

# FootPrints

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

**Historic Reno  
PRESERVATION  
SOCIETY**

WINTER 2003 NEWSLETTER VOL. 6, NO. 1

## Donors for HRPS Annual Dinner and Auction 2002

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Sage Creek Grill & Taproom-Bill Thornton  
Silver Peak Brewery  
Victoria Wallington  
Washoe County Community Concert Asso.  
Kathy Wishart

## HRPS "Burma Shave" Poem Winners

He done her wrong  
But she was lucky  
Six weeks in Reno  
Her ring's in the Truckee  
All Roads Lead to Reno!

Our biggest little secret  
Everyone should know  
DeLongchamps would be famous  
If he'd built  
A casino!  
All Roads Lead to Reno!


They came to Reno to make some dough  
Mr. Gable and Miss Monroe  
While in town they had a snit  
It seems that they  
Were really Misfit!  
All Roads Lead to Reno!

## Celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the Transcontinental Highways

### Charleston, Charleston, everybody's doing the Charleston!

Once again HRPS turned the clock back for an evening of good food, great music, friends and entertainment; fun, all in a setting reminiscent of earlier times. On November 8, 2002, one hundred twenty-five party-goers turned out at the California Building on what was truly a dark and stormy night to acknowledge the importance of the Lincoln and Victory Highways to our nation and to our region. Larry Elliot and the Goode Time Band definitely set the mood with ragtime, jazz and 20s vintage music. Horn player and vocalist George Montag did a marvelous job on What a Wonderful World, made famous by Louis 'Sachmo'

Armstrong. Quilters from the Truckee Meadows Quilter's Guild added to the sense of the original Exposition with their beautiful hand-arts. Old fashioned carnival cutouts had many of us hamming it up before Glee Willis and her camera. The catering by Rutherfords was outstanding.

HRPS was delighted to welcome fellow travelers from the Lincoln Highway Association and Alice Parsons and Christine Fey from the City of Reno. The Board wishes to thank members Cindy Ainsworth, Joan Collins, Joan Dyer, Nancy Holmes and Ann McCarty for their many, many hours of work. Thanks also to Kathy Wishart and Felvia Belaustegui for their work on the silent auction. 



HRPS Charleston Flappers Joan Collins, Nancy Holmes, Cindy Ainsworth.

## HRPS Bricks & Stones Walking Tour

### Overview of the Bricks & Stones Neighborhood

The Bricks and Stones neighborhood represents sixty years of Reno building, from 1870 to 1930. It's a vernacular neighborhood, complete within itself with schools, churches, grocery stores and homes. In 1870, the area bounded by Arlington, California, Plumas and Reno Street was an Addition called Marsh's Park. In 1907, another area bounded by Lander, Taylor, Arlington and La Rue was developed called Park Lawn.

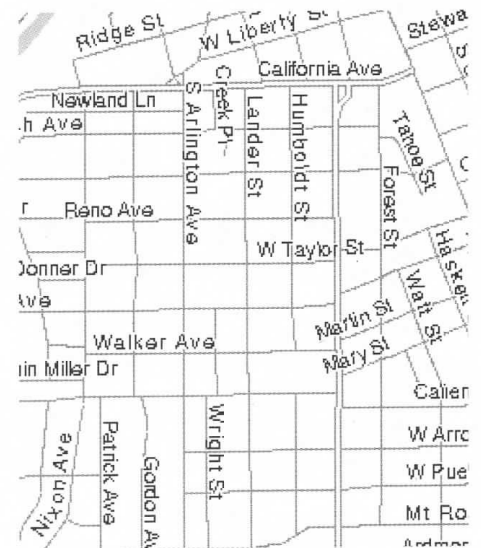
A developer would offer lots in an area three blocks by two blocks. When that was sold, the same developer or another would offer another small group of lots. This is like the tract developments today, but on a much smaller scale. The lots were sold but houses not necessarily erected at that time. Many homeowners selected a floor plan from an existing plan in a book, or a Sears' catalog or obtained plans from a neighbor. To make their houses look different they would have different brick patterns on the outside, use quoins, and have brick or stone trim around the windows, doors and entrances.

This was a neighborhood of teachers, white-collar workers, business owners and professionals. There were nice lawns and beautiful porches. Homeowners often sat on front porches talking and conversing with neighbors. This was a neighborhood of deep lots with alleys running through the middle of the block. To encourage affordable housing for the downtown workers, permits were given for apartments and small houses in back yards. There is a whole neighborhood culture awaiting exploration in the alleys of Bricks and Stones.

**Editor's Note:** Special thanks to Anne Simone, Neva Gardner Watne, and the folks at the State Historic Preservation Office for providing FootPrints with details about the Bricks and Stones Walking Tour neighborhood.

#### WALKING TOUR PATH:

Start at California and Lander, south on Lander, short detour east on Marsh, return to Lander, continue on Lander to Pueblo, east on Pueblo to Humboldt, north on Humboldt St. through Billingshurst Park to California, cross California to Hill, west on Liberty, south on Flint, return to California at Lander.



#### The Stone House at 1203 Lander Street

In 1932, Neva Gardner and her family moved into the small stone house at 1203 Lander Street, a few houses south of Mt. Rose Elementary and Mrs. State's Lander Street Grocery.

It was open, sagebrush dotted country then. Our Lady of the Snows had not been built. The roads were dirt and there were no sidewalks. Neva and her friends from "the Lander Street Gang" had to take their roller skates up to more established neighborhoods like Nixon and Gordon to find sidewalks.

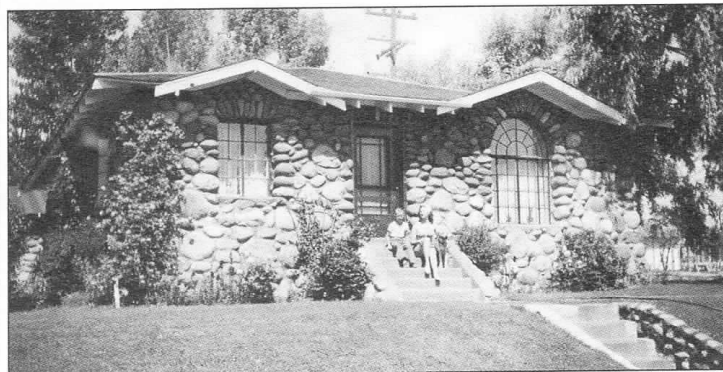
The builder of these intriguing stone houses was a man named John Logan Reinmiller. He and his family lived in a large, white house presently occupied by Our Lady of the Snows School and playground. Reinmiller was trained as a mining engineer and it was probably

mining that brought him to the area.

But it is building stone houses for which he is remembered. It was not a slipshod effort Neva reports. The bulk of the stones were excavated directly from the site. Mr. Reinmiller and his wife carefully selected ones they felt were well suited to one another, and if additional stones were needed, the fields were full of them.

The walls were three feet thick with no veneer. The house was warm in the winter and cool in the summer. The lot sloped directly to the street, since the present-day stone retaining wall was added later.

Neva lived in this house, within easy walking distance of everything, from 1932 until 1965. This little gem set Neva's family back \$3,400 - five hundred down and thirty a month.



1943 photo of 1203 Lander, courtesy of Neva Watne.

## HRPS Bricks & Stones Walking Tour (continued)

### The Giraud-Hardy House, 442 Flint Street. Reno

Compiled by Anne Simone, Joan Collins, and Helen Hardy Mills

One of Reno's most beautiful landmarks was designed in 1914 by prominent Nevada architect Frederic J. DeLongchamps (1882-1969). The Giraud-Hardy House at 442 Flint Street is an imposing two and one-half story brick structure exhibiting Colonial/Georgian revival influence. The structure is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

It was completed in 1919 for sheep rancher Joseph J. Giraud, Sr. at a cost of \$11,500. The foundation is constructed primarily of hand-cut stone taken from the site. Walls are 14-inch-thick brick laid in a Flemish bond pattern alternating sides and ends. Over the eighty-four years of its existence many changes have taken place, but it retains much of its original character.

The Girauds lived in the house for ten years. Records from 1930 show that the Crocker Bank then took possession and it was rented until 1934 when it was purchased by Roy Hardy, a distinguished mining engineer. The house remained in residential use until 1976 when it was converted to a restaurant.

Hardy, clearly one of Nevada's outstanding figures in mine and milling operations, served in numerous capacities as mine foreman, supervisor, owner, and operator of a number of mining operations in Tonopah, Virginia City and Humboldt County. He also worked for the mining enterprises of George Wingfield, prominent Nevada entrepreneur, politician and financier. The collaboration of George Wingfield, Roy Hardy, and eventually Noble Getchell, produced some of Reno's and Nevada's most interesting stories, some associated with what has become known simply as "The Hardy House."

Readers may recall from the Fall, 2002 issue of FootPrints, (Vol. 5, No. 3) that it was Bonnie, one of Dr. George and Alice Thoma's two beautiful daughters, who became the wife of Roy Hardy. Following their marriage, Bonnie and Roy lived with the Thoma family at 401 South Virginia until they moved into the beautiful home on the corner of Flint and California.

Helen Hardy Mills writes to us with the following information:

"My grandfather, Roy A. Hardy, and great uncle, George Wingfield, were business associates when Roy Hardy married Bonnie Thoma. Roy introduced George to Roxy Thoma. George and Roxy (George Wingfield's second wife) lived together with George's son, George Jr., and his daughter, Jean Wingfield, the offspring of his first marriage, at their home (which has recently been lost to fire) at 219 Court Street."

"My grandparents, my father Royce A. Hardy, and his sister Alice Hardy (Paulsen) lived at 442 Flint Street. The Thoma sisters were very devoted to each other and lived within walking distance of one another, seeing each other nearly every day of their lives. Roy Hardy and George Wingfield started out being friends, as well as business and political associates, and ended up brothers-in-law. They, too, saw each other daily, often dining together with their wives at their homes, where both my grandmother Bonnie and great aunt Roxy were fabulous in the kitchen

(my grandmother preferring a wood burning stove in conjunction with her electric one). Many times, as one would expect, the Hardys and the Wingfields (and their many guests) dined at Uncle George's beloved Riverside Hotel."



*The Hardy House, California and Flint, Reno.  
Photo courtesy of [www.nevadamax.com](http://www.nevadamax.com).*

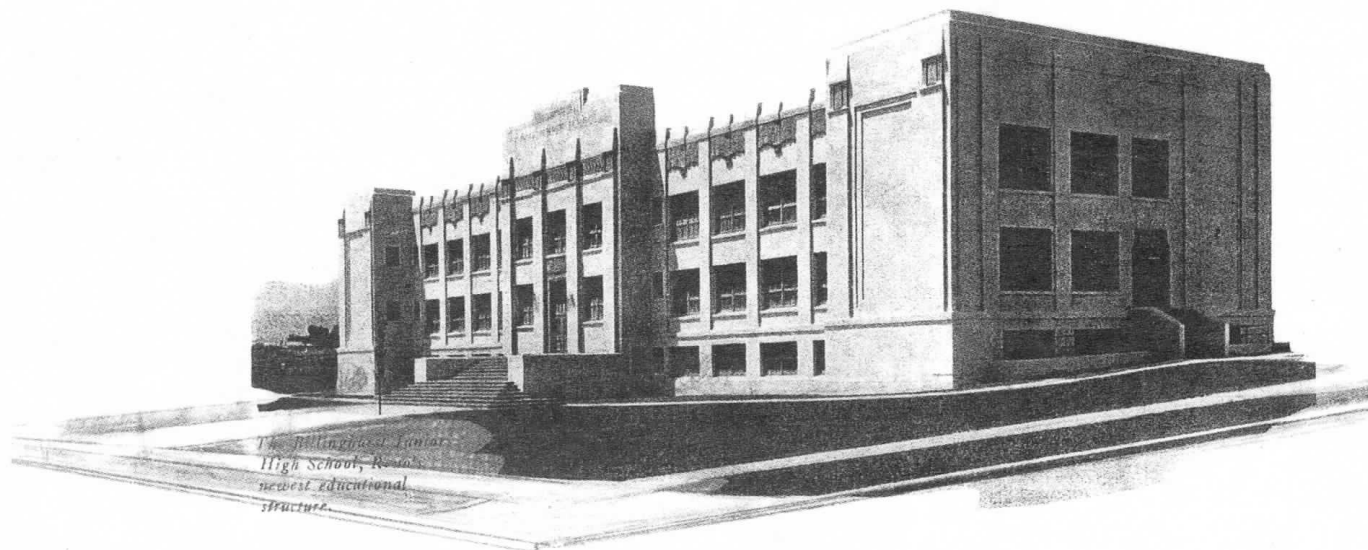
Interestingly, around this same time, Roy Hardy introduced his sister-in-law Roxy to George Wingfield. As C. Elizabeth Raymond reports in her book, *George Wingfield: Owner and Operator of Nevada*, a \$6,000 diamond ring was placed on Roxy's finger as George declared to his friends, "I think I've got it right this time." The Reverend Brewster Adams of the First Baptist Church, then located across from St. Thomas Aquinas, officiated. The wedding was held at the Thoma homestead at 401 South Virginia Street, which today would be across from the Bruce Thompson Federal Court House.

**Editor's Note:** Please excuse the errors in Vol. 5 No. 3 in which we had Bonnie Thoma Hardy married (in the same paragraph) to both Roy Hardy and George Wingfield. Bonnie Hardy was married to Roy Hardy. Roxy Thoma Wingfield was married to George Wingfield. Roxy is spelled Roxy and not Roxie. Helen, we thank you.



## HRPS Bricks & Stones Walking Tour (continued)

### B.D. Billingshurst Junior High School



*B.D. Billingshurst Junior High School, was in the Bricks and Stones Neighborhood, bounded on the west by Lander, the east by Plumas, the north by Walker, and the south by Monroe.*


**B**.D. Billingshurst Junior High School, built during the 1930s on Plumas Street, was named for Benson Dillon Billingshurst, a renowned Nevada educator. From 1908 until his death in 1935, Billingshurst served as Reno City Schools Superintendent. His name and influence are associated with reform and innovation in Nevada education. He was the first educator in the state to introduce the junior high school concept. He was a leader and innovator in industrial, home and commercial education. He was associated with the establishment of the State Textbook

Commission. He was instrumental in the creation of laws providing for free textbooks for school children, compulsory attendance, medical examination requirements and improved methods for financing education.


Reno City Schools was the largest and best financed school district in the state during Billingshurst's superintendency. In 1933 the U.S. Department of Education rated Nevada's schools as second only to those of New York in quality and educational standards. This status was

generally attributed to B.D. Billingshurst's work, vision and qualities of leadership.

Today the block where the school stood is a recreation area for the City of Reno, and boasts notable rock work on the western portion of the property by the Works Progress Authority (WPA), one of many such WPA projects in Reno during the Great Depression.

B.D. Billingshurst's name appropriately lives on at a new middle school in northwest Reno. 

### The Lander Street Grocery

**T**he original structure at 1019 Lander Street was a tract cottage built in 1933. Later, the little neighborhood store was added in front where Mrs. States provided "treats" for school children for many years. The last owners, Mr. and Mrs. A.G. Clark, owned the store since the 1950s. The business zoning for this piece of property was such that when the Clarks stopped using it as a store, it had to revert to a residence. Mr. Clark passed away in 1998 at the age of 97, and Mrs. Clark felt she could no longer operate the store. She sold the equipment and closed the store. The property is now used exclusively as a residence. 

**Editor's Note:** In the early 1940s Mrs. States sold Double Bubble Gum for two cents. I showed up at Mrs. States nearly every day with two pennies. Sometimes I'd change my mind and get two sticks of licorice instead of gum. Then I wasn't in so much trouble at Mt. Rose.



## On the National Register of Historic Places

### The B.D. Billingshurst Home, 729 Evans Avenue, Reno

This lovely home was erected in 1910 as a residence for B.D. Billingshurst, Superintendent of Reno City Schools. The two-story wood frame structure is located on Evans Avenue near the University of Nevada. It was designed and built with great skill and sensitivity, and is a perfect example of the bungalow style of architecture developed in the early 1900s.

The building was lap cedar and shingle siding, with a gable composition shingle roof, and a partial stone and concrete foundation. The interior pine, stained, varnished and rubbed in five successive coats, is a remarkable example of finish work not commonly found in modern construction. Most of the electric light fixtures are original and the glass-fronted bookcases, glass doors and mirrors are beveled. The interior finish is plaster with wood walls and ceilings, and the floors are of hardwood. The 2,302 square foot home has living room, den, formal dining area, kitchen with eating area, utility room and one-half bath on the first floor, with three bedrooms and one bath on the second floor. There is a full basement with a concrete floor.

B.D. Billingshurst lived in the home from 1910 until his death in 1935. A nationally known educator, and Reno's second Superintendent of Schools, he was responsible for many reforms and innovations in Nevada education. (Please see story on page 4.)

The home on Evans was originally in the middle of the block between 7th and 8th Streets. Orvis Ring Elementary School was across the street to the east. It was an ideal location, just down the street from the University of Nevada. The ideal location was to change as

highway plans placed Interstate 80 right beside the Billingshurst home.

In 1971 the home was purchased by the Nevada Highway Department as freeway right-of-way for the construction of Interstate 80. Two crusaders, Florence Billingshurst Flagg, daughter of B.D. Billingshurst, and Edward S. Parsons, Reno architect, fought the good fight over the next six years to preserve the building.


They were initially given two years to petition to place the house in the National Registry. In August of 1973 they were given an extension of ninety days

the house was not eligible. They tried the University of Nevada, which replied that it would be pleased to accept the house as a gift but did not have the funds to purchase the home.

Despite all of the efforts of Flagg, Parsons, and the Washoe Landmark Preservation Inc., the home was sold at auction in January, 1977 for \$48,000 to the highest bidder, Abbas Lebastchi. The Nevada State Journal reported that Lebastchi planned to live in the home and to work with Mrs. Flagg to regain some of the home's past glory. In May, 1979 the Regional Planning Commission voted against a commercial development

proposal for the property, and voted to keep its residential zoning but designate it as a historic landmark so that a special use permit could be issued.

729 Evans currently is the first house on the south side of Interstate 80. Orvis Ring Elementary has been razed, and apartments occupy that location.

Today Farmer's Insurance occupies the property at 729 Evans in a wonderful example of adaptive reuse. The interior is beautiful. The original condition of the house has been preserved, and in some cases enhanced. 



*The B.D. Billingshurst home at the time it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974.*

before the house would be sold at public auction. Over the years they were given additional extensions, including one last minute reprieve from Governor Mike O'Callaghan. In November 1974 the B.D. Billingshurst home was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The problems of saving the property were not over yet. A buyer was needed to purchase the property from the highway department. Mrs. Flagg and Mr. Parsons sought funds through the Nevada State Park System, but were told

**Editor's Note:** HRPS thanks Rusty Hinman and Bill Burgess (the younger) of Farmers Insurance for generously allowing us to tour their house/office space and entrusting us with wonderful historic photos and clippings. Also thanks to Bill for reminding us that Florence Billingshurst was a busy, well-known piano teacher working from this house and that Bill's cousin Peggy Burgess Pendleton was once a student of hers.

# Historic Resources Commission Report

by Mella Rothwell Harmon, Chair

**I**t seems unbelievable that another year has passed and I am once again writing about Historic Resources Commission's annual accomplishments. As usual, we have had a busy year. Here are some examples of our activities.

The process has taken longer than anticipated, but HRC is very near to completing the update of the City's inventory of historic buildings, which will ultimately be housed at the main branch of the Washoe County Library, with a second set at the State Historic Preservation Office in Carson City. The final product will consist of three sets of binders, each set sorting property information in a different way. One set will contain MetroScan sheets sorted by construction year. The MetroScan sheets provide basic information on all properties dating from 1865 to 1962, including address, parcel number, date of construction, and a brief description of the building. The second set will contain MetroScan sheets sorted by Assessor's Parcel Number. The third set of binders will contain copies of surveys conducted in Reno for other projects, for example compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The majority of these surveys are part of the state's inventory on file at the State Historic Preservation Office. In addition, the binders will include copies of all recorded subdivision maps from 1868 to 1962, and other maps that show the development history of the city. The HRC will also prepare a brochure with instructions on how to use the inventory to conduct historic property research. The HRC is grateful to Barbara Mackey and her staff for coordinating the survey, and I would personally like to thank the commissioners who assisted with the inventory.

HRPS board member Cindy Ainsworth approached the HRC earlier this year with the idea to place a commemorative plaque on the old Reno arch on Lake Street. It took many months of bureaucratic wrangling, but

we are nearly ready to send the final design to the bronze foundry in California to produce the plaque. In conjunction with HRPS, the City of Reno, and the Reno Redevelopment Agency, a dedication ceremony will be held as soon as plaque completion and good weather converge. The HRC wishes to acknowledge Cindy Ainsworth for her steadfast dedication to this project. I am sure she is grateful that HRPS does not have the checks and balances required by a Certified Local Government.

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## Nearly complete, inventory of Reno's Historic Buildings, to be housed at the main branch of the Washoe County Library.

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Over the year HRC continued to participate in City planning projects, such as the review and approval of the project for Mid-block of the redevelopment district, the Truckee River Pathway project. HRC also performed our duties as a Certified Local Government, including the review of Certificates of Appropriateness, National Register nominations, federal undertakings under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the annual historic preservation award ceremony and reception.

This fall, the HRC is fortunate to have acquired the services of UNR anthropology graduate student intern Kara Geiger, who is currently developing a website for the HRC with the assistance of Chris Good, the City's webmaster. The website will include a

brief history of Reno, a virtual tour of our historic buildings, and other exciting features. As soon as the site is complete and on-line, we will provide access information. Many thanks go to Kara for her creativity and technological skills, to Chris for his support of this project, and to Dr. Don Fowler for sending Kara our way for her internship.

Last, but not least, I want to add a few words as I complete my final term as HRC chairman. I started my term as the Mapes was coming down and a number of our professional members were forced to resign due to conflicts of interest. It was no doubt the lowest point in HRC history, but HRC persevered and has made many gains including an annual budget, and the cooperation and respect of the City Council and City staff. Personally, chairing the HRC has been an exceptional experience for me; one that was often uncomfortable, but mostly rewarding. I can't begin to thank all of those who deserve thanks, from the commissioners themselves to everyone in the City with whom I have worked, and to the steadfast members of the public who attend every HRC meeting—you know who you are. I also want to thank Donald Naquin, our staff liaison, who had us thrust upon him before he even got settled in his cubicle. Donald has been both friend and counselor and I can't thank him enough for all the time and effort he gives the HRC. With that, I wish you all a prosperous, peaceful, and happy New Year. 

*Mella Harmon is a historic preservation specialist with the State Historic Preservation Office, the current chairman of the Reno Historical Resources Commission, and a HRPS member. Ms. Harmon holds a Master's Degree in land use planning and historic preservation from the University of Nevada, Reno.*



# RSCVA Emphasizes Cultural Tourism and Historic Sites

by Mary Ann McAuliffe, Arts & Culture Manager, Reno-Sparks Convention & Visitors Authority

**S**ave your heritage, share it with visitors and reap the economic benefits of tourism! This is the core idea in cultural/heritage tourism. Cultural/heritage tourism is the phenomenon of travelers seeking authentic, exciting and educational encounters with the people, traditions, history and arts of a specific place. This travel trend has been gaining momentum in the U.S. since the late 90s. Our European friends have developed a lucrative industry by doing just this for centuries!

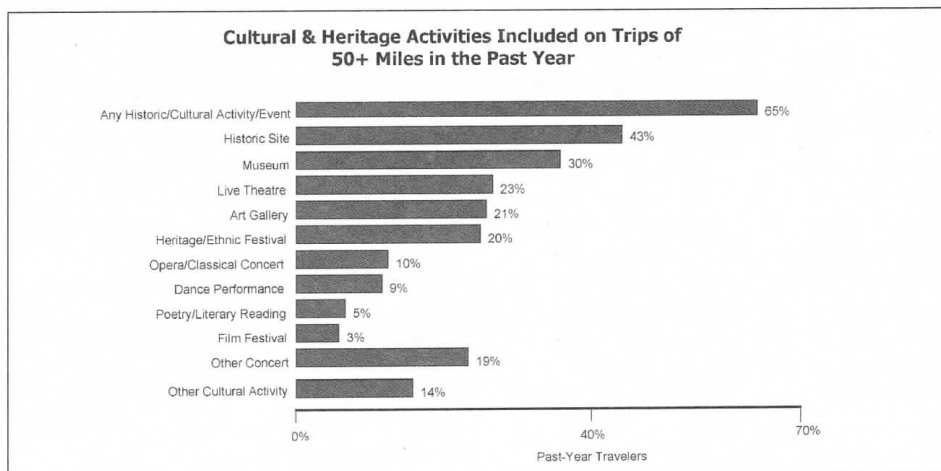
Now more than ever, the RSCVA has recognized that it must continue to develop and diversify its tourism products if it is to increase market share in the fiercely competitive tourism industry. Cultural and heritage tourism is now a permanent fixture in our destination message.

Nearly half (45%) of the US adult population ( 92.7 million) took a trip which included a heritage or cultural tourism component while on a trip of 50 miles or more, one way, in the past year. This is one in five (21%) of all domestic person-trips.

In addition, the market is increasing with aging populations of highly educated, well-traveled boomers, as well as trans-generational (family) tourists. Learning travel (cultural/heritage tourism) is an important niche market among these audiences.

Leisure travel trends indicate travelers are looking to make authentic connections (cultural, historic, heritage, natural). The Historic Reno Preservation Society (HRPS) is a tremendous resource that provides these authentic experiences for travelers.

In addition to product development, the RSCVA is always looking for ways to broaden its tourism base. This means we are looking to attract new demographic niches: families, Boomers and Gen-Xers. Interestingly enough, in recent years, the demographic profile of the cultural/heritage traveler has shifted dramatically. Today, this traveler is younger,




*This graph indicates the types of activities that cultural/heritage tourists engage in; visits to "Historic Sites" are rated as the second most popular activity. Information taken from the 2001 Travel Industry Association of America Historic/Cultural Traveler Report.*

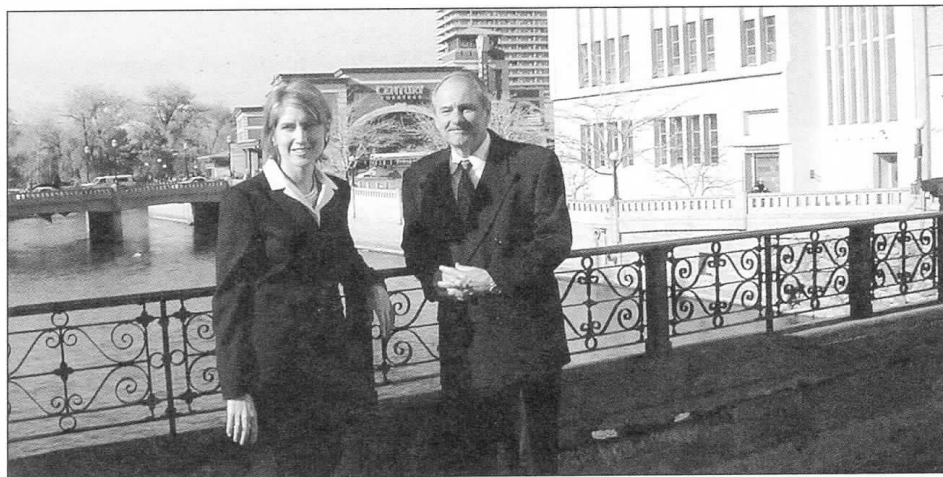
wealthier, more educated, and more technologically savvy. Travel industry research indicates that cultural/heritage travelers spend more money and stay longer at their chosen destination.

On average, heritage travelers spend \$722 per trip, excluding transportation to their destination. Average spending on U.S. trips in general is \$457.

Heritage travelers extend the duration of their trips, with an average duration of 5.7 nights. As a specific travel industry segment, it is quite evident why the cul-

tural/heritage tourist is so desirable to destination marketing organizations.

The RSCVA has been working diligently on the re-branding of our destination and HRPS is certainly part of this effort. Linking tourism and preservation can do more for local economies and for tourism and preservation than promoting them separately. Our heritage can be used as a new economic tool that debunks the tired myths about Reno. The answers have always been right in front of our eyes. 



*Mary Ann McAuliffe and Ralph Witsell, RSCVA Executive Director of Travel Industry Sales, pictured on the Virginia Street Bridge.*

## Old Barns are Like Old Suspenders


by Jack P. Hursh, Jr.

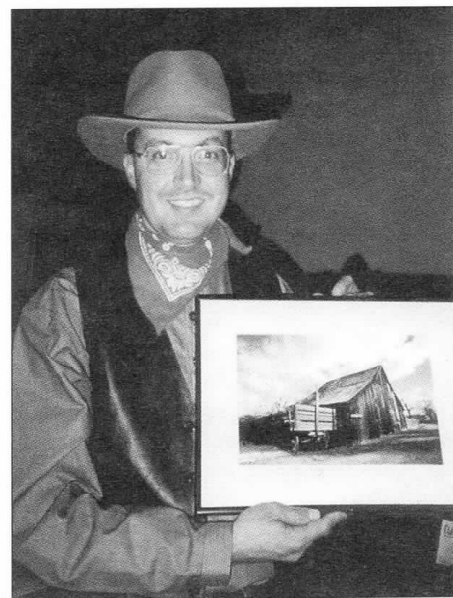
To know my parents is to know the Nevada experience, camping in the desert, visiting the ranchers, and exploring the mountains. My father is trademarked by the big smile, silver hair, and always wearing the "Nevada" suspenders given by me as a Christmas gift in 1993. These suspenders are really thick, dark blue with big beefy buckles, and the large bold letters spelling out NEVADA in the old western style typeface. His Levis and suspenders have been inseparable as part of his daily costume. After several years of constant wear, they began to look tattered. Expecting to receive the exact same product, I ordered a new set of suspenders from the same source. When they arrived, I pulled out of the package a very different product. The wide, thick material was now thin. The heavy, strong buckles had been replaced by narrow, light buckles that hardly gripped. The font style had changed from the big, bold, western style serif letters to small, anemic looking sans serif letters. I was so disappointed that I called the source and asked if they had the old style

suspenders. They answered that they no longer offered the old kind. The quality of the old suspenders is so endearing that my old man refused to wear the new ones and they got thrown away. He still wears the old suspenders because, although they look tattered, they are still structurally sound and will outlast several pairs of the cheap new suspenders.

Old suspenders are like old barns. The wood siding, although beaten by a century of weather and sun, has a rich, beautiful patina that is priceless. The craftsmanship and stockiness of the timber framing with just a good roof will last forever.

Old barns are like old suspenders as it was the barn that supported the ranch. In the 1860s, the ranches of Carson Valley, Washoe Valley, and the Truckee Meadows supported and fed Virginia City's Comstock Lode. Together the ranches and the Comstock Lode built this great state of Nevada.

Old suspenders are like old ranches and old barns, they don't make them anymore. 



Jack Hursh with the print of the Valley Road barn he donated to the HRPS Auction at the California Building.

## How to be a House Detective

by Felvia Belaustegui

Finding the history in your home can be fun and sometimes takes some detective work. I was back in Washington DC a couple weeks ago and the Smithsonian National Museum of American History featured a house located in Ipswich, Massachusetts. The house is 250 years old, and researchers were able to ascertain that only five families had lived in the house over that period of time. Many of the artifacts displayed in the Ipswich house were found behind walls where wallpaper had been added over the years and also in a long forgotten attic that had been closed off for years.

Some of the hints they gave to tracking down former residents were very obvious. Try to track down former residents or their children or by talking to neighbors. Many times neigh-

bors might even have photos or other helpful information.

One of the first things that I do when researching properties, especially if the house was built between 1867 and 1970, is to go to the Sanborn Insurance Map. You can find these maps at the Nevada Historical Society on North Virginia Street. The Sanborn maps have a footprint of the structures and also the materials of which they were built.


Deed records are located in Reno in the Washoe County buildings at Wells and Ninth. This work can be tedious but sometimes very intriguing. Work back from the present owner to the original owner.

Smithsonian recommended books

for further reading on researching properties are:

Howe & Fleming, **House and Home: Exploring their History**, Nashville, TN: American Association for State and Local History, 1987.

Hugh, Howard, **How Old is This House?** New York: Noonday Press, 1989.

There is also a website "Within These Walls..." located at: <http://www.americanhistory.si.edu/house>. 

*Felvia Belaustegui has a Masters Degree in historic preservation from the University of Nevada, Reno, serves on the Historic Resources Commission (HRC) and is HRPS Vice President for Programs*



## Preserving Nevada Barns

by Jack P. Hursh, Jr.

The grandest and most interesting barns in Nevada are the earliest timber-framed barns built between the late 1850s and about 1910. The early pioneers built their barns to support survival on the frontier landscape. With the boom of the Comstock Lode at Virginia City and the ushering of Nevada into statehood in the early 1860s, many large ranches in Carson Valley, Eagle Valley (Carson City), Washoe Valley, and the Truckee Meadows sprang up to feed the growing area's population. These ranches and their barns were critical to early Nevada's economy.

Like most barns, Nevada barns functioned as shelter for livestock, including workhorses, and for the storage of hay to feed the livestock through our sometimes rough winters. Interest in vernacular ranch

architecture certainly extends to the other outbuildings: chicken coops, carriage houses, bunkhouses and spring houses. A ranch, consisting of house and barn and outbuildings, was usually laid out in a row or courtyard arrangement

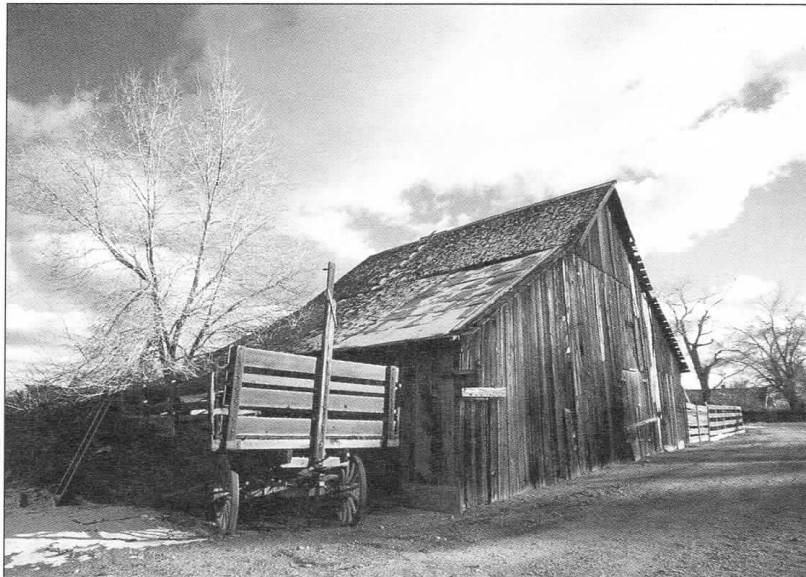
beam from a round-tree-log with nothing but an axe and a strong back? Hand-hewn beams typically indicate the earliest barns. By the mid 1860s there were many mills in operation, so many barn beams of this era were no longer

hand-hewn. There are exceptions as some barns were too far from a mill, or the rancher could not afford milled timbers. It is documented that a barn known as the Jones barn was built in 1865 with milled timbers. There are a number of hand-hewn barns still existing in the area today.

The weathering of these barns depended on roof maintenance. Early barn roofs were shingled; later many roofs were replaced with corrugated tin. As long as the roof did not leak, the timber-framing remained strong and could last forever. Timber-framed barns, where joints have wood in contact with wood,

actually last longer than newer barns where wood is in contact with metal. Wood and metal have different pH factors which accelerate decay. The timber frames with wood on wood have a neutral pH and can last forever if the roof does not leak to cause decay from moisture. Our intense Nevada sun bestows a beautiful caramelized patina on the wood siding of barns, especially after a hundred years.

The most common style of barn in Nevada is the gable with wings (Mayberry, Valley Road, Jones, Quilici). Gambrel roofed barns are more typical in the east, the local example being the Huffaker barn. Gable with wings barns are constructed with a simple single



*1998 photo of a Reno landmark, an old barn on Valley Road, is an icon of this area's history. The architectural style dates this barn to the 1870s. This photo projects the warm, organic beauty of a pastoral setting and brings back memories of a bygone Truckee Meadows that seemed endless with green alfalfa fields and grazing cattle.*

to maximize efficiency in the rancher's travels while doing chores.

The Comstock boom attracted emigrants who were skilled in timber-framing barn construction; teams of barn builders would tour the area. Some of these teams were of German descent, some English, and a few of other nationalities. Each nationality had a different style of carving the joints. We can study existing antique barns and speculate what nationality the craftsmen were by the style of the joinery.

The nearby resource of great Eastern Sierra trees provided early barn builders ample timbers to do some magnificent timber-framing. Hand-hewn beams represent the height of hand-craftsmanship. Can you imagine the labor involved in carving out a square



*Hand-hewn beams joined together by a mortice and tenon joint with wooden pins.*

*continued on next page...*

## Preserving Nevada Barns (continued)

gable structure in the center and winged extensions off to the sides. Some of the winged extensions begin a few feet below on the side of the central gable structure. These buildings are called gable with broken wings (Holcomb, Shadow Mountain). Style was usually in the simplest form for maximum function. This is what makes these structures so beautiful: their simplicity.

Many of our local barns are true timber-framed barns, meaning that no iron holds the beams together. Beam-ends were carved and inserted together, in a mortice and tenon joint, like Lincoln Logs or Legos, and held together with a wooden pin. The only metal on a timber-framed barn is in the nails holding the siding to the barn, the hinges on the doors, and the rings to hitch horses. Many Nevada barns had extra bracing on the sills or lower part of their framework. This enabled the structure to withstand our frequent strong zephyrs and heavy snows. Other parts of the west were typically settled after the Comstock era, when construction techniques had changed to iron bracing or where the timber resources were not as abundant.

A timber-framed building can easily be disassembled and moved to a new location by removing the siding, popping the pins out, transporting the pieces, and reassembling the building. For this reason, from a preservationist's point of view, there is no excuse for destroying a barn. If development puts a barn in harms way, move it.

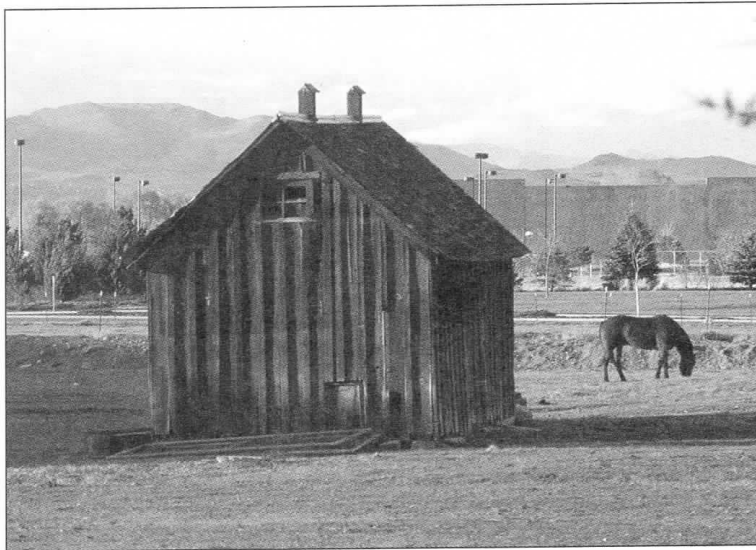
To a photographer or artist, capturing the Nevada barn means getting that last image of a dying legacy that is rapidly being consumed by urban sprawl. This symbol is a spiritual connection with a piece of history that is rapidly being forgotten. The photographer or artist

wants to capture an image of historic construction that molded beautifully with the landscape, as opposed to modern construction that fights it.

A barn becomes more beautiful with age. You either appreciate rustic beauty or you don't. The patina of a hundred years cannot be purchased at Home Depot.

### Truckee Meadows Remembered

Photographer Jack P. Hursh Jr., artist Loren Jahn, and videographer Jack Sutton are the founding members of a group of citizen volunteers who call themselves Truckee Meadows Remembered (TMR). These three have successfully lobbied with the Washoe



*Quilici Ranch outbuilding approved for TMR.*

County Parks system to allow volunteers to do fund raising to relocate, secure, and restore historic ranch structures and artifacts to be viewed as interpretive displays in the context of existing parks. Local Eagle Scout troops have expressed interest in helping the group with the labor of arrested decay restoration, decoration with related artifacts, and maintenance. Their goal is to create an interpretive display so that future generations can appreciate the beauty and utility of Nevadan architecture and ranch heritage.

TMR's first approved project involves moving several small ranch outbuildings to Bartley Ranch Park. The project is illustrated on page 11 with a sketch from Loren Jahn. Five buildings are currently sitting on Boomtown property. These five buildings are originally from the Joe Ferretto Ranch on South Virginia in Reno. Boomtown moved them to their property about fifteen years ago and used them for a couple years as a backdrop to barbecues. A couple more structures from the Quilici Ranch on Longley Lane have been approved to add to the display.


These buildings are circa 1860s to 1900s and include a chicken coop with pigeon loft, bunk house, carriage house, cook house, tool shed, tractor shed, granary, hay derrick, hay wagon, and other smaller artifacts. They are prime examples of the very few remaining specimens of local vernacular architecture created by our pioneering forefathers. They are some of the oldest existing architecture in the state of Nevada. They are not Italianate, they are not Greek Revival, they are not Colonial, they are not Victorian. They are Nevadan, and that puts them on a higher level. Most importantly, and of the greatest historical interest, is that a couple of

these buildings may have existed before there even was a Reno. Besides that, their tin and shingle-roofed rustic patina makes them beautiful.

TMR has loftier goals for the future including the preservation of an 1860s timber-framed barn and the 1860s Longley/Capurro carpenter gothic ranch house. The Capurro ranch and house are illustrated in a mural by Loren Jahn in the Bartley Ranch Interpretive Center. TMR hopes that land and funds can be found in time.

## Preserving Nevada Barns (continued)

### Financial Support for Truckee Meadows Remembered

Truckee Meadows Remembered has already received about \$6,000 in private donations. Their goal is to raise \$20,000 to complete the first project with the small outbuildings to be located at Bartley Ranch Park. Legal and logistic details are currently being discussed by Washoe County to maximize tax deduction benefits for donors and to minimize risk to both the artifacts and the public. TMR hopes that no snags or issues will delay or stop the actualization of this project. TMR plans to reward donors with a token print of either the photography of Jack Hursh or the artwork of Loren Jahn. Artist Fred Boyce is also donating the proceeds of the sales of the prints (\$100) of his Jones Barn oil painting. Potential donors are asked to call Jack Hursh and pledge a donation: 746-3252, leave a message with contact information. 

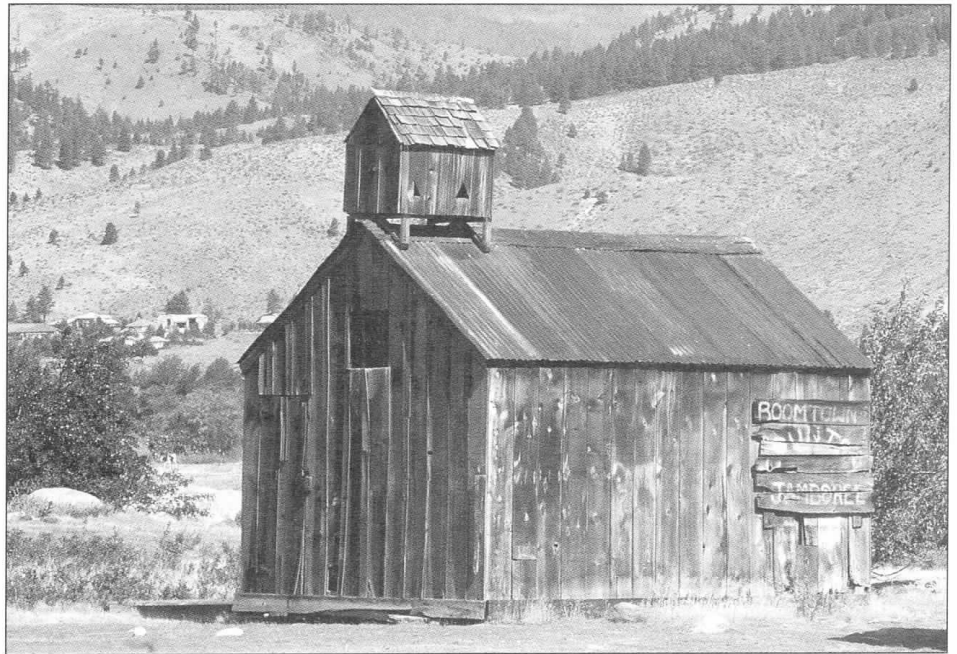
*Jack Hursh, Jr., a Reno native and third generation Nevadan, is strongly influenced by the desire to capture images of the real Nevada, a Nevada of sagebrush, rugged landscapes and colorful history. Hursh also considers himself an activist, through his photography, for the preservation of*

*Nevada heritage that is increasingly threatened by the over-development and commercialism of our modern environment. Hursh is a member of HRPS.*

*Loren Jahn illustrated the sketch of the proposed Truckee Meadows Remembered pictured below. He also created the*

*ranching mural in the Bartley Ranch Interpretive Center. Jahn illustrated the Virginia Street Bridge in the HRPS logo.*

*Jack Hursh and Loren Jahn presented the HRPS September 2002 program on Nevada Barns at Mt. Rose Elementary.*



*1870s vintage chicken coop with pigeon loft that is currently at Boomtown, intended to be included in TMR.*



*Loren Jahn's sketch of the proposed Truckee Meadows Remembered ranch buildings compound at Bartley Ranch, Reno.*



## HRPS News

### HRPS President's Message

As we prepare to meet the challenges, opportunities and unknowns which every new year brings, on behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you to all the members who contribute in ways large and small to the success of HRPS. Your interest and participation are vital to our success. We now have more than 500 members, which is cause for celebration for a not-quite-six-year-old non-profit organization.

Much has happened during the past year. Our walking tours have increased, both in numbers and participation. We offered a bus tour which high-lighted the architecture of Frederick DeLongchamps. We are volunteering at the Sierra Arts Gallery, in return for a location for our phone. The RSCVA and we are developing a collaboration to offer historic walking tours for convention-goers. Our monthly programs have been very well attended. We had a great fund-raising party at the California Building. An unexpected and very welcome surprise which happened during the event was Katherine Latham's generous financial donation to the City of Reno's restoration fund for the California Building. Katherine and her husband, while students at UNR, were caretakers for the building, and lived in a small apartment (now used as offices) attached to it.

Your Board of Directors has been busy with administrative matters. We have

updated our strategic plan, developed our annual budget, and have adopted an organizational chart in an effort to more efficiently focus on our mission. We plan to establish committees in the coming months, not only to seek the active participation of members, but also to bring fresh, creative ideas to the organization. So, those of you who have expressed an interest on your membership form in serving in various way may be receiving a call to help us. Please feel free to call us first! One of our immediate goals is to avail ourselves of the talents and enthusiasm of our members through their active participation in the operation of HRPS.

The Board would like to especially extend its heart-felt thanks to Mella Harmon, who is completing her fourth year as chairperson of the City of Reno's Historic Resources Commission. Mella has been a member of HRC for 8 years. Mella, a member of HRPS, is not leaving the Commission — that simply will not be allowed! — and it is our great good fortune that she remains a member. So, to all of you who have been, or who will be contributing to the cause of historic preservation in our community and state, "thank you".

Kathy Wishart, President

### Walking Tours for Convention Goers

HRPS, in conjunction with the Reno Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority, will begin offering walking tours to convention groups in the spring of 2003. The initial tour will feature downtown churches, our magnificent Truckee River, the mansions on the bluff, and the diverse bungalows on Riverside Drive and in Reno's "Little Italy." Training will begin in January. The dates have not been established. If you are interested in being a Tour Guide, contact Tours Chairperson Pat Klos at [pfklos@msn.com](mailto:pfklos@msn.com).

### The Fourth Street Story

"Reno's Axle: Historic Fourth Street" was recently published by local author and HRPS member Beth Miramon. It is an up-to-date non-fiction narrative tracing the history of Reno from the completion of the transcontinental railroad to the transcontinental highways, from Fourth Street motels to downtown hotel-casino complexes. There are lots of old photographs to give the reader a glimpse of Reno before the casinos pushed the little businesses, restaurants and retail stores off downtown Virginia Street. Available at Sundance for \$14.95.

## Carson Valley Historical Society Presents A Year-Long Program,

### Barn Again!®

### Celebrating An American Icon

Genoa Courthouse Museum  
Main Street, Genoa

Carson Valley Museum and Cultural Center,  
1477 Hwy 395 N, Gardnerville  
775-782-2555

The Barn Again!® program originated with Museums on Main Street and the Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibit program. In Nevada it is underwritten by Nevada Humanities Committee. Carson Valley Historical Society has expanded the Smithsonian Exhibit part of the program to a year-long series of events and exhibits at its two museums. Already in progress is Artists Do Barns (a juried show), Photographing Barns Contest, and Youth Barn Art Contest.

January through March, Thursday evenings, 7:30-9:00, eight films and presentations on barns at the Gardnerville museum, \$4/night for Historical Society members, \$5/night for others. Tickets to all eight evenings available now. Seating limited to 49. Non-ticketed seating is first-come-first serve.

### Exhibits for the year are as follows:

January 30 – Aug 7:  
Dairies of Carson Valley

February 15 – June 30:  
Barn Sale

July 12 – Nov. 15:  
Artists Do Barns

August 18 – Sept 30:  
Smithsonian Institution  
Barn Again!® exhibit

There will also be community-wide exhibits of the youth artwork, photographs of barns and aerial photos of ranches in Carson Valley.

In late Spring and Summer there will be family workshops to make bird, bat and butterfly houses out of barn wood.

May 31: Carson Valley Barn Tour  
September 13: Barn Dance at Corley Ranch with games, silent and live auction, dancing, music and food.

## Truckee Meadows NEON Tour Wednesday April 2, 2003

The Heritage Tourism Coalition (HTC) will be sponsoring an evening NEON bus tour of the Truckee Meadows on Wednesday April 2, 2003. The tour will show off our roadside culture and demonstrate that Reno/Sparks has some fine vintage neon. Get your cameras ready for a fun evening. Call Nancy Holmes at 852-2094 for details.

## HRPS Call for Riverside Volunteers

Would you be interested in serving at the HRPS desk at the Riverside Sierra Arts Gallery on Saturdays for two to four hours a week or a month? As volunteer host you will answer phones and provide information for visitors. Hours are between 11 a.m.- 3 p.m. on Saturdays. For training information please call Nancy Holmes at 852-2094.

## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

### Renewal Membership

(As of Nov. 18, 2002)

Alicia Barber  
Carol Burns  
Treat & Patty Cafferata  
Neal Cobb  
Joan Collins  
Elizabeth Creveling  
Karlene Dickey  
Suzette Dietel  
Jackie Drews  
Sheila & Joe Erlach  
Marshall & Shirley Fey  
Don & Kay Fowler  
"Jackie, Steve & Michael Frady"  
Lisa & James Franks Family  
Mary Lee & Chuck Fulkerson  
Phyllis Hedgpeh

Winnie Herbert  
Jack Hursh  
Inge Jahn  
Dr. Robert Johns  
Bob Klein  
Arlene Kramer  
Jacque Lane  
Laurance Lyons  
Pat Martinez  
Doug Marx  
Nancy Mawson  
Darla McKenna  
Don & Anne Meier  
Elsie & Larry Newman  
Larry & Nancy Oakley  
Dod & Kim Pittman & Family

Pat Quinlan  
Ronald & Sharon Rachow  
Deanna Rallo  
Cathy Ringer  
Carol Sara  
DeArmond & Joyce Sharp  
Nan Spina  
Roger & Luanne Steininger  
Tom & Leanne Stone  
S. M. Temen  
Zona & Bob Therkelsen  
Jake & Terri Thompson  
Pat Wehking  
Ursula Wellman  
Angela Whited

### New Members

(As of Nov. 18, 2002)

Patti Adams  
Bonnie & Richard Bryan  
Roberta Fraser  
Heidi & Paul Georgeson  
Ruth Hilts  
Christie Hovenden  
Susan & Jack McLeod  
Cathy Murray  
Elsa Norbeck  
Judith Ann O'Connor  
Geno Oliver  
Dave & Sharon Quinn  
Pamela Tate  
Marc Tiar

## HRPS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

**Please check your mailing label! Renew your membership and help HRPS preserve historic Reno!**

Please make checks payable to **Historic Reno Preservation Society**, and mail along with this application to:  
P.O. Box 33444, Reno, NV 89533

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ New Member  
Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_ Best time to call: \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Renewing Member

**Annual membership includes:** Footprints (HRPS Newsletter) • HRPS Calendar • Free participation in walking tours

☐ Student \$8.00    ☐ Individual \$15.00    ☐ Supporting \$100.00    ☐ Business/Corporate \$50.00  
☐ Family (children 18 & under) \$20.00    Additional donation: \_\_\_\_\_

**Interest Survey:** There are many areas in our organization where your enthusiasm, skills, and dedication will be invaluable to historic Reno and future generations. The goal of the Historic Reno Preservation Society is to preserve the history and built environment of our community. Please indicate your interest in serving on the following committees by marking the appropriate category or categories:

☐ Education    ☐ Exec. Committee    ☐ Finance    ☐ Fund-Raising    ☐ Grant Writing    ☐ Hospitality  
☐ Membership    ☐ Office Volunteer    ☐ Newsletter    ☐ Programming    ☐ Publicity    ☐ Walking Tours

**FOR OFFICE  
USE ONLY**

PAID: ☐ Check ☐ Cash    Amount: \_\_\_\_\_    Membership # \_\_\_\_\_    Renewal Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

### WINTER PROGRAMS 2003

FELVIA BELAUSTEGUI • Program Chair 329-0149

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

**Wednesday, January 22:** Neal Cobb, local historian and photographer, will present slides on the first decade of the 20th century. These slides will show where people went to church, out to dinner, shopped for groceries, the barbershop, and other places where the ordinary citizen conducted the process of consumer commerce.

**Wednesday, February 26:** James McCormick, Professor Emeritus from the Art department of the University of Nevada, will talk about Cowboy Art. The title of his presentation is "Cowboys Painters Don't Use Pastels".

**Wednesday, March 26:** Ann Bail Howard, Professor Emeritus from the English Department of the University of Nevada, will talk about Ann Martin. At the turn of the century the Martin family lived at the present site of the Siena Hotel. Ann Martin had a long career as a lobbyist in Washington, DC and she ran for US Senate in 1918.

**HRPS Phone: 337-1165**

#### HRPS OFFICERS

**President:** Kathryn Wishart 747-4323

**Vice President & Program:**

Felvia Belaustegui 329-0149

**Secretary:** Mark Taxer

**Treasurer:** Bill Walbridge

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