

The Newlands Name in Southwest Reno

by Alicia Barber, PhD and ZoAnn Campana, MPS

In recent months, we have seen heightened attention being paid to the deplorable views on race voiced by Francis G. Newlands, who served as a U.S. Senator from Nevada in the early 20th century. Some have called for the outright removal of his name from public space, a cause that other residents have just as passionately opposed.

The Newlands name is found on several features in Reno's Old Southwest, including Newlands Park, Newlands Lane, Newlands Circle, a number of historic subdivisions, a stone tablet and pillars, and the Newlands Historic District, recently recognized by the National Register of Historic Places. In light of the seriousness of this debate, it seems critical, for context, to understand how, when, and why these features came to bear the Newlands name. While we do not in this article discuss Senator Newlands' views on race, we encourage readers to consult other sources that do so, including some that have been posted on the HRP website at historicreno.org/newlands.

Despite the seemingly obvious connection between the Newlands name and the Senator, the presence of this name in the neighborhood is attributable not just to Francis G. Newlands but also to the land development company he co-founded, the activities of other Newlands family members, and longstanding community practice. In short, like many aspects of our history, the relationship between Senator Newlands and the physical presence of the Newlands name is more complicated than it may initially appear.



The home of Senator Francis G. Newlands (top right) was the only residence on the bluff for many years. Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno.

The Origins of the Newlands Neighborhood

When Francis G. Newlands moved to Reno in 1889, he purchased fifteen acres at the top of the bluff on the south side of the Truckee River to build a personal residence for his new wife Edith McAllister Newlands and the three young daughters from his first marriage to Clara Sharon: Edith, Janet, and Frances. At the time, Reno was just over two decades old, and the entire bluff was covered in low scrub and sagebrush; before his arrival, it was known familiarly as "Rattlesnake Point."

Newlands hired a professional architect to design his house and a professional landscape architect to design its grounds. Now a National Historic Landmark, the Senator Francis G. Newlands House was the very first structure erected on the high ridge overlooking town and remained the only one there for years. As a result, by the first decade of the 1900s, residents commonly referred to the area as "Newlands Heights" or simply

"Newlands," an informal practice that has continued to this day and inspired the naming of the Newlands Historic District in 2016.

Within just a few years after his arrival, Newlands entered politics, representing Nevada in the U.S. House of Representatives beginning in 1893 and in the U.S. Senate beginning in 1903. The same year he was elected to the Senate, he entered the local real estate business, co-founding the Newlands Company with six other individuals including his nephew, James Newlands.

He eventually purchased hundreds of acres of land in the Reno area, which he went on to either sell to private entities or convey to the Newlands Company for sale.

Newlands sold a parcel adjoining his own to Senator George Nixon, who built his palatial home there in 1907. Other land conveyed to the Newlands Company was in turn developed by the company or sold to other land developers. While Senator Newlands was alive, the company developed the area east of Nixon Avenue between the Truckee River and California Avenue, creating the Rio Vista Heights, Riverside Heights, and Marker Tract subdivisions.

The Newlands Company continued to develop real estate tracts in the Old Southwest for years after Senator Newlands' death in 1917. In addition, other members of the Newlands family, including the Senator's widow, daughters, and nephew, continued to reside and conduct business in town. Family members helped operate the

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Newlands Company in addition to granting the City numerous donations of land, easements, and utilities.

Newlands Terrace and Newlands Park

Newlands Park owes its development to the Newlands family's extensive land ownership, the Newlands Company's real estate activities, the Newlands family's successive donations of land and civic improvements after Francis G. Newlands died, and the dedication of Senator's daughter, Janet Newlands Johnston, to civic beautification through landscaping and architecture. Janet, who married physician William Bernard Johnston in 1903, spearheaded much of the Newlands family's public philanthropy throughout the 1920s.

Newlands Park is perhaps the most palpable example of Janet's impact on the designed landscape of the Old Southwest. The park consists of two parcels spanning both sides of California Avenue at its summit, just east of Keystone Avenue. One fronts the edge of the bluff on the north side of California Avenue, offering expansive views of the Truckee River, northwest Reno, and Peavine Mountain. The other comprises the half circle between California Avenue and Newlands Circle. The park features lush lawns, gravel walking paths, and stone-carved benches and walls.

At the time of Senator Newlands' death in 1917, the area on either side of California Avenue west of Nixon Avenue, at the top of the bluff, was still mostly undeveloped, aside from the Newlands family residence and the Nixon mansion. California Avenue was not yet improved west of Nixon Avenue, and the western city limits were near the current Keystone Avenue. Around 1919, the company decided to plat and offer for sale additional parcels at the top of the bluff, to the west and south of the Newlands residence. Those parcels became part of the Newlands Terrace subdivision, a tract that included Newlands Park.

The idea to make Newlands Park a city park was fully integrated with the creation of Newlands Terrace and closely coordinated with Reno city government, which agreed to accept the park as a memorial to Senator Newlands just a few years after his death. The idea was apparently first discussed publicly at a Reno City Council meeting attended by Senator Newlands' nephew, James, in November of 1919, when as the *Reno Evening Gazette* reported, the idea was raised to dedicate "the point of the hill for park purposes," a circular piece 200 feet in diameter, as it "was the desire of the Newlands family to have some sort of lasting memorial to the late Senator Newlands established in Reno." A family spokesperson suggested that "The Newlands Company should dedicate the land, the city to build and maintain the park."

Reporting on the same meeting, Reno's second paper, the *Nevada State Journal*, explained that the family had been "considering this memorial as a private enterprise" but that it had "been practically decided to give up the idea." Once the suggestion was made in the meeting to dedicate the circular plot as a city park, the reporter wrote, "The suggestion met with the approval of members of the council and the Newlands family

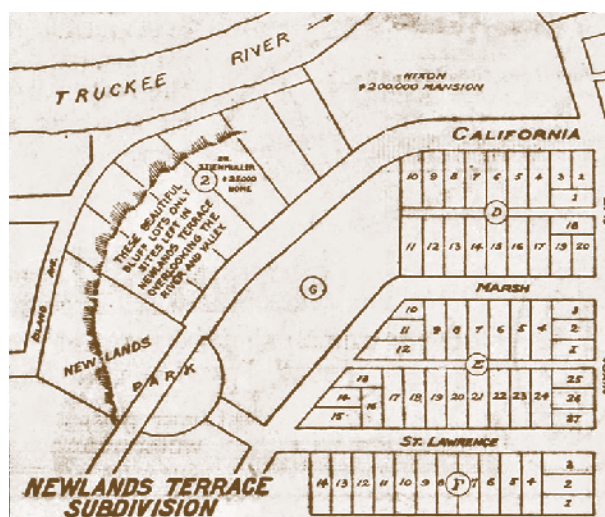
will be so advised. From this point, a wonderful view of the Truckee and the majestic mountains flanking it on both sides is available."

The subdivision, Newlands Terrace, with the park as its visual anchor, was formally platted in 1920. The deed transferring Newlands Park to the City was also drawn up in 1920. Identifying as the donors Senator Newlands' widow, Edith McAllister Newlands, her daughters Edith Newlands Johnston and Janet Newlands Johnston, and Janet's husband, William B. Johnston and dated June 26, 1920, the deed contained specific language about the intent of the property donation:

"That it is the desire of the parties of the first part herein, to create in the city of Reno, a memorial to Francis G. Newlands, and to be held by the party of the second part in trust, forever, as a trustee for the people of the city of Reno, as a public park and playground, and the parties of the first part, do by these presents grant and convey to the party of the second part, for the purposes above mentioned, all of the following described pieces or parcels of land [...]"

This arrangement was from that point mutually agreed upon, although the transfer of property was not formally completed until the receipt by the city of the deed for the park parcels in 1923. By the time of the formal platting of the Newlands Terrace tract in 1920, plans for the park had already been drawn up by M. W. Porter of San Francisco, identified as a "landscape artist." The plan envisioned "a circular park with retaining walls, terraced lawn, walks, and ornamental seats."

When the park deed was finally received by the city in 1923, James Newlands wrote that he wanted to complete the transaction while the sitting City Council was still serving their terms "inasmuch as the idea originated with the body now in office." Interestingly, the city named the new park Newlands Park rather than Francis G. Newlands Park. In contrast, Wingfield Park was given the full name of George Wingfield Park after its namesake donated that property to the city in 1920.



Advertisement for Newlands Terrace Subdivision. Courtesy Reno Evening Gazette, April 7, 1922.



Illustrations of the stone pillars accompanied advertisements for the new Newlands Manor subdivision in the *Reno Evening Gazette*, September 7, 1927.

Although the Senator's family had donated the park to the city, the Newlands family retained a close relationship to it. Janet Newlands Johnston and her husband had moved into the Nixon Mansion in 1922, returning to the family the property that her father's company had sold to Senator Nixon in 1906. Janet and her family retained ownership of that house and a physical presence in Reno until her death in 1965. They also contributed significantly to beautifying the neighborhood and park including donations to help move the park's power lines underground in 1930.

The Francis G. Newlands Memorial Tablet

In keeping with the family's stated intent for Newlands Park to serve as a memorial to Francis G. Newlands, a granite memorial tablet was erected in the southern portion of the park in 1923. Directly below the pediment are Senator Newlands' birth and death dates, 1848 and 1917 respectively, which are separated by a rounded space that once featured a bronze circle depicting Newlands' profile. The bronze circle has since been stolen.

The quote below Newlands' name is a Biblical excerpt from the 32nd and 35th chapters of Isaiah and references Newlands' work promoting legislation funding federal reclamation projects to enable expanded agriculture throughout the American West, specifically the Reclamation Act of 1902, which eventually established

major irrigation projects in 20 western states. According to the *Reno Evening Gazette* in April of 1923, "The inscription is a fitting reminder of the long years spent by the senator in promoting the development of the West by means of irrigation through the medium of the federal government, his greatest interest having been in the Truckee-Carson project, now renamed the Newlands project, in his memory."

The memorial tablet appears to have served as the only signage linking the park to Francis G. Newlands until the erection of the contemporary "Newlands Park" sign that stands in the northern portion. The 1923 tablet is identified as a landscape element and listed as a contributing resource to the Newlands Historic District.

Newlands Circle

The short street to the south of Newlands Park was planned as part of the Newlands Terrace subdivision to curve around the south end of the park but was not initially named. In 1922, Janet Newlands Johnston commissioned the design and construction of the three houses that front it, hiring noted Santa Barbara architects Kirkhuff and Schaaf. The houses and their grounds were completely constructed and finished before offering them to buyers. As one reporter wrote, "The architect's purpose was to produce a grouping of houses artistically related to one another and to the scenic setting which is the bluff above the Truckee River with a view of the valley to all points and the mountains."

In 1926, the City decided to give the short street its own name, to distinguish it from California Avenue, and the naming committee agreed on Newlands Circle. These three houses, located at 1, 2, and 3 Newlands Circle, originally evoked the French Renaissance Revival style.

Newlands Manor and its Entrance Pillars

Newlands Manor is one of six subdivisions that make up the

Newlands Historic District. By the mid-1920s, two that were developed by the Newlands Company included Newlands Heights (1920) and Newlands Terrace (built in four stages beginning in 1920).

Newlands Manor was not constructed and offered for sale by the company itself but by Nevada Developers, Inc. in 1927. Nevada Developers, headed by W.E. Barnard, was one of the development partners that purchased land from the Newlands Company. Through that arrangement, the Newlands Company typically subdivided the property, laid out plats, and improved the site, in a way that reflected City Beautiful and Garden City ideals.

In the case of Newlands Manor, the Nevada Development Company then took over development of the tract, constructing homes, planting trees, establishing any deed restrictions, and offering lots for sale. Although racial restrictions were not part of the restrictions imposed by Francis G. Newlands on the tracts developed during his lifetime, Barnard did exclude non-white buyers or residents in the Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions, or CC&Rs, for Newlands Manor.

Stone pillars with the Newlands Manor name are found on the west side of Nixon Avenue and mark the eastern boundaries of the subdivision on the corners of Donner Drive, John Fremont Drive, La Rue Avenue, and Manor Drive. They are constructed of granite topped with scrolled iron markers reading "Newlands Manor." Like the Francis G. Newlands Memorial Tablet, they are designated as contributing resources to the Newlands Historic District.

Dr. Alicia Barber is a professional historian, author, and consultant and the editor of *RenoHistorical.org*. ZoAnn Campana is a professional architectural historian. She drafted the National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Newlands Historic District in 2016.

The House That Jack Built

by Debbie Hinman

Editor's Note: Realtor Tayona Tate asked Debbie for confirmation that Greg LeMond, three-time winner of the Tour de France, had owned a house she was listing. Debbie confirmed that and found out more interesting secrets that this grand old house has harbored for many years.

The house sits on the busy southwest Reno corner of Lakeside and Hillcrest and yet its overall impression is one of peacefulness. Beautiful old trees shade a yard filled with shrubs and flowers. Adding to the ambiance, the Cochran Ditch meanders through the property on its way south to fill Virginia Lake. According to the Assessor's office, the house itself may date from the early 1920s. It is a lovely Craftsman that after nearly 100 years and a major move, still bears its rustic charm, fish scale shingles and a wide, welcoming front porch.

Over the years, I have passed this house at 235 Hillcrest Drive hundreds of times and always been puzzled by it. Immediately to its left are a complex of box-like apartments, which appear to have been thrown up with no thought given to style or attractiveness. Across the street to the right of the property are a series of 1960s ranch houses and a few others with a more creative Mid-Century flair. I concluded that it must have been a ranch house built long before the neighborhood and Virginia Lake were developed.

It turned out I was right in some ways and wrong in another significant way—the house was indeed a ranch house once surrounded by open fields. However, the open fields were just west of the South Virginia Road, some 1,000 feet east of its current location. The house, whose earliest address was Route 1, Box 59, then later 1997 South Virginia, was built out beyond the Reno city limits, which at that time ended at Mount Rose Street. There were a few scattered residences that far out of town, such as the Alamo Ranch in the area of today's Peckham



235 Hillcrest Drive, next to the Cochran Ditch, August 2020. Photo courtesy Tayona Tate.

Lane. But, these were country homes while the South Virginia Road was a narrow country lane that led to Carson City.

What do we know about who built the house?

Since its inception, Reno has had its share of interesting characters who made their name and often their fortunes here. Participants on our walking tours often hear about the scoundrel and “city father,” Myron Lake and then George Wingfield and the crime kingpins, William Graham and James McKay. However, there were often lesser-known but equally intriguing individuals whom we rarely hear about on the fringers of these major players. One such man was John B. (Jack) Scarlett, aka Jack Sullivan.

Scarlett was born in Canada in 1879. He came to the United States at an early age, and like so many young men looking for adventure, in 1906 he found himself in Tonopah during the boom days of the mining camp. John Scarlett was a boxer. The rowdy miners of the Tonopah and Goldfield camps welcomed entertainment and boxing and betting on matches was a favorite. A well-known professional boxer of the day was an Irish-American pugilist named John L. Sullivan, recognized as the first heavyweight champion of gloved boxing. When introducing Scarlett in a Tonopah match, a fight announcer jokingly announced him as “John L. Sullivan.” The name stuck, though his friends changed the John to Jack. Jack would use John B. Scarlett for legal papers, but he went by Jack Sullivan from that day on.

Al W. Moe writes in his book, *The Roots of Reno*, “[George] Wingfield had real estate, and he needed to have tenants. Graham, McKay and even Jack Sullivan were called to town to open clubs that would take up residence in basements and second floors. Gambling was illegal, but as long as it wasn't out in the open, nobody cared.” In Tonopah, Jack had struck up a partnership with James McKay and William Graham. Arriving in Reno some years later, Jack renewed his acquaintance with these old mining camp friends.



The same home, but at 1997 South Virginia Road, with Jack Sullivan and one of his dogs, sitting on the steps. Photo courtesy Jack Sullivan Grellman, Esq.

In 1922, the men opened and operated The Willows, a high-end gambling house and speakeasy on the South Verdi Road (today Mayberry Drive). The Willows burned to the ground while closed for renovation in June of 1932. The men already had another endeavor happening: the well-known and lucrative Bank Club. In March of 1931, Governor Balzar signed a bill for legalized gambling. The Bank Club underwent a massive renovation, moving the gambling floor from the basement to the main floor. It was the largest “sports establishment” in Nevada. Early in 1934, Graham and McKay were indicted on charges of mail fraud and conspiracy and sent to prison. Jack Sullivan managed the Bank Club in their absence, becoming a third owner in 1939.

On the personal front, Jack had an early marriage that produced his only child, Dorothy c. 1913. Following his wife’s death, Jack, according to family lore, met a woman named Charlotte “Lottie” Mack from New York. She came west for a divorce, taking up residence at a guest ranch in Minden. Early in their relationship, Jack saw her write her name “Lottie” and misread it as “Sallie.” From that time on, she was Sallie, soon to be Sallie Sullivan when the two married.



Jack Sullivan, with his ever-present cigar.
Photo courtesy Jack Sullivan Grellman, Esq.

According to an October 27, 1931 deed, Jack and Lottie purchased four acres (with buildings) stretching from the State Highway (Virginia Road) to the center of the Cochran Ditch. The family established themselves in their country home along the major artery leading in and out of Reno to the south. To the rear of the property were kennels. Family believed Jack may have been involved in dog fighting, but in photos Jack and Sallie were often seen posing with what appeared to be well-treated family pets.

In 1937, the Bank Club received a new upgrade, said to be the “classiest bar this side of the Waldorf Astoria.” The bar cost an estimated \$22k to 35k to install. According to Dwayne Kling in his *History of Reno Gaming*, Bill Harrah was a regular visitor at the Bank Club during the wee small hours of the morning, until one day an off-duty bartender from the Bank Club stole one of Harrah’s dollar slot machines out of his Blackout Bar. Harrah called the police. This did not sit well with Jack, who told him, “We don’t need the police to settle things like this, you and I can work it out.” Harrah disagreed, the thief went to jail, and Harrah was no longer welcome at the Bank Club.

By the late 1940s, the Bank Club was facing a lot of competition from the Mapes, Harolds Club, Harrah’s and the Nevada Club, right across the alley. Al Moe relates an interesting event involving Jack and Nevada Club’s part-owner Lincoln Fitzgerald. Moe wrote, “Late one evening, Jack ran into Lincoln Fitzgerald in the alley separating the clubs. Tempers flared and a bitter argument erupted. Sullivan flashed his walking stick, which held a retractable knife, at Fitzgerald but it was Sullivan

who was found bleeding profusely from the neck a few minutes later. He claimed a vagabond had tried to grab his wallet. His wound was quickly patched up, but not his pride.”


Coincidentally or not, just two weeks later in November of 1949, Fitzgerald was ambushed outside the garage of his home and shot once, the bullet hitting his spinal cord and lung. A second shot aimed at his head hit the garage wall. The assailant was never identified. Was it payback from Graham and McKay who possibly knew the truth about the knifing of their partner, Jack Sullivan? The police investigated many leads but there were

plenty of motives for the shooting; Fitzgerald had his share of enemies. Fitzgerald recovered and asked that the case be dropped. He lived the remainder of his life in his rooms above the Nevada Club, confined to a wheelchair and rarely seen.

In June 1950, apparently looking toward retirement, Jack attempted to sell his one-third interest in the Bank Club to Joseph “Doc” Stacher, once a member of the Meyer Lansky-Bugsy Siegel gang. The Gaming Commission did not approve and Jack sold his share back to Graham and McKay.

What happened to the house?

Although Jack continued to own the South Virginia Road ranch until his death, in the mid-1940s he and Sallie had a home built on Marsh Avenue that became their primary residence. Jack passed away in April of 1951. A newspaper notice read, “Death Summons Jack Sullivan.”

Sallie inherited the house and sold the land on which it sat to Waldren Motors in 1951. In 1952, the foundation was laid on a piece of land at the west end of Hillcrest Drive. The South Virginia house was moved to Hillcrest Drive in early 1954, next to the Cochran Ditch. It seems very much settled into its “new” neighborhood on Hillcrest, some 66 years following its relocation. The home is currently for sale; I hope the new owners will appreciate its history as much as its beauty and setting. 

Information for this story came from Jack Sullivan Grellman, Esq. who provided the wonderful historic photos; *The Rise of the Biggest Little City: An Encyclopedic History of Reno Gaming, 1931-1981* by Dwayne Kling; “*The Roots of Reno*” by Al W. Moe; genealogical information from Ancestry.com; and various local newspaper stories of the era.

Debbie Hinman is City of Reno’s Historical Resources Commissioner, a HRPS Board member, Tour Guide and Managing Editor of *FootPrints*.

Oscar Hammonds, Weatherman

by Brett Banks, HRPS' Instagram Manager

Editor's Note: *How do we write articles? And do research? We include some of the pieces of information Brett located to piece together the life of Oscar Hammonds, who was influential in the beginnings of Reno's Bethel AME Church.*

Oscar H. Hammonds was born in 1881 in Indiana, the oldest of three siblings, where he attended both grade school and University. Working as a school teacher after college, a profession very unique to a black man in the early 1900s, Oscar did not feel fulfilled. By 1907, he had studied for and taken the Civil Service Examination for the Weather Bureau in Indianapolis, Indiana. He passed and became the first black weatherman in the country. After being shipped off to Reno (and San Francisco from 1908-1910), Oscar made his home at 226 Bell Street, a popular boarding house for black Americans, with his wife Beatrice.

At the time of their move, Reno had an African-American population of just 225 people, so the Hammonds' status in the community was prominent immediately.

Beatrice and Oscar were divorced by 1911, due to "abandonment" on her side, never having any children together. It is not known what happened to Beatrice, but records indicate she likely left the state much before the divorce filings were ever made. Not broken by this, Oscar quickly married a woman named Sarah "Dollie" Hamilton about 1912 and they had one daughter together, who unfortunately did not live to adulthood. Dollie passed away in late 1925, and on June 5, 1926, Oscar married his last wife Mabel.

Living in the boarding home that hosted the initial meetings, Oscar was a founding member of the local Bethel American Methodist Episcopal Church, also known as Bethel AME. By 1910, they needed more space and were outgrowing the meeting room. The site for the new church was 220 Bell Street, the location of Sarah "Dollie" Hamilton's family home. The home was moved to make way for the structure, and is likely how Oscar ended up meeting Dollie as they were married the following year. Not only was Oscar a member of the Bethel AME Church, he was an entertainer. He served as choir director, leader of the male quartet, and President of the Booker T. Washington Forum all within the church. This Forum was able to raise enough money to pay off the entire mortgage for the church.

In 1934, famed African-American writer Langston Hughes came to Reno and became familiar with Oscar and his family. Hughes penned a biography of O.H. Hammonds and it was published in the *Pittsburgh Courier*, focusing on his career as the nation's only African-American weatherman.

Hughes left Reno by fall of 1935, and so did Oscar's desire for weather service. By winter of 1935, Oscar retired from his station and began focusing on his other duties. He had been the Master of Mizpah Lodge #26 F & AM of the Masons since 1925, a community leader at the Negro USO at Lake Street, a Bethel AME entertainer and worshipper, as well as a member of the Reno community's NAACP. His personal affairs and interests kept him busy.

In the winter of 1945, Oscar became sick and could not recover and on January 6, 1946 he passed away, widowing wife Mabel. He was buried with Dollie and their daughter, as well as his father, in Mountain View Cemetery.

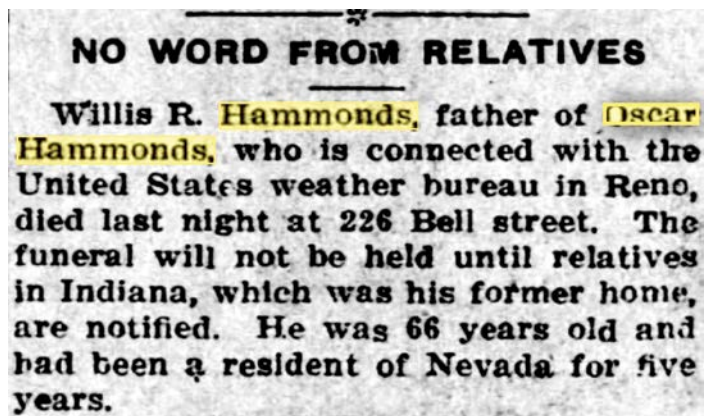


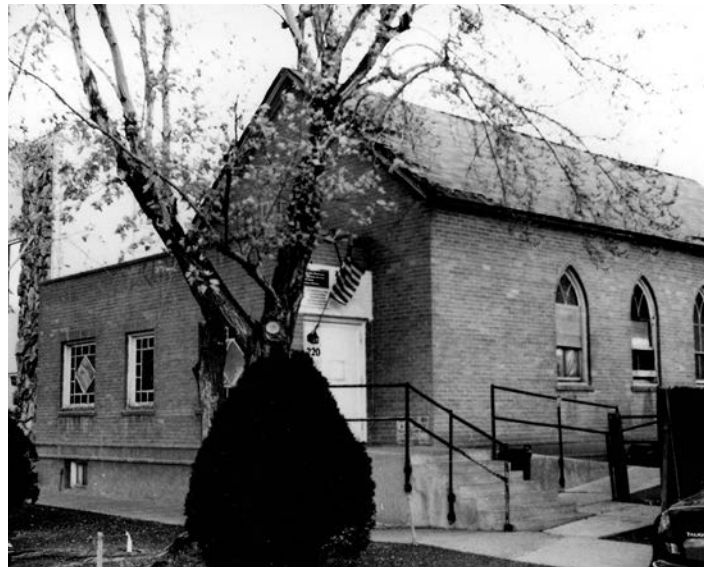
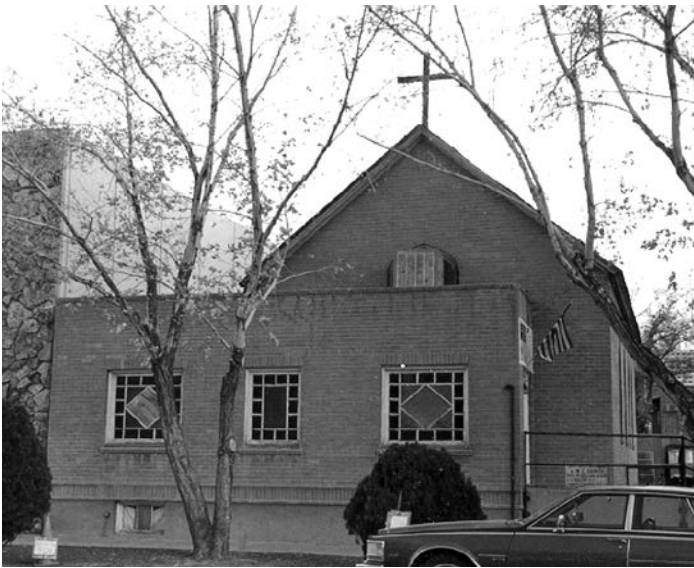
historicrenonevada
Bethel AME Church (Reno, Nevada)

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Group photo of Oscar Hammonds and his crew performing "Ethiopia at the Bar of Justice" in May 1935, a show Langston Hughes mentioned watching and enjoying. Oscar is seated in the middle at the desk.
Courtesy Nevada Historical Society





The Bethel AME Church was a religious, social and political center of the African-American community, initially for black settlers in the 1910s, and later for local civil rights activists during the 1960s. From its inception in 1907, Bethel AME has held to the principles of the AME church (the initials stand for African Methodist Episcopal) to provide self-expression and fuller involvement in society as a means through which members could gain a sense of dignity and self-respect. Bethel AME Church has fostered social equality through its active role in the community, through its direct link with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and through its abiding dignity in the face of conspicuous and unrelenting discrimination.

Text by Mella Rothwell Harmon, Courtesy Reno Historical. Photo Courtesy Nevada Historical Society.

MRS HAMMONDS DIES AT HOME

Following an illness of over a year, Mrs. Dolly Hammonds, wife of O. H. Hammonds, weather observer at the Reno weather bureau office, died yesterday at her home on Bell street. Funeral services will be held tomorrow afternoon at the Bethel M. E. church, with interment in Mountain View cemetery.

The cornerstone of the Bethel AME Church at 220 Bell Street. Courtesy State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

CARD OF THANKS

The Booker T. Washington Forum thanks all subscribers and friends who have donated in any way to the cause of liquidating the mortgage on Bethel A. M. E. Church. The entire amount has been raised and the edifice stands free of debt.

O. H. HAMMONDS, Pres.
LOUISE MIMS, Secy.



Historic Reno Preservation Society with Washoe County Library System

1st Tuesday 2020 Educational Programs

Virtual via Zoom

Zoom links for these programs will be emailed to HRPS members through Constant Contact. They will be available on the HRPS website historicroeno.org under Programs / Monthly and on the Washoe County Library System website under Events / Calendar of Events / Teens & Adults.



Tuesday, October 6, 5:30 p.m. (first Tuesday)

Speaker: Jerry Wager 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 Wager'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. Jerry had a 40-year career managing a variety of environmental programs at the federal, state and territorial level.



Tuesday, November 3, 5:30 p.m. (first Tuesday)

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

and 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.



Reno Heritage Fund Update

by Cindy Ainsworth, RHF Administrator

The Reno Heritage Fund (RHF) committee members are practicing COVID-19 social distancing procedures by conducting all grant decisions virtually. While the committee certainly misses the camaraderie of meeting in person to discuss the grant application projects, we have found that the streamlined process has worked well. In the future, we will continue some of these pandemic grant application measures. One of these is allowing applicants to scan their application information instead of having to mail six copies to the committee. If you are interested in applying, we are still accepting 2020 grant project Letters of Intent. For more information check our website at historicro.org.

This summer the RHF committee and HRPS board awarded a grant to John and Kate Langley to help in replacing the roof at 801 S. Arlington Avenue. This 1914 southwest Reno house was originally the home of Andrew and Viola Ginocchio, the owners of the well-known business Reno Iron Works. The home remained in the family until 2005 when the Langleys bought the home from Ginocchio's daughter Andrea.

There are many stories associated with this home, including one about architect Paul Revere Williams. In his design for the 1934 Luella Garvey House (see <http://renohistorical.org/items/show/114>). Paul Williams required superior commissioned iron work. Reno Iron Works was Mr. Williams' logical choice for the work he desired. Mr. Ginocchio traded custom iron work for the Garvey House project and in turn, Mr. Williams did some architectural enhancements on the 801 S. Arlington Avenue home.

Another story shared by Andrea Ginocchio was that her father did not trust banks during the depression and supposedly hid gold pieces in the basement's dirt crawlspace. The Langleys report that if the gold pieces are still located



The Ginocchio / Langley home at 801 S. Arlington Avenue, with a new roof. Photo by Cindy Ainsworth.

in this hidden spot, "they shall remain there and be a part of the mystique of this wonderful house."

The Langleys respect the history associated with the home. "We have treasured living in this historic house and are reminded of its beauty and significance every day. We strive to continue to preserve its history and charm."

This is the third project that RHF has funded in 2020, including the property at 1129 S. Arlington, and the Artists' Co-op at 627 Mill Street. (see HRPS Reno Heritage Fund: Enhancing the Face of Our Community in Summer 2020 *FootPrints* Vol. 23 No. 3). Historic Reno Preservation Society and the Reno Heritage Fund are committed to continuing to fund grants for small historic preservation projects even during the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. These RHF grants are part of our non-profit's mission.

Founded in 2010, grants from the Neighborhood Preservation Fund, (now the Reno Heritage Fund), are generated from the proceeds from HRPS' Reno Harvest of Homes Tours and with \$500 from each HRPS Lifetime membership, plus donations from individuals. Over its eleven years, HRPS has awarded 47 grants for a total of \$174,994.

Donations to the Reno Heritage Fund are much appreciated and can be made at HRPS website at: <http://historicro.org/>.

Cindy Ainsworth is President of the Nevada Chapter of the Lincoln Highway Association, a HRPS Past President and past Chair of the City of Reno Historical Resources Commission.



The beautiful ironwork on the north side of the home at 801 S. Arlington was likely done by the Ginocchio's company, Reno Iron Works. Photo by Cindy Ainsworth.

A Mid-Century Property The C. Clifton Young Federal Building

Article and Photography by Gail Ewart

The C. Clifton Young Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse, 300 Booth Street, opened in 1965 across from Reno High School. This building typifies the federal effort to incorporate modern design into government buildings. New guidance called for quality materials, flexible interiors, innovative elements, and public art, with an emphasis on enhancing employee morale. Private firms created the designs to ensure a variety of expression.

The General Services Agency (GSA), one of 31 agencies originally housed in the building, provides management services to federal buildings. Community leaders wanted the building located near the then new city hall (now Terry Lee Wells Discovery Museum) in order to form a civic center. Reno's strong growth at the time caused downtown land prices to spike. To lower the project cost, GSA selected the Booth Street site instead. Community leaders protested, and Mayor Baker forced a re-evaluation of the location decision. GSA prevailed, even though the Booth Street site required improvements to Keystone Avenue and a new bridge over the Truckee River.

Lockard, Casazza, Parsons & Associates designed the Young Building in the New Formalism style during the second wave of Modernism. This style emphasizes marble and granite, smooth wall surfaces, arcades and projecting cornices. This awarding-winning firm also designed the Reno-Sparks Convention Center, the Washoe County Administration Building, Laxalt Mineral Research Center, and Lawlor Events Center.

The Young Building is five stories high, with a mechanical penthouse. The exterior features overlapping rectangular



Front Elevation of the C. Clifton Young Building showing the expanse of exterior decoration. May 2020.

volumes, flat roofs, metal frame windows, and integrated ornamentation. Especially notable are the colorful aluminum grilles and blue porcelain panels. The penthouse sports terracotta screening.

On the inside, the lobby walls are clad in marble with terrazzo flooring. A painting by Richard Guy Walton, referred to as *Life Before the Pioneer Era*, is installed flush with the wall opposite the entrance, giving it the look of a mural. Walton was a prolific painter and photographer whose subjects ranged widely from the stark Nevada desert, his Comstock neighbors, ineffectual politicians, and studies of spatial issues that usually intrigue mathematicians.

The building was praised and panned by early occupants. Many were delighted by the spaciousness and abundance of natural light. Others complained about having smaller, darker offices than their previous quarters. The most significant upside was the gathering together of federal agencies previously scattered around Carson City and Reno. This arrangement was more efficient for citizens and for agency personnel who needed to work closely together. A state-of-the-art communications network (a telephone system and operators) connected this building with all other federal buildings.

In 1988, Congress dedicated the building to C. Clifton Young. Young was a Nevada native who served as Public Administrator for Washoe County, in the Nevada Senate, the U.S. House of Representatives, and on the Nevada Supreme Court. In addition to his government service, C. Clifton Young was active in civic organizations and was a long-time supporter of the National Wildlife Foundation, serving as its president for a time.



Décor detail at the entrance to the Young Federal Building. May 2020.

Woodwork inside the courtrooms, built-in furniture, drinking fountains and mail chutes are still intact. Because the building retains a high degree of integrity inside and out, it is eligible for the National Register for Historic Places. The U.S. GSA has recently submitted a nomination for the building to the National Register of Historic Places. Federal agencies still housed in the Young Building include U.S. Bankruptcy Court, GSA, and U.S. Marshals.

Information for this article: Letter of Determination of Eligibility, January 28, 2016, from GSA Pacific Rim Region to Nevada State Historic Preservation Office, enclosing National Register Eligibility Determination; *Reno Gazette-Journal*, February 27, 1965, "New Federal Building Due for Occupancy"; *Reno Gazette-Journal*, March 13, 1965, "Federal Building Pleases Government Workers"; Newspapers.com.

Gail Ewart is a 5-year resident of Reno, a retired geographer with extensive experience in urban planning and Mid-Century Modern design.



Referred to as "Life Before Pioneer Era," by Richard Guy Walton, this tryptic is often identified as a mural. Native American themes are a recurrent subject of Walton's work. March 2020.



by Sharon Honig-Bear

Pioneer Center and Downtown Library added to Reno City Register of Historic Places

In one of the successes of the Reno MoMo (Modern Movement) initiative, the Reno City Council gave enthusiastic approval to inclusion of the Pioneer Center for the Performing Arts and the Downtown Reno Library on the City Register of Historic Places. Both buildings were recognized for their unique Mid-Century architecture and their importance in the cultural growth of Reno.

Plans are underway to create historic markers for the sites and we hope for a fun-filled installation and celebration when conditions are right. HRPS members will be among the first to know since HRPS was instrumental in raising the funds and planning the activities that accompanied the year-long project.

Special thanks to HRPS Board members Alicia Barber (for the Pioneer) and Sharon Honig-Bear (for the Downtown Library) for writing the nominations and shepherding them through the many steps until approval was reached.

Still craving more Modern Movement?

Watch three Neighborhood Stories that HRPS developed for the 2020 Artown at HRPS website historicro.org: *Historic High Rises in Reno* and *Mid-Century Modern* offer invaluable information on this movement in Reno and the *Circle/Southridge tour* offers examples of a Mid-Century residential area.

The HRPS-sponsored app renohistorical.org has added several related "tours." You can experience these on your device or by foot or car! *Modern Movement* and *Motels and Early Auto Tourism* provide a wealth of information.

We continue to add more content on this historic period (see related article in this issue on the *C. Clifton Young Federal Building*).

Sharon Honig-Bear is a HRPS Board member, a HRPS Tour Guide, and the founder of the Harvest of Homes Tour.



The Pioneer. Courtesy UNR Special Collections.

Chinese Herbal Medicine Is Time-Honored Tradition in Reno

by Sharon Honig-Bear



It's easy to think of Chinese alternative medicine as something new, a hip-and-happening path to wellbeing. In reality, Reno and surrounding cities have a history of herbal shops that goes back a hundred years to the Chinatowns of old.

Reno's Thriving Chinatown

"Hey what?" you may ask. Chinatown? Reno, like many other towns throughout Nevada, had a lively Chinese community at the turn of the 20th century. After the transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869, many Chinese stayed and established local enclaves.

In Reno, Chinatown extended east along Front Street (now First Street), on the north bank of the Truckee River. Health was important to the Chinese from the start. The first uniquely Chinese businesses revolved around intensive gardening with three major fruit and vegetable areas. Chinatown functioned as an independent entity within Reno and many businesses catered to Chinese residents, while opium dens, laundries, gambling, and prostitution catered to the wider population.

Discrimination was rampant and local newspapers spread these views. An 1871 *Nevada State Journal* editorial stated, "For sanitary and other reasons, this class of our population should always be removed from the center of towns...Their unearthly noises and heathenish habits ill accord with the quiet that obtains among a civilized people and in Reno, especially, they are an unmitigated nuisance."

These views led to an unannounced torching of the neighborhood one night in 1908. Chinatown was never rebuilt but many Chinese moved out to the surrounding downtown area, opening restaurants, shops, and rooming houses.

Chinese Herbal Shops Abound

By the beginning of the 20th century, Chinese herbal shops were common in Reno. An early proponent was the C. Shee Way Herb Co. at 12 Commercial Row. In frequent advertisements beginning in 1914, readers were asked "Are you sick—or discouraged about your health? Cheer up! There is help for you!"

which was followed by a long list of ailments that the herbs could cure. Other ads soon followed for the Wai Sun Herb Co., May Ling Herb Co., Sing and Kwan Herb Co. They drew their clients from the Caucasian community and ads often featured testimonials endorsing the herbal products.

Prominent Herbalist Faces Manslaughter Charges

The path of the herbalists hit a major snag in 1941. The most prominent herbal doctor at the time was Dr. Q. S. Wong. In 1924, he opened his practice at 138 West Street, a building whose construction he likely financed himself. In August of 1941, Dr. Wong was charged with manslaughter in the death of a client he was treating. The District Attorney charged that Wong illegally treated Velma Valentine Webb of Oregon for epilepsy, practicing medicine without a license. Although released on \$1,000 bail, Wong and four other Chinese herbalists were ordered to close their businesses. During his trial, he noted that he had helped 15,750 patients in his 30 years as an herbalist in Reno. Interestingly there was no account of the trial's outcome in the local newspapers but



At top, a full page print from Harper's Weekly in 1877 featuring the Chinese in Virginia City. The photo above shows Reno officers at the 138 West Street office of herbalist Q.S. Wong in July of 1941. Wong was charged with involuntary manslaughter when a client died of epilepsy. He was later cleared of all charges.

the herbal shops reopened soon after. In the *Nevada State Journal* on December 25, 1943, Dr. Wong's ad read "Season's Greetings to all Americans in the good old-fashioned spirit of the occasion." He remained in business until early 1945 and died later that year while with family in Sacramento.

As times changed, so did recognition of the Chinese healing arts. Fast forward to 1973 when the Nevada Legislature approved a bill allowing for the practice of acupuncture. And in a final touch of irony, an ad in 1975 in the *Reno Evening Gazette* touted younger looking skin with "Chinese Gingseng Crème." From vegetable gardens to herbal shops to cosmetics, the Chinese brought an imprint of health and wellness to Reno and the surrounding area.

Sharon Honig-Bear was the long-time restaurant writer for the *Reno Gazette Journal*. She is a tour leader with Historic Reno Preservation Society, a Past President of HRPS, and founder of HRPS annual Reno Harvest of Homes Tour.

From last week.

STOMACH TROUBLE CURED WITH HERBAL REMEDIES

DR. T. P. KWAN,
356 North Virginia Street,
Reno, Nevada.

Dear Doctor— I was suffering with stomach trouble and had consulted no medicine. I had been feeling pain in the intestines and right side for about a year. I went to a hospital and some of the doctors said that I would have to be operated on for appendicitis immediately, but I feared an operation.

I was treated by you for three weeks; my old complaints have entirely left me and I am stronger than I have been in the past three years. I shall always be very grateful to you for the benefits of your treatment and will gladly recommend it to any who are suffering as I was.

Yours truly,
HOY GILBERT,
453 Nevada St., Reno, Nevada, March 1, 1922.

CONSULTATION FREE

The Sing and Kwan Herb Co.

The Famous Chinese HERBALISTS

When Others Fail, Come to See Us

PHONE 1226-W

356 N. VIRG. ST.
Reno, Nevada



Above: The Sing and Kwan Herb Co. advertisement reprinted from Nevada State Journal, March 19, 1922.

At right: Chun and Wan Herb Co. advertisement reprinted from Nevada State Journal, July 20, 1932.

DR. Q. S. WONG

HERB SPECIALIST

—in—

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CHUN & WAN HERB SPECIALISTS

The most modern Herb Laboratory and the largest and most complete stock of Chinese Herbs of every description for every ailment is now on hand for your convenience.

Your Patronage at This Reno Office is Cordially Solicited

In establishing our offices at 669 South Virginia Street we make our bow to the residents of this district, having for our purpose the performance of the same character of healing service which we have been giving to Californians elsewhere during the past 25 years. For a quarter of a century we have been established in San Francisco, Oakland and other California cities. As a result of our efficient treatment of illness by our Chinese herbs, we have thousands of testimonials covering almost the complete category of human ailments. What we have done for others we earnestly believe we can do for you.

The imported herbs of 3000 varieties which we employ have been known and used by the Chinese people for thousands of years. We use no narcotics, no knife; only nature's herbs that God put into the ground for the very purpose of healing mankind.

Our files of testimonials are open for your inspection and you will find them covering almost every ailment.

Whatever your trouble may be and howsoever discouraged you may have become because of failure in your efforts to secure relief, come and consult us for quick and permanent results. When you face the numerous voluntary testimonials of grateful patrons you will please bear in mind that our occidental patrons have come to us only after repeated failures from treatment by others as chronic and hopeless.

OUR STERLING REPUTATION AND OUR WIDE EXPERIENCE MADE THE RECORD OF OUR STEADY SUCCESS

We diagnose your particular ailment and supply the correct herbs for prompt relief and final cure. Consult us on stomach, liver, lungs, kidneys, heart trouble, chronic asthma, catarrh, neuralgia, cough, blood pressure, skin disorders, pneumonia, diabetes, rheumatism, dropsy, appendicitis, hemorrhoids and female trouble.

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At left: The G. Shee Way Herb Company advertisement reprinted from Reno Evening Gazette, April 7, 1914.



A MESSAGE TO THE SICK

時園藥房

YOU NEED NOT BE DISCOURAGED ABOUT YOUR HEALTH. CHEER UP. THERE IS POSITIVE HELP FOR YOU.

OUR FAMOUS HERBS WILL CURE DISEASES OF THE LUNGS, STOMACH, HEART, LIVER, KIDNEYS, RHEUMATISM, BLOOD POISON, IMPURE BLOOD, THROAT, PARALYSIS, NERVOUSNESS, CONSTIPATION, WEAKNESS, DIZZINESS, APPENDICITIS, CONSUMPTION, MALARIA, CATARRH, BLADDER TROUBLE, SKIN DISEASES, FEMALE TROUBLE, IN FACT ALL AILMENTS OF THE HUMAN FAMILY.

THOUSANDS OF YEARS DOCTORING BY THE CHINESE HAVE TAUGHT US WONDERFUL CURES.

OUT OF TOWN PATIENTS CURED AT HOME. WRITE OR CALL FOR SYMPTOM BLANK. CHINESE HERBS AND HERBAL REMEDIES.

G. SHEE WAY HERB COMPANY

12 W. COMMERCIAL ROW

PHONE 1323

Join Sharon Honig-Bear for some of the tasty stories that she researches regularly for *ediblerenotahoe* magazine for her column "Edible Traditions." Join Sharon on Zoom for HRPS Educational Program "Taste of History" on Tuesday, November 3, at 5:30 p.m. (see page 8).



Message From Your HRPS President

Carol Coleman

story seems to increase by 20-25 hits per week. Running videos on our website has turned out to be a marvelous way to reach people.

We do plan to create more videos—like Debbie Hinman's Ten Years of HRPS Harvest of Home Tours.

HRPS Board Actions

HRPS has temporarily found an Executive Director to assist us with the CARES projects and in our effort to install a Membership Management software package. While interviewing Joy Orlich for the open Treasurer Board position, it was apparent she had multiple skills that could assist HRPS. She agreed to work as Executive Director for three months and then to become HRPS Treasurer, both pending a Board vote to approve.

We welcome a new HRPS Board member, Elizabeth "Libby" Cook, a professional architectural historian who works for NDOT. Libby moved here from Virginia where she includes time at Colonial Williamsburg on her resume.

The HRPS Money Situation

As I mentioned last issue, since we aren't having any fund-raising events because of COVID-19, it is affecting our finances. However, there is good news on that end—HRPS applied for and received both the Nevada Arts Council CARES grant and the Nevada Humanities CARES grant. Both are restricted to Operating funds over a fourth month period, but that takes care of office rent, Executive Director, insurance and some licenses. It is a very welcome relief. These two grants along with the Vanguard Charitable grant are coming close to covering what I figured we would lose with COVID-19 cancellations. What we are still missing are the new memberships we usually receive when we are meeting and greeting people at events.

Thanks to Flick Ranch Project

You may have followed the efforts of the Flick Ranch Project, a non-profit headed by Kelly Rigby. Their

stated purpose was "preserving and enhancing culture, heritage and historical architecture by renovating and repurposing the Flick Ranch Mansion in Reno." HRPS ran the story of Flick Ranch in the Spring 2016 issue of *FootPrints*, Vol. 19 No. 2. The Flick Ranch property was purchased by the Truckee River Flood Control Project in 2007, and the Flick Ranch Project tried mighty hard to convince them to move the ranch house to save it as a heritage center. Now that the ranch has been demolished, the non-profit is disbanding and disbursing its funds. They chose to give HRPS \$1,500 as HRPS' mission fits well with the Flick Ranch Project's mission. Many, many thanks to Kelly Rigby and Joyce Cox, both Flick Ranch Board members.

Good News and Surprises

Those wonderful folks who choose to be Lifetime members donate \$1,000 to HRPS, \$500 of which goes directly to the Reno Heritage Fund and \$500 to Operations Reserves. George Burke became a Lifetime member in July, joining his wife Linda Burke, who is already a Lifetime member. Many thanks to the Burkes for their strong support of HRPS. Thanks to Barbara and Ralph Courtney who became Lifetime members in July. Barbara is a long-time HRPS supporter and was a HRPS Board member from 2007 to 2012. Joyce Cox became a Lifetime member in August; Joyce is a member of the *FootPrints* team and the author of the Arcadia books *Washoe County* and *Sparks*. Thank you, Joyce. We appreciate these Lifetime funds and work to "dribble" them out over the course of years.

I want to thank all of you who support HRPS in whatever way that you can. As you may realize, HRPS is a pretty lean and mean organization. To all who support HRPS financially, HRPS thanks you.

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

How are you doing?

During these difficult times, HRPS hopes that you are taking care of yourself. When you combine the COVID-19 pandemic, the smoke from the fires in the West, economic downturn, and the political environment, it's tough on everybody. I'm just grateful we aren't in the middle of fires like California, Oregon and Washington are—hopefully it will stay that way. Please do take care of yourself and those you love. Even those you don't love.

Virtual Education Programs

HRPS' first priority is to keep everybody safe during this pandemic. Our usual in-library Education Programs will be virtual this Fall, and are likely to remain virtual for the January to May Programs. Please join us for our October 6 Zoom program with Jerry Wager, who will discuss the onset of WWII and the work of American scientists and the military to ensure Germany didn't use a nuclear weapon—and the Reno connection to this. On November 3, Sharon Honig-Bear, wearing her hat of journalist and historian, will enthrall you with stories from her Edible Reno Tahoe column. See Zoom link details on page 8 and check out one of Sharon's stories on pages 12-13.

A Big Hit!

We decided to create virtual Neighborhood Stories as HRPS' offering for Artown 2020. Fortunately, we decided to record them. What a win-win situation that has been! We had about 550 total attendees for the 18 Stories we did on Zoom in July. As of this week, we have more than 5,000 hits on the recorded Stories on the HRPS website, historicro.org. Each

HRPS Lifetime Members

Darleen R Azizisefat
Sharon Honig-Bear
Jacqueline Black (*)
Laurie & Greg Boyer
Lynn Bremer
Holly Walton-Buchanan
Florence Ann Burgess
George Burke
Linda Burke
Tom & Phyllis Cates
Jan & Phil Chik
Press & Delores Clewe
Karalea Clough
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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.

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