Editor’s Note: The Flick Ranch property is now owned by the Truckee River Flood Control Project and is on HRPS’ List of Endangered Properties.

The beautiful Flick Ranch, now approximately 15 acres in size, is a tiny remnant of a huge historical settlement along the Truckee River. The property dates back to George and Susan (Carroll) Alt in 1865, when George Alt purchased the land through a school land warrant. The second owner was Charles Mapes, Sr., who purchased the ranch from the Susan Alt estate in 1918. The Flick and Kimpton families were the third owners when they bought the Ranch from the Charles Mapes, Sr. estate in 1937. The Reno Catholic Diocese bought the Flick Mansion (Mansion) and the surrounding 15 acres in 1948 to use as the first Bishop Manogue High School. When the school moved to a larger building in 1957, the Brothers of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary occupied the Mansion for 39 years until 1997. Finally, Bristlecone Family Resources, as a tenant of the Reno Diocese, used the site as an adolescent drug treatment center beginning in 1997. The Truckee River Flood Project brought the property along with surrounding properties in 2007.

George Alt, the original owner, was listed in the 1862 Nevada Census as living in the Truckee Meadows. In 1865, he purchased 160 acres in School Land Warrant #3 (the third School Land Warrant in all of Nevada) for $5.00 per acre ($800); later he added 10 acres that were near Stones and Gates Crossing and then bought another 160 acres in 1877. Alt and his wife Susan grew alfalfa, potatoes, onions, beets, cabbages and had a herd of Durham cattle. The ranch had an apple orchard of 200 trees, and in 1885 Alt even tried to grow 400 stalks of tobacco. George Alt fell from a wagon in mid-December 1900 and died in early January 1901. Two days before his death he deeded 298 acres to his wife Susan along with all water rights, ditches and easements. Susan continued to live and work at the ranch with her niece Mamie (Mary E.) Dickie and great niece Veronica Dickie until her death in January 1912. The Alt ranch house, possibly built in the 1850s, was at the same location as the Mansion and was described in 1897 as a “grove of trees surrounded by flowers that makes the lover of the beautiful homesick unless Dame Fortune has made it possible for him to own such a place.” Mamie and Veronica, executors of Susan’s estate, lived at the ranch house from 1904 until selling it in 1918. Mamie’s obituary in the Oakland Tribune on November 13, 1958 reported that “The Alt house was the site of the first Mass celebrated in that region, which was five miles outside the Glendale settlement.” This claim, although difficult to verify, makes for a good story when looking at the total history of the ranch.

Continued on page 2
Preserving Flick Ranch (continued)

Charles Mapes, Sr. bought the Alt ranch from Mamie and Veronica in 1918. Charles and wife Gladys may have lived in the Alt house until the death of his father George in 1923. They then moved to the large and elegant Mapes' house on Ralston Street. Mapes used the Alt ranch as pasture land for his Durham cattle. Gladys made some improvements to the property, adding a new barn and a new bunkhouse. The original Alt house burned in 1929. Charles Mapes, Sr. died in 1937. Gladys Mapes, executor of his estate, sold the Alt property to Margaret Flick, her daughter Genevra Kimpton and husband Lawrence Kimpton on July 18, 1941. Robert (R.J.) Flick, Margaret's husband, was later added to the deed.

Robert J. ("R.J.") Flick was born in Ohio on May 10, 1874, and in 1910 moved to Kansas City, Missouri, to become president of the Franklin Ice Cream Company. Franklin Ice Cream was the largest and best known ice cream company in the midwest, selling and distributing ice cream in Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Arkansas. The company had sixteen trucks that held 1,000 to 4,000 gallons each and may have been the first refrigerated trucks to deliver ice cream. Franklin Ice Cream produced ice cream under the Sealtest label, which was known for its “high standard, rigid step-by-step quality control.” National Dairy Products Corporation, formed in 1923, purchased Franklin Ice Cream in 1926. In 1940, National Dairy purchased Kraft Phenix Cheese Corporation to later become Kraft Foods. Franklin Ice Cream became part of Kraft Foods.

R.J. and Margaret lived in Beverly Hills in the late 1930s and may have seen Nevada’s “One Sound State” promotion that publicized Nevada as a tax haven. Once and have had several satisfactory deals with you. First you build a big fine house & everything that goes with it and we were pleased.” The timing was right for the “big fine house” to be the Mansion. By now the Flick property was approximately 1,000 acres. Flick said in 1954 that he made approximately $650,000 worth of improvements (not counting the Mansion) to his 1,000-acre property. He built a guest cottage, a packing plant and two large barns outside of the 15 acres surrounding the Mansion, added modern corrals, and rebuilt fences and ditches on the entire property. Flick put up a concrete retaining wall along the banks of the Truckee River and “constructed a new roadway with a hard surface.” A utility building and a pump house were added inside the 15 acres near the ranch house.

The Flicks wanted to sell their large Mansion with the remaining 1,000-acre ranch soon after Lawrence Kimpton and Genevra divorced in 1942. Lawrence was supposed to help with the management of the large ranch but after his divorce he left Reno and moved to Chicago where he later became the president of the University of Chicago. The Flicks now called their ranch the Kimlick ranch combining the names Flick and Kimpton. In 1947, they sold the Mansion, with the 15 surrounding acres, to C.M. Wood. Wood wanted to convert the Mansion to an elaborate nightclub.

The owners repossessed the property and in February 1948 sold the Mansion with the surrounding 15 acres to the Reno Catholic Diocese. The Diocese converted the Mansion into eight classrooms with a study hall and library and a basement cafeteria for the first Bishop Manogue High School. The school opened with freshman, sophomore and junior classes in September 1948 with the first graduating class in June 1950. The property was described in the March 3, 1949 Nevada State Journal as “The school situated on the old Ranch is bounded by the Truckee on the north, and Glendale and Mill roads. An orchard, several pastures and spacious lawns with numerous shade trees make up the grounds.” Boudwin Construction Company built a Quonset-hut style gymnasium in 1949 for $26,000.

The school moved out of the Mansion in 1957 when the school needed a larger facility. A monastery with thirty Dominican Brothers moved to the Mansion in January or February 1958. The monastery was part of the Dominican Order until 1961 or 1962, then became an independent community known as the Brothers of the Holy Rosary who took part in “social work and youth services.” Operation Peter Pan or Operation Pedro Pan, a program sponsored by the Catholic Church in Miami, brought 50 Cuban boys to the monastery in 1962. Cuban parents were sending their children to the Church in Miami to protect them from Communist
teachings. The Miami Church then sent them on to other dioceses for care. The boys, between the ages of 12 and 15, stayed in the gymnasium at the monastery. Social workers from the Nevada Department of Health stepped in after about nine months to place the boys in foster care.

In 1964, the Brothers opened the Glendale Academy as a high school preparatory academy for 7th and 8th grade boys. Classes were held in the Quonset hut gymnasium next to the house, with about 42 boys attending. The academy closed in December 1968. The Brothers, because of decreased membership, moved out of the Mansion in 1997.

SageWind Treatment Center, a substance abuse center for adolescents, leased or rented the Mansion from the Reno Diocese in 1997. When Washoe County bought the property as part of the Truckee River Flood Control Project, SageWind rented from the flood project. SageWind merged with Northstar Treatment Center in the mid-2000s to become an adult substance abuse center. The Mansion was used for adult services until 2013.

The Mansion was now empty for the first time since 1942.

This endangered property includes the Mansion along with the 15 surrounding acres. The property includes a bell tower, a caretaker’s cottage, a Quonset-hut style gymnasium and a pump house or utility building. Two “concrete-block towers topped with brick and round globe lights” are at the entry way off of McCarran Boulevard. The bell tower, similar in design to the entry-way towers, was built by the Brothers in 1960 and is dedicated to the Alt family. The large majestic Mansion, possibly built by Norman Biltz’s Sierra Construction Company, was erected in 1941 or 1942, and was made with the finest quality materials and workmanship. The original Mansion was a U-shaped, two story colonial revival/ranch style house featuring a large great room lined with natural wood from floor to ceiling and a large fireplace.

The main floor also had a den with a fireplace. A majestic staircase led up to about six large bedrooms. The architect of the house has not been determined but we know that Biltz used many local architects for his buildings in the Truckee Meadows and Lake Tahoe. The Reno Diocese modified the Mansion somewhat to make the bedrooms into classrooms and added a basement cafeteria. When the Brothers occupied the building, a one-story cinder-block chapel was added on the front of the Mansion along with 12 extra bedrooms on the west wing of the 2nd floor. In 1980, the Mansion had 41 rooms including 21 bedrooms.

Today the Mansion awaits the results of an historic review to determine eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. Meanwhile, the Mansion’s integrity is being jeopardized by frequent break-ins by vandals and thieves who have caused damage to floors, fixtures, plumbing and electrical systems.

A grassroots nonprofit named the Flick Ranch Project is working to raise funds necessary for preserving and converting the Mansion to a heritage center. Its mission is to enhance culture, heritage and historical architecture by repurposing the Mansion for the education and enjoyment of local residents and visitors for present and future generations.

Information for this article came from articles in Reno Gazette Journal and Nevada State Journal, deeds from Washoe County Recorder’s Office, biographies of R.J. Flick from Kansas City Missouri Public Library, Arcadia’s Washoe County by Joyce Cox and “The Flick Ranch: An Endangered Historic Property,” Fall 2015 issue of Nevada in the West.

Joyce Cox is Secretary of the Flick Ranch Project and a member of HRPS and the HRPS Editorial Board.
City Center. El Ray. Heart-O-Town. Reno Royal. Mid-Century motels and their attention-grabbing signs characterize the streetscape of Downtown Reno. A legacy of the city’s history as a transportation center and travel destination, the once-glittering motels are seen by many as a glaring symbol of urban decay and are therefore in danger of being targeted for demolition.

Reno’s development, as well as its emergence in the American imagination, was largely the result of its role as an important transportation hub located along the Transcontinental Railroad and, later, along the Victory Highway (U.S. Highway 40). Completion of Highway 40 in 1926 resulted in increased automobile traffic through Reno, and therefore a proliferation of automobile and travel-related enterprises, including hotels and motels. In fact, the highway ushered in an era of automobile-centered leisure travel that boomed between the 1940s and 1960s. The bevy of motels dotted along Fourth Street and throughout Downtown Reno reflect the city’s history as an important node along the American highway, as well as its rise as a tourist destination.

Moreover, Reno’s downtown motels reflect Reno’s unique cultural identity. Across the nation, motels sought to attract customers by assuming a theme that was often linked to the area’s geography or history. Reno boasts a number of Western-themed motels, including the Golden Nugget Motel, Golden West Motor Lodge, Thunderbird Motel, Virginian Motel, Donner Inn, Sundance Motel and El Dorado Motel. Other motel themes comprise common tropes of the 1950s and 1960s, including the Stardust Inn, B-Gay Motor Lodge and the Fireside Inn. Some motels appealed to Nevada’s reputation as a gaming destination, including the 7-11 and Ace Motels.

The architecture of these motor lodges is also noteworthy. Motels sought to convey the ultramodern, whether it be by advertising the latest technology (e.g. Color T.V., hot water, in-room telephones, Danish Modern furnishings) or by exterior design in the newest fashion (e.g. concrete block sun-screens, swimming pools, Contemporary and Modern-style details). A typical motel plan was U-shaped and arranged around a landscaped central courtyard, which often featured a swimming pool, with parking restricted to the exterior of the court. Other motels featured simple rectangular and L-shaped footprints with rooms that opened onto balconies extending the full-length of the building. A number of architectural styles were employed to reflect a given motel’s theme. The El Dorado and Farris Motels embraced the Spanish Colonial style with red-tile roofs and stucco wall cladding, the Fireside Inn expressed the sleek Contemporary style with a flat roof and horizontal emphasis, the Gold Key Inn (now demolished) exemplified the Mid-Century Modern with decorative concrete block and massive barrel arches, and the Thunderbird and Heart-O-Town Motels demonstrated the Ranch style with brick walls and decorative metal balcony rails. Additionally, the fabulous signage for many of Reno’s motels is in a league of its own, calling on road-weary travelers with pure Atomic-Age motifs and symbolic marquees.

Reno is fortunate to have such a large concentration of motels that express the diversity of the Mid-Century Modern style and era, especially when one considers that all things Mid-Century are reaching a cultural fever-pitch. A quick internet search reveals the resurgence of Contemporary...
and Modernist design, from shops offering reproduction “Sputnik” light fixtures and Eames-style chairs to blogs dedicated to icons of the American Roadside. Moreover, one cannot discuss the architecture of the Mid-Century motel without making reference to Palm Springs, an embodiment of the Mid-Century Modern, which hosts a number of previously-derelict motels that have been renovated within the last five to ten years. Unique architecture, a sense of history, and pure nostalgia draw an international parade of visitors to these motels, which were snapped up by enterprising hoteliers and restored to their former glory.

Admittedly, some of Reno’s motels are in a state of deterioration, but demolition is not the only option for blight remediation. In fact, these motels demonstrate huge potential for adaptive reuse. Motels, by their nature, create density and are therefore perfect candidates for small business incubation and commercial space that draws people downtown. A great example of this is Denver’s Metlo, formerly the Broadway Plaza Motel, which has been rehabilitated and converted into office space and retail suites. Converted motels, with their sense of place and history, are a much more attractive alternative to today’s office parks and strip malls. They also boast plenty of off-street parking, which addresses a common issue with redevelopment in dense urban areas. Potential uses for motels are endless, from art galleries and museums to shops and studios.

Adaptive reuse of Reno’s motels also makes environmental sense, as the greenest building is one that is already built. Mid-Century motels, like all existing buildings, are valuable in that a huge amount of money, energy and materials were expended when they were constructed fifty or more years ago. To demolish these buildings takes additional energy and financial expenditures, and rebuilding something in its place only expands the carbon footprint.

From a planning perspective, blight removal programs have shown us that many demolished buildings result in vacant lots, a number of which are not redeveloped in the foreseeable future. The Park Lane Mall, demolished in 2009, is one such example. Successful urban planning and real estate development tells us that one of the keys to prosperous neighborhoods is building density and supporting walkability, which does not exist if every other lot is vacant. Specifically, when we take a look at the Park Lane Mall, we are reminded of the foreboding feeling of a big, empty lot, overrun by seagulls, in the middle of a city.

Mid-Century motels are woven into Reno’s landscape. They reflect Reno’s history, cultural identity and unique urban fabric. Let us not rip them away from the tapestry of downtown; instead, give them the purpose and vision to reclaim their place in the built environment.
The late LaVere Redfield has achieved near mythic status in Reno. Decades after his death, stories of his eccentricities still abound: the reclusive, unkempt millionaire, the obsessive hoarder and penny pincher, the criminal tax-dodger and ruthless businessman. Jack Harpster’s book, *The Curious Life of Nevada’s LaVere Redfield: The Silver Dollar King*, digs past these folktales and reconstructs the facts of Redfield’s life, tracing his path from a poverty-stricken childhood in Utah to his rise to wealth and fame in Reno. While he is able to track down minute biographical details, Harpster ultimately concludes that Redfield’s inner motivations and personality remain enigmatic, concluding that “history may never know the real LaVere Redfield.” While examining the events that gave rise to the legend, this book lays a solid biographical foundation that replaces much of the spin with facts.

One of the strongest features of the book is the in-depth analysis of Redfield’s business practices. Harpster portrays a hard-working, thrifty youth who was exposed to the frenzy and excitement of the stock market while honeymooning in Southern California during the Roaring Twenties. He began to speculate in oil and mining, surviving the crash of 1929 and becoming a millionaire during the Great Depression. While it is not entirely clear how he managed to prosper during this time, he himself stated that he only bought when prices were “beaten down on the open market.” He was one of the millionaires who moved to Reno in response to the One Sound State campaign, in which Nevada was promoted as a tax haven for the wealthy. He soon began investing in property, buying small parcels of land scattered in between larger holdings, a strategy that paid off handsomely; these small, worthless lots were cheap to buy and turned out to be pivotal acquisitions when the larger pieces of land around them were up for development, enabling Redfield to get a high return on his investment.

Harpster also focuses on Redfield’s gambling habits. Moving to Reno at the dawn of the casino era, he became a regular at the roulette table, known for disguising himself in worn out work clothing and carrying paper bags of silver dollars. It is this aspect of Redfield’s life that gives rise to the stories: the shabbily dressed millionaire who walked the streets of Reno clutching his bags of money rather than pay for gas or call a cab. Harpster recalls in detail the street robbery that may have left Redfield with brain damage, and follows up this speculation by interviewing practicing psychologists about brain trauma and mental illness. Harpster also details Redfield’s penchant for hoarding, filling each chapter of the book with details about Redfield’s unique personal habits, showing how they led to speculation and public gossip. Detailed accounts of the multiple break-ins of the Redfield mansion and police findings there, along with Redfield’s determination to evade the IRS, fueled public perception of his eccentric nature, giving rise to the many legends.

Harpster examines the friendships and alliances Redfield made, referencing his many mistresses and examining his relationship with Joe Conforte and his role in developing the Mustang Ranch. He details the Redfield tax evasion trial and the attempts at retrial, again examining the psychological ramifications of Redfield’s attempted self-defense. Discussing the time after Redfield’s death in 1974, Harpster writes in great detail about his estate and the wills he left, listing the difficulties his executors faced and the extent of his legacy in Reno. Like everything else about Redfield, this information provides a treasure trove of personality quirks which Harpster is able to frame in the context of Redfield’s life while avoiding drawing any speculative conclusions.

This is precisely what makes *The Curious Life of Nevada’s LaVere Redfield* an interesting and informative book. Harpster’s background in journalism has given him both the investigative training to assimilate the vast paper trail left by Redfield through his business dealings and his acquaintances, as well as the critical skills to place the quirks they reveal about the man into a historical context rather than a mythical one. Through material uncovered in old newspaper articles, archives, and diaries, as well as formal interviews with former friends and colleagues of Redfield, Harpster does an excellent job balancing an accurately written biography with plenty of allusions to the qualities that made Redfield’s story an enduring urban myth of Reno. Those who are intrigued by the stories of his contradictory and larger-than-life personality will love this book as well as those who want to know as much as possible about what really happened. Harpster’s Redfield remains, in the end, an enigma, a man both quiet and generous as well as a “public philanderer, a corporate raider, a tax cheat, an unrepentant felon, a chronic gambler and a litigious gadfly.” The real life version is as intriguing a character as the myth.

Kimberly Roberts is a HRPS Board member and is an Archivist in Special Collections at the University of Nevada, Reno.
When I think “Rancharrah,” I think of the massive 30,000 square foot home of John Harrah, at the end of Talbot Lane. But there are other structures on the property, several of which will be razed to accommodate the 691 units and two large commercial parcels planned by Reno Land Development Company.

Recently I was lucky to be able to tour one of the properties slated for demolition, a lovely large house that has been suspended in time and sadly neglected. Described by the late Jerry E. Smith as a Williamsburg-style manor house, it was originally known as the West Mansion. It was built by Norman Biltz, one of the multi-millionaires who made Reno his home in the 1930s and worked to attract others like himself to the area to improve the local economy. Biltz purchased the large tract of land and constructed three houses; his own home, which stood where the Harrah home stands today and two others a distance away, one facing west, one east.

In 1943, Biltz sold the west-facing house to local businessman Roy Crummer and his wife Hazel. They lived there for some time but moved to the east-facing house later, as Roy was finding it difficult to climb the stairs to the second story. The east-facing house, still known as the Crummer House, has a stairway that could accommodate a stair lift. Roy died in 1968, his wife in 1969. When Bill Harrah bought the property, according to the planner who was our tour guide, he just closed up the home and left it unoccupied.

Today the home has a few scattered pieces of abandoned furniture and the wood floors are in poor condition, dull expanses studded with puddles of water and debris, but its bones are lovely. There is a wide archway with a keystone center leading from the entry to a spacious living room. The highlight of the room is a wonderful bowed window, looking west over pasture land, filling the room with sunlight. There is an attractive fireplace with a formal white wood surround and tall French doors. The kitchen is a retro dream with its floral wallpaper, original cabinets, blue countertops and vintage appliances. The bathrooms have their original tile and fixtures. The latest in bathroom appointments of that era are also featured, including chrome panels in the wall that swivel around to expose storage space for toothbrushes and other items. The front staircase winds gracefully to the second floor and the nonfunctioning stair lift is still attached to the wall. It has been said that the lift moves on its own (or is still operated by Roy Crummer at times). The day I visited, it was at the top of the stairway; our guide said it was at the bottom of the stairs the last time he was inside.

In his history of Rancharrah, Jerry Smith underscores the huge number of “the rich and famous” who were frequent guests of the residents. In addition to the entertainers invited by Bill Harrah, the Crummers were visited by good friends Dwight and Mamie Eisenhower. Smith describes how Ike loved to fish the ponds and walk the property along the ditch at night, listening to the frogs and crickets.

The new development project plans to preserve as much of the green area, water features and as many of the trees as practical, while building a community of upscale quality homes. It will still be sad to see the tranquility of this beautiful acreage interrupted by hordes of residents and vehicles coming and going and the Crummer House reduced to salvage materials.

Debbie Hinman is a member of the Historical Resources Commission, a HRPS Tour Guide, and a member of the HRPS Editorial Board.
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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>3:00</td>
<td>INSIDE DELONGCHAMPS’S DOWNTOWN</td>
<td>Please note: this walk starts at 3:00 p.m. Go behind the scenes in some of downtown’s most notable buildings designed by Reno’s most celebrated architect, Frederic DeLongchamps. Visit the interiors of the historic courthouse and the Downtown Post Office along with several artist lofts at the Riverside. Meet at Washoe County Courthouse front steps. Tour guide: Sharon Honig-Bear.</td>
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<td>Saturday</td>
<td>10 a.m.</td>
<td>DOWNTOWN SPARKS</td>
<td>Learn about the history of the rail city with a guided walking tour of Victorian Square and Downtown Sparks. This interactive tour is designed to show how this area has transformed itself from a railroad hub, to a vibrant commercial district, to a rundown urban area and finally to a successful redevelopment area that has changed the image and future of the city. The tour includes 17 buildings and sites that have played an important role in the history and development of Sparks and Nevada. Tour begins and ends at the Sparks Heritage Museum located at 814 Victorian Avenue, Sparks. Tour guide: Scott Carey. This tour is in collaboration with the Museum (<a href="http://www.sparksmuseum.org">www.sparksmuseum.org</a>) but reservations need to be made through HRPS.</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>6:00</td>
<td>UPPER RALSTON/NORTHERN LITTLE ITALY</td>
<td>Enjoy a walk in a residential neighborhood with a mix of architectural styles. Proximity to the University has traditionally determined the mix of residents, professors and students alike. Meet at the intersection of Washington Street, The Strand and College Avenue. Tour guides: Jim and Sue Smith.</td>
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<td>Saturday</td>
<td>10 a.m.</td>
<td>BIKE TOUR THROUGH OLD RENO</td>
<td>A leisurely ride through the most historic parts of Reno. Meet at the Lander Street side of My Favorite Muffin, 340 California Avenue. Tour guide: Phil Ulibarri. HELMETS REQUIRED, NO EXCEPTIONS!</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>6:00</td>
<td>UNIVERSITY NEIGHBORHOOD</td>
<td>A walk through an historic and endangered neighborhood at the foot of the campus—with vintage Queen Anne homes and charming bungalows. Meet at the base of the 9th Street University steps. Tour guide: Debbie Hinman.</td>
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<td>Saturday</td>
<td>10 a.m.</td>
<td>ROADS AND RAILS, HISTORIC FOURTH STREET CORRIDOR</td>
<td>Discover the historic origins of the Lincoln Highway and the Nevada, California and Oregon Railroad, stopping to appreciate the Barengo/NCO building, Flanigan warehouse, and other vestiges of the corridor’s heyday. Meet at Louis Basque Corner, 301 E. 4th Street. Sign-in located around the corner from Louis on Evans Avenue. Tour guide: Cindy Ainsworth.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>6:00</td>
<td>WEST OF WELLS</td>
<td>Discover an often overlooked treasure trove of fascinating Reno history. Join us as we walk the neighborhood West of Wells Avenue, along the former path of the V&amp;T railroad. Experience unusual architecture unique to this neighborhood and learn the history of the colorful characters who gave birth to Reno’s neighborhood on the other side of the tracks. Meet outside Silver Peak at 140 Wonder Street. Tour guide: Barrie Lynn.</td>
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Tour cost is $10 per person, free to HRPS members. Walks generally last from 1 ½ to 2 hours. **No dogs please. Reservations required and space is limited.**

Please go to www.historicreno.org or 775-747-4478 for reservations and information. **Please note the May 11th tour is on a Wednesday and begins at 3:00 p.m.**

Access to HRPS Walking Tours varies according to venue. Certain areas may not be fully accessible to individuals with disabilities due to architectural barriers inherent in the historic construction of the structures or uneven walking surfaces.
### Historic Reno Preservation Society

#### June 2016

**Historic Walking Tours**

Tour cost is $10 per person, free to HRPS members. Walks generally last from 1 ½ to 2 hours.

**No dogs please. Reservations required and space is limited.**

Please go to www.historicreno.org or 775-747-4478 for reservations and information.

Access to HRPS Walking Tours varies according to venue. Certain areas may not be fully accessible to individuals with disabilities due to architectural barriers inherent in the historic construction of the structures or uneven walking surfaces.

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>June 4</td>
<td><strong>MANSIONS ON THE BLUFF</strong> — Walk past historic Reno homes located on Court, Ridge and upper California streets. Learn about the senators and merchants who made early Reno <em>The Biggest Little City in the World</em>. Be sure to bring water and wear comfortable shoes for this uphill tour which begins at the McCarran House, 401 Court Street. Look nearby for mandatory sign-in/registration on Court Street. Tour guides: David Vill, Joan Collins, and Donna and Paul Erickson.</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>June 7</td>
<td><strong>MONROE STREET</strong> — Stroll along Monroe and Joaquin Miller Streets, savoring the history and architecture of this lovely residential area south of the Newlands Neighborhood. You will see the Hart House, the Patrick Ranch House, Greystone Castle, and other homes. Meet at the corner of Monroe and Manor Drives. Tour guides: Anne Simone and April Kempler.</td>
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<td>Saturday</td>
<td>June 11</td>
<td><strong>LAKE ADDITION</strong> — Meander through one of Reno’s earliest additions, past divorce-trade dwellings, Victorian and ultra-modern architecture. Nowhere in Reno is the contrast between old and new more evident. Includes a stop at the Historic Lake Mansion. Meet in front of the Nevada Museum of Art, 160 West Liberty Street. Tour guide: Debbie Hinman.</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>June 14</td>
<td><strong>PARSONS/MILLS ARCHITECTURE</strong> — Stroll one of Reno’s most unique neighborhoods to view some designs of Reno architects Edward Parsons and Russell Mills, who sometimes collaborated on designs. Hear about the families who first lived in these homes. Meet at the corner of Marsh Avenue and LaRue. Tour guides: Anne Simone and April Kempler.</td>
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<td>Saturday</td>
<td>June 18</td>
<td><strong>BEYOND THE ARCHES</strong> — Witness downtown Reno as it has reinvented itself for 150 years. This tour links the downtown Reno arches with stories of the forces that shaped the town: railroad and mining, immigrants, the notorious divorce and gambling mecca — and now as a livable cultural hub. Walk in the footsteps of Bill Harrah, Myron Lake, Baby Face Nelson, Frederic DeLongchamps and others. Meet at the National Automobile Museum parking lot area, 10 S. Lake Street. Tour guides: Jim and Sue Smith.</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>June 21</td>
<td><strong>HISTORIC TRUCKEE RIVER WALK</strong> — A relaxing stroll along the Truckee River from the McKinley Arts and Cultural Center to the Lear Theater reveals eclectic architecture grounded by rich political histories and spiced with colorful anecdotes. Meet in front at the McKinley Arts and Cultural Center, 925 Riverside Drive. Tour guide: Joan Collins.</td>
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<td>Saturday</td>
<td>June 25</td>
<td><strong>MIDTOWN BUSINESS DISTRICT</strong> — Take a walk through the emerging Midtown District and see how this area has changed over the past 100 years from a quiet country road lined with large homes to a bustling business district. The Midtown area has continually reinvented itself to adapt to the changing needs of our city. Learn about the exciting businesses and people that once occupied the familiar buildings you see today. Meet at the southwest corner of St. Lawrence Avenue and Virginia Street. Tour guide: Barrie Lynn.</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>June 28</td>
<td><strong>WELLS AVENUE NEIGHBORHOOD</strong> — Take a stroll through a working-class neighborhood along the path of the Wells Avenue streetcar, across the V&amp;T tracks, and past the homes of the “Thoma Street Gang.” Meet at the Sinclair Street side at the historic Southside School Annex, 190 East Liberty Street. Tour guides: Mark Taxer and Joan Collins.</td>
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The Crider Building Project
Reprinted by permission of Kim Henrick

In September of 2004, Marvin Grulli and three partners purchased two handsome brick buildings at the corner of W. First Street and Roff Way in Reno. The group immediately sold off the 108 Roff Way building (originally called the Crider Apartments) in order to focus their efforts on remodeling the 211 W. First Street building (originally called the Crider Building). This article will be about the Crider Building only, but I hope to discover more about the Roff Way building in the future. The owners (from here on I’ll let Marvin Grulli represent the owners) believed the building was built in 1936 and the assessor’s office actually got that date right, but little else was publicly known about it. I’ll work backwards in time and discuss SOME of the structure’s history. This Crider Building Project will be a story of discovery. As more facts are discovered, like—where did the smooth, orange bricks used on the exterior of the building come from; who bricked over the pretty arched door on the front of the building?—they can be posted on the new “Blog” that HRPS Webmaster Rosie Cevasco has set up on our website (www.historicreno.org/blog). Before going any further, I would like to thank Sharon Walbridge, a good friend and charter member of HRPS, for encouraging me to investigate this interesting building.

The Crider Building (I’ll discuss the origin of the building’s name later) is 80 years old this year and sports a huge, red “HENRIKSEN BUTLER” sign where the original “CRIDER” sign used to be mounted. The “Our Bar” sign on the street level hangs where, among others, the La Mar Beauty Salon, the Paradise Beauty Shop, the Christian Science Reading Room, and La Bussola clothing store businesses operated in years past. In the fall of 2014, the Henriksen Butler design group opened for business on the second floor. The 36-year-old office furniture business “specializes in commercial, education, government and healthcare interiors” (source: www.hbdg.com) in four western states, and has been a proud Herman Miller furniture dealer since 1983. The company sells fine office furniture from many quality manufacturers, but it seems their success lies in their skills—always considerate of space, light, textures, temperatures, colors, views, and moods—and their dedication to supporting a long-term relationship with their clients. (Personally I wouldn’t know a Herman Miller chair from a milk crate, but my discerning friend Rosie Cevasco, who went on a tour of the Henriksen Butler showroom with me, sat in one of their Herman Miller chairs and it took quite awhile to get her out of it.) The photo of the Henriksen Butler office and showroom tells the story of how this modern company made use of this old building’s 2nd-floor space. In 2013 and 2014, Grulli completed a large-scale remodel of the floor. Most of the building work Grulli and others have done on the building has been done in waves, over about a six-year period. For this article I’m more concerned with what was done than when. The work included rebuilding the ceiling structure, which had originally been made with inferior, mismatched scrap wood, unlike the framing wood in the rest of the building. (Did the original builder run out of money? In 1936, during the Great Depression, did it become difficult to get more quality wood?) Interior walls were stripped of layers of lath and plaster, and drywall additions (eliminating “asbestos-tainted” materials), and the walls’ crazy, colorful, never-intended-to-be-seen bricks were revealed. The wood-framed windows were replaced and a full-floor radiant heat system was installed. All new electrical and plumbing were installed and an outdoor steel staircase was built on the east side of the building. The Henriksen Butler folks then built their impressive, shiny office/showroom (see page 12), utilizing the nice view to the west, and complimenting the fresh, but old look of the space.

Step back a few years now to 2008 (after the La Bussola clothing store moved out of the ground floor space). Mike Daane, an experienced construction guy, became the new street-level tenant. Alongside several area contractors, including Jim Loverin of Custom Manufacturing, Mike Daane assisted in some major remodeling work to accommodate his “Port of Subs” shop (2008 to mid-2010), then his “Bar” business (which was a bar and kitchen from 2011 until 2014, when he changed the name to “Our Bar” and “Our Food.”) It appears Mike has been a huge help to Marvin Grulli at every stage of the building’s makeover.

Here is just a portion of the work that has been completed on the first

Crider buildings between mid-1942 and 1946. photo by Ernie Mack.
The Crider Building Project (continued)

floor; wall materials were stripped off, revealing the “crazy brick” and an arched door on the front of the building that had been covered up at some previous date. (It was the door used by the original owner to enter his west side office.) On the outside of the hidden door area, the crew pulled out the patched-brick section and installed a pine door with a glass section on the top. They used a heavy Ponderosa Pine beam, cut in sections to frame the opening, then rebuilt the area around the door with well-matched bricks, including dark-brown rug bricks around the curved edge, which were procured through Sandy McMurtry of McMurtry Masonry. The original Crider Building’s arched door had a full-glass front, but I’m sure the original owners would be pleased with the current door. Also on the outside, small orange tiles below the windows were removed and an automatic sliding door was installed on the east side of the building’s front.

Ponderosa Pine wood (instead of a more common building wood like Douglas Fir) was used throughout the building. Opening up the ceiling on the first floor revealed floor joists of pine, cut in an unusual size of 13 ¼ inches x 1 ¾ inches and set on 12-inch centers. Because of the commercial uses planned for this building, steel I-beams were added during the remodel to ensure adequate structural support. (These can be seen in a few of the photographs.) The pine floor joists were sand blasted, beefed up in a few spots, and left exposed as part of the remodeled ceiling. New electrical and plumbing were installed, the floor was warmed by a radiant-heat system installed under the flooring, and major work was done to set up the present bar and kitchen. The basement is a work in progress, but much of the same cleaning and stripping of materials was done, in addition to replacing an ultra steep and dangerous staircase with a safer, shallower steel staircase. Let’s leave the present day for now and talk about the man who built these buildings. This will be an abbreviated version. I will post a longer biography on the HPRS Blog by May 1 (www.historicreno.org/blog).

The builder, Rex Arlo Crider, was born and raised in Iowa. After high school there he graduated from the Palmer School of Chiropractic and in 1915 arrived in Reno to start a long, distinguished career as a chiropractor. His first wife Susan died in 1930, and in late 1931 Rex married Mae Elizabeth Paschall, who came to the union with a young son John Franklin and a zeal for community involvement. Rex appeared to be a successful chiropractor and he and Mae were often mentioned in the social pages of the papers, attending bridge parties, hosting golf events, joining the fight for a Sierra Street Bridge in 1936, and supporting for a long time the Reno Lions Club, Camp Fire Girls and the Red Cross. Rex even tried his hand at elected office a few times, running for city council in 1935 and mayor in 1943, but losing both races.

In December of 1935, Rex and Mae bought the western portion of Reno’s Lots 1 and 2 of Block 1. (The First United Methodist Church, completed in 1926, sits on the eastern portion of these two lots.) In 1935, this was a quiet, tree-lined residential neighborhood. West Avenue (a one-block street parallel to West Street, renamed Roff Way in 1936) was lined with wood-framed houses on both sides and the Crider’s new building lots would have had a great view of the Truckee River to the south since the Hughes-Porter building and its later addition (now called the Truckee Lane Building) had not been built yet. In March of 1936, the Criders borrowed $12,000 and were issued a building permit for $18,000 to build the Crider Building at 227 West First Street (the address today is 211 W. First Street).

A Nevada State Journal article dated March 18, 1936, announced it this way:

Continued on page 12
“Excavation for a two-story building was begun today at First and West streets. The structure is being built by Dr. Rex A. Crider, and the contractors are Wine and Williams. When erected the building will contain store and office quarters on the ground floor and apartments on the second floor.” (I have not found out who designed the building.) Rex Crider placed his first newspaper business ad for 227 W. First Street at the end of July 1936, just four months after the construction began. [Note: the Crider Apartments building followed quickly. In April of 1937, the Criders borrowed $28,000, paid off what they owed on their previous loan, and were issued a building permit for $16,000 to build the apartments at 108 Roff Way, which were completed that year.]

Sometime between mid-1942 and 1946, prominent photographer Ernie Mack took the beautiful black and white photograph of the Crider buildings in winter (page 10). Rex Crider died on May 26, 1944, leaving Mae to carry on with the Crider buildings’ business. His son John Crider would retire from the U.S. Navy and become a local architect. In September of 1958, Mae Crider sold both the buildings to the First Church of Christ, Scientist, for $106,500 (plus 5 1/4% interest on the installment-payments part of the agreement). The following year, Mae moved to Navarro-by-the-Sea (south of Fort Bragg, California) and she died in December of 1971. The First Church of Christ, Scientist, didn’t waste any time changing the Crider Building. In December 1958, only three months after the sale, the church announced in the newspaper that it was opening a new Christian Science Reading Room at 225 West First Street (the building’s east side address at the time): “Light and spacious rooms for quiet reading...new room featuring many improved facilities and decorated by Homer Huntoon, Reno design consultant...” At the same time, attorneys Harvey Dickerson, John Shaw Field, and L. William Paul rented space in the Crider Building. The new Christian Science Reading Room would remain open to the public until around the end of 1973.

I’ll end the article here. If you’re interested in more details about the Criders, please check the HRPS “Crider Building Project” blog after May 1. Hopefully, future research will disclose more owners and tenants of the two buildings and answer the most burning question of all, Who removed a perfectly good door on the front of the building? Please support Henriksen Butler by buying and donating 30 Herman Miller office chairs to your favorite fourth-grade class, and drop by Our Bar for a cold one and a delicious sandwich.

Sources for the article not mentioned: Washoe County Recorder’s Office deeds and court records; Washoe County Assessor’s Records, online; numerous local newspaper articles; Census records, online; Nevada Historical Society’s historical maps and city building permits; interviews with Marvin Grulli, Mike Daane and Ian Anderson.

Kim Henrick is a HRPS member and a HRPS Editorial Staff member.
West Street Median Comes Alive with History and Art

by Sharon Honig-Bear, Reno Arts and Culture Commission

Who needs “Elvis sightings” when we in Reno have our own variation known as “Mapes sightings”? Perhaps you’ve passed the classic Mapes panel along Riverside Dr., in a lovely garden near the Keystone Bridge. To my surprise, when I recently moved, I discovered one of these Mapes medallions embedded in the grass in my new back yard. I’m sure there are others around town.

Now there is a new and very public way to enjoy the beautiful elements that once graced the Mapes, the tallest hotel in the state when it opened in 1948. Head downtown to the West Street median, just north of First St., and you will witness a recently dedicated display that incorporates Reno history, art and landscaping.

This project is a collaborative project between the City of Reno, The River School, Truckee Meadows Water Authority and Roberta Ross, who was looking for a way to improve the area outside the Ross Manor. Also involved were historian Dr. Alicia Barber, landscape architect Tom Stille and metal artisan Lanny Perry, whose work was funded through a grant from the City of Reno’s Arts and Culture Commission. The Regional Alliance for Downtown and the Reno Riverwalk District also participated.

Cross carefully to the median and spend some time looking at the displays. Read about the legacy of West Street and how it got its name (when Reno was first laid out, this street was near the western boundary of the city). Enjoy snapshot descriptions of historic buildings still in the area, including the First United Methodist Church, the Senator Hotel (b. 1914, originally named the Saturno Building), the Riverwalk Condos (formerly Comstock Casino) and the Ross Apartments (b. 1907 and known as the Colonial Apartments). Explore the demonstration garden planted in the space, described as: “a unique median space is both lush AND water-efficient.” During the warm months, the median beds were overflowing with flax, coreopsis, cosmos, yarrow, roses and more, all growing in interconnected abundance.

But best of all, walk among the relics from the Mapes Hotel. The median is scattered with five sections of the iron rod railing that once adorned the upper level of the Hotel, outside the famous Sky Room, with its sweeping views of the Truckee River, Virginia Street and the mountains beyond. Ms. Ross salvaged these railings, at personal cost to her, before the Mapes was imploded in 2000 and has been storing them ever since. The median uses other remnants of the Mapes, donated by Tom Stille, and described as “pyramidal medallions” from near the top of the building. Mr. Stille also donated one of the classic panels that once decorated the building. Read the display and you will discover, as I did, that these white pieces are called terrazzo spandrels. Never knew that before!

The landscaping in the median will look its best in the warm months but the historical relics and displays can beckon in any season. Come enjoy the latest enhancement to a revitalized downtown and experience a small celebration of Reno history. And let me know if you experience a Mapes sighting!

West Street Median displays. Courtesy Mike Van Houten.

HRPS Endangered Building Watch List

- Freight House on Evans St.
- Nevada Brewing Works on 4th St.
- Regina Apartments on Island Ave.
- First Masonic Building (Reno Mercantile) at Sierra and Commercial
- Historic Homes in The University Gateway District
- Buildings in the University Neighborhood
- The Hotel El Cortez at 2nd and Arlington
- Hill/Redfield Mansion on Mt. Rose St.
- Lear Theater
- Flick Ranch House
- Two El Reno Apartments at 1463 Lander St.
- Hillside Cemetery
- WPA Projects at Plumas, Stewart and Virginia Lake Parks
- Mid-century Motels
- Burke’s, Belli and Mountain View Additions
Message from Your HRPS President
Byllie D’Amato Andrews

"...Our grassroots efforts will play the single most important role in assuring that our historically important buildings and places are preserved. ... Individually and as an organization, we must be agents of change and stewards of our local history.” These words from my last President’s Message were prompted by our program with Jim Bertolini from the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office, and HRPS and its members have had a chance to act in our adopted roles as agents of stewardship by advocating for the preservation of the late 19th and early 20th Century homes that lie in the University's Gateway District.

At its March 9 meeting, the Reno City Council voted 6-1 to postpone a decision concerning UNR's expansion south onto land currently occupied by this historic block of homes. HRPS is proud to have played a role in this step in preserving the homes. We may not get all that we want, but because of the City Council's action we have a chance to act in our adopted roles as agents of stewardship by advocating for the preservation of the late 19th and early 20th Century homes that lie in the University's Gateway District.

Since our tour and due to the homes’ conspicuous absence from UNR’s initial plan, HRPS has been actively advocating for their preservation. Carol Coleman, Debbie Hinman and the HRPS editorial staff featured the area on the front pages of the Winter 2016 edition of Footprints. HRPS members have distributed copies wherever stakeholders can be found, including Planning Commission meetings, HRC meetings and City Council meetings. AAC chair Barrie Lynn wrote an op-ed published by the RGJ (Preserve Gateway Buildings, March 4 2016, p. A-2). On Tuesday March 8, KOLO interviewed Barrie in front of Atcheson’s house; the column and interview have been widely shared on Facebook by concerned residents.

We are happy to announce the removal of two properties from the HRPS Endangered Buildings List. The 1889 NCO Engine House at 401 East 4th St. is for sale and is likely to be used in a way that will add to Reno's Fourth Street Brewery District. The Mid-Century car dealership building on the southwest corner of South Virginia and Cadillac streets has been painted and renewed with its architectural integrity intact and once again has cars for sale in its newly repaved lot.

In closing, we welcome our newest Lifetime members, Laurie and Greg Boyer who join 39 other couples and individuals who have made this commitment to HRPS. Before the program at our membership meeting on Wednesday, April 27, we will ask our members to approve the appointment of four additions to the HRPS Board of Directors: ZoAnn Campana, Constance Hansen, and Mylan Hawkins have been serving since August, and Sharon Honig-Bear will be returning to the HRPS Board in June.

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HRPS Barns or Bust Ranch Bus Tour

A few years ago historian, photographer and longtime HRPS member Jack Hursh hosted our first Barns or Bust Tour. Jack is back with a new edition of this popular HRPS bus tour.

Our bus tour will begin at Bartley Ranch where we will have an opportunity to visit the Dalton/Ferretto buildings. We will explore two beautiful barns in the northwest area of Reno. Then we will take a quick ride north on Highway 395 and visit the Old 1862 Ranch owned by Lifetime HRPS Members Jan and Jim Loverin. We will have a talk and tour the outbuildings and ranch house. We’ll close by having appetizers and wine on the porch and patio.

While actually located in California, the Old 1862 Ranch has many Nevada connections. The original ranch was owned by Samuel S. Wright and James A. Barker and consisted of 40 acres. Wright later chose H.H. Bence as a partner. Bence was a Nevada assemblyman and property assessor in Carson City. Together they increased the ranch size to 160 acres. By 1888, the property was sold and became the Ramelli Creamery/Dairy. The Ramellis sold their goods to restaurants in Reno.

Jan and Jim Loverin purchased the property in 1984 and with their son, Will, have lived there since 1986. They cherish this lifestyle and love their property. Jan will share tales and history about the ranch. HRPS wants to thank Jan and Jim for allowing us to visit this special property.

The tour takes place August 20 from 11:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Cost is $60.00/pp. Dress is casual but please wear closed shoes suitable for rocky and uneven ground. To make reservations call our Voicemail number at 747-4478. Leave your name, phone number and the number in your party. We will return your call to give you the final details. This tour will fill quickly so make your reservation early.
HRPS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The Historic Reno Preservation Society (HRPS) is “dedicated to preserving and promoting historic resources in the Truckee Meadows through education, advocacy and leadership.” In 1997, a small group of people interested in Reno’s history created HRPS as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. We have been an all-volunteer group ever since! As a HRPS member, you can learn about Reno’s history and make a difference in its future.

All Membership levels include the HRPS quarterly historical publication FootPrints; HRPS walking tours during the summer months; and education programs in the fall and winter.

You may pay by check, cash or credit card. When paying by credit card, please visit our website, www.historicreno.org. We use PayPal™ to process your payment. Don’t worry if you don’t have a PayPal™ account. They will accept your credit card on our behalf; we will send you a confirmation email with the information you provide.

Name(s) _______________________________________________________________________
Mailing Address _________________________________________________________________
City ____________________________________________________________________________
State ______________________________ZIP _________________________________________
Phone (H) ______________________________________________________________________
E-Mail: _________________________________________________________________________

HRPS respects your right to privacy. We will NOT share your email address.

Membership Levels:

☐ $15.00 Student
☐ $25.00 Individual
☐ $45.00 Family
☐ $100.00 Supporting
☐ $200.00 Business
☐ $250.00 Preservation Patron
☐ $500.00 Benefactor
☐ $1,000.00 Lifetime Member

My Additional Donation:

$ _____________ Pat Klos Annual Volunteer Award Fund
$ _____________ Neighborhood Preservation Grant Fund
$ _____________ Overall Program Support

HRPS Quarterly FootPrints Preference (please check one):

☐ Hard Copy ☐ Email Only

New Member ☐ Renewing ☐

Please make your check payable to Historic Reno Preservation Society and send with this form to:
HRPS
P.O. Box 14003
Reno, NV 89507

☐ YES, I want to get involved. Please contact me by:
☐ Phone ☐ Email

regarding volunteer opportunities.

RV 12.11.2015FO-DCD
HRPS Barns or Bust Ranch Bus Tour

August 20, 2016

See page 14 for details. You’ll see the Mayberry Barn (left) and visit the Old 1862 Ranch (right).

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