

SOCIETY NEWS

The Nevada Historical Society e-newsletter

Winter 2023

Vol. 2



Above Photo: Young ladies and men and a cute child with a sled are getting ready to ski, Galena Creek winter sports area, Washoe County, 1940s. NHS Photo, WA-09595.

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NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dr. Catherine Magee

Happy Spring!

Please join me in welcoming Tiffany Jones as our Administrative Assistant and Store Manager. We are still small and mighty with five amazing staff and hoping the remaining two team members will be on board in 2023.

The NHS Team completed our strategic plan for 2023-2028. We had insightful input from visitors, community partners, students, docents, and others. Input is essential to ensure we meet your needs, fulfill our mission, and remain central to education and cultural heritage preservation in Nevada. As part of the strategic plan, we've updated our mission and vision statements:

Mission

The Nevada Historical Society collects and preserves our state's cultural heritage to make it accessible to everyone through education, research, and exhibitions about the people, places, and events that shape Nevada.

Vision

The Nevada Historical Society encourages the spirit of discovery and pursuit of knowledge to enrich lives through history.

We strive to be:

- A diverse and inclusive educational institution that reflects the histories of all Nevadans
- A valuable resource that illuminates our past, connects us to the present, and inspires us for the future
- An accessible destination for education, research, and public programs

I just can't say enough about our docents! In case you don't know, our docents keep the NHS open and running in so many ways. We've been in high demand for school tours, and our docents provide engaging and curriculum-enhancing tours for K-12 schools.

Speaking of docents, it is the 40th anniversary of the NHS Docent Council, and we've been celebrating them all year with docent-focused programs. If you've ever thought about volunteering with the NHS, there's no time like the present! We have endless opportunities and fascinating projects!

We are happy to be partnering again with Dr. Von Nagy and students from two of his UNR Shared History Program courses. It's a win-win experience for everyone! Being mentors and providing expanded educational opportunities are so important to the NHS Team.

Cheers,



MEET OUR NEWEST STAFF MEMBER

Tiffany Jones

I am really happy to be part of the Nevada Historical Society team. I am a 5th generation Nevadan; I grew up in Elko and attended college at the University of Nevada, Reno. In my third year, I studied abroad in Pau, France, doing an intensive language program. I received my BA degree in International Affairs and French.

After college I spent 5 years in Los Angeles working for IMAX and Riot Games, honing my administrative skills. My professional background is in retail, customer service, and accounting.

As the Administrative Assistant / Store Manager, I will be running the museum store and helping with museum visitors, membership, and events.

In my free time I enjoy hiking, camping, bookbinding, oil painting, and watching movies with my cat Ares!

Next time you are at the Historical Society, stop by and say hi!



Above Photo: Alice Happy Days Diminy, woman prospector, Jefferson Summit, c1902. NHS Photo NYE-01073.

THIS WAS NEVADA SERIES

Happy Days Diminy: Eccentric Dreamer

Phillip I. Earl

Alice was her name, Alice Diminy, but her many friends and acquaintances knew her only as Happy Days. One of several female prospectors and mining entrepreneurs who abandoned house, home, family, and other civilized amenities for the uncertainties of life in the mining camps of central Nevada around the turn of the century, she became known far and wide for her good humor, sunny disposition, and eccentric ways.

Little is known of her background or the reasons for her coming to Nevada. A native of Bavaria, Germany, she was born about 1861. Like Lillian Malcolm, whose life was chronicled in these columns recently, she had apparently spent some time in Canada and Alaska during the rush to the Klondike in the late 1890s and had married there.

Over the years, she picked up and shedded at least two additional mates, A. W. Shipway, with whom she had lived at Rhyolite, and Herbert Jester, a miner who had claims at Tule Canyon on the edge of Death Valley. She had several affairs during the early years and publicly admitted that she was an advocate of "free love."

To read the full article, [Happy Days Diminy](#).



Above and Below Photos

Cleaning and reorganizing the shelving in the library.

With the majority of the county photographs digitized by the hardworking members of Team Photo, we decided to move the binders of photocopies of those images out of the Research Library, in order to allow for some rearranging of the reference material.

The Polk's directories are now housed together in one location, and some of the resources that were previously on shelves in non-accessible areas are now more readily available to researchers.



Year of the Docent - Fun Fact

"Late Summer Activities: During the Nevada State Fair (August 25-29) docents assisted at an exhibit on the Donner Party. They answered questions visitors had and made Nevada Historical Society pamphlets and flyers available. Over 2,000 people stopped by the exhibit to look at the pictures and/or listen to talks." D.C. Bee, Vol. 11, No. 2, October 4, 1999

REVEALING HIDDEN COLLECTIONS

by Sarah Patton, Archivist

Thanks to a generous donation from lifetime member Lynn Bremer and the logistical assistance of the Docent Council, I was able to purchase a license for Airtable, a cloud-based spreadsheet-database hybrid that I am using to create a detailed master inventory for our manuscript material. Thanks also to Archivist Jessica Maddox at UNR Special Collections for her guidance and assistance with this software.

As I continue the shelf-read work I started last year, I am populating a table with information such as shelf location; type and size of box; physical state of the collection; and whether the boxes contain media such as photographs, sound or video recordings, or microfilm. It will take quite a bit more time in the stacks to complete this, but when done, it will provide invaluable information about our holdings, increasing our physical and intellectual control over the material.

In the meantime, I have linked one of the tables, <https://airtable.com/shr90zM2IRUHP0NvG>, on the Research Library page of the Nevada Historical Society website. A master list of our numbered manuscript collections, it includes the collection number and name and links to online PastPerfect records and PDF finding aids, as available. While not all the collections have summary descriptions or detailed finding aids at this time, the list at least provides a way to see the names of the collections in one place, and it can be updated in real time, rather than editing and uploading a PDF. My hope is that this may drive interest in collections that previously were "hidden," which in turn can help determine future description and processing priorities.



Above Photo: Main Street in Bodie during the winter, three men on skis crossing the snow, Bodie, California, 1911. NHS Photo Collection, BillebBodie52.

LIBRARY CATALOG MIGRATION

by **Sarah Patton, Archivist**

The Nevada Historical Society is part of the Nevada Library Cooperative, a group of libraries throughout the state, including our sister institution Nevada State Museum Las Vegas, who share resources in a way that is more cost-effective than doing things alone. One of the shared resources is our ILS (Integrated Library System).

We currently use Polaris, but the CoOp has received approval to migrate to a new system, Koha, with the Aspen Discovery layer. This is the same system used by the Washoe County libraries.

I will be working with the CoOp and our vendor, ByWater, as we migrate to this new system before the start of the new fiscal year in July. Our scheduled go live date is Monday, June 26th.

Many of the member libraries are very excited about this change, and I am hopeful that it will result in an improved user experience, both for researchers and staff.

If anyone has library cataloging experience, (specifically Library of Congress Classification) and would like to volunteer to provide some support or assistance during this migration, please email spatton@nevadaculture.org. Thanks!

ADMISSIONS & MEMBERSHIP VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

by **Tiffany Jones, Adm. Assist/Museum Store**

Thinking about volunteering with us at the Historical Society? We need volunteers to help with membership tracking and data entry.

Maybe you are looking for something more social? We also are looking for back up coverage for museum admissions on Saturdays, where you would be welcoming gallery visitors and processing admissions.

Please contact Tiffany if you are interested
tdjones@nevadaculture.org



Photo Above Left: NHS Docent Shirley Gaffney



Photo Above Right: Individual embossed stamp boxes

DOCENT SPOTLIGHT

by **Debra Brastoff, Collections Manager**

Shirley Gaffney joined the Nevada Historical Society Docent Council in 2018 after answering an ad for volunteers in the Senior Spectrum. When asked why, she tells a wonderful story of volunteering in California at community health events and her love of travel.

While traveling with her boyfriend in a truck with a camper through the Southwest, they enjoyed visiting Native American, aviation, and railroad museums. Now that she has moved to Washoe County, she continues to enjoy taking her son to local museums when he visits.

Shirley brings her enthusiasm for volunteering and museums, along with beautiful penmanship and a willingness to pitch in wherever the NHS needs her. In her five years as a docent, Shirley has greeted patrons and introduced the galleries; cashiered and stocked the museum store; tallied membership checks; numbered manuscript collections for the American Gaming Archives; assisted the library and addressed envelopes.

She is currently making boxes to house the recently donated Marion & Co. embossing dies. I look forward to Shirley's help every Wednesday.


STORY App

We are excited to share now that we have submitted our content to STORY. The app will be available by May 2023 and that will provide additional historical content, photos, and fun kids' facts to enhance your visitor experience in our permanent Nevada galleries.



**Photography
Exhibition**

**3/1/23 until
7/29/23**



Landscapes, Skyscapes & Great Escapes
Mark Vollmer, photographer
March 11, 2023: Artist Reception 1-3:30pm and Exhibit Talk, 2-3pm

Nevada's Oldest Cultural Institution
Nevada Historical Society
1650 N. Virginia Street | Reno, NV 89503 | 775.688.1190 | nvhistoricalsociety.org
NHS is part of Dept. of Tourism & Cultural Affairs, Div. Museums & History



Ruby Mountains, Lamoille Canyon, Lamoille Creek



NHS Changing Hallway Gallery featuring Mark Vollmer's work. Don't miss our Artist Reception and Exhibit Talk on Saturday, March 11, 2023 from 1-3:30pm.

EXHIBITION NEWS CHANGING GALLERY

Landscapes, Skyscapes & Great Escapes **The Photography of Mark Vollmer**

The NHS Changing Hallway Gallery now features the new exhibit, *Landscapes, Skyscapes & Great Escapes*.

Mark Vollmer shares his unique vision in this photography exhibit and sale, revealing some of the stunning moments he's experienced while exploring Nevada and the West for over 30 years.

"The physical and spiritual beauty of the earth and its inhabitants inspire my outdoor photography. My goal is to evoke from the viewer a response similar to how I felt toward the scene."

From a Lake Tahoe sunset to ancient Pueblo ruins in New Mexico, and from the Great Reno Balloon Race to the alpine jewel of the Ruby Mountains, Mark has sought to capture the evocative beauty of our western heritage.

Mark Vollmer is an award-winning outdoor photographer, instructor, and freelance writer based in Sparks, Nevada. His illustrated feature articles have appeared in *Nevada Magazine*, and his images have been widely published in regional books, calendars, and brochures.

The exhibit will be on display from **March 1, 2023 through July 29, 2023.**

NHSQ HISTORIC ARTICLE

The "Descendants of Ham" in Zion: Discrimination Against Blacks Along the Shifting Mormon Frontier, 1830-1920

by Newell G. Bringhurst

During the past twenty to twenty-five years an impressive number of works has been written on the Mormon-black experience; these have been stimulated in large measure by the controversy surrounding the now-defunct Mormon practice of denying blacks the priesthood.

Included among these is Stephen J. Taggart's *Mormonism's Negro Policy*, which attempts to define the social-historical roots of Mormon black priesthood denial. Of greater importance is Lester E. Bush's Dialogue article "Mormonism's Negro Doctrine: An Historical Overview" which traces the development of Mormon attitudes and practices toward Blacks from the earliest days of the Latter-day Saint movement until the early 1970's.

A third study, written from the vantage point of Utah blacks themselves is Ronald G. Coleman's essay "Blacks in Utah History: An Unknown Legacy" which describes their social, political, and economic activities and their struggles for equality during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Other significant studies examine the lives of individual Great Basin blacks—including Samuel Chambers, Jane Manning James, and Elijah Abel.

Considering all these studies, one might rightly ask what justification can be offered for yet another treatise on the black-Mormon experience? These numerous studies, despite their informative, scholarly nature, do not adequately consider the nature and effects of Mormon black interaction along the Latter-day Saint frontier. Yet this interaction was of primary importance in causing the Mormons to discriminate against blacks. Mormon antiblack attitudes and practices were evident from the earliest days of the Latter-day Saint movement. They intensified and reached a peak by the time of the American Civil War.

These attitudes and practices, moreover, were perpetuated and, in fact, reenforced during the fifty-five-year period after 1865. Thus, they were firmly established by 1920—the date that the first period of black migration into the Great Basin came to an end. Mormon antiblack prejudices emerged along a shifting Latter-day Saint frontier, one that initially moved from New York into Ohio and Missouri, and then into Illinois and finally into the Great Basin.

NHSQ Winter 1981 issue, pages 298 – 318.

<http://epubs.nsla.nv.gov/statepubs/epubs/210777-1981-4Winter.pdf>



Five miners posing at a mine or mill building with their skis. NHS Photo, WP-00984.

Year of the Docent - Fun Fact

"Docent Stars Shine Brightly on Channel 5!"

If you tuned into the opening night of Channel 5's Winterfest Pledge Drive on Tuesday, December 1, you saw many of your docents answering phones. Those who volunteered for this opening night duty were LEE BISHOP, JANE OLSEN, JOHN GOMES, JOHN HOFFA, JEANNIE and TOM NICHOLS, KATHY DAMM, and JEAN HAZEN. Great job!" D.C. Bee, Vol. 10, No. 3, December 7, 1998

NEW DONATION
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

by SherylN Hayes-Zorn, Curator of History

The Nevada Historical Society would like to thank the Mary Bremer Foundation for the generous donation of \$10,000 to purchase a new LCD projector, sound system, video camera and editing software, wiring and installation, and the repainting of our Event Space and Hallway Gallery.

We will not have a new exhibit scheduled during the month of August so we can get the space ready.

NOTES FROM THE DOCENT COUNCIL BOARD

Pam Walker, NHS Docent President

Hi to all you wonderful docents. Lots going on with the Docent Council and here are just a few things worth mentioning.

You may notice some new pictures on the Docent bulletin board. Karen has been taking pictures of docents busy volunteering and is posting them on the wall. Take a look next time you are in the Museum and be sure to have your picture taken too. If you would like to see docents at work in years past, you can check out the digitized versions of the DC Scrapbooks. These are available in the NHS Docent Council Records, MSNC00604.

If you have been to the Museum lately, you may have noticed that the garden at the front door is looking cleaner. That's thanks to Jody Covington and her husband, who spent a day raking and bagging up leaves. There is still lots to do to present a better first impression to Museum visitors, and if you are willing and able to help, just pick a day and come with a rake and some trash bags.

School tours are back in full swing, and if you are interested in leading or shadowing a tour, let Catherine know. We are always looking for more folks to join the docent education team. The school kids are always excited to tour the museum and full of curiosity. It really is a joy to see and be a part of.

Welcome to a couple of brand-new docents, Alexandra (Alex) Cubbon and Jennifer Hernandez. If you see someone working in the library or the store or in photos and you don't recognize the face, introduce yourself. It's probably a friend you haven't made yet!

A great time to meet new members and catch up with familiar ones will be at the Fordham luncheon on April 6th. This year we will celebrate the Docent Council with lunch at the National Automobile Museum in Reno. Watch for emails regarding the luncheon; for more information, contact Lorraine Petersen lorrainepetersen@hotmail.com. Lorraine even managed to get our admission fee waived and after lunch we are invited to explore the galleries and even join a tour of the museum.

That's all for now, thanks for taking a few minutes to catch up on what's happening with the Docent Council. If you haven't participated lately but would like to get back into the swing of things, remember, we meet the first Thursday of the month at 10:30 and always have fun and interesting speakers. Hope to see you there.



Marion & Co. dice and chip embossing dies

WHERE GAMING HISTORY FINDS A NEW HOME

by Debra Brastoff, Collections Manager

The American Gaming Archives (AGA), founded in 2006 at the Nevada Historical Society, welcomes a Marion & Co., Inc. donation to a growing list of gambling device manufacturers whose histories are preserved as part of the AGA.

Marion & Co. started in 1900 as Victor Fliegelman, a little store on 4th Avenue in New York City, later acquiring H. C. Edwards, who had merged with Ace Sporting Works. Marion & Co. moved to Davis, Florida in 1998.

Thanks to Marion & Co., the NHS received the dice and chip embossing dies from these companies. They will join our historic company dies: T. R. King, Hunt & Co., Taylor & Co., Burt Co., Mason & Co., Jones Brothers, and additional H. C. Edwards.

This collection will take three to four months to permanently house and catalog, depending on volunteer participation. Photographing each die has started and boxes are being made. Numbering and measuring are up next, then description and database entry.

Receiving this material is like having a missing piece of a bigger puzzle come home. The integration of these dies completes a picture seen on the H Mold chips of H. C. Edwards and the elephant mold chips of Marion & Co.

To learn about dice and chip manufacturing, come visit the Nevada Historical Society American Gaming Archives Exhibit.



Above Photo: NHS Nevada History Gallery



Above Photo: NHS Museum Store bookcases

MUSEUM STORE NEWS

by Tiffany Jones, Adm. Asst./Store Manager

The Nevada Historical Society Museum store features a selection of books that illuminate Nevada's diverse history, landscapes, and peoples.

We are working to enhance our literary offerings by expanding our book selection to include children's books and highlight the works of the authors and artists featured in our monthly programs and exhibits, such as greeting cards of Mark Vollmer's photography and books from our Writers' Wednesday authors.

The store also carries one-of-a-kind vintage slot glass and casino memorabilia. Come check out the exciting additions to our museum store!

GALLERY LABEL TASKFORCE

One Idea or Label at a Time May Lead to a History Rabbit Hole

by Lorraine Petersen, NHS Vice-President

A new committee was formed in late December 2022. Sheryl Hayes-Zorn is our leader, and Karen Hastedt and I are the first to join this team. Karen has been collecting suggestions from visitors about the labels in our galleries, and we are using that list as our starting point.

I didn't hesitate to join this committee. Before school tours, I always take the time to straighten the labels in the gallery and made any repairs possible. Other tour docents do this too. As our museum is not moving in the immediate future, Catherine gave us the okay to review, repair, re-script, and replace as many labels as possible.

One visitor's comment was about a two-headed calf poem. Wow! That was an intriguing comment! Right away, Karen found the poem, and we shared it with the docents in our docent newsletter last month. The poem was not necessarily written about our two-headed calf. It turns out there are many two-headed calves in museums throughout this continent. In fact, there are many two-headed species in museums.

We are learning so much about the artifacts in our galleries. I'm known for going down rabbit holes. Well, this is the Year of the Rabbit, and history holes are so very interesting.

Using the Smithsonian Guidelines for appropriate font, font size, and placement, we are using this information to help us when hanging new items, like the new Nevada map in the Event Space. Having a map easily accessible was a visitor's idea. We are looking at placing another map within a gallery.

If you want to learn more about the artifacts at the museum by reviewing the labels, talk to Sheryl Hayes-Zorn about joining this team. If you see a label that sorely needs some attention, please tell Karen.

And expect me to stop you and tell you about the latest piece of history that I have finally learnt!

Year of the Docent - Fun Fact

“Quickies: President JOHN GOMES has announced that the Docent Council has received a mini grant from the Nevada Humanities Committee to expand the outreach program to the History on Wheels program.” D.C. Bee, Vol. 8, No. 8, April 7, 1997



Bank Club interior, Reno, Washoe County, Nevada, 1930s.
NHS PHoto, WA-03574.

DOCENT COUNCIL LECTURES

The NHS Docent Council has a great lecture series scheduled for this spring. Lectures occur on the first Thursday of the month at 10:30am; this is a great way to learn about the Docent Council organization.

4/6/2022 10:30am Fordham Luncheon

No meeting this month.

5/4/2022 10:30am Meeting and Lecture

Speaker, Sarah Patton, *A Bonanza for Nevada Tourism*

6/1/2022 10:30am Meeting and Lecture

Speaker, Laura Tennant, *History of Dayton*

NEW Hours of Operation

Museum & Store: Wed. – Sat. 10am–4pm

Research Library: Thurs. – Sat. 12–4pm*

*Reservations Required – reserve a seat!

Nevada's Oldest Cultural Institution

Nevada Historical Society

1650 North Virginia Street Reno, NV 89503

775.688.1190 | nvhistoricalsociety.org

NHS is part of Dept. Tourism & Cultural Affairs, Div. Museums & History

UPCOMING EVENTS

We are scheduling several programs that didn't make it into this newsletter. Make sure to check our website and Facebook page for these and other upcoming events. Limited seating is available in our Event Space so make sure to arrive early.

3/8/2023 5-6:30pm Writers' Wednesday

Peter Mires, *Wicked Virginia City*. Refreshments before 5:30pm talk.

3/11/2023 1-3:30pm Artist Reception & Talk

Mark Vollmer, Photography Reception, *Landscapes, Skyscapes & Great Escapes* photo exhibit. Talk starts at 2pm.

3/16/2023 12:00pm High Noon Lecture (Zoom)

Debbie Hinman, *The University Gateway Houses: A History & Update on the Relocated Survivors*.

3/25/2022 1-2:30pm History Lecture

Dr. Diana Ahmad, Professor Emeritus of History, *Prostitution in Nevada*.

4/12/2023 5-6:30pm Writers' Wednesday

Stephen H. Provost, *Goldfield Century: Nevada Boomtown*. Refreshments before 5:30pm talk.

4/15/2023 1-2:30pm AGA Fireside Chat

The Bank Club. Michael Fischer, speaker and Howard Herz, Moderator.

4/20/2023 12:00pm High Noon lecture (Zoom)

Joe Curtis, *Virginia City, the Great Fire, October 26, 1875*.

5/6/2023 10:00- 12:00pm NHS Docent Orientation

Have you wanted to learn more about being a volunteer at NHS? Here's your chance to meet great people and help preserve and promote Nevada's history!

5/10/2023 5-6:30pm Writers' Wednesday

Michael Makley, *Imposing Order without Law: American Expansion to the Eastern Sierra, 1850-1865*. Refreshments before 5:30pm talk.

5/13/2023 1-2:30pm NEW Lake Tahoe Lecture Series

Susan Magee Clemons, Glenbrook Historical Society President, *Glenbrook: From Timber to Tourism*.

5/18/2023 12:00pm High Noon Lecture (Zoom)

Scott Carey, *Sparks Then and Now*.