

The Last Tour of the “Gateway Homes”

Article by Debbie Hinman - Photos by David Loundes

Old ideas can sometimes use new buildings. New ideas must use old buildings. – Jane Jacobs

In the fall of 2005, I wrote a story for FootPrints detailing UNR’s new Master Plan. I became alarmed when looking at the area including N. Center and Lake streets between Eighth and Ninth streets: the plan denoted an empty area labeled “Gateway.” Another map referred to “green space,” with no structures in sight. I was new to HRPS and didn’t have any idea how to raise local awareness but my final paragraph included the words, “Adaptive reuse of historic buildings and the incorporation of them into the newly-expanded campus would create a much richer, more interesting academic community.” At that time I had never heard of Jane Jacobs but felt instinctively that this was true. I decided to research the houses and create a walking tour of the neighborhood, delivering it for the first time in July of 2006. Since that time, I’ve given it nearly every year. It was with great sadness that I delivered it for the final time last month.

Very soon there will no longer be a “university neighborhood”—only a conglomeration of large, modern buildings housing classrooms and students. Much of the history of those who occupied those homes, many of whom were members of the university community, will be lost...to history.

Some of these homes may yet be saved; in fact, one already has a new neighborhood and is on its way to restoration. Though they will be out of context in their new locations, at least their individual histories may live on. We owe a great debt to those who have stepped up to move several of the homes and in these remaining days, hope that a few more might also find a way to “adopt a house.”

Houses that are still not under contract are available—contact Troy Miller of the UNR Real Estate office. His email address is tmiller@unr.edu and his phone number is 775-784-6506.

Here’s a last look at our University Neighborhood Homes.



The Jones/Nenzel House: 825 Lake Street, c. 1910

This home is a rare example of the Free Classic style of Queen Anne architecture in Reno, with a foundation of local stone and Tuscan columns supporting the porch. It had a university connection in the 1920s when it was the home of J. Claude Jones, Professor of Geology and Mineralogy. Jones was also the curator of the Mackay Museum. The next residents were the Rudolph Nenzel family. Nenzel was active in mining. His uncle Joseph Nenzel had discovered the Rochester Mine in Rochester, Nevada. In its more recent past, the home was owned by Pastor and Mrs. Robert Owens who would hold University Family Fellowship services in the backyard. *(pending letter of intent)*



The Mack House: 829 Lake Street, c. 1910

Though two-story Craftsman homes are quite common in California, they are fairly rare in Reno. This home is lovely with its shingled upper story and gabled porch roof with flared eaves adorning sturdy columns. The stucco finish was probably added later. The home was the early residence of Winfred and Olla Mack. He was a well-known veterinarian and bacteriologist who was told Reno would be a better climate for his tuberculosis so he joined the University faculty. Mack died in 1918 and Olla contracted multiple sclerosis, supporting herself by selling magazine subscriptions via phone and mail from home. She died in 1958. The house was converted to student housing in its latter years. *(under contract)*

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The Last Tour

continued from page 1



The Moffitt House: 843 Lake Street, c. 1910

Like its neighbor down the street, this house is a wonderful example of the Free Classic Queen Anne style, with its prominent rounded porch and semi-hexagonal bay window. It was the early home of David and Lucinda Moffitt, who came to Reno from Plumas County, California. Later Reno's popular 3-term mayor, Edwin Roberts and his second wife moved into the home. A later long-term family was the Bradshaws, whose children all attended the university until the three boys left to go to war. *(tear down)*



The Riegg/Green House: 820 N. Center Street, c. 1907

This unique Dutch Colonial house with its distinctive gambrel roof actually faces Eighth Street. Riegg had emigrated from Germany and was a railway postal clerk. Inspired by his profession, Riegg invented a mailing cabinet for which he received a patent. James Green of Green Painting Company occupied the home next. *(under contract)*



The Fulton House: 895 N. Center Street, c. 1895

This spindled Queen Anne with its fish scale shingles beneath the eaves looks much as it did when built. John and brother Robert Fulton came west circa 1875. John moved into the house in 1903, prior to his marriage to Theodora Stubbs, daughter of university president, Joseph Stubbs. Later residents included Galen and Joanne de Longchamps, who soon moved four houses down the block. The house was a student rental, then MacKenzie Insurance, and most recently the University Real Estate Office. *(tear down)*



The Mary Sherman House: 847 N. Center Street, c. 1895

This house was originally a Free Classic Queen Anne, built for Mary Sherman. She resided in the home for a time, then leased it out to people associated with the university. A family named Haseman bought the home in 1923. In 1946 the house was sold to the Reno Unity Center. From 1998-2012 the house served as a childcare center. It's on the City of Reno historic register. *(pending letter of intent)*



The North/Berry House: 839 N. Center Street, c. 1900

This Queen Anne home is the second two-story home on the block. Eureka Judge Junius North moved his wife and children to Reno to give them educational advantages. After his death, his wife Julia and four daughters continued to live in the home; one daughter was a teacher, two were university students and the youngest was in high school. The William Berry family bought the house in 1942. He was a well-known newspaperman who wrote about celebrity Reno divorces. *(tear down)*



The Donnells/Scott House: 815 N. Center Street, c. 1895

The end of the 800 block of N. Center is a Queen Anne cottage, this one in the Eastlake design. While the home is very much altered from its original state, elements such as the varied patterned shingle styles on its front eave and the designs on the decorative brackets remain. The Albert Donnells family occupied the home in the early 20th century. In the mid-1950s, carpenter Delmer Scott purchased the home and began adding on and remodeling it to create rental apartments. Later owner Ken Yamada restored it to a single-family home. *(tear down)*



The Armstrong/de Longchamps House:
821 N. Center Street, c. 1895

This spindled Queen Anne has had its exterior altered very little over the years. The home was purchased in 1922 by Edna and Elmer Armstrong who raised children Raymond, John and Ruth there. With Sam Kafoury, Raymond founded Kafoury-Armstrong & Co. In 1974, Galen and poet, artist and university professor Joanne de Longchamps purchased the house. Upon her death in 1983, the home was willed to the university as a guest house and later became the Northern Nevada International Center. *(under contract)*



The Folsom/Atcheson House: 829 N. Center Street, c. 1895

With its corner spindletopped turret, this is the most distinctive house on the block, where for many years, the face of W. C. Fields occupied the 2nd-story window. Lewis and Mary Folsom purchased the lot and hired architect George Holesworth to build their elegant home that was the envy of Reno in its day. Folsom owned a grocery business, but died in 1918. Mary remained in the home until the early 1940s, when she sold the home to Katie Atcheson. The home remained in the Atcheson family until 2018. *(pending letter of intent)*



The Leaver/Campbell House: 801 Lake Street, c. 1910

This American Foursquare house with a combination of Free Classic, Craftsman and Prairie School detailing is a unique style of architecture rarely seen in Reno. It has suffered from neglect over the years but was a true showplace in its day. Early in its history, the home was briefly occupied by prominent local architect, George Ferris. The Leaver family occupied the home from the early 1920s until Edmund Leaver's death in 1943. Ginette Campbell purchased the house in 1953, running it as a boarding house under the name Campbell House. In the 1970s it was known as Casa de Mañana. *(pending letter of intent)*.

The Masonic Temple Cornerstone

by Catherine Magee, Ph.D.

Editor's Note: Following the January, 2019 demolition of the 1872 Masonic Building on Commercial Row in Reno, a ceremony was held on April 16, 2019 to announce the contents and provenance of the Masonic temple cornerstone. What follows is Dr. Catherine Magee's presentation to the attendees:

Good Morning. I am privileged as the Director of the Nevada Historical Society and the conservator who excavated the time capsule to be part of this amazing team honoring this historic building and unveiling the materials that had been sealed in the cornerstone for 147 years.

I'd like to give you all a little bit of the flavor of the era in Reno's history when this first masonic Temple was built. Reno was a tough commercial town, having been officially re-named Reno in 1868, at the urging of railroad financier Charles Crocker.

In 1869 a year later, Reno Lodge number 13 was chartered. Desiring a permanent home, in 1872 the Masons asked for proposals for a building to be built on a lot they purchased for \$1000. This lot was on bustling Commercial Row, across from the railroad platform. They specified the building was "to be built of brick, two stories in height and to measure 34 feet x 100 feet." To meet a budget of \$11,500, the builder who

won the contract, Mr. Hoole, modified the size to 35 feet by 75 feet, and completed the Romanesque Revival style building in 1873.

The structure had 20-inch thick hollow brick walls, and according to an 1879 *Reno Evening Gazette* article, honey bees had made their home in the Masonic Hall for some time. Some estimated there were 10 tons of honey in the hollow walls and under the roof. (Did you find any traces of this during the demolition?)

Perhaps in 1879 when Jerry Schooling, a grocer and former State Treasurer, joined James Hagerman, the first tenant of the main floor, they sold the honey as part of their grocery endeavor and the wax in the hardware store.

Not only was the First Masonic building a commercial center, it was a social center for Reno with a population then exceeding 1,000 people. The grand ball celebrating the opening of the hall was an all-night event, with over 75 couples from Reno, Carson, and Virginia City



The Masonic building, built in 1872 on the corner of Commercial and Sierra, with a mercantile store on the first floor and the Masonic Temple on the second. Courtesy of Nevada Historical Society.

"tripping the light fantastic" until four in the morning. This ball was the first of many enjoyed by Renoites in the Masonic building.

Although a 25 foot addition was added in 1881, the Masons moved to a new, larger building in 1905 and sold this building to the Reno Mercantile Company. This first Masonic building, known both as the Old Masonic Lodge and the Reno Mercantile building, had the distinction of being the oldest standing commercial building in Reno until its recent demolition.

DEMOLITION OF THE MASONIC BUILDING,



December 15, 2018



December 18, 2018



December 19, 2019



HRPS Prohibition Walking Tour in front of the Masonic Building in 2009.
Photo courtesy Kim Henrick.

On October 15, 1872, this cornerstone including the time capsule was placed. When this time capsule was discovered, there was much elation! When I was brought in to examine it, the excitement was palpable. Though I was among the construction and management teams—I would say these gentlemen were literally giddy with excitement! This atmosphere of wonder and excitement continued to the day I came to remove the materials from the time capsule.

The materials had been snugly placed in a lead box, which in turn was tightly fitted into the rectangular hole chiseled for it in the cornerstone. Unfortunately for my work and preservation aspects, the materials in the time capsule were waterlogged and muddy—but this did not dampen the enthusiasm of everyone

involved. As I removed the materials, there were times of excited discussions, contrasted with absolute silence, with everyone focused on what was emerging from the lead box.

Materials known to be in the time capsule included newspapers, Masonic items, Carson City and San Francisco silver dollars, and horn silver from the Eberhardt Mine in White Pine County. And there were a few surprises—my favorite is the harmonica.

Time capsules are meant to give the discoverers a window onto the past—to what was happening at the time of encapsulation, as well as what was deemed important by the people who made the selection. The complete assemblage tells us much more than just one item taken out of context. The English half sovereign and the Mexican dollar would be simply old coins. Yet the fact these coins were chosen tell us about cultural connections these Masons felt were important. The people from 1872 have communicated to us in 2019. Some of it will likely only be understood by fellow masons. But the newspapers, harmonica, bottle opener and business cards resonate with all of us.

In conclusion, I am honored to have been part of the recovery of this important part of Reno and Nevada's history. And as the Director of the oldest cultural institution in the state, I am committed to continuing our work to collect, preserve, and share our state's multi-faceted history, including what we are celebrating here today. 🍷

Reno Masonic Temple Dates of Interest

- Reno Lodge number 13 chartered in September 23, 1869.
- 1872, lot on the corner of Sierra and Commercial row purchased from Henry Menke for \$1000.
- 1872, construction awarded to local contractor S.F. Hoole, size reduced to 35 x 75 feet to bring cost of construction to \$11,500.
- October 15, 1872, this cornerstone was placed.
- Feb 21, 1873, grand ball to celebrate the opening of the Masonic Hall.
- 1873, first tenant, James Hagerman, a dealer in groceries, hardware, tinware, wines and liquor.
- February 1, 1879, Jerry Schooling joined the business. He was a grocer and was the State Treasurer from 1871 to 1879.
- 1905, second Masonic Temple, built on the site of the Iron Bridge Livery Barn, on Virginia Street between the river and First Street, was at one time the largest and most impressive building in Nevada.
- The building succumbed to a fire in 1965 and was demolished to make way for the third and current Masonic Temple, completed in 1967.

December 2018–January 2019 PHOTOS BY DAVID LOWNDES



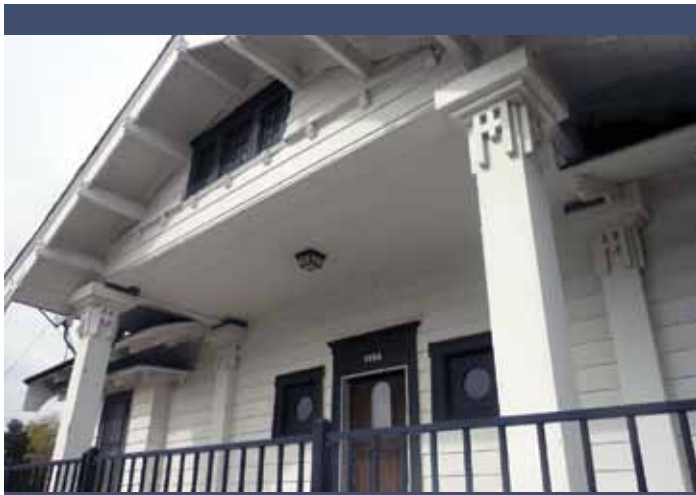
January 17, 2019



January 28, 2019



January 30, 2019



About the Humphrey House Move

by Carol Coleman
Photos by David Lowndes



Walking tours this May definitely provided some “just-in-time” photo opportunities for HRPS photographer David Lowndes!

Begin with the Humphrey House at its Eighth Street location in the upper left corner of this page, a photo taken in 2017.

In order to move the house to its new location at Arlington and St. Lawrence, the house movers cut off the porch and the top of the roof and left them at the Eighth Street location. On the May 14 University Neighborhood Walking Tour, David caught Tour Guide Debbie Hinman standing at the same fence with the roof on the ground, where the house used to be.

On the May 18 Newlands Neighborhood Walking Tour, it just happened that a truck was delivering the Humphrey House roof to its new location on Arlington and St. Lawrence as Tour Leader Scott Gibson led the tour group alongside.

Early in May the house movers placed the home on top of its foundation and began work on the house itself. In the photos on the lower left, the St. Lawrence Street side, you can see that they are removing the aluminum siding from the building, taking it down to the original wood.

The bottom right photo shows the house as it fronts Arlington Avenue. The porch will be rebuilt as it was in the original Eighth Street location.



HRPS Presents Old Movie Night: Wednesday, August 21

A story of fast cars...reckless women...and sudden danger...and a guy who loved all three!

Date: Wednesday, August 21

Time: Doors open at 6:00 pm,
Movie starts at 6:30 pm

Location: Reno Little Theater
(RLT), 147 E. Pueblo
(between Holcomb and Wells)

Tickets:

\$18/pp, sold through RLT, can
access through
historicroeno.org. (75 seats)

Sales open October 1, 2018. This
is a fundraiser to support HRPS'
Preservation Fund. (We do have the
expense of facility rental and movie
license to cover.)

Join us for a bit of nostalgia and a view of the 1950s Reno scene. Our host will point out Reno scenes and talk about the history of movie and the location.

Reno Little Theater's concession stand will be open at 6:00 pm (and during intermission), so grab a beverage and enjoy a relaxing (and interesting) time.

Johnny Dark is a 1954 American Technicolor comedy drama action film directed by George Sherman, starring Tony Curtis, Piper Laurie and Don Taylor. Automobile engineer, Johnny Dark designs a radical new car. When the owner refuses to sponsor the car in a Canada to Mexico Sportscar race, Johnny, with the aid of the owner's granddaughter, steals the car and runs the race against the favored driver, his ex-buddy.



Pat Klos HRPS Volunteer Award Presented to Carol Coleman

by Debbie Hinman

On Sunday, May 19th, at the HRPS Annual Meeting held prior to the Sunday monthly program, Carol Coleman, HRPS President, was honored with the 2019 Pat Klos Volunteer of the Year Award.

Pat Klos is the founder of the Historic Reno Preservation Society. In 2014, she established an award fund with HRPS to annually honor an exemplary volunteer. The volunteer was to receive a commemorative certificate and \$200 stipend. Pat said, "Renoites love Reno and are willing to volunteer and work together to preserve our heritage. It is my intention as founding president of HRPS to reward that spirit of dedication by annually acknowledging a person who has shown commitment, enthusiasm, and innovation as a member of HRPS."

This year's recipient meets all of those

qualifications. For over 15 years, Carol has been the guiding force of our quarterly publication, *FootPrints*. In 2016, our HRPS president completed her term and no one else on the Board wanted to take it on. Carol stepped up and has led the organization since that time. The following year, we were lacking a chair for our annual Harvest of Homes Tour and none of the committee members were willing to take on the lead position. Rather than see our major fundraiser go away, Carol stepped up and we had a very successful past two events and are on track for 2019.

As time intensive as these responsibilities are, Carol's commitment to historic preservation also extended to volunteering at the Nevada Historical Society and leading several Newcomers groups. She even found time to write an Arcadia book on behalf of the Docent Council entitled, *Early Reno*.

There is no one who deserves this award more—kudos to Carol, and thank you for all you do for HRPS and preservation in general!



Presenting the Klos Award to Carol Coleman are Debbie Hinman (left) and Pat Klos (right)

Save the date for HRPS Harvest of Homes Tour
Saturday, September 21, 2019, from 10 am to 3 pm



HRPS and Artown July 2019 HRPS Historic Walking Tours

Bill Kolton & John Farrow, Walking Tour Chairs



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 call 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.

- Tuesday,
July 2,
6:00 p.m.

TRUCKEE RIVER WALK — 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.**
- Tuesday,
July 9,
6:00 p.m.

WELLS AVENUE NEIGHBORHOOD — Take a stroll through a working-class neighborhood along the path of the Wells Avenue streetcar, across the V&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.**
- Saturday,
July 13,
9:00 a.m.

NEWLANDS NEIGHBORHOOD — Enjoy an architectural walk through one of Reno’s oldest and most prestigious neighborhoods. Newlands Heights Historic District was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 2017. Meet at the Lander Street side of My Favorite Muffin, 340 California Avenue. **Tour guide: Scott Gibson.**
- Tuesday,
July 16,
6:00 p.m.

POWNING’S ADDITION — Discover one of Reno’s earliest and most delightful vernacular neighborhoods and learn about the English, Germans and Italians that settled the area. This neighborhood is the first City of Reno Conservation District. Meet at the McKinley Arts & Culture Center, 925 Riverside Drive, east side parking lot. **Tour guides: Jack Hursh and Loren Jahn.**
- Saturday,
July 20,
9:00 a.m.

BRICKS AND STONES — A walk through the Humboldt and Lander Streets Neighborhood. Discover the architectural treasures of this area, a mix of bungalows, Tudor and mission revivals and cottage styles. Meet at the Lander Street side of My Favorite Muffin, 340 California Avenue. **Tour guide: Susan Skorupa Mullen.**
- Tuesday,
July 23,
6:00 p.m.

DELONGCHAMPS RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE — This walk takes you on a neighborhood tour of homes, large and small, designed by Reno’s notable architect, Frederic DeLongchamps. Hear about his life and what made him so unique to this area. Meet at the Hardy House/Arte Italia, 442 Flint Street. **Tour guides: ZoAnn Campana, Sharon Honig-Bear.**
- Saturday,
July 27,
8:00 a.m.

MANSIONS ON THE BLUFF — Walk past historic Reno homes located on Court, Ridge and upper California streets. Learn about the senators and merchants who made early Reno *The Biggest Little City in the World*. Be sure to bring water and wear comfortable shoes for this uphill tour that begins at the McCarran House, 401 Court Street. Look nearby for mandatory sign-in/registration on Court Street. **Tour guides: Donna and Paul Erickson, ZoAnn Campana, and Joan Collins.**



UNR Historic District



Wells Avenue Neighborhood



Truckee River Walk



HRPS

August 2019 HRPS Historic Walking Tours

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

No dogs please. Reservations required and space is limited.

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

Tuesday,
July 30,
6:00 p.m.

UNR HISTORIC DISTRICT —Visit Morrill Hall, Mackay School of Mines and the Keck Museum to learn the history of this beautiful campus. Meet on campus at the Honor Court just off 9th and Center Streets. **Tour guides: Jack Hursh and Bob Shriver.**

Sunday,
August 4,
9:00 a.m.

BIKE TOUR THROUGH OLD RENO — 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: Brandi Quaglieri. HELMETS REQUIRED, NO EXCEPTIONS!**

Tuesday,
August 6,
3:00 p.m.

INSIDE DELONGCHAMPS'S DOWNTOWN — 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.**

HRPS 10th Annual Home Tour: Saturday, September 21

Historic Reno Preservation Society's 10th annual Reno Harvest of Homes Tour will be held on Saturday, September 21. Our wonderful tour homes are open from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Plan to join us in the morning, make a short lunch stop, and finish with a flurry.

Homes featured in the HRPS Home Tour are at least 50 years old, have

some combination of the following: the home may have a bit of history associated with it, could display the architecture of a particular era, are interesting to view, may have a fabulous yard, and have been well cared for by their owners.

Information about the Tour will be available in the Fall issue of *FootPrints*, in your mailbox September 1, and

online at historicreno.org by mid-August. Tickets are available the last week of August and will again be \$30 in advance and \$35 on the day of the event. Tickets will be available at specified local businesses September 1 and on the HRPS website.

For information, please contact Tour Chair Carol Coleman at (775) 560-0602 or email at CarolC@galenaforest.net.

HRPS Endangered Property Watch List

ENDANGERED PROPERTIES (Listed Alphabetically)

- Buildings in the University Neighborhood
- Caughlin Ranch House
- Center Street Homes (Gateway)
- Freight House on Evans St.
- Hillside Cemetery
- Lear Theater
- Mid-century Motels
- Nevada Brewing Works on 4th St.
- Sinai Building/Howell House
- Sundance Books/Levy House
- Two El Reno Apartments at 1461 Lander St.

LOST PROPERTIES (Listed by Date of Demolition)

- Mapes Hotel (1947-2000)
- Virginia Street Bridge (1905-2015)
- Downtown Motels Block (c. 1875-2018)
- Ralston Avenue 300-block homes (c. 1875-2018)
- Masonic Mercantile Building at Sierra and Commercial (1872-2019)
- Flick Ranch House (1942-2019)

Jack Reeve:

Unsung Hero of Reno's Parks

by Debbie Hinman

Early Reno had a number of “unsung heroes,” those who contributed greatly to our town, then either moved on or passed on, leaving a mark but receiving no recognition. One such hero was an Englishman named John Henry (Jack) Reeve. Today’s local residents benefit greatly from his dedication to our city park system, and yet few have probably ever heard his name.

Reeve was born November 1, 1876 in the tiny English village of Colkirk in Norfolk. Colkirk today has about 500 inhabitants and dates from around 1100 A.D. Not much is discoverable about his early life but on February 9, 1890, he embarked on a ship at Liverpool and traveled to New York. In October of 1892, Reeve appeared before a Los Angeles Superior Court to renounce his allegiance to England and become a citizen of the United States. On the Declaration of Intention, his age is shown as 22; however, he was in actuality a few days shy of 16.

In 1903, Reeve married Emma Louise Capell in Santa Ana, California. Emma’s family had relocated from New York to Los Angeles. The following year, they had a daughter, Rovista. The marriage seems to have been short-lived; at least, they did not live together long.

In 1912, Reeve registered to vote in Bishop, California, stating his age as 36 and his occupation as florist. Six years later, Reeve reappeared in Goldfield, Nevada, working as a J hoist engineer for Consolidated Mining Company. Goldfield had boomed in 1902 following the discovery of gold. By the time



Photo of the home that Reeve built on acreage in the area of Mt. Rose Street between Plumas and Lander. Photo courtesy Debbie Hinman.

Reeve arrived there, the mines were playing out. The largest mining company left town in 1919. In 1923, a moonshine still exploded, destroying most of the town’s flammable buildings. But according to a Reno 1923 directory, Jack Reeve was safely living in Reno with the job title of City Park Superintendent. Emma and Rovista were living with Emma’s parents in Los Angeles.

In the early days of Reno, people were preoccupied with growing the town when lots were first sold in May of 1868. Wooden structures sprang up practically overnight near the railroad tracks and station. A little later, additions such as Powning’s and the Western Addition provided residential lots. But very little thought was given to such frivolities as parks.

A 1906 *Nevada State Journal* editorial entitled “A Plea for City Parks” may have been the impetus for city beautification. It scolded residents with these words: “A \$50,000 city hall has received its cornerstone, one of the most magnificent bridges in the country spans the Truckee as it rolls past Virginia Street; homes artistic and costly are springing up on every hand and modern business blocks grace almost every corner in the commercial district. Yet there are no provisions being made for parks. A city without parks is like a home without a yard. Parks are a public necessity and an aid to a city’s health.”

Actually, however, there were already two parks by 1906; in 1871, a plot of land on the east side of Virginia Street had been donated by Myron Lake at the same time he donated the land for a courthouse on the west side, stipulating that it was to be used as a park. First known as the “city park,” it would be officially named Powning Park in 1911, after C.C. Powning, a leading citizen of Reno who had been named an



Jack and Izabella Hunt-Jones in front of their 1870s home, rescued and relocated by Jack Reeve to his Mt. Rose Street property. Photo courtesy Jack Hursh.

uncompensated Parks Commissioner in 1891. Powning Park that year acquired a new fountain, comfortable settees and electric lights and the bandstand was moved to the rear of the park.

A plot of land on Riverside Drive had been named McKinley Park in 1902. The following year, it was planted with 200 trees from Philadelphia. This would, in the not too distant future, become the site of a fine new elementary school.

The first reference to Reeve occurs in a February, 1923 news item where Governor J. G. Scrugham selected him as park superintendent of Reno, to represent Nevada at the third national conference of state park workers at Turkey Run, Indiana on May 7.

In 1925, Reeve visited Death Valley Scotty's "oasis" in Grapevine Canyon. Faced with a conglomeration of concrete buildings, sixty pack mules and a fleet of trucks, Reeve admitted to being baffled by the mysteries surrounding Scotty—the newspaper reports that he considers a crossword puzzle a much easier proposition.

However, his trip to the desert obviously made an impression on Reeve. By 1925, the transplanted Englishman had become a huge proponent of desert flora, fully embracing the land he would call home for the rest of his life. He developed a desert garden display for the 1927 Transcontinental Highways Exposition. Reeve contended that the desert plants are "far more beautiful than any cultivated flowers." In 1927, Reeve was appointed county gardener and was to have charge of the lawn and flower gardens around the courthouse at a salary of \$75 per month during the summer.

Although his salary doesn't seem that it would support his buying land, in 1929 Reeve was able to purchase some significant acreage in the area of Mount Rose Street between Plumas and Lander Streets. The land was outside the city limits at that time, so possibly that made it more affordable. During the 1930s and into the 40s, Reeve built his own home, then began



Reeve's Truckee River island c. 1937. Courtesy Nevada Historical Society.

accumulating additional houses to place on this land. In working as a gardener, he became aware of small homes within the city in areas where the land was needed for Reno's growth. Owners were happy to see the houses moved and Reeve contracted with Romolo Bevilacqua to perform the moves to the Plumas property. Amazingly enough, the hidden enclave of houses still occupy Reeve's former land. They are owned by a single party who rents them out.

For thirteen years, a couple has occupied the 1870s Carpenter Gothic home which was probably one of Robert Fulton's rentals originally built in Virginia City, then moved to W. First Street. They have created a front yard with fruit trees and other plants of which Reeve would certainly approve.



Early photo of Virginia Lake. Courtesy Nevada Historical Society.

In addition to being responsible for creating the layouts for new city parks, Reeve was respected by locals as a floral expert and was a popular speaker at garden clubs. In 1932, he gave a talk to the garden section of the Century Club on rose gardens here and in England. In spite of his preference for desert flowers, he was incensed by the theft of hyacinths from the court house garden and offered a \$25 reward for the arrest and conviction of the thieves. He was ingenious in his attempts to thwart the attack of weevils and angle worms on his beautiful tulip garden at the court-house. When lime and other preparations were not effective, Reeve placed a long, perforated pipe underground, covered the flowerbeds with blankets, and connected the pipe to the exhaust of his automobile. The exhaust gas killed the weevils, leaving the plants unharmed.

Reno was a little late experiencing the effects of the Depression, but by 1933 there were many local men out of work. When the Nevada State Relief Committee asked about any public work that could be done to give employment to the needy and at the same time be a public benefit, Reeve suggested moving the large scotch elm trees that would soon be in the way of the proposed new wing of the court-house. He offered to supervise the move without cost to the city. Upon receiving criticism for the expenditure of hiring men to do the work which had been approved by the County Commissioners, Reeve responded in a letter to the editor, "One cannot estimate the value of a beautiful tree." He went on to say about the men under his direction, "As yet I have to hear one word of discontent from any of these men...my sympathy goes out to some of them, not accustomed to pick and shovel work and in some cases displaying a weakness from lack of proper nourishment."

Reeve had worked with Frederic DeLongchamps in moving trees to the new Riverside Hotel. In 1936, he headed up a team of WPA workers to move trees from the northeast corner of the Southside School to make way for the new kindergarten building. Later

Jack Reeve

continued from page 11

that year, he again utilized a WPA crew to plant sixty evergreen trees on the “island” in the Truckee River between the Virginia and Center Street bridges. Reeve had already installed a sprinkler system. He requested donations of shrubs or plants from Reno locals, to further beautify the island. This new adornment for the river lost a lot of its greenery when high waters rose in December of 1937. Undaunted, Reeve replanted in 1938, saying that with the completion of Boca Dam and the river flow being regulated, the island would be safe from flood waters. However, the little island, which became a beautiful addition to the downtown portion of the river, succumbed to the 1950 flood. Reeve would not live to experience that flood which so damaged downtown Reno.

Reeve was kept very busy in the summer of 1938 with what the *RGJ* termed “two splendid projects.” There was the new Virginia Park “just outside the southern limits of the city” and the new park on Mill Street “south of the Washoe County General Hospital.” Both were WPA projects. The *Reno Gazette Journal (RGJ)* reported, “Mr. J. H. Reeve, horticulturist, is in charge of landscaping the two parks and his artistic ideas account for much of their attractiveness.” When the Virginia Lake project began in 1936, a willow and a cottonwood were the only trees on the entire 45 acres. Chinese elms were purchased by the county but private individuals contributed many additional varieties of trees. The university donated over two thousand dollars’ worth of trees and shrubs. The as yet unnamed park on Mill Street (now Pickett Park) was five acres, in a triangular shape. It was landscaped between February and July.

Virginia Lake Park was an ongoing project for Reeve. In November of 1942, it was reported that finishing touches were being applied to a unique fountain which was “entirely a product of Nevada.” The *RGJ* wrote, “Through the ingenuity of J. H. Reeve, county gardener, very large coral rocks, hollowed and resembling huge shells have been



Early photo of Virginia Lake, a truck and a worker — maybe that is Jack Reeve. Courtesy Nevada Historical Society.

brought from the Pyramid Lake region and under Mr. Reeve’s supervision have been arranged in tiers to form a terraced fountain.” There are even benches created of tufa; the little plot forms an interesting, meaningful tribute to Nevada. Reeve took it a step further and added red, white and blue petunias to the three points forming a V as a Victory Garden. The fountain and surrounding tufa formations still exist today. There is a plaque congratulating a number of local businesses for their contributions to the restoration of the fountain in 1997. There is no mention of John Henry Reeve.

Reeve retired in 1948, but in the few years before he relinquished his posi-



Jack Reeve’s tufa fountain at Virginia Lake, 2019. Photo courtesy Debbie Hinman.

tion, he became the champion of the Virginia Lake swans. They were often under attack by young troublemakers, which Reeve took very personally. He once took a badly injured swan home with him to try and nurse it back to health, but it was too injured to survive. One of his last heroic acts was to rescue a 10-year-old boy who was drowning in Virginia Lake; he instructed the boy who was flailing in the center of the lake to hold on to the half-submerged boat while he radioed to the police who were able to get to him in time.

Reeve had health issues in the two years after retiring and preceding his death on January 2, 1950. But he continued to garden on his land, maintain the six small houses he had moved there and stay in contact with his daughter. He died suddenly as a result of a blood clot in his brain.

Although there were many newspaper articles mentioning Reeve in the 25 years he spent tending our city gardens, there were no photos of the man. His service was not commemorated in the monthly Parks magazine and he received no public accolades. However, he doesn’t seem to be the sort of person who would have minded that. He was likely happier bending over his flower beds or hauling rocks to create an artistic display in a park.

Though some of what Reeve did for the city is no longer—the island in the Truckee, the profusion of tulips and hyacinths at the courthouse, the landscaping around the Riverside Hotel—Reeve left us his spirit in our many city parks, in the mature trees and other greenery that makes them peaceful retreats for local residents to jog, bike ride, walk their dogs or simply enjoy the scenic beauty. 🚲

Debbie Hinman is on the City of Reno’s Historical Resources Commission, is a HRPS Tour Guide and Managing Editor of FootPrints.

Artists Co-Op Has Opportunity to Buy the French Laundry

The Artists Co-Op of Reno gallery has contributed to the Reno community for the past 53 years at the same location, 627 Mill Street. It offers art from over 400 artists and has donated (\$4,400 this year alone) to many local organizations including The Rock Art Foundation, the Canine Rehabilitation Center and Sanctuary, Nevada Veterans, SPCA, Nevada Land Trust, Wild Horse Foundation and more. In 2002, HRPS awarded the Artists Co-Op its Preservation Award for “best continuous use of a historic building.” Now the Artists Co-Op has a special request.

They have been renting the old French laundry, that was built in 1910, for the past 53 years. This year, they have the opportunity to purchase the building from the original owners. This would allow them to keep the gallery open into the future under local ownership.

They need \$150,000 to purchase the building and perform deferred maintenance on the property. They are asking for donations from our supportive community to keep this historic building and to make the gallery locally owned and operated.

Anything you can donate would be appreciated. Stop at the Co-Op to give them a donation or give through their GO Fund



Sketch by Ralph Bennett

Me account using a credit card at: <http://www.gofundme.com/artistscoopbuildingfund>. 

Lear Theater Again

Sierra School for Performing Arts (SSPA) recently announced that “despite almost a year of negotiation with Artown regarding the transfer of the Lear Theater, we are disappointed to report that we have reached an impasse with Artown concerning the purchase of the building.”

Eight years after Artown acquired the historic Lear Theater in downtown Reno, the majestic building and prime real estate is up for grabs again. To become operational as a theater again, the building could require between \$5 million and \$7 million in improvements, according to the Artown board.


One year ago, the Artown Board of Directors chose SSPA as the next likely owner of the historic Lear Theater in



downtown Reno. Artown, the nonprofit that hosts the annual citywide arts festival in July, did not legally hand over the building, but the official deal was expected to happen in a few months and included a transaction of little more than \$1, according to the *Reno Gazette Journal*. The Artown Board was optimistic that “it had found a steward

of the Lear Theater that will fulfill the vision of Moya Lear.”

Lear was an arts patron who envisioned the church as a theater and in 1997, she contributed \$1.1 million and matching community funds to purchase the building. She gave the building, designed by the revered African American architect Paul Revere Williams, to the now-defunct Theater Coalition. While the coalition made some renovations and put on a few performances, it eventually closed the theater in 2002.

The building was the long-time home of the First Church of Christ Scientist. It is listed in the City of Reno’s Historic Register and in the National Register of Historic Places. 

Save the date for HRPS Harvest of Homes Tour
Saturday, September 21, 2019, from 10 am to 3 pm



Message From Your HRPS President

Carol Coleman

State of HRPS 2019

HRPS is doing well – in its 22nd year as an all-volunteer run organization!

With HRPS mission of Education, Leadership and Preservation, our focus for most of that time has been Education, with Walking Tours (29 in 2019), Educational Programs (12 in 2018-2019), and our Home Tour. The Neighborhood Preservation Fund began in 2010, using funds from the Home Tour to support preservation of the exteriors of historic homes with modest grants. (Note that HRPS Board members were active in support of the Mapes, the Virginia Street Bridge, Fleischmann Planetarium, and Lincoln and Manzanita Halls.)

In the last couple of years, the HRPS Board has seen the need to become active in preservation initiatives such as the Caughlin Ranch house, the mid-century motels, the Ralston Street homes, the Masonic Building, and the Center Street homes. Attending City meetings such as City Council, Planning Commission and Historical Resources Commission, keeping contact with people in-the-know, planning strategy, writing articles for *FootPrints* and public announcements takes additional time in an already busy HRPS Board schedule.

We have been doing well, but we want to do more. As a Board, we want to be proactive in the support of properties before they are about to be demolished.

(1) We plan an initiative to support getting properties on the City's Historic Register, working with HRPS Volunteers to do the research and City applications.

(2) We want to focus our preservation funds on projects to support Reno's historic buildings, and to support historic markers on these properties. This will require writing grants and other fund raising. And (3) we intend to change our Advocacy efforts into more of a Community Outreach Committee.

Managing HRPS has become too large a task for the HRPS President and Board. That said, HRPS plans to hire a part-time person as Executive Director / Administrator. After penny-pinching in 2018, we are in a financial position to manage this. One of the responsibilities of the position will be to work on fundraising and thereby support his or her own salary. Additional skills should include social media knowledge, historic preservation experience, web and PC applications, Writing and Grant writing ability, and being good at building relationships.

As we move into the 2019-2020 year, we plan to continue all our Education efforts, and add to that an emphasis on Leadership and Outreach in historic preservation. The HRPS Board now has a broader focus of experience and skills, and with an Executive Director on board, we will be ready to meet new challenges.

HRPS Board and Terms

I want to thank Eric Broili for serving two 3-year terms on the HRPS Board from 2013-2019. Eric will be remembered for pushing us towards the use of new technology or maybe just technology.

We are adding four new Board members since last year's Annual Meeting:

- Megan McGuire, history professor
- Jeff Borchardt, land use planner, previously with the City, now with a developer
- Alexis Thomas, architectural historian with NDOT
- Debbie Hinman, writer, researcher and historian

We have four current Board members who are willing to do a second:

- Jen Johanson, STEAM coordinator / educator
- Holly Walton-Buchanan, retired educator and author
- Sharon Honig-Bear, past HRPS President and Chair City of Reno Arts & Culture Commission
- Carol Coleman, HRPS President

Thank you all for supporting HRPS.

I Wish To Honor These Two HRPS Members

First, my friend of many years, Anne Simone, for her research on architects DeLongchamps, Parsons and Mills in particular, and for developing many of the HRPS walking tours.

2001: took over Bricks and Stones, which Pat Klos has developed.

2004: began DeLongchamps Architectural Walk and the Beyond the Arches Walk, which focuses on DeLongchamps.

2005: began the Parson's Mills Walk.

2007: began the Monroe Street Walk.

2009: with Sharon began Inside DeLongchamps Downtown and DeLongchamps Residential Architecture.

2010: began The Other Side of the Street.

Anne retired from giving walks this year, but had trained people to take over her walks. HRPS thanks you, Anne.

Second, I want to thank Cindy Ainsworth for her many years of supporting HRPS.

Cindy was a charter member of HRPS and HRPS' first Vice-President. She was the second President of HRPS, following Pat Klos. Cindy served on the City of Reno's Historical Resources Commission and served as its Chair. When Joan Dyer became HRPS President, Cindy quietly became the Administrator. She served in this position through Felvia Belaustegui's years as President and also Sharon Honig-Bear's years as President. She decided to retire as I became President.

Cindy has also been the Administrator of the Neighborhood Preservation Fund for many of its nine years. She has decided to retire this year as she has been saying the NPF needs to change its focus and she wants to keep a flexible travel schedule.

HRPS thanks you, Cindy.

Cindy has been an invaluable resource for the organization and its Presidents over the last 22 years. Thank you Cindy.

HRPS thanks you for your support.

Carol Coleman, 775-849-3380
carolc@galenaforest.net

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 Sharon Honig-Bear
 Jacqueline Black (*)
 Laurie & Greg Boyer
 Lynn Bremer
 Holly Walton-Buchanan
 Florence Ann Burgess
 Tom & Phyllis Cates
 Jan & Phil Chik
 Press & Delores Clewe
 Karalea Clough
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Peter Dube Architecture
 Harold & Alice Jacobsen

HRPS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

By joining **Historic Reno Preservation Society**, you are a member of a community group that celebrates Reno's history by sharing information and advocating for our endangered properties.

In the summer, you may attend as many as 25 different Walking Tours. In winter, twice a month we bring you Educational Programs. You receive our quarterly, *FootPrints*, to keep you informed about HRPS events, articles about endangered properties, people and homes of interest. HRPS' information is on our website, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and occasional eblasts.

You may pay by check, cash, credit card or PayPal. To pay by credit card of PayPal, please log on to our website: www.historicreno.org. We use PayPal to process your payment. They will accept your credit card on our behalf; we will send you a confirmation email.

<input type="checkbox"/> New Member <input type="checkbox"/> Renewing		My Additional Donation:	
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FootPrints Managing Editor:
Debbie Hinman, 322-9400

Editorial Staff:
ZoAnn Campana, Joyce Cox

Photographer:
David Lowndes

Editor Emeritus &
FootPrints Founder:
Sharon Walbridge

Graphic Design:
Double Click Design
dcdreno.com

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