

Museum Matters

October November December 2021

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Douglas County Historical Society

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Monday - Friday,
10 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Closed Saturday & Sunday

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DOUGLAS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY TRUSTEE MEETINGS

Trustee meetings are held on the third Thursday of every month at the Carson Valley Museum & Cultural Center at 3:00 p.m. Members and friends are always welcome to attend. October 16, November 18, and December 16, 2021

This edition of the DCHS Newsletter is being mailed to all DCHS Members in good standing.

"The Douglas County Historical Society seeks to enrich lives by preserving local history and making it accessible to our communities and visitors."

New Exhibit on Genoa's Famous Candy Dance

By Linda Reid, Collections Chairperson

Candy Dance and Genoa have become synonymous. The Town Hall comes alive with candy makers late in August and early September. Some vintage kitchen items, a classic cookbook, and a view of the celebration in poster form are now part of a Candy Dance Exhibit at the Courthouse Museum in Genoa. It was the brain child of the talented Frank Dressel, who designed and put it together, paying homage to one of the largest annual events in Carson Valley.

The number of volunteers making fudge, divinity, and peanut brittle, to name just a few of the favorites, is amazing. Originally candy was passed around at the dance, and that is how it eventually became known as the Candy Dance.

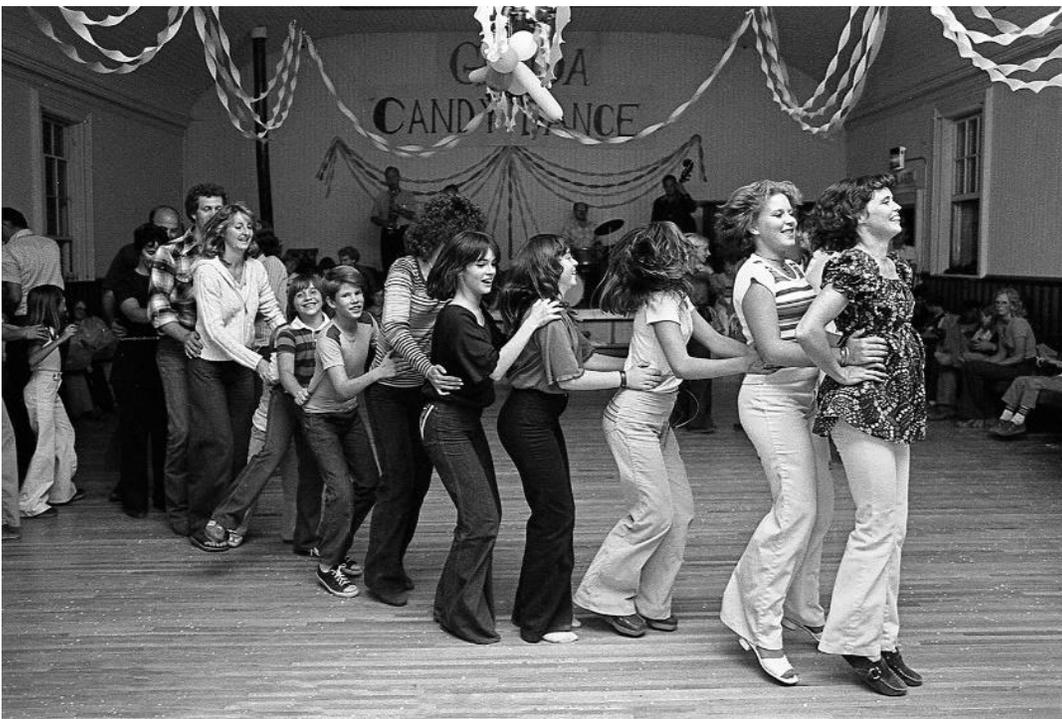
The Town Hall, originally Raycraft Dance Hall, was built in 1846, and as locals and visitors alike can attest, it is still put to good use today. Over time, a midnight supper served there became an evening dinner. This is one of the traditions that has continued to this day. Fashions have changed over the years and this is visible in the posters on display.

The Genoa Candy Dance Faire, as it was first called in 1974, boasted 12 vendors. Today, it is a two-day affair with thousands in attendance. Live music has always been what dancers enjoyed. The band was hired by the town until midnight. If the dancers wanted the party to go on, a collection was taken up to entice the music makers to continue.

There is one myth that has been perpetuated. It has been handed down over the years that when the candy was



passed around at the dance, it was on silver trays. This is not too likely because the general population of the town was made up of average to poorer people. The true wealth of Genoa is in its citizens and their volunteering spirit.



Take a trip up Genoa Lane and visit the Courthouse Museum in Genoa. Check out the Candy Dance Exhibit. Doors open at 10 a.m. everyday. You can call ahead to check exact hours at 775 782-4325. The museum itself will close for the winter on October 31st and open again in the spring.

Dancers doing the "Bunny Hop" in 1978. Photo copyright Jay Aldrich All rights reserved.

Happenings at the Museum



Author Karen Dustman presented a very successful *Salute to Agriculture Heritage Lecture* in September. She wrote the following overview of her topic for those that missed this special event.

What was life like on the ranch, back in the old days? Well, it involved hard work, of course. *Lots* of hard work. But research has taught me that “life on the ranch” was so much more than just work! It meant meeting unexpected challenges head-on, for one thing. Like a local ranch wife whose duck got into the poisoned grain. She grabbed some ether (used to start farm engines), anaesthetized the duck, cut its stomach open, removed the grain, and nursed her duck back to health. She wasn’t a hero, her family emphasizes. She was just a problem-solver.

Ranch life also meant depending on family. Neighbors could be a fair distance away, and households often included extended family. Generations didn’t always live in separate houses – an important form of social safety net as parents grew elderly. That could pose its own challenges, of course. One ranch wife, asked how it felt to start her own family while living with in-laws, said simply: “I wouldn’t recommend it!”

Ranch life meant coping with wind and weather. Lightning struck cattle – and cattlemen, too, occasionally. Carson Valley’s terrific winds could tumble barns. And heavy snows or flooding might cut the ranch off from outside supplies for extended periods. Those who *could* get in to town would shop for the neighboring ranches. But life on the ranch could also be fun. There were poker games and horse races. Coffee klatches and garden clubs. Kids had swimming holes and .22 rifles.

Some of the early settlers in Carson Valley made sure they brought plants with them from the Old Country that still survive today. The beautiful crimson Pentecost Rose peony, for example, was brought by Anna Engel Neddenriep when she emigrated in 1872. And the highly-prized Freestone Damson Plum came from Germany with Anna Dreier in 1888, when she arrived with her soon-to-be husband, Fritz Neddenriep, Jr. These treasured plants must have been a special comfort, not only reminding people of their roots in the Old Country but also helping to make this new place “home.”



New Exhibit: Early Schools of Douglas County

Originally from Taft, California, Jo moved to Carson Valley when she married Clayton Johnson in 1958. Six years later, she was visiting her in-laws at their home in Gardnerville when she realized that their home had been a schoolhouse! At that time, she sketched an image of the home with pencil on a grocery bag. Her interest in schoolhouses was piqued!

Over the years Jo interviewed many long-time Carson Valley residents about their schoolhouse memories. She began sketching and painting these schoolhouses. She researched schoolhouses at the main library in Carson City and at the Douglas County Historical Society. The collection you see is her interpretation of her interviews and research. Many thanks go to Frank Dressel and Pat Andrew for putting together this welcoming special exhibit of Jo’s work. It is located inside the Main Hall at the Carson Valley Museum & Cultural Center. The photo shows only a selection of all the paintings on display. Come by and see them all!

DCHS Volunteer Sue Leinweber



By Linda Lechien, President, Board of Trustees

Volunteers are very valuable to operate our two museums. We could not adequately or efficiently manage without their help. From the minute a guest walks in the front door, they are greeted by a friendly, knowledgeable volunteer sitting at the reception desk. These volunteers freely give up a part of their day because they love the history and traditions of the Carson Valley and want to share it with our guests.

Sue Leinweber is a volunteer of three years at our Genoa Courthouse Museum. Sue was born and raised in a small midwestern town 35 miles west of Chicago. Her small Catholic girls school taught the usual High School subjects, and they also taught the students to be a responsible citizen and give back to family, friends, and the community.

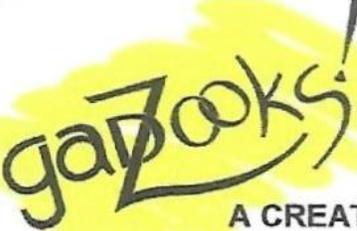
Sue and her husband of 46 years lived in Denver, Colorado, Maui, Hawaii and Monterey, California before retiring to Genoa. Sue's background includes employment at Rocky Flats Nuclear Weapons Facility for 20 years in Denver. In Maui, Sue volunteered at the local Alzheimer Association office which was a great way to learn what her mother, who had the disease, was experiencing. While living in Maui, Sue and her husband volunteered on the whale watching boats, the Maui

Humpback Marine Sanctuary, Pacific Whale Foundation, and many other small non-profit organizations that needed extra hands.

After moving to Monterey Bay, she became a volunteer with the Monterey Bay Aquarium as a guide. Finally, deciding to retire, they moved to Genoa. Sue chose to volunteer at the Genoa Courthouse Museum. Sue is also a Genoa Greeter in the corner gazebo booth in town, sharing information about the area and answering the many questions from visitors. Sue says she enjoys everything about Genoa, such as making and selling candy for the Candy Dance...and that is uniquely Genoa!



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Membership Benefits:

- Free admission to both museums
- 10% discount at Museum Bookstores
- DCHS Newsletter & member updates
- Invitations to special events
- Discounts on special programs
- Volunteer opportunities
- Free admission to our DCHS Lecture Series

Annual Membership Dues:

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- I am interested in volunteering at the museums.
Please call me.

To All Members:

Please make sure that the Museum has your correct address, phone number, and email. Thank you!

The Membership Committee

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In Memory of

**James Blaisdell Jr.
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The Douglas County Historical Society accepts monetary gifts as memorials to honor your loved ones. To make or discuss a donation, please visit or call our front office.

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Douglas County Historical Society runs the Carson Valley Museum and Cultural Center and

the Courthouse Museum in Genoa. From Armed Forces Day to Labor Day every summer, both museums are happy to participate in the Blue Star Museums initiative, a program that provides free admission to currently serving US military personnel and their families.



We are asking all Amazon shoppers to choose us when making online purchases. There has been a significant impact on our normal fundraising activities, but this is one way you can still help.

Go to smile.amazon.com and find the drop-down box. Choose Douglas County Historical Society in Gardnerville, Nevada. Be sure it is us. Surprisingly, there are many other Douglas County Historical Societies, so double check the location. Bookmark it so it is always where you enter Amazon.

On eligible purchases 0.5% of your order comes in as a donation. The best part is that it costs you nothing, and helps keep the Carson Valley Museum & Cultural Center and the Genoa Courthouse Museum going on a consistent basis, no matter what the challenge. Then all of us really have something to smile about.

From the Bookstore



By Judy Conrad, Bookstore Manager

It's Fall and time for a few more hikes before winter sets in. We have an excellent new book for finding those special hikes, complete with the history of the area you are choosing to hike. **Hiking Lake Tahoe – A history and trail guide** is interesting just to read the stories surrounding areas such as Carson Pass, Lake Tahoe, Donner Pass, etc. After the story about the area, there is a **“How To Hike It”** with excellent hiking information, mileage, elevation gain, difficulty of the hike, and instructions on getting to the trail beginning. The book tops off with both historic black and white pictures and recent color photos. It's a winner!

What would October be without a book of ghost stories to enjoy? We have many to pick from, including **Haunted Old West**. Ever hear of “Big Jack Davis” who haunts Six Mile Canyon in Virginia City? His story takes place in Virginia City, which is a short drive from here. It would be interesting to read his ghostly tale and then visit the place where it all happened. Twenty-seven other ghostly spirits of the West round out the book. Enjoy!

For the children, fun stories in **American Legends and Tall Tales**, including Paul Bunyan, Annie Oakley, AND it's a Dover Coloring Book too! Come shop our bookstores. Great books and all proceeds help our museums stay open.
DCHS Members receive 10% off their purchases from our bookstores.

Next Heritage Lecture



Our *Second Thursday “Salute to Agriculture” Heritage Lecture Series* continues at the Carson Valley Museum & Cultural Center. This upcoming event is on Thursday, October 14. Local Rancher Frank Godecke will speak on “Dairying in Carson Valley.” Find out what the daily operations were like in one of the most important enterprises in Carson Valley. Doors open at 6:00 Lecture begins 6:30 p.m. \$3 at the door / Free for DCHS Members

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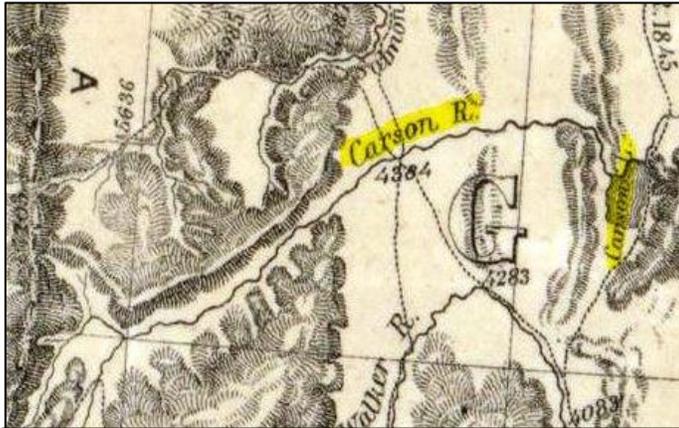
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Jack Za is creating a historical musical about the Carson Valley! For more information: jzmusic12@gmail.com! www.JackZaMusic.com!

What's in a Name? The Story of "Carson Valley"

One of the goals expressed in the Douglas County Historical Society's mission statement is to collect and preserve local history. This includes not only artifacts, but the books and unpublished manuscripts that are part of the Van Sickle collection. These, along with other sources, help us answer such questions as: "*How did Carson Valley get its name?*"

In 1843, John C. Fremont embarked on his second Western expedition with a group guided by Kit Carson and accompanied by surveyor and cartographer Charles Preuss. In January 1844, the party headed south from Pyramid Lake, keeping east of the Pinenut Mountains until reaching today's Bridgeport area. After unsuccessful attempts to traverse the Sierra, the men traveled north to the East Fork of the Carson River, finally crossing at what is now known as Carson Pass.



Fremont, et al. Map of Oregon and upper California from the surveys of John Charles Frémont and other authorities, 1848. Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division

Fremont presented the expedition report to the U.S. Senate prior to its publication in book form. In 1848, Preuss's expedition map that depicted the locations of the Carson River and the Carson Lake/Sink was printed. Both of these records would be used to create the earliest trail guides.

In 1881, Thompson & West published "*The History of Nevada*," the first comprehensive narrative about the Silver State. In order to ensure accuracy, the editors contacted Fremont directly to verify that he had indeed named the Carson River. His written response was included in the book.

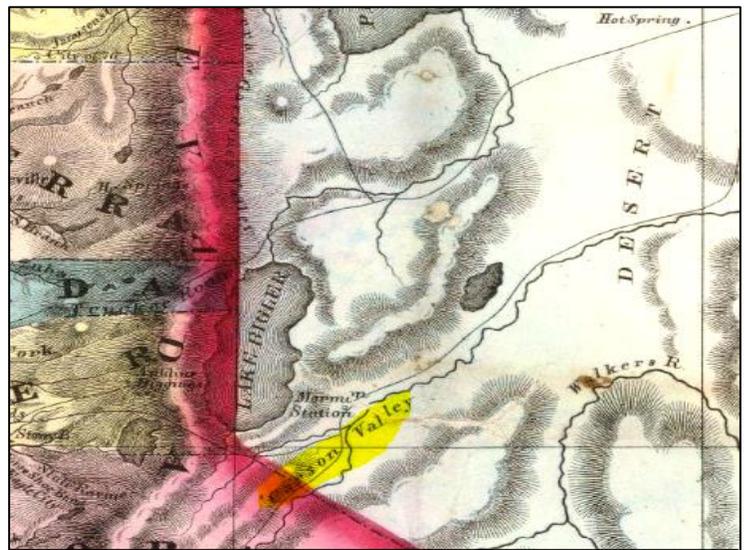
The editors also noted why Fremont chose "Carson" and how Carson Valley received its name. In a later expedition, he had "*moved up the stream to which he had given the name of his favorite scout, Carson, and passing through the valley and cañon that have since received their name from the river.*"

But many early newspaper editors were confused about the location. Carson Valley—also called Carson's Valley or Carson River Valley—was applied to many other areas along the Carson River. Articles from the early 1850s included such "Carson Valley" stories as mining in Gold Cañon [Dayton] and farming near Ragtown [northwest of Fallon]. In time, the growing prominence of the Mormon Station settlement helped change this misconception. Yet as late as 1890, Hubert Bancroft's "*History of Nevada, Colorado and Wyoming*" stated that the "*lower part of Carson Valley is 3,840 feet above the sea.*" That elevation is not in Carson Valley—it's at the river's terminus in Churchill County's Carson Sink.

Where did the residents of Mormon Station think they lived? In 1851, Frank G Barnard noted in the "*First Records of Carson Valley*" that "*a meeting of the citizens of 'Carson Valley'*" had been held. The quotes he used around the term suggest that this was an informal name.

But while inhabitants and outside parties seemed to disagree over the term, the geography was clear. The 1861 "*Act to organize the Territory of Nevada*" referred to Carson Valley solely as the upper portion of the Carson River drainage when it defined the territory's western boundary as "*the dividing ridge separating the waters of Carson Valley from those that flow into the Pacific.*"

Finally, 1854 saw the publication of what might have been the first official map that specifically showed Carson Valley in the proper location—below Woodfords Canyon in present day Alpine and Douglas counties.



William M Eddy, Official map of the State of California, 1854. David Rumsey Map Collection, David Rumsey Map Center, Stanford Libraries

~ by Debbe Nye, Volunteer Researcher

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*Please give us a call if you wish to
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DCHS Highlights

Don't miss a moment of the fun!

Volunteer Coffee

Tuesdays October 5 & November 2 at 9 a.m.

Heritage Lecture Series

Thursday October 14, Doors open at 6 p.m.
Lecture begins at 6:30 p.m.

Sarah Winnemucca Day

Saturday October 16
Courthouse Museum Genoa

Art Fall Pie Baking Contest

Saturday November 6
10:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Armistice Ringing of the Bells

Thursday November 11
11 a.m.

Holiday Gala

Saturday December 4