

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

Anna Mariska Shultz Fitch
First Known Nevada Female Author - 1840-1904

By Patti Bernard

When one thinks of most women in the mid to late 19th century, mental pictures of a woman in a long dress whose interests center predominately around home and family generally come to mind. But remember that this was an era of active women's suffrage, and women began entering traditionally male dominated fields. Some of those women were more active than others and Anna Shultz Fitch would fit that category.

The Hawaii *Honolulu Advertiser* in her obituary described the death of Anna as, "removes a woman who had achieved fame in the West as an author and one who figured no less prominently in the early days of Nevada and California than did Col. Fitch, her husband." The April 16, 1904, edition of the *Los Angeles Times* said that "... she was an authoress of note and a woman who numbered many brilliant characters among her personal acquaintances."

How did she acquire such literary stature? Anna's most important influence was her introduction to Thomas Fitch. Fitch was a wanderer searching for his life's goal; that of a U.S. Senator or Territorial Governor, a pinnacle of political success, which he never seemed to find. He was fortunate in his searching that he met a young San Francisco author by the name Anna Mariska Shultz and he married her there on January 1, 1853.

It was at this point her geographical world expanded far beyond her wildest imagination. She moved with Tom to all the western territories (including Hawaii) and numerous states, well over twenty times, as he sought that elusive U.S. Senator position or governorship in a territory somewhere. Even though he attained the high rank of a U.S. Congressman from Nevada, that wasn't enough. An orator with a keen mind, he seemed to have no equal and he became known far and wide as the "Silver Tongued Fitch." However, by the prestige Anna achieved in the literary field, it seems to prove that he met his match intellectually. And Anna achieved her success as she relentless moved from one place to another, for Tom felt it was necessary to purchase a home and establish residency in every move, to show that he was serious about being a permanent resident. Setting up one household or even several could be considered average for a married couple. Setting up that number of households and still making time for writing, as well as anti-suffrage activities, and other social involvements would be considered superhuman.

Anna was born in Shoreham, Vermont in 1840. It is not known when she moved to San Francisco. Almost immediately after her 1853 marriage, her extensive traveling began. Taken from the February 26, 1881, *Reno Evening Gazette*: "At the Metropolitan hotel are Mr. and Mrs. Fitch, who have probably lived in more of the United States than any of its known citizens; that is to say, they have lived in professional and social importance in more of the Territories than any couple I know."

Coming to Nevada in 1863 and living in both Virginia City and Washoe City, Tom, a newspaper owner, and editor, also was admitted to the Nevada Bar in 1864. He became Washoe



Anna Mariska Shultz Fitch

Photo courtesy the *Honolulu Advertiser*

Continued on page 6

Membership and Donations - April-May 2021

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Thank You All!
You are Critical to the Success of the Nevada Women's History Project!

Bowers Chautauqua a Great Success



Front Row: Mina Stafford, Sue Davis, Barbara Fleischer, Alicia Wright, Kathy Noneman, Mona Reno

Middle Row: Marcia Cuccaro, Katie Drinkwater, Bonnie Drinkwater, Heidi Englund, Michelle Gardner, Janice Hoke

Top Row: Catherine Cuccaro, Joyce Hinton, Chelsea White, Patti Bernard,

The above 17 members and friends of the Nevada Women's History Project presented a Chautauqua written by Patti Bernard for the "Programs on the Porch" at Bowers Mansion on May 21, 2021. These ladies deserve much credit for participating in this event when the weather was threatening. We did complete the presentation before the rain and snow came; but only by a few minutes! There were nearly 30 audience members! We give them much credit also for attending.

The presentation was the story of the Reno Women's Civic Club on the day they decided to purchase Bowers Mansion so it would not become a casino. See the March 2021 *NWHP News* for a longer story about this group.

Thank you to the Bowers Mansion Regional Park for inviting us to present this Chautauqua celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the purchase of Bowers Mansion for Washoe County.

"Quotes on Solitude" from the Phi Kappa Phi Forum Spring 2021

This compilation offered 15 quotes on solitude for helping people cope with COVID isolation.

Suffragist, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 1892.

Author, Virginia Woolf, 1928.



"We come into the world alone, unlike all who have gone before us; we leave it alone under circumstances peculiar to ourselves. No mortal ever has been, no mortal ever will be like the soul just launched on the sea of life."
<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5315/>



Why weren't there more accomplished female writers?
"Because too few of them had a room of their own to think - and a lock to keep intrusions away."
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Room_of_One's_Own

Mark Your Calendars

Please join the NWHP for programs this year. For information on these programs contact Sue at shdavis4364@att.net or Patti at awtuv1@gmail.com, Watch for emailed event flyers with registration information and Mail Chimp monthly news.

Jean Ford Hike: Verdi's Crystal Peak Park

Date: Saturday, **June 26**

Time: 10:00 - 11:30 a.m.

Meet in the Crystal Peak Parking Lot

-The Park can be reached either by 551 Crystal Peak Road or by West 3rd Street in Verdi.

The Verdi Crystal Peak Park is one of the later parks added to the Washoe County Parks and Open Space system. Join us for this 0.6 mile guided trail hike that explores the area used by the Verdi Lumber Company from the 1860s through the 1920s. In 1938 this area was home to the Verdi Glen Resort, of which remains can be seen on the trail. It's a wonderful easy walk through a meadow, meanders along a pond and the Truckee River, and passes the remains of several interesting structures left from those businesses. In addition to the flora and fauna we will see, you will learn a bit of history. In addition to the Verdi Lumber Company and the Verdi Glen Resort, you will also learn about Florence Marsh, who played an important part in the 1993 acquisition of the land by Washoe County.

July 4 to Battle Mountain is not happening.

NWHP Guest Speaker and Annual Luncheon

Date: Saturday, **July 31**

Time: 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Place: Napa Sonoma Restaurant
At Plumbgate, 550 W. Plumb Lane

Cost: \$30.00 members; \$35.00 non-members

Join us for our annual luncheon meeting. Our keynote speaker will be UNR Professor Wendy Calvin, who is a planetary scientist specializing in optical and infrared spectroscopy of minerals and ices, at UNR's Desert Research Institute. She will present an interesting talk on how, as a woman, she chose her field, which is mostly a male dominated area of science. She will talk about opportunities available for young women entering her field and related science areas. She will discuss her current projects, one of which deals with the planet Mars!

Bring A Friend, Membership Luncheon

Date: Saturday, **August 21**

Time: 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Place: Patti Bernard's home,
995 Pineridge Lane.

This luncheon is our way of thanking our loyal members who supported us this past COVID year as well as welcoming folks that are interested in learning about, and joining our organization. Mostly, we just plan to have a relaxing get-together over salads and sandwiches. And, we hope you will bring a friend or two with you.

2nd Annual NWHP Garage Sale

Date: Saturday, **September 18**

Time: 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Place: Patti Bernard's home,
995 Pineridge Lane.

Please start thinking about what you might donate; then come and find more treasures.

Nevada Day Parade

Date: Saturday, **October 30**

NWHP will have a float in the Nevada Day Parade, if the parade is held this year. We will be riding in a flatbed. We will not be presenting the Living Flag as earlier planned. COVID brought an end to that idea for quite some time.

NWHP - Membership Report

May 2021

As of May 4, 2021, NWHP currently has 100 members in good standing. We have one new member, Kathleen Long, 6 organizational, 12 honorary, and 4 life members.

Joy Orlich, Membership

NWHP - Treasurer's Report

May 2021

The Year-to-Date, as of May 4, 2021, financial report shows a bank and Pay-Pal balance of \$77,674.53, \$426.72 in fixed assets, \$0.00 liability and a net YTD income of \$-605.03. The total equity plus liability of the NWHP is \$78,101.25.

Michelle Gardner, Treasurer

Featured Historic Nevada Woman:

DORIS BARBARA “DODIE” POST GANN

First Nevada Olympian, champion skier, led an adventurous life.

At a glance:

Born: September 10, 1922, Topeka, Kansas

Died: December 24, 2012, Friday Harbor, Wash.

Maiden Name: Post

Married: Ernest K. Gann, 1966

Children: none

Race/Nationality/ethnic background: Caucasian

Primary city and county of residence and work:

Reno, Washoe County, Nev.; Squaw Valley, Calif.; Sun Valley, Idaho; Pebble Beach, Calif.; Friday Harbor, Wash.

Major Fields of Work: U.S. Olympic Skier and Team Captain, Women’s U.S. Olympic Ski Team Manager, International Ski Federation (World Ski Cup) Competitor and Team Captain, UNR Nevada Wolf Pack Hall of Fame 1973, 1984 Air Race Classic winning team, numerous awards and recognitions

Other Role Identities: Ski instructor, aviator, world traveler, conservationist



Photo Credit: Find-A-Grave.com

When Dodie Post was selected for the women’s U.S. Olympic ski team in the spring of 1947, she became the first Nevadan ever to be named to an Olympic Team. She captained the women’s 1948 U.S. Olympic Ski Team, captained and competed in the 1950 International Ski Federation’s (FIS) Alpine Ski World Cup (an international ski competition second only to the Olympics), competed in the 1952 Winter Olympic Games, and managed the 1956 women’s U.S. Olympic Ski Team. Although she neither competed nor managed in the 1960 winter Olympic games, the event took place at her old ski stomping grounds of the Squaw Valley ski resort just west of Reno in California.

Dodie became the first woman elected to the University of Nevada’s inaugural Athletic Hall of Fame in 1973, and in 2001, she was inducted into the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame.

Born September 10, 1922, in Topeka, Kansas, to Theodore and Dorothy Belyea Post, Dodie was the first of three daughters. (Her sisters, Lois and Phyllis, were both born in Reno.) Dodie’s father was a music professor at the University of Nevada and her mother taught music at home. From kindergarten on up, Dodie attended Reno schools and was active in school sports and clubs. Having both parents with music backgrounds, it was only natural for Dodie to be proficient in more than one instrument. She

played both piano and violin and performed in many community events with her parents. Dodie was editor of the Billingshurst Junior High Yearbook, and she was on the volleyball team as well as the Reno High School ski team of which she was secretary-treasurer in 1939.

By 1940, she was the top junior in the Far West Ski Association, one of America’s largest ski associations that today represents more than 50,000 skiers and snowboarders in the 12 western states. She trained in Sun Valley, Idaho during the winters of 1941, 1942 and 1947, and won the Silver Belt (Sugar Bowl ski resort’s signature ski series) and the Silver Dollar Derby at Mt. Rose ski resort. In a Dec. 5, 1945 *Reno Evening Gazette* article, former 1936 Olympic team captain Elizabeth Woolsey described Dodie as “the nation’s most graceful woman skier.” Woolsey added further, “Otto Lang, former head of Sun Valley ski school and author of many books on ski techniques, selected Dodie as one of four of the nation’s top-ranking women skiers to appear in an RKO ski newsreel filmed at Alta, Utah.”

In January 1947, Dodie was “crowned all around women’s champion” at the 6th annual Western Interstate Ski Meet in Sun Valley, Idaho and in March 1947, she became the first Nevadan to be named to a U.S. Olympic team. The Reno community rallied with fundraising events to help sponsor her Olympic quest.

In a Jan. 16, 1948 *Reno Evening Gazette* article, Woolsey, managing editor of *Ski Illustrated* and former national downhill and slalom champion, wrote, “Dodie Post, from Reno, Nev., is the most finished

stylist among the current American girl racers. She was undefeated last year until the nationals at Ogden, where she injured an ankle and had to retire for the rest of the season. She is a deceptive skier in that her technique is so smooth and effortless..." Woolsey went on to state, "By temperament, Dodie is rather placid and easy going. Until last winter she had never extended herself in races and her many victories had surprised those who had overlooked her style. When an objective so desirable as a trip to Europe came into view, Dodie simply turned on the steam and showed them what she could do."

On a training run in St. Moritz, Switzerland, Dodie broke her ankle and was unable to compete in the 1948 Olympic Games, but she retained her team captain title, and her teammate, Gretchen Fraser, went on to win Olympic gold.

In 1950, Dodie captained the American women's team at the International Ski Federation's (FIS) Alpine Ski World Cup in Aspen, Colorado, and in 1952, she competed in the Winter Olympics in Oslo, Norway. She did not medal but her teammate Andrea Mead-Lawrence won gold in the Women's Slalom competition.

During the 1940s and early 1950s, Dodie taught skiing at many ski resorts, including Mt. Rose (Nevada), Squaw Valley (California), Sun Valley (Idaho), Jackson Hole (Wyoming), and two seasons teaching the top class at the Emile Allais ski school at Portillo, Chile. She said that her skiing had afforded her greatest thrill, which was making the 1948 Olympic ski team. "A close second was my selection for the 1950 FIS team."

Dodie managed the Ladies Olympic Training Camp at Sun Valley, Idaho in 1955 and 1956 and received an appointment to the U.S. Olympic Team selection committee. 1956 saw Dodie managing the U.S. Women's Team at the Winter Olympics in Cortina, Italy, where another Reno Olympic hopeful, Katy Rodolph, competed.

In a December 9, 1953, *The San Francisco Examiner* article, Dodie gave the following ski tips to novices: "Skiing takes time; it takes practice. Actually, I think it's easy to learn to ski, but you can't do it in a day." In addition, she recommended, "Don't spend a lot of money on equipment. Rent it first; then if you like skiing, you can buy it later. Take some lessons at the ski school – you'll learn faster, and have more fun. Don't try to ski when you're tired. Take it easy the first day. The main point is to use your head."

In spring 1956, Dodie retired from the Squaw Valley ski school staff and became the private secretary to her future husband, novelist/aviator/sailor Ernest K. Gann. She originally met him while ski instructing. Dodie was Ernie's secretary/Girl Friday for a decade before the couple eventually married in summer 1966. Together they sailed the world on Gann's sailing ship, *Albatros*, and

flew together in their Cessna 310, *The Noon Balloon* (a reference to their typical noon departure time).

After marrying in 1966, Ernie and Dodie bought an 800-acre cattle ranch on San Juan Island, Washington, which remained their home base for the duration of their lives.

Taught to fly by her aviator husband, Dodie became a licensed pilot. Ernie bought Dodie a 1958 Cessna 172, and in addition to casual flying around the San Juan Islands, Dodie took up air racing. Dodie and her frequent co-pilot, Phyllis Baer, raced their first Air Race Classic together in 1979. Over the years, they raced mostly together and in 1984, Dodie and Phyllis took first place in the race. The Air Race Classic is a four-day, 2,400-mile cross-country air race, consisting of teams of at least two women pilots. Pilots range from 17 to 90 years of age and racers come from a diverse range of professions.

In 1990, a year before Ernie's passing, the Ganns donated 780 acres of their Red Mill Farm to the San Juan Preservation Trust which they'd helped establish. A decade earlier, in 1980, they donated 38 acres of eagle habitat to the Trust. In an August 14, 1990 article in the *The Longview Daily News*, Dodie states, "We're only the stewards of the land. We want to pass it on unscathed and save the San Juan valley for generations to come."

Dodie was active with the local flying community and hosted the San Juan Pilots Association picnic every year at her hangar. She was a long-time board member, advocate and volunteer with the San Juan Historical Society and Museum, and as a lifelong animal lover, she helped found the Animal Protection Society of Friday Harbor. Dodie is remembered annually at San Juan's Dodie Gann Memorial Dog Walk.

Dodie gave up skiing late in life but remained a licensed pilot until the time of her death. She passed away peacefully at the age of 90 at her Red Hill Farm home on December 24, 2012.

Researched by Patti Bernard and written by Catherine Cuccaro.

Posted on website March 22, 2021

Sources of information may be found at:

<https://www.nevadawomen.org/research-center/biographies-alphabetical/doris-barbara-dodie-post-gann/>

NWHP has a new email address.

NevWHP@gmail.com

Continued from page 1: Anna Fitch

County Attorney, practiced law and ran the *Virginia Daily Union*. Anna associated with the likes of Mark Twain, Dan De Quille, and R.M. Daggett and Joseph T. Goodwin because of his business relationships. She was at ease in those social settings and, although she was known in the San Francisco area for her writings before marriage, she undoubtedly learned some writing techniques from those men to gain the literary reputation she held nationwide. She even collaborated with some of them in a newspaper series.

Anna became active in the Nevada anti-suffrage movement and wrote a lengthy "*Open Letter to Hon. Curtis J. Hillyer*" that was published in the *Territorial Enterprise* on April 25, 1869. Her use of the English language against Assemblyman Hillyer's legislation supporting a women's right to vote was masterful. Her powerful argument didn't reverse his support of suffrage and the amendment to the Nevada Constitution he introduced requesting that the word "male" be struck from Article II, the Suffrage clause, passed. Suffragists were jubilant and had high expectations for successful passage in the 1871 Legislature, when it would be voted on a second time. In that session Anna's anti-suffrage arguments held sway, as the bill failed to pass. That 1869 session was the earliest formal attempt at women's suffrage in Nevada. It wasn't until 1911 that successful attempts were made again, and Nevada women finally gained suffrage in 1914.

As an author, Anna is notable for an exceptional accomplishment. In 1870 she published her first of three books, *Bound Down: Or Life and its Possibilities*. With that early date, she is credited with being the first woman to have a book published in Nevada or, as far as my research can find, any of the Western territories or states. (Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins' *Life Among the Piutes: Their Wrongs and Claims* was published in 1883.) Anna also, published many of her numerous poems. She was held in high stature in the literary world.

Anna continued writing and published two more books. In 1882 *The Loves of Paul Fenley* went to print and 1891 she co-wrote with husband Tom, *Better Days: or, A Millionaire of Tomorrow*. This book went into four printing editions.

With all the many moves, Anna's health became fragile, and ailing with Bright's Disease, now called nephritis, the couple moved to Hawaii in 1891. They returned to Los Angeles in 1903 and Anna died three months later. Both she and Tom are buried in Hayward, California.

We Can Do It! *Nevada Women* *Working on the Railroad*

Patti Bernard and Mona Reno gave a ZOOM presentation for the Nevada State Railroad Museum on May 6, 2021. Our research was on three women who worked for the Sierra Pacific at different times.

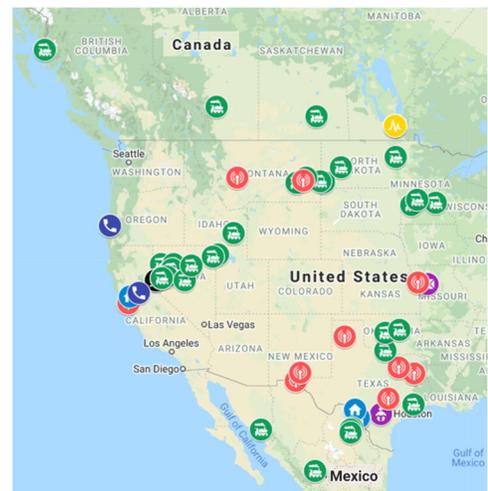
Kate Potwin, telegraph operator, ticket agent, station agent

Mattie Collins Kuhn, telegraph operator

Mary Jones, round house clerk

Kate Potwin was primarily a California person, but her beginnings were in Humboldt, Nevada as a night telegraph operator. She always remembered the coyotes, the Indians and the dark emptiness of her work here. She quickly went back to California and eventually became the station agent for the SPs busiest station, the 16th street station in Oakland, Calif. She had a 42 year career with the railroad, between 1883 and 1925.

Mattie Collins Kuhn was always a telegraph operator, but she worked for several railroads, the Western Union, and for "the Postal." She eventually was hired by the Sierra Pacific and settled in Sparks, Nev. Her career is so complicated we made a map of all the places she worked between 1902 and 1942.



Mary Jones was employed by the Sierra Pacific in Sparks, Nev. and may have worked in Imlay temporarily. She was not a career employee. Her work with the railroad was as a "RR Laborer" and round house clerk. We documented her work between 1919 and 1920.

NEVADA WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT

Membership Form

Membership is for January thru December of each year.

Persons joining after August 15 will be members for that year and the next full year.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the Nevada Women's History Project. 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. All membership comes with an event discount and a newsletter. All levels of membership may be tax deductible since NWHP is an educational non-profit.

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NWHP News Contacts

NWHP — State Office

770 Smithridge Dr., Suite 300,
Reno, NV 89502-0708

Tel: 775-786-2335 - Fax: 775-786-8152

E-mail: NewWHP@gmail.com

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NEVADA WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT

770 Smithridge Dr., Suite 300 • Reno, NV 89502
 (775) 786-2335 • FAX (775) 786-8152
 www.nevadawomen.org
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 E-mail NWHP@pyramid.net

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Best States for Women's Rights

Overall Rank (1 = Best) ↓	State	Total Score ↓	'Workplace Environment' Rank ↓	'Education & Health' Rank ↓	'Political Empowerment' Rank ↓
1	Hawaii	75.13	4	1	12
2	Maine	71.53	2	21	2
3	Nevada	70.93	1	44	1
4	New Mexico	68.13	5	8	14
5	Arizona	67.87	8	15	5
6	Massachusetts	65.99	25	9	6
7	New York	65.86	15	14	7
8	Vermont	65.26	7	6	31
9	Minnesota	65.08	9	23	8
10	California	65.07	3	30	10
11	West Virginia	64.60	29	1	24
12	Michigan	63.98	21	26	4
13	Iowa	63.70	33	10	9
14	Oregon	62.58	6	25	16
15	Delaware	62.49	12	11	19

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Adam McCann, Financial Writer. WalletHub. August 2020.