

***Our  
Mission***

To provide visibility and support for the gathering and dissemination of history about the roles and contributions of all Nevada women.

*Nevada Women's History Project presents  
An Old Fashioned Holiday Tea in Reno*

A visit with members of the Gosse and Mudd Families



~ Ice Skating on the Truckee River 1932 ~

Featuring presentations by the Silver State Young Chatauquans

**WHEN:** Sunday, December 11, 2016

**WHERE:** 3487 San Mateo Circle, Reno, NV

**TIME:** 2pm-5pm

We are ending the year of 2016 on a high note with our Holiday Tea. Elizabeth Rassigna has graciously offered her home for this event and is encouraging attendees to dress in costume, if they so desire.

Reno author Jack Harpster's recent book, "The Genesis of Reno," tells the history of the Riverside Hotel and Virginia Street bridge. His book has also generated discussion about the Gosse-Mudd families who were associated with the magnificent Riverside Hotel between 1896 and 1922. Some of the Gosse family members will also be attending the Holiday Tea and will reminisce about their pioneer days on the Comstock and early Reno.

The Gosse family will be represented by the Silver State Young Chatauquans who have enlightened and entertained us in the past. Come join us and set the stage for your holiday season with tea, cookies and a glimpse into the past. Seating is limited so make your reservations early.

Contact Patti Bernard @ 826-3612 or Marcia Cuccaro @ 883-1454 for more information.

Be sure your browser is set at [www.nevadawomen.org](http://www.nevadawomen.org) for the new NWHP website. The website is Live! and for a while the unr.edu address will redirect you to the new website.

## Uncovering Her story (plus a bit of Nevada History) part 1

By Patti Bernard

For about 10 years I have had several small 8x10 unframed pictures resting on my office bookshelves. They are of Nevada landscapes and I moved them from shelf to shelf periodically when I needed the book they were resting upon. I was always going to frame them but I never got around to actually completing that task. But I didn't want to place them somewhere I would lose track of them. They needed visibility to command my attention for the future framing task.

One oil painting of St. Mary's of the Mountains in Virginia City, Nevada especially held my interest, for it was painted on the back of an old 8x10 National Geographic membership certificate dated 1922. It had been part of memorabilia I inherited from my mother, who had possibly won it as a prize at one of the many events she used to attend.

In early years the National Geographic sent a thick tag board membership certificate out to their members, "suitable for framing." I couldn't decipher the artist's signature on the painting, but the certificate was made out in the name of a S.C. Dinsmore of Reno, Nevada.

That small exquisitely colored painting of St. Mary's Catholic Church sat alone amongst a plethora of the many gray-green hues of sage brush in Virginia City, Nev. It looked to occupy the same location as present, albeit additional structures are now around it. Who was this artist? Was S.C. Dinsmore female or male? Was s(he) a local painter? A Latimer Art Club member?

My first step was to search on Google for S.C. Dinsmore and I found him noteworthy as Nevada's first Food and Drug Director, although that was not the official office name at the time. A 1910 publication identified him as Sanford C. Dinsmore, and a chemist in charge of food control at the University of Nevada Agricultural Experiment Station and probably not the painter.

Next, I keyed in the [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com) website to look for a 1910 Reno, NV census listing for

Sanford Dinsmore. I had no birth date or other pertinent facts to insert in the search engine but bingo, a Sanford C. Dinsmore popped up in the census index. He had a birthdate "about 1879" (age 31), was a chemist at the university, and lived in Reno Ward 5 on University Tichnal Avenue with his wife Dorothy, also 31. The couple had been married 3 years but had no children.

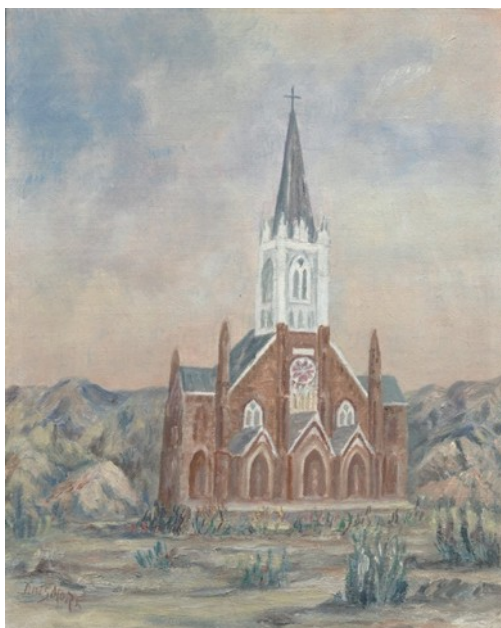
University Tichnal Avenue Street looked highly suspicious as a misnomer for University Terrace, to me. As the indexing actual census documents were manually transcribed, and after viewing the actual document, I could easily see why the transcribing error had been made. The 1910 census taker had very poor penmanship.

I also discovered 1920, 1930, 1940 census information, as well as a Maine Marriage record between Sanford C. Dinmore and Dorothy B. Martin, and a WWII Draft Registration for Sanford Crosby Dinsmore on that website. In addition, I found numerous years of Reno City

Directory listings for "Dinsmore, Sanford C. (Dorothy M.) Commissioner, Food and Drugs, University of Nevada, 208 University Terrace." My documentation proved who the National Geographic member was, but not the artist of the painting.

Looking under Dorothy Dinsmore's name, I discovered an 1880 Foxcroft, Maine census listing for a Dora B. Martin, age 3, and a 1900 Foxcroft census listing Dorothy Martin aged 23, who lived with her family and worked in a local dry goods store. To complete this early history, the marriage certificate was dated 7 Aug., 1906 taking place in Foxcroft. Finally, I found a 7 Dec. 1963 California death index listing for Dorothy Dinsmore in Alameda County, stating that she had been born 27 Dec. 1876.

There is a bonus feature to [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com). A section "find others who are searching \_\_\_" led me to insert the name of "Sanford Dinsmore" to see if other individuals were compiling information on the



Dinsmore line. I found that his genealogy had been researched back to 1620. But from the overabundance of Dinsmore facts listed, I only gleaned that Dorothy's maiden name was "Bolton." Unfortunately, I found no one searching the Bolton family line.

I now had a skeleton outline for Dorothy. I was sure that she was my artist, but I needed facts between 1876 and 1963 to more fully flesh out her story. Who was she? What was she like? My small painting showed that she had artistic talent. Was she a part of early Reno's art community? Was she active in suffrage? Could I find a photograph of her? Could I find enough information on her to be able to write a biography of her to be placed on our [Nevadawomen.org](http://Nevadawomen.org) website? Where was my research going to take me?

My next step was to go to the website of [newspaperarchive.com](http://newspaperarchive.com) and look for listings of Dinsmore in Reno, Nev. It wasn't common for women to be referred to by their first names in publications until the late 1950s, so I would be more apt to find her under Mrs. S.C. Dinsmore or Mrs. Sanford Dinsmore in newspaper articles. I was a bit dubious about what information I could find though, because usually, the only public information found on a woman's life through that time period would be a marriage article, and then if the woman was socially active, what clubs she was a member of, what she wore to social events, and what she served (or ate) at those events. Finally, if she was lucky, her obituary would list her by her first name, rather than 'Mrs. Husband's Wife.'

One of the first nuggets that I discovered was that Dorothy had been a member of the oldest and most prestigious painting club in the state of Nevada, called the Latimer Art Club. That group was started in 1921, a year earlier than the National Geographic membership card date. When Dorothy actually painted the picture remains unknown, and perhaps I will never know for sure. But there sure weren't many structures around it at the time she painted it. A decision had to be made. Should I spend time dating the painting? Although an attractive idea, my focus was to find more out about Dorothy and that had to take priority.

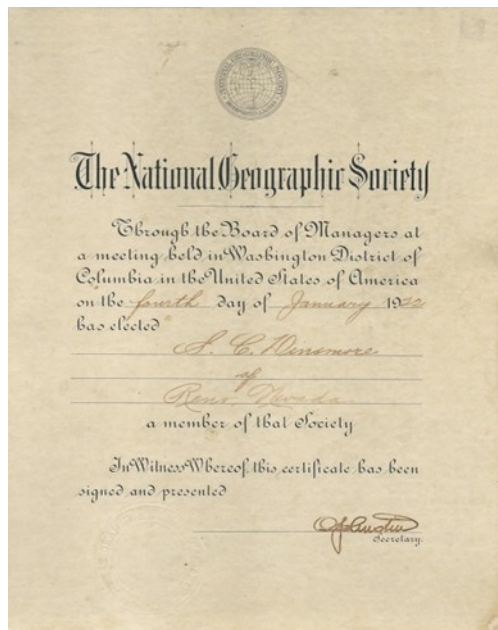
Many view historical research as a difficult and mysterious pursuit. And in the past, that viewpoint was often true. Before many common informational sources such as church, county, state, international indexes and like related books became digitized, a researcher hoped that pertinent records had been microfilmed by the Mormon Church, National Archives, or some other state or local entity that could be accessed by interlibrary loan through a local library. Out of town visits to churches or county clerk's offices, would also have to be considered, where one might wade through old records for hours on end, or wander through weed strewn cemeteries ferreting out relevant information from tombstones. Not only was this process slow, but could prove to be expensive, even though such a trip might prove to pan out to be surprisingly fun and fruitful.

Today though, thanks to the internet and a home computer, much worldwide information can be found at the touch of a keystroke. If one is drawn to various types of puzzle entertainments, the hunt for information can be challenging, exhilarating, and like crossword or jigsaw puzzles, become a compulsive pastime. And there are plenty of "how to" books and

magazines to make the hobby of research easier than it ever has been.

During my initial series of searches, I identified a cast of characters who would become important in writing Dorothy Martin Dinsmore's biography. Besides Dorothy and Professor Sanford Dinsmore, the names of Professor (Dr.) James E. Church, Charles F. Cutts and the Nevada Art Gallery, as well as the Gallery Gardens also kept cropping up. I also uncovered some interesting little known facts about Nevada State Prison, the State Capitol building, and the earliest history of the Nevada Museum of Art.

Part 2 will be in the next 2017 *NWHP News*.



## Featured Historic Nevada Woman:

ELLEN CLIFFORD NAY (1879-1947)

### *At a glance:*

**Born:** August 29, 1879, Tybo, Nevada

**Died:** April 2, 1947, Fallon, Nevada

**Maiden Name:** Ellen Clifford

**Race/Nationality/ethnic background:**  
Caucasian

**Married:** Joseph Brigham Nay  
December 7, 1899, Belmont, Nevada

**Children:** Two daughters;  
Emma Nevada and Olephia

**Primary city and county of residence and work:** Tybo, Stone Cabin Valley, Belmont, and Tonopah all in Nye County, Nevada. Goldfield in Esmeralda County, Nevada.

**Major Fields of Work:**  
Prospector, road house owner

**Other role identities:** Mother, wife, blacksmith



Courtesy Lottie Nay Collection, Central Nevada Historical Society

Mount Ellen stands east of Tonopah, as does the mining district of Ellen and the ghost town of Ellendale, though no modern explorer is likely to find a trace of them. Ellendale is the ghostliest of ghost towns, but once Ellen Clifford Nay's name studded the landscape. The fourth of eleven children, she was a petite sprite, barely five feet tall, born in the mining camp of Tybo. She followed her father and brothers everywhere and did what they did, including heavy work. From an early age, she dreamed of making a rich gold strike.

As a young woman, she had new concerns – her marriage to a Mormon cowboy, Joe Nay, and the birth of her two daughters, but her dream never died. The spring of 1909 found them running a road house to sell necessities to travelers – and prospect on the side at Salsbury Wash, about thirty miles east of Tonopah. Her dream came true on the day when she came running to Joe with a rock wrapped in her apron. “I never saw so much gold on a single piece of rock before,” she later said. Boomers rushed to the new discovery, town lots in Ellendale sold for fancy prices, and mining commenced, only to evaporate in a mere two months. The site had contained only ore with surface concentrations of gold.

Newly prosperous, Ellie and Joe retired to southern California and quickly learned that retirement was not for them. Thanks to Ellendale, they would now be able to buy the Barley Creek Cattle Ranch, a remote and beautiful spread in the shadow of the Monitor Mountains. Although returns from occasional mining leases were modest, Ellen kept her faith in Ellendale. Every year her family gathered there for about a week to do the annual

assessment work legally required to retain ownership of the site – and prospect a little. Ellen's daughter Olephia panned enough gold to buy a major luxury, her first washing machine.

After Joe died in 1939, Ellen retired to Tonopah and sold the ranch. Nonetheless, when the family went for a drive, the car had to immediately halt when Ellen thought she saw a sugar loaf mountain, one of the distinctive features of Ellendale. She died in 1947 of pulmonary congestion. Without Ellen's hopes to keep it alive, her family at last sold Ellendale and it reverted to nature.

**Researched and written by Sally Zanjani.  
Posted to the Web site April 2016.**

### Sources of Information:

- ◆ For more on Ellen Nay, see Sally Zanjani's *A Mine of Her Own: Women Prospectors in the American West, 1850-1950*.
- ◆ Zanjani, Sally. *A Mine of Her Own: Women Prospectors in the American West, 1850-1950*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997.

# Kate Potwin, Railroad Woman

## May 29, 1855 to January 22, 1949

Reno Evening Gazette January 25, 1949.

### SENIOR RAILROAD WOMAN DIES AT OAKLAND HOME

OAKLAND, Calif., January 25. (AP)

Private funeral services were held yesterday for the little lady telegraph operator of Humboldt House, Nev., in the early 1880's.

Miss Kate Potwin, 93, died Saturday at an Oakland rest home. Southern Pacific hailed her as "senior railroad woman" of its entire system when she retired, in 1924, after 42 years' service.

At Humboldt House, she worked as a night operator, alone, with an occasional Indian peering curiously through the window and coyotes howling on the horizon. Neither ever harmed her.

She was a conductor once, too—for a day. A train was ready to leave Martinez, Calif., early in her railroading career, and the conductor failed to arrive. She took the tickets and the passengers' jests with equal calm.

Her final service before retiring was as top box of Oakland's 16th Street station, with a staff of 35 persons under her direction.

Contributed by Churchill County Museum



"Kate Potwin, 1855 -1949"  
Pacheco Cemetery & Crematory  
Pacheco CA.  
Record created by: Megan 02/19/2006  
Photo added by: Eileen 06/04/2011

[www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com) searched by  
Mona Reno

In our next 2017 *NWHP News* we will have Kate's interview from the 1916 *Oakland Tribune* with more photos.

### *NWHP-Membership Report* November 14, 2016

NWHP currently has 91 current members. We have 7 organizations in good standing.

**New Members:** Individual—\$30: Lynn Atchenson

**Renewing Members:** Individual—\$30

Doris R. Drummond

Nancy Hudson and Maggie Thomsen for 2017

**Donations:** Lynn Atchenson—\$30

Christianne Hamel— Membership

### *NWHP -Financial Report* November 14, 2016

The November 14, 2016 Year to Date financial report shows a bank and PayPal balance totaling \$30, 022.64 and a net income <loss> of <\$6,723.11>. With fixed assets totaling \$2,939.27 (for office furniture and equipment) the total assets of the NWHP is \$32, 961.91

Jon Hamel—Treasurer

### *Honorary Advisory Committee*

This photo was taken at the Plumas Bank in Reno.

See page 6 for the Advisory Committee report by Patti Bernard.



**Front:** Bonnie Drinkwater, Barbara McLaury, Jean Carbon, Mona Reno, Annie Zucker. **Back:** Mary Lee Fulkerson, Patti Bernard, Sheryln Hayes-Zorn, Bruce Lightfoot

Be sure your browser is set at [www.nevadawomen.org](http://www.nevadawomen.org) for the new NWHP website. The website is Live! and for a while the unr.edu address will redirect you to the new website.

## *Jean Ford Research Center Committee Meeting*

September 21, 2016



**L to R top:** Kathy Noneman, Christianne Hamel, Jon Hamel, Jacki Falkenroth. **L –R bottom:** Mona Reno, Charlene Sprague, Marcia Cuccaro.

The JFRCC staff is in the process of visiting State and local libraries and Historical Societies to go through their vertical files for names of women in Nevada. Our new NWHP Website, [www.nevadawomen.org](http://www.nevadawomen.org), will become a clearinghouse for researchers on women in Nevada.

Photo by Patti Bernard  
Taken at the Nevada State Library & Archives in Carson City

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## *NWHP upcoming programs for 2017*

The new year of 2017 will be started off with a bang! A fascinating program on the history of MGM's (now the Grand Sierra Resort) world famous floorshow, "**Hello Hollywood, Hello**" will be held in late January. The show ran from 1978 to 1989 and still holds the world's record for having the largest stage set.

The program will feature some of the original dancers providing plenty of humorous anecdotes and memories from their onstage days and you will see many the costumes they wore. Be sure to save the date of **Saturday, January 28, 2017** for this event. More information will be forthcoming.

Some of the other programs planned throughout the year will feature Women and the Military at the Stead Air Force Base, a Bowers Mansion history and picnic, Governor's Mansion Pink Tea, Nevada's First Ladies videos, Sierra Wildflower Hike, and a Research and Oral History class.

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## *Honorary NWHP Advisory Committee*

On October 18<sup>th</sup>, a new Honorary NWHP Advisory Committee met at the Plumas Bank on Meadowood Drive. The purpose this group harkens back to the genesis of NWHP when Jean Ford formed the original committee. The original Advisory Committee's purpose for its members to provide knowledge and expertise in their specific fields in the support of various facets of the NWHP organization. It's not known exactly when that Advisory Committee was disbanded, but in interviewing the founding members of NWHP last January, the importance of having an Advisory Committee was restated.

Our new Advisory Committee will meet twice a year and their input will be a welcome addition to further the effectiveness of our organization's mission of collecting and disseminating information on contributions of all Nevada women.

Over a luncheon of soup and salad, the members heard presentations by NWHP Chair, Patti Bernard, Jean Carbon and Mona Reno. They were given an introduction to the [www.nevadawomen.org](http://www.nevadawomen.org) website, which showcases all the many methods of NWHP public outreach. A discussion was held afterward brainstorming a number of suggestions that could be considered in the operation of the organization.

Members of this committee are Jennifer Budge, Jean Carbon, Bonnie Drinkwater, Barbara Finley, Mary Lee Fulkerson, Dan Flowers, Bruce Lightfoot, Barbara McLaury, Mona Reno, Sheryln Hayes-Zorn and Annie Zucker.

**By Patti Bernard**

## NEVADA WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT

## Membership Form

(Membership is for January thru December of each year)

Thank you for your ongoing support of the Nevada Women's History Project. Our new year is here and it is time to renew your membership. You are vital to maintaining our educational website of women's biographies and interviews, having special events and to offset the operational costs of the NWHP.

Please notice that we have added a lifetime membership category, Best Friend Forever. Membership comes with an event discount and a newsletter. All levels of membership may be tax deductible since NWHP is an educational non-profit.

## Membership Levels

Individual	\$30.00	_____
Family of Two	\$55.00	_____
Friend	\$100.00	_____
Good Friend	\$250.00	_____
Best Friend	\$500.00	_____
Best Friend Forever	\$1,000.00	_____
Organization	\$50.00	_____
Corporate Sponsor	\$250.00	_____

I also enclose an additional \_\_\_\_\_ donation for the NWHP.

\_\_\_\_I prefer the **digital copy** of the newsletter.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ CELL PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Check No: \_\_\_\_\_

Send this membership form to:  
Nevada Women's History Project  
770 Smithridge Drive, Suite 300, Reno, NV 89502

*Thank you for your Membership*



2016 - 2018

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# NWHP News

NEVADA WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT

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### *“Read & Succeed Program”*

At every NWHP event, we will collect books donated by members, families and friends.

The books will be given to Lisa-Marie Lightfoot, a NWHP Member and the WCSD Administrator of Volunteer Services.

Thank you!



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Nevada Women’s History Project would like to wish everyone a wonderful Holiday Season and a prosperous New Year!