

FootPrints

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

**Historic Reno
PRESERVATION
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Truckee Meadows Remembered: A Success Story in Preserving Nevada Ranching Culture

by Jack Hursh, Jr.

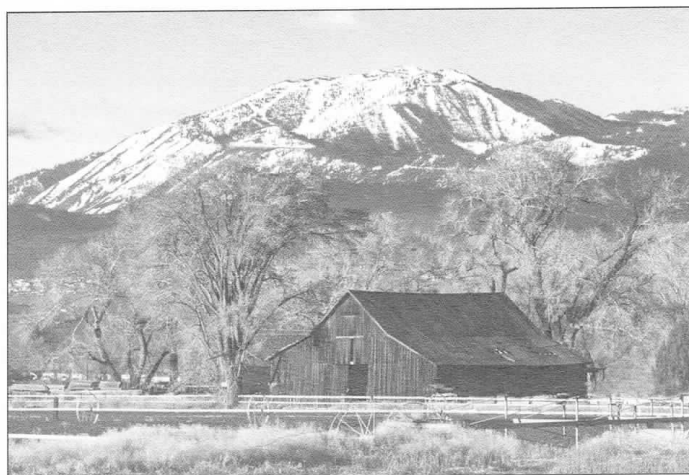
Truckee Meadows Remembered, a project of the Nevada Land Conservancy, wants to preserve the history and culture of the ranch life era that began in the Truckee Meadows and Washoe Valley in the 1850s. Loren Jahn, Jack Sutton and Jack Hursh, Jr., "old Nevada boys," have been out to save what they really love about Nevada.

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 (Reno) sprang up to feed the populations of the growing area. These ranches and their barns were critical to support the populace.

A ranch meant a ranch house and a barn that functioned as a shelter for livestock, including work horses, and the storage of hay to feed the livestock through our sometimes rough winters. That ranch also included outbuildings, which are the focus of this article.

The boom of the Comstock Lode attracted emigrants who were skilled in timber-framing and the construction of barns. Teams of barn builders would tour the area raising barns. Most of these teams were European and each had a different style of carving the joints. A barn existing today can be studied and speculation can be made as to what the nationality of the craftsmen was by the style of the joinery.

The nearby resource of the very large trees of the eastern Sierra provided early barn builders ample timbers to do some magnificent timber-framing. Hand-hewn beams represent the height of craftsmanship. Can you imagine the labor involved in carving out a square beam from a round log with nothing but an axe and a strong back? Hand-hewn beams typically indicate the earliest barns, and there are a few such barns still existing in the area today.



View of the 1865 Jones barn from the Sparks side of the Truckee River near the University farms and Vista area. Slide Mountain towers above in the background.

The distinctive weathered look of these barns depended on how the roof was maintained. The early barn roofs were first covered in shingles, then many roofs were covered over with corrugated tin (circa 1900). As long as the roof did not leak, the timber-framing remained strong and could last forever. Our intense Nevada sun bestows a beautiful, rich, sun-baked caramelized patina on the wood siding of barns, especially after 100-plus years.

The first of the big ranches were built by English and

German families—the Holcombs, the Huffakers, the Oddies, the Longleys, the Mayberrys and others. The Jones Barn, near Vista, was built in 1865. In the early 1900s there was a large immigration of Italians like the Ferrettos, the Raffettos, the Casazzas, Capurros and Quilicis, and many others who established themselves in ranching or purchased the older ranches.

Square nails were used from 1860-1870, followed by round nails. Often a smooth surface of boards was placed on the

Continued on page 2

TMR: Preserving Nevada Ranching Culture (cont.)

Continued from page 1

exterior of a barn when it was new, with square nails. Then some years later, when the exterior boards had shrunk, other narrow boards were placed over the "crack" with round nails. The style is called "board and batten."

At the A.A. Longley/Beidelman/Capurro ranch near Rattlesnake Mountain, the large campus of barns associated with the Carpenter Gothic ranch house (built in 1862), supported the ranching operation. That ranch complex is depicted in a full color mural (by Loren Jahn) that can be seen at the Bartley Ranch Park Western Heritage Interpretive Center. The large campus of barns was torn down in October, 2001 and has been replaced by warehouses. The beautiful Carpenter Gothic ranch house still stands under the cottonwood trees.

Outbuildings (little barns) from the Joe Ferretto Ranch in the Huffaker area on South Virginia in Reno were moved to Boomtown in the early 1990s. Boomtown used them for a couple of years in a "country jambo-ree" setting. These buildings are circa 1860s to 1910s and include a bunk house, a chicken coop with pigeon loft, a cook house, carriage house and a granary/tool shed. The oldest of the five buildings appears to be the bunkhouse as it is constructed with square nails and some of its boards measure eighteen inches wide and one inch thick.

Truckee Meadows Remembered (TMR) successfully lobbied with the Washoe 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. Their goal is to create an interpretive display so that future generations can appreciate the beauty and utility of Nevadan architecture and ranch heritage.

towards the McCarran exit, the whole way being accompanied by Nevada State Highway Patrol escort. They were carefully brought into Bartley Ranch Park where a few tight turns were cautiously negotiated by Ralph Lynn Movers.

After arrival at Bartley Ranch Park, the first task was to sanitize the little barns

with bleach, to make sure that none of the leavings from previous residents remained. Loren Jahn and Jack Hursh, clad in hazmat style suits and masks, performed this task.

Next, a team of contractors were hired to do extensive structural enhancement to the buildings to make them strong. The buildings were placed onto concrete piers with tie-downs fastened to the framework of the buildings to anchor them securely to the ground. The bunkhouse porch was reconstructed with new framework but then clad with weathered boards for that authentic rustic look.

The next effort was restoration of the windows. Loren Jahn and Jack Hursh were able to locate enough salvaged authentic six-over-six six-pane windows for all the barns.

Many wonderful, rusty old ranch artifacts have been

donated by citizens of the community. Donors include Jack Sutton, Marian Durkee, Louis Capurro, Nat and Bob Quilici, Grace Lagomarsino, Carol Lary, Bill Thornton and others. Aleta Hursh donated a 1905 Ladies spindle seat run-about buggy to the project. All of these artifacts have been carefully placed in the buildings, giving a real authentic look.

Continued on page 3



Ralph Lynn of Ralph Lynn Movers carefully placing the bunkhouse (farther away) and chicken coop (closest) into position at Bartley Ranch Park.



On their way to Bartley Ranch Park, the carriage house and cookhouse pick up steam with Nevada Highway Patrol escort as they negotiate the I-80 onramp near Boomtown.

The first approved project was to move the Ferretto/Boomtown ranch outbuildings to Bartley Ranch Park. Ralph Lynn of Lynn House Movers was hired in May of 2004. A supporting framework was built around the buildings and wheels and axles were welded beneath to make them secure and able for transport. It was humorous and ironic to see two little barns on a trailer moving down I-80

TMR: Preserving Nevada Ranching Culture (cont.)

Continued from page 2

Along with rusty pitchforks and horse-shoes, a 48-star flag and a 45-star flag (1896-1908) have been donated. "We fly the 48-star flag from the bunkhouse porch on days when we are at the park working," said Jack Hursh. "We are determining the authenticity of the 45-star flag and may give it some very careful archival treatment."

In Fall 2004, two accessories were placed into the setting—an outhouse and sheep shed donated by Floyd Flanary of Sparks. Note that the outhouse is a two-holer, making it pretty fancy.

Six hundred pounds of concrete and tie-downs were added for the foundation of the bunkhouse to make it secure, thanks to the volunteer help of HRPS member Terry Cynar. Floyd Flanary also donated his father's bee-keeping equipment, which is now on display in the smallest building, now referred to as the "honey house." Improvements to the site also include the addition of a hitching post made possible by salvaged materials gathered by Jack Sutton.

The little barn buildings are great additions to Bartley Ranch Park. They were one of the tour stops at the Fall Festival held in the park in October. Nearly 300 people, mostly children, were led on interpretive tours around the buildings and were allowed to peek inside.

The buildings also provide the opportunity for advertisements and photo shoots. The National Auto Museum brought the 1907 Thomas Flyer to the site, to use the barn buildings as a backdrop to a docu-

mentary film about the famous car that has been aired on PBS. Also businesses have used the site to film advertisements for local television.

Future goals of Truckee Meadows Remembered include the reconstruction of the little stone building possibly built

represent the early form of constructing buildings from the local field stone. The little stone building stood beneath the cottonwoods for perhaps 150 years. In January 2004 the building was dismantled. Loren Jahn carefully numbered each stone and drew a detailed diagram of the stone layout of the building.

The Truckee Meadows Remembered project hopes to reconstruct this humble stone house, to live again for future Nevadans.

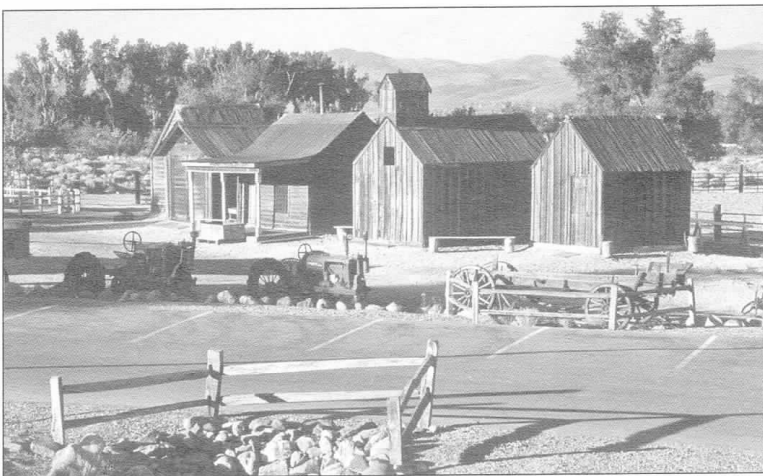
These humble structures represent some of the oldest remaining examples of home-built architecture in the region. A couple of these buildings may have existed in territorial days before there even was a Reno. They are not Italianate, they are not Greek Revival, they are not Colonial, they are not Victorian, they are Nevada!! Besides that, their tin and shingle roofed, rustic patina makes them beautiful.

This interpretive display of Nevada Ranching Culture is viewable at Bartley Ranch Park during regular park hours. To see the inside of the structures, make arrangements with the park ranger or contact Jack Hursh, Jr.

Jack Hursh, Jr. is a Reno native and a third generation Nevadan. He 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 cartographer for the Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology at the University of Nevada. Hursh is a member of the HRPS Board and is responsible for the 2005 Programs.



June 2004 at Bartley Ranch Park with the open carriage house door (left), the bunkhouse before the porch was rebuilt (middle), the chicken coop with the pigeon loft, and the ladies buggy.



The complete lineup, Fall 2004. The cookhouse and carriage house are in the distant left, the bunkhouse now has a porch, the chicken coop with pigeon loft, and the toolshed now known as the "Honey House" on the right.

Photos courtesy of Jack Hursh, Jr.

in the late 1850s that stood where there is now a Lazy Boy furniture store on South Virginia Street. This building was also part of the Joe Ferretto ranch and along with being reunited with the five other little buildings from the same ranch, it would

The Gray Lady of West First Street

by Debbie Hinman

Near the heart of downtown and just a block away from the picturesque Truckee River, sits an architectural gem – the First United Methodist Church of Reno. The building is truly a steadfast landmark in the ever-changing face of downtown Reno; residents and visitors alike admire its benevolent presence, the music of its bell, and the lights that adorn the tower at night.

Anchoring the corner of First and West Streets, this stately edifice is one of the city's oldest churches. Built in 1925, its exterior resembles stone but is actually constructed of concrete poured into wooden plank molds, quite an innovation for Reno in the 1920s. If you look closely at the surface, you can still see wood grain marks, which contribute to the natural appearance of the exterior.

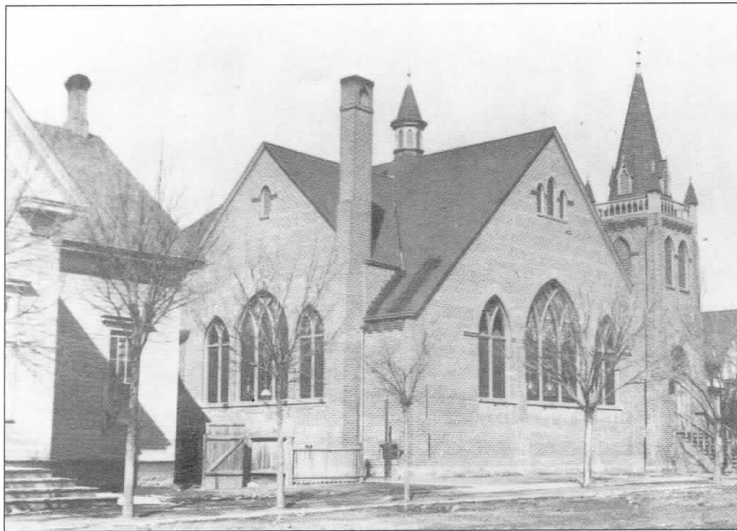
The first Nevada Methodist Church was built in Virginia City in 1861. Reverend Thomas McGrath organized a group of Methodists in Reno shortly after townsite lots went up for sale in the spring of 1868. They met in the wooden schoolhouse on the corner of what is now First and Sierra Streets. By 1870, the congregation had acquired a plot of land just north of the schoolhouse. Here they built their one-story wooden Methodist Episcopal Church complete with a steeple on the front face of the building and arched Gothic windows.

In 1871, Judge William Webster of Washoe County gave the church its first bell, cast in San Francisco from two smaller bells. The bell was forty inches in diameter and weighed one ton. It is a testament to the church fathers' dedication to preserving their valuable history that this is the same bell we hear today, calling modern congregants to services.

This bell was soon conscripted into service for the entire community. An 1880 Nevada State Journal article urged the

following: "It has been suggested that when an alarm of fire is sounded at night in Reno, the Methodist church bell, which is very loud, be sounded in addition to the usual alarm. We have no doubt that the Methodists would gladly comply with such a request and place their key in a convenient place."

With the ever-increasing population of Reno, the congregation soon outgrew their small church. As the old church was still usable, it was moved to the rear of the Sierra Street lot. The wood frame



The second Methodist Church built at the site on Sierra Street, in 1900.

To the left is Reno's first schoolhouse, built in 1868.

Photos courtesy of Nevada Historical Society.

building was veneered in brick and used for the Sunday School. A new brick church was constructed on the front of the old church. The bell was moved from the old church to the new addition and the new building was dedicated on September 2, 1900. The Reno Evening Gazette reported: "The Gazette takes this opportunity to congratulate Rev. G. H. Jones of this pastorate and the good people of Methodist persuasion on the push and energy displayed in accomplishing so much in the way of a magnificent brick church building ... the Methodists of Reno are in no way lacking in progressive ideas."

In 1911, Rev. W. S. Kelly oversaw the acquisition of a new pipe organ. One wall of the church had to be removed to make

a place for it. It is believed that most of the pipes purchased then have survived until the present time and are still in the church today, though the console was replaced when the current church was built. This is just one more example of the Methodists' preservationist spirit.

Rev. Kelly was noted for his "illustrated sermons," for which he would use hand-painted stereopticon pictures. One of his interesting topics was "John Chinaman at Home." No details were found with regard to this service, but it was probably intended to foster a more tolerant and accepting attitude toward the Chinese residents of the city, who had a history of ill treatment and discrimination.

In the mid 1920s, the church was once again experiencing growing pains and the members agreed to contribute funds from their own pockets to purchase a new plot of land and build a brand new church—the current First United Methodist Church. The chosen property was purchased from Judge Thomas V. Julien, whose residence had been on the site. In May of 1925 the current pastor visited the bay area to view churches there. The architectural firm of Wythe, Blaine and Olson of Oakland were engaged to design the Methodists' new home.

The Cornerstone Laying Ceremony took place on March 30, 1926 and must have been one of the key events of the year. The Silver State Band led a parade from the University of Nevada to the Masonic Temple, where the officers of the Grand Lodge joined the procession to the church. Addressing the crowd were Governor James J. Scrugham, Reno Mayor E. E. Roberts, and Walter Clark, University President. Bishop Charles Wesley Burns gave the cornerstone address and Grand Master Clarence L. Young (father of former State Senator Cliff Young, a First Church member) laid the cornerstone.

Continued on page 5

The Gray Lady of West First Street (continued)

Continued from page 4

The total cost of the land, building and furnishings was a hefty \$118,721.45. The parishioners could not foresee that the era of relative prosperity they were experiencing would be coming to an abrupt halt in the next several years and there would be some nervous scrambling in an effort to pay off this huge debt.

In the early 1930s, an event occurred that caused quite a stir throughout the city. A visiting temperance leader known as "Dry" Jones was given permission to address the congregation from the church pulpit. In his "sermon," he condemned the city of Reno as a modern-day Sodom and Gomorrah, enumerating a whole roster of corruptions, including the corruption stemming from the relaxed attitudes surrounding the bootlegging of liquor. Mayor Roberts, feeling that the charges should not go unchallenged, asked for and received equal time at the pulpit on a Sunday evening. In an angry rebuttal the mayor quoted statistics on church attendance, education standards, and public improvements. The climax came when he declared that the only way to combat corruption by liquor was to place a barrel of whiskey with a dipper on every street corner. The mayor's speech was a hot topic of conversation for many weeks.

The 1940s were a decade of change for the church. The role of the pastor was expanded to minister to every area of religious life, both personal and social; he was to involve himself in visitations and personal counseling as well as preaching. The church appointed a full-time Minister of Music to develop adult, youth and children's choirs, and a Pastor's Assistant to work with young people and young married couples. A weekly newsletter, "The Stream," was financed by local advertisers and distributed to local hotels as well as church members. The name of

the paper was suggestive of the church on the banks of the Truckee River and of the stream of life, which continually flows through Reno.

Changes occurred in the church building itself. In 1942, newly-appointed Reverend Frederic H. Busher began the remodeling of the sanctuary by contacting Mr. Harold Cummings, of the Cummings Architectural Glass and Interior Design Studios in Sacramento, and the first stained glass window was ordered for the church. This window was a gift from a group of church families.

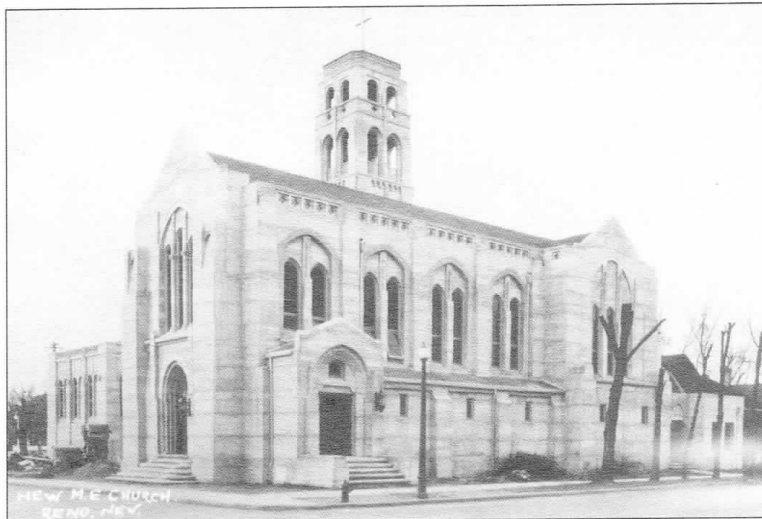
Reverend Busher went on to develop the symbolism or iconography of the soon-to-be-created series of windows. The

recent windows and in 2000, appraised the collection of stained glass windows in excess of a quarter of a million dollars.

In 1944 a Mortgage Burning Ceremony was held—the church was now free of debt. In 1947 the basement was finished, and well-known local architect Russell Mills, assisted by Frederick Perazzo, designed the new rooms, which are still in use today. Just three years following their completion, however, the Reno Flood of 1950 filled the basement with six feet of water, mud and even some dead fish. When the river flooded again in 1955, sandbagging efforts better protected the basement and the rising water only minimally affected it. Following this

flood, the brick retaining wall was constructed on First Street so that only the front entrance would need to be barricaded in future floods.

In 1968, the Methodist Church of Reno celebrated its 100th anniversary. While so many other churches established in the early part of the 20th century in Reno have been razed and replaced with modern facilities in outlying neighborhoods, the quiet gray lady still stands proudly on her corner of the city, reminding all who pass of her illustrious past and contributing her grace and history to the present and the future of Reno. 



The third (and current) First United Methodist Church, First and West Streets, circa 1930. Built in 1925.

Holy Family Window, comprised of five main sections and four secondary sections was installed in 1942 at a cost of \$2,100. In 2000 it was appraised at \$8,200. Considered part of the Holy Family Window is the Hosanna Arch. The faces in the Hosanna Arch are the exact replicas of fifty infants and young children in the 1943 church school. The Arch was sculpted by Alice English and given to the church by the members of the Busher family as a fitting memorial to Dorothy Busher, the Reverend's wife who passed away during their years in Reno. The local business, Tapestry Glass, created some of the more

Editor's Note: Sources for this article include "History of First United Methodist Church," Martha H. Jones, "First United Methodist Church—Three Historic Nevada Cities: Carson City, Reno and Virginia City", www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel/nevada/fir.htm, "Holy Family Window: The Stained Glass Windows at First Church" from the First United Methodist Church. Martha Jones is the mother of HRPS member Charlotte Jones McConnell.

Debbie Hinman is a HRPS Tour Guide and on the Editorial Board of HRPS FootPrints.

On the National Historic Register: Morrill Hall

by Anne Simone and Carol Coleman

Morrill Hall was the first building erected on the vast expanse of farmland at the northernmost border of the town of Reno, destined to become the University of Nevada campus. The cornerstone was laid September 12, 1885 and staff began moving in on February 15, 1886. For ten years, it was an all-purpose facility housing administrative offices, classrooms and dormitories. In 1974, Morrill Hall was placed on the National Register of Historic Places and declared part of the University National Historic District in 1987.

U.S. Senators Justin S. Morrill of Vermont and William M. Stewart of Nevada were both instrumental in gaining the funding to buy land and build the "agricultural college" in Reno. The 1862 Morrill Land Grant Act and the wording about a state university in Nevada's 1864 constitution brought funds to establish a land-grant college in 1874. The University of Nevada had its beginnings in Elko in 1874 and was moved to Reno in 1885. At the time Morrill Hall was built, the campus was called the State University and Reno had a population of fewer than 3,000 people. The state was little more than a collection of rough mining camps and railroad towns.

The architect of Morrill Hall was Mr. M. J. Curtis, born in Vermont in 1849. Curtis moved to Reno at an early age and designed many buildings in Reno and throughout the state. Morrill Hall was designed as a two-and-one-half story structure in the French Second Empire style with a mansard roof and dormer windows. The building sits at the south end of the university quadrangle, overlooking downtown Reno at the head of the campus.

Damage from the 1959 Reno earthquake brought to light serious problems with

the oldest buildings on campus. Stewart Hall, probably the third oldest structure, lost its upper stories. It was demolished entirely some years later.

University alumni were greatly concerned the same fate might befall Morrill Hall. A structural engineer claimed there was no way to save the building; his advice was "just tear it down." It was constructed solidly of brick and heavy

rooms in the basement, first and second floors to better distribute the weight of the building. It was also imperative that all current building codes be met. Fire escapes were added to the outside of the building, as the inside staircase didn't meet current codes. The project also addressed the issue of access for the handicapped, which involved building a ramp into the building, installing an elevator and enlarging restrooms.



Morrill Hall, circa 1890. Photo courtesy of Nevada Historical Society.

timber, according to the standards and technology of the day. The building was standing as a result of sheer mass.

In the 1970s, a campaign was begun to raise \$500,000 in restoration funds. Reno architect Ed Parsons, a restoration committee member, was chosen as lead architect for the ten-year-long project. Although alumni contributions were generous, money from the National Trust for Historic Preservation (\$300,000) and donations from other supporters throughout Reno were needed to complete the restoration.

The biggest engineering challenge was shoring up three floors, each of which was sagging three inches. The solution was installing columns in the center of

Restoration plans also indicated using the first floor as offices, the second as an alumni lounge and bar with a meeting or banquet room, and the third as an exhibit space with limited access. The basement was accessed separately from the rest of the building so it could function as an autonomous space. Robert Laxalt, who founded the University Press, asked that the Press continue to be housed in Morrill Hall. He felt that the group's outcry of protest at the time of Stewart Hall's destruction had probably saved Morrill Hall and that they deserved to retain their offices.

The restoration of Morrill Hall gave the University an historic building to be proud of and an important legacy for future generations of students, faculty and residents alike.

Editor's Note: Sources for this article are Parson's oral history, the architectural designs on file in UNR's Getchell Collection, Nevada Historical Society's 2nd biennial report, 1910 and National Register of Historic Places nomination papers from the State Historic Preservation Office.

Anne Simone is a HRPS Tour Guide and Researcher. Carol Coleman is Managing Editor of HRPS FootPrints.

2005 HRPS Historic Preservation Week Walking Tours

The following is the schedule of HRPS Walking Tours for Nevada Historic Preservation Week, May 8 through May 14, 2005. Call Susie Carter, 787-3170 for information and reservations. All tours are free to HRPS members and \$10 for non-members.

- Sunday, May 8
10:00 am** **WELLS AVENUE NEIGHBORHOOD:** A Walk through Reno's working class neighborhood along the path of the Moran and Wells Avenue streetcar, across from the V&T Railroad, to the homes of the "Thoma Street Gang" kids. Meet at Southside School, southwest corner of Sinclair and Liberty Street. Tour Guide, Mark Taxer.
- Monday, May 9
6:00 pm** **UPPER RALSTON/NORTHERN LITTLE ITALY:** Enjoy a neighborhood walk with agrarian roots dating to the late 1800s combined with a mix of architectural styles, some built by Genovese Italians and others designed by prominent architects. Proximity to the University of Nevada has traditionally determined the mix of residents—professors and students alike. Meet at the intersection of Washington Street, The Strand, and College Avenue. Tour Guide, Pat Klos.
- Tuesday, May 10
6:00 pm** **EL RENO APARTMENT WALK:** Discover Reno's pre-fabricated apartment-homes that were shipped by rail from southern California. Meet at Statewide Lighting Center, 1311 South Virginia Street. Tour Guide, Debbie Hinman.
- Wednesday, May 11
6:00 pm** **HISTORIC TRUCKEE RIVER WALK:** A relaxing stroll along the Truckee River reveals eclectic architecture grounded by rich political histories and spiced with colorful anecdotes. Meet at McKinley Arts and Cultural Center, 925 Riverside Drive. Tour Guide, Joan Collins.
- Thursday, May 12
6:00 pm** **MANSIONS ON THE BLUFF:** View high-style architecture in Reno's most significant political neighborhood. Meet at the McCarran House, 401 Court Street. Tour Guides: Ed Wishart, Joan Collins, and Tammy Buzick.
- Friday, May 13
6:00 pm** **UNR HISTORIC DISTRICT:** Morrill Hall, Mackay School of Mines, the Keck Museum, and the history of this beautiful campus. Meet at Honor Court, 9th and Center Street. Tour Guide, Jack Hursh.
- Saturday, May 14
10:00 am** **NEWLANDS NEIGHBORHOOD AND BACK ALLEYS:** Discover a hidden neighborhood in old Reno. Meet at My Favorite Muffin, 340 California Avenue. Tour Guide, Tammy Buzick.

Come to the HRPS Preservation Week Luncheon

The first annual HRPS Preservation Week Luncheon will be held at noon on Wednesday, May 11, 2005 at the Siena Hotel following the City of Reno/Historical Resources Commission Awards Presentation and reception to be held at City Hall at 10:00 a.m.. HRPS will honor current and past recipients of the City of Reno's Historical Resources Commission Preservation Awards at the luncheon.

Reservations for the Siena Hotel luncheon must be made with Pat Ferraro Klos, 348-8594 or pfklos@sbcglobal.net. Reservations should be made between April 14th and May 5th. Cost is \$25 per person.

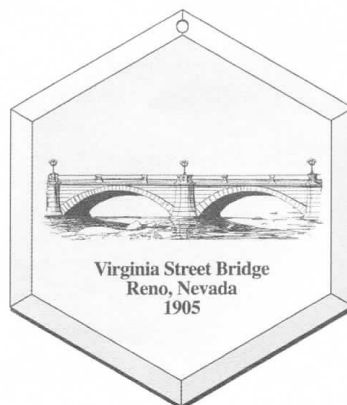
Come one, come all. Join us as we honor our past and envision our future.

Barns or Bust Tour is a Sellout!

The Barns or Bust Tour scheduled for Saturday, May 7, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm is already sold out. However we'd like to be sure that those interested sign up for the next tour. Please call Jack Hursh, 746-3252, for information and to sign up.

HRPS Suncatcher of Virginia Street Bridge Available

HRPS is offering an opportunity to purchase a beautiful keepsake, a beveled glass suncatcher ornament containing an etching of the Virginia Street Bridge. Underneath the etching of the bridge is the title:



**Virginia Street Bridge
Reno, Nevada, 1905**

The suncatcher is in the shape of a hexagon, approximately 4 1/4 by 4 3/4 inches in size. It comes ready to hang, and is in an attractive gift box. The price is \$20. Proceeds will be used to help pay for liability insurance, required for our walking tours. The suncatchers will be available for sale at the monthly HRPS meetings, the fall party, and during some walking tours. For further information, please call Kathy Wishart, at 856-3662.

The Steadfast Lutherans

by Sharon Walbridge and Debbie Hinman

While the early Lutheran population in the Reno area was small in number, it was significant in that the congregation was primarily drawn from two of the many groups of Europeans settling in the Truckee Meadows. A sufficient number of the Lutheran congregation were of Danish and German extraction that services were conducted weekly in English and twice monthly, at different times, in German and Danish.

Reno had a larger than normal foreign-born population; in 1900, twenty percent of the total residents were not born in the United States, while the national average was thirteen percent. These settlers brought their spiritual beliefs with them and contributed to the array of different religions practicing in the Reno area.

Reno was not the earliest site of the Lutherans in Nevada. According to Sam Davis, editor of *History of Nevada, Volume One*, Lutheran people first moved to Nevada around 1877, settling in the Carson Valley near Gardnerville. They didn't form an organized congregation until 1893, however. Their first church was built in 1895.

In the Truckee Meadows, Lutherans had been holding sporadic mission meetings in Reno since 1896. These first services were conducted under the direction of Rev. J. H. Theiss of the Missouri synod. Reverend Theiss was on his first missionary journey and exploratory trip to Lassen County, Janesville and Susanville, which necessitated his passing through Reno on the way. He is quoted as saying "Reno is without doubt the largest and most beautiful city in Nevada." He stopped for two days, preaching to an audience of 50. It is interesting to note that during the years of organizational work, the congregation met in the Congregational Church, built in 1892, and located on Chestnut St. (now Arlington) between Third and Fourth Streets.

It wasn't until 1908 that Reno had a pastor who was dedicated full-time to the local congregation. This man was Reverend Franz E. Martens who led the congregation until 1931. Martens was described in a later pastor's church history as "a man of rare individuality, a cultured and courteous man." He was also committed to recruiting new members for Reno's small congregation. He went as far afield as northeastern California, Truckee and the paper mills of Floriston to find new additions to his church.

Reverend Martens was originally from San Francisco, where he attended primary and grammar schools. After working at

Board of California and Nevada to take charge of the Reno and Lassen County parishes. After he'd been in Reno about a year, Franz Martens married Miss Lina Reissman of Berkeley who became, in the amusing words of one account of early Lutheran history, "hostess and queen of St. Luke's parsonage of Reno."

Recognizing the challenges he faced getting a new congregation off the ground with little in the way of resources, Pastor Martens asked for the help he needed. In March of 1909 he organized a Ladies Aid Society as a nucleus for congregational work.

The following September the congregation was officially ready to organize. All seven members, which included Reverend Martens, were men. In those days, women were accepted as communicants, but not voting members. This small group formally organized under the name Evangelical Lutheran St. Luke's Congregation. At this time, according to the writings of Pastor Martens, the congregation began meeting every Sunday in the Kindergarten Building at West and Walnut Streets. Incorporation for religious, educational and charitable purposes took place in September, 1912.

St. Luke's petitioned the Synod-at-large for a contribution to the building fund, but

received a less than enthusiastic response. Apparently, Reno's reputation as a loose, lurid place led to the Synod's parsimonious loan of \$1000. Undaunted, many of the members subscribed several times to their building fund. The new church, costing close to \$17,000, was 90 percent locally financed. This fund raising success can be largely attributed to the efforts of Reverend Martens who urged his congregation "We provide for our blood relatives. Why should we not also provide for our spiritual relatives?"

Continued on page 9



Interior of St. Luke's Lutheran Church; altar with oil paintings "Behold I stand at the door and knock" and "Peter walking on the water." June 26, 1960.

Photo courtesy of the bride and groom, Sharon and Bill Walbridge.

such jobs as office boy and hotel help, he was able to enter and earn a degree from a business college. With this education behind him he went on to lucrative careers in various San Francisco mercantile houses. But Martens had held the ministry in mind from an early age, and increasingly, a generous salary became less important to him than spreading the Lord's word. And so he went to Kansas for simultaneous college and seminary work, then on to Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. It was upon completion of this course of study that he was called by the Mission

The Steadfast Lutherans (cont.)

Continued from page 8

Seeking a location for their new edifice, offices, and parsonage, the congregation purchased lots in the Powning Addition, sometime during the latter part of 1913 or early in 1914. FootPrints readers will recall the Powning Addition was filed with the office of the Washoe County Recorder April 10, 1891. The Lutheran congregation purchased lots 1, 2 and 3 in block L, on the corner of West Second and Bell Streets.

The church was a traditional, one-story Gothic Revival with dimensions measuring 45 feet by 72 feet, designed by noted Reno architect, Frederic DeLongchamps. The exterior revealed a one-story brick building with a high pitched gable roof and a tall corner tower with spire, pierced with Lancet windows. Pinnacles projected from the roof. The nine memorial windows were Gothic arches with wooden tracery. The interior revealed altar appointments and vestments endowed as special memorials, and two large oil paintings: "Behold I stand at the door and knock," and "Peter walking on the water," presented by Mrs. G. M. Stevens, a communicant of the church.

On June 7, 1914, nearly six years after his arrival in Reno, the edifice was dedicated by Pastor Martens with the aid of Rev. F.H. Menzel of Gardnerville and Rev. George C. Jacobsen of Stockton, who it was noted, "praised the courage of the 100 members in Reno for completing such a great undertaking" with so little external support. The parsonage was dedicated in 1920, in part due to a \$1000 bequest, again from the very generous Mrs. Stevens.

St. Luke's thrived at this location for 60 years. In that time several more dedicated pastors followed Reverend Martens: Reverend A. C. Keck, Reverend Theodore Hoelter, Reverend George Schroeder and Reverend Armand E. Mueller. In fact,

unlike many other local congregations who experienced a frequent turnover in church leadership, in the first 75 years of the church's existence, only eight ministers served the congregation. In addition to the long-enduring Ladies Aid Society, other church-affiliated groups such as the Ruth Guild, the Walther League for young people, and the Men's Club contributed their efforts for the benefit of the church and local community.



*St. Luke's Lutheran Church, built in 1914 at the corner of W. Second and Bell.
Photo from a vintage postcard.*

The establishment of the Ruth Guild is significant in that it reflected the changing face of American female roles. This was perhaps more the case in Reno than in many other American cities. Whereas the Ladies Aid Society was made up of women who generally did not work outside the home and had more time to devote to church-related activities, the Ruth Guild, established in 1953, held evening meetings for women whose working conditions did not permit them to participate as fully as Ladies Aid members. However, the two organizations often cooperated in church efforts and activities.

From the early days of the church, Pastor Martens was adamant about the importance of a church youth group. The first recorded group of officers appears in a 1917 church newsletter. Church records state that many worthwhile endeavors

were accomplished by the young people. In 1950, the youth group became known as the Walther League.

During the same time frame, the Men's Club was organized. Its purpose, like all societies of the church, was to aid by special efforts in the expansion program of the church.

For the first 40 years of the church's existence, the children of parishioners were educated in the Sunday School. It had long been discussed that a Christian Day School would be a positive addition to the church, but it wasn't until 1948 that a small school was opened in the church building. In January of 1957, the school moved into a large building in the center of a 3-acre site at Kietzke and Market Streets. At one point, more than 60 students in grades 1-8 attended the 2-classroom school. However, the school closed in the 1960s and the building and property were sold.

In 1974 the congregation moved to its present location at 3835 Lakeside Drive. The stained glass windows and pews from the original church were sold with the property and preserved as part of the new funeral home built on the site. Readers may view them at O'Brien, Rogers and Crosby.

Sources for this article include: "The Nevada Lutheran," 1919-1923, "50th Anniversary notes prepared by Rev. Armand E. Mueller," W.P.A. Report MS278 Boxes 21 & 22, "History of Nevada, Volume One," Sam P. Davis, Editor (1894), Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno, St. Luke's Lutheran Church Newsletter.

Sharon Walbridge is Editor of FootPrints. Debbie Hinman is a HRPS Tour Guide and on the HRPS FootPrints Editorial Board.

From Your HRPS President

Winter found many board members planning for our busy season. As a result, the February meeting agenda produced a number of important changes for HRPS.

First, our Treasurer Bill Walbridge discussed the increasingly expensive liability insurance premiums we pay annually. We carry this insurance, which has risen from \$2,200 to \$3,600 over three years, because of our walking tours. While board members are researching other insurance alternatives, it has become very apparent we will not be able to cover this expense if we do not raise our dues and other fees.

Jack Schroeder made a motion to raise dues amounts from (\$8, \$15, and \$20) to (\$15, \$25, and \$40) and it was seconded and approved. At our annual meeting in May, this proposal will be brought to the general membership for approval.



Also of concern to board members was the popularity of our walking tours and how to deal with sometimes overwhelming numbers of participants. Walking Tours Director Susie Carter will be adding eight more tours to the seventeen already on our agenda this season. She

felt by raising the Walking Tour fee for non-members to \$10, it would not only raise more funds but encourage people to join the organization.

Our new Membership Director Gordon Foote reported we have over 700 members (counting a family membership as two members).

Our upcoming May meeting will also mark changes on the board itself. Several members will be stepping down as their terms will be ending. A nominating committee of Jack Hursh, Gordon Foote, Jack Schroeder and Susie Carter will be looking for interested members to serve in the coming months. Don't be shy about volunteering!

—Joan L. Dyer, President

HRPS Powning Project Update

by Sharon Adler Walbridge, Editor

Members may recall that last year HRPS assembled a visual record of current condition of the resources (structures and parks) within the Powning Addition. Thanks go to Cindy Ainsworth and Felvia Belaustegui with assists from Jack Hursh and Jack Schroeder. Photographs for the survey were done by Lindi Cooper-Schroeder and Jack Schroeder. (Please reference HRPS publication *A Walk Through Time* for a glimpse of twenty-four of the Powning Addition's resources.)

This semester we're fortunate to have the services of several undergraduate and graduate students from UNR, who will be working under the supervision of their professors in the Geography Department and the Department of Anthropology, Land Use Planning and Historic Preservation. These students will be engaged in an initial survey of public records to determine not only estimated dates of construction of each property in the Powning Addition, but also information on construction materials, ground plan dimensions, and so on. That's hours and hours of research for which HRPS is very grateful.

HRPS board member Felvia Belaustegui, 329-0149, and SHPO architectural historian and HRPS member, Mella Harmon, 684-3447, continue to provide guidance and oversight for the Powning Project.


Once this initial survey is completed the next step in the Powning Project will be to evaluate the data with the goal of establishing significance of each property in three areas. The first area is integrity, which is to say the state of preservation of the property's fabric and setting. The second area is distinction as a representative of its type or style. The third area is its association with persons or events that have contributed something of consequence to local history.

The visual record of the current condition addresses the area's integrity. The initial survey addresses the area's distinction. The collection of historic photos, scrapbooks, diaries, etc., addresses association with persons who helped shape our local history.

As UNR students patiently comb the dusty pages of public records, HRPS will continue to assemble historic views and photographs, family scrapbooks, diaries;

anything that will help us explain to the community why the Powning Project and its stories are so integral to the history and development of Reno.

Over the last two years, FootPrints has written about many properties in the Powning Addition: Readers can refer to Vol. 6 No. 3 of FootPrints for a story about Reno's Little Italy, and an article on C. C. Powning, who cast a very big shadow in the history of Reno and Nevada itself. In Vol. 7 No. 4, the story of the First Baptist Church was brought to light. In Vol. 8 No. 1, we learned about Bethel AME, the oldest surviving African American Church in Nevada, which is slated by the congregation to become Nevada's first African-American museum and cultural arts center. In this issue readers can learn about the Lutheran Church of the Missouri Synod that thrived for 60 years on the corner of Second and Bell.

We know there are HRPS members who can add to our growing treasure trove of information on Reno's fascinating, yet undocumented history. Get on board! 

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 14003, Reno, NV 89507

☐ New Member

☐ Renewing Member

Name(s) _____

Mailing Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone (H) _____ (W) _____ Best time to call: _____

Occupation: _____ Employer: _____

Fax _____ E-Mail: _____

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

☐ Student \$10.00

☐ Individual \$15.00

☐ Family (Children 18 yrs and younger) \$20.00

☐ Business Contribution \$50.00

☐ Supporting \$100.00

☐ HRPS Angel \$250.00

Additional donation: _____

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

**FOR OFFICE
USE ONLY**

PAID: ☐ Check ☐ Cash Amount: _____ Membership # _____ Renewal Date: _____

RV 05.27.04/FO

Bulk Rate Mail

FootPrints is now being mailed using a Bulk Rate Mail permit. If your address changes, please send a note to HRPS, POBox 14003, Reno NV 89507, with your address change. Bulk Rate mail is not forwarded.



HRPS wishes to thank Promenade on the River for allowing HRPS to hold its Board Meetings at the Promenade.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Renewals November 23, 2004 - March 6, 2005

Bill & Dorothy Barnard
Dana Bennett
Jane Bowden
Bill & Joan Brosnan
John & Janet Brown
Tom & Phyllis Cates
Neal Cobb
Elizabeth Creveling
Lois & Len Crocker
Terry Cynar
Becky Czarnik
Linda Colon & Donnette Dickey
Judy & Steve Dollinger
Jackie Drews
Dave & Kathy Ebner
Donna Edwards
Marshall & Shirley Fey
Elizabeth Fisher
Barbara & Barry Fleischer

Gordon & Carolyn Foote
Italo & Gloria Gavazzi
Sandy Gordon
Nancy Hardy
Suzanne Hawkins
Leath Hayden
Debbie Hinman
Jack Hursh
Aleta Hursh
Torrey Karlin
Red & Connie Kittell
Arlene Kramer
Mike & Jeanne Madsen
Joyce McCarty
Ann & Gordon Milldrum
Rosemarie Miller
Madeline Murray
Harrell & Patti Oxner
Daryl Pelizzari

Pat Quinlan
Dave & Sharon Quinn
Ronald & Sharon Rachow
Dick & Margaret Richardson
Don & Patti Richter
Mahree Roberts
Russ Schooley
Anne & Don Simone
Tom & Leanne Stone
Mark Taxer
Fran & Terry Terras
Jake & Terri Thompson
Betsy Vandeman
Ursula Wellman
Eleanor & David Wheeler
Darren, Carrie & Chloe Young
Dr. Sally Zanjani

New Members November 23, 2004 - March 6, 2005

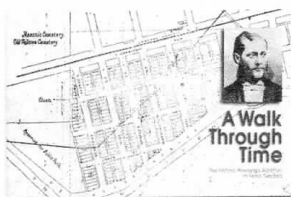
Laura & Diana Balsley
James & Maria Blakely
Darrel Cain
Beverly A. Drake
Linda C. Fine
Selma Goldstein
Nevada Historical Society
Bill & Beth Isaefe
Geraldine & John Lilley
Ruth Miller
Dave Minedew
Ruth Olguin
Larry Pizorno
Rhoda R. Talso

Thank You, Thank You!

Thank You, Thank You to Ginger Salcedo. Belated, yes, but we offer a most appreciative thanks to Ginger, who handled Membership duties for HRPS from the beginning of HRPS until November 2004.



P.O. Box 14003
Reno, NV 89507



A WALK THROUGH TIME: The Historic Powning's Addition in Reno, Nevada is available at Sundance Bookstore and the Nevada Historical Society for \$5.00



SPRING PROGRAMS 2005

Jack Hursh, Jr. – Program Chair: 746-3252

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

Wednesday, April 27: Historical memoir on the Lake Mansion. Barbara Gulling Goff who is the great great step-granddaughter of Myron Lake, and her son Bruce will offer a unique insight on the Lake Mansion history. Both Barbara and Bruce were instrumental in the successful relocation of the mansion. Bruce works for Domus Design here in Reno.

Wednesday, May 11: First Annual HRPS Preservation Week Luncheon at the Siena to follow the City of Reno/Historical Resources Commission Awards Presentation and reception to be held at City Hall at 10:00 a.m. For specifics see article on page 7.

Wednesday, May 25: Due to popular demand, we'll have an "Open Microphone Night" at the HRPS meeting. Come and share a favorite Reno story or two with people who love Reno stories. Your story can be about the famous, the not so famous, and yes, even the infamous. But please, no politics. We will also have display tables for those who would like to share old photos and/or memorabilia with the group.

May 25 is the HRPS Annual Meeting: At this time we'll have the election to the Board of Directors. This is also your opportunity to vote on the proposed dues change. See President Joan Dyer's article on page 10 for specifics.

HRPS OFFICERS

President: Joan Dyer 329-8744

Vice President: Phyllis Cates

Secretary: Mark Taxer

Treasurer: Bill Walbridge

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Felvia Belaustegui, Susie Carter, Gordon Foote, Fritz Grupe, Bob Harmon, Jack Hursh, Jr., Jack Schroeder, Marilyn Fuetsch Turville, Linda Sievers

PROGRAM

Jack Hursh, Jr. 746-3252

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR

Gordon Foote 348-6455

WALKING TOURS

Susie Carter, 787-3170

MANAGING EDITOR

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