your payment. They will accept your credit card on our behalf; we will send you a confirmation email.

☐ New Member ☐ Renewing

Membership Levels:

- ☐ \$15.00 Student
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- ☐ \$100.00 Supporting
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HRPS respects your right to privacy. We will **NOT** share your email address.

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- ☐ Other _____

Please make your check payable to:

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