



CARSON CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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April 2024 Newsletter

Carson City Historical Society presents a "Victorian Secrets With Tea" Saturday, April 27, 2024

We have a special event coming up, a tea called "Victorian Secrets With Tea" on Saturday, April 27, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. The program includes a talk by Rebecca Van Sickle on Victorian dress, "What They Wore: An Intimate Look at Victorian Dress." She will provide a dress-up demonstration and lecture. After the talk and tea, there will be a tour of the historic Foreman-Roberts House.



Rebecca Van Sickle is a local living historian and budding costuming enthusiast. From a young age, she has been fascinated with Victorian dress and was introduced to 1860s' fashion while her parents were re-enactors in the early '90s. Rebecca is a native Nevadan and is proud to share her love of history with Carson City and the surrounding communities.

For reservations, call 775-315-9111. The cost of the event is \$40.00 for general admission and \$35.00 for Historical Society members. Tickets can be purchased online at cchistorical.org or by mailed-in check sent to CCHS, PO Box 1864, Carson City, NV 89702-1864.

We are only taking 32 reservations, so if you plan on coming, now is the time to make a reservation. Call Liz Cain (775) 775-315-9111 to make a reservation or if you have questions. Payment is due by April 17. Payments can also be made online at cchistorical.org

Other upcoming events:

Adam Michalski presents talk on "The Railroad and Carson City" Thursday, April 18, 2024

Adam Michalski, Curator of History, at the Nevada State Railroad Museum, will present a free talk called *The Railroad and Carson City* on



Thursday, April 18, at 6:30 p.m. in the Carriage House behind the Foreman-Roberts House. He will discuss the role of the railroad in the development of Carson City. This will include history about the Virginia & Truckee Railroad; why it was built;

the materials transported by rail to and from Carson City; the V&T's passenger trains; the Virginia & Truckee Shops; and other items. The event is free, reservations are not necessary, but seating is limited.

Adam Michalski has served as the Curator of History at the Nevada State Railroad Museum since August 2023. Prior to that, he served as the museum's Curator of Education for nine-and-a-half years. Adam has had a lifelong interest in railroading and wrote his master's thesis about the Chicago, Milwaukee, & St. Paul Railroad's electrification project in the 1910s, which converted its lines in Montana, Idaho, and Washington from steam to electric operations. Adam enjoys sharing Nevada's railroad history with visitors to the Nevada State Railroad Museum and the general public.

Saturday, May 4: CCHS will participate in the Carson City Downtown Business Association's Wine Walk, from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. For information about participating in the Wine Walk, go to downtowncarson.org/carson-city-wine-walk, where tickets are available one week before the event.

Saturday, May 11: Local authors and historians David and Gayle Woodruff present a Chautauqua on "**Snowshoe Thompson: Superhero of the Sierra**" from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the Carriage House during Mark Twain Days.

The Woodruffs assume the characters of "Snowshoe" Thompson and his wife Agnes in this 55-minute Chautauqua performance.

Thompson carried the mail across the deep Sierra Nevada snow for 20 winters. Packing 80 pounds of mail over the 180-mile round trip in just 5 days on his handcrafted skis, with nothing more than a jacket, dried meat, and matches. Thompson was a larger-than-life character, saving numerous lives, serving his community unwaveringly, and devoted his life to the betterment of all... a true Sierra Nevada Superhero.

This is a ticketed event (\$15 for CCHS members, and \$20 for non-members). Funds benefit CCHS. Tickets are available at breweryarts.org/event/20240511-mtd-chautauqua

Saturday, May 18: CCHS will be involved in the opening of the spring "Living History at Bowers Mansion," from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. What's the connection? Well, Annie Roberts, matriarch of the Roberts House family, was friends with Eilley Bowers in old Washoe City. They were neighbors and Annie would write letters for Eilley.



Monday, May 27 (Memorial Day): Opening of World War II Exhibit in the Carriage House. Gary Cain, proprietor of Westwall Militaria and former CCHS President, will present a talk at 4:00 p.m. on the equipment used by British paratroopers and on other WWII items that helped the US allies win the war. The lecture is focused on the bicycles used by British paratroopers.



Thursday, July 18: Gary Ballew will talk about Early Washoe City (where the Foreman-Roberts House was moved from).

Saturday, September 14: The Victorian Garden Tour is scheduled for September 14. The Carson City Historical Society and the Mark Twain Garden Club will be hosting a joint venture between the two organizations. The Mark Twain Garden Club currently maintains the flower garden in front of the Foreman-Roberts House.

Also in the works:

- An Ambrose film done in the 1920s. Lecture about the Ambrose family of old Empire.
- Karen Dustman on her new book.
- A Mystery dinner
- A visit to Washoe City Lodge, Cemetery, location of Foreman-Roberts House, and a barbeque.

What we have done recently

Thursday, January 18: David Bugli presented a lecture on "The Meder Family of Carson City." It focused on composer, musician, and all around "useful man," J.P. Meder, and his father, B.H. Meder. The younger Meder was the composer of "Hank Monk Schottische" and "Nevada State March." Other members of the family contributed to the daily life of Carson City starting in the mid-1860s.

Thursday, February 29: As part of Black History Month, Michael Smith presented a talk on African Americans and the Arts. Smith is

currently serving as a member of the Carson City Cultural Commission. He has a Master of Education degree from the University of Mississippi and is a retired high school principal after 33 years in the field of education. Smith is president and CEO of the Northern Nevada Cultural Foundation and vice chair of the Employee-Management Relations Board.

Saturday, March

23: Ben Merrell and Stan Cleaves, members of the Eagle Valley Muzzleloaders - an organization that conducts historic reenactments of the Mountain Men's struggle for survival during the 1800s - gave a presentation.



Saturday, April 6: CCHS participated in its first Downtown Business Association **Wine Walk**. CCHS recently joined the DBA. The Wine Walk presented an opportunity to bring to the public's attention our exhibits and activities. The DBA recently expanded the district for the monthly Wine Walks northward so that it now includes the Foreman-Roberts House and its neighbors, the Midtown Market and the Tap Shack.

"This and That":

- The Mark Twain Garden Club has taken our garden under their angel wings and soon the flower blossoms will flourish too.

- CCHS has joined the Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Business Association, and Churchill County Museum in hopes of expanding our horizons.

Volunteers are needed

We are gearing up for more events, but we need volunteers. Please call Sue Ballew at 775-220-6278 if you can help on Sundays from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., when we open the Foreman-Roberts House and Carriage House for tours.

Temporary Executive Director

We contracted with Kathleen Long as temporary Executive Director for the first three months of 2024. She was a whirlwind of wonderful thoughts and ideas; new exhibits popped up along the walls in the Carriage House, and in the Foreman-Roberts House, history was put back in its proper place. She said to Pres. Sue Ballew, "The Sheriff's back in town," and she was! The Carriage House and Foreman-Roberts House now glimmer and shine.

Carriage House Rental

Carriage House Ad: Need a place to meet that has a mini kitchen, Internet access, projector and screen, room for 44 people, and air conditioning? Yes? The Carriage House is available to you for a nominal donation. Call Sue Ballew at (775) 220-6278 for details.

Here is a little history:

The Historic Foreman-Roberts House Museum

by Sue Ballew, President, Carson City Historical Society



The Foreman-Roberts House at 1207 North Carson Street is a gothic-revival style home surrounded by a small park. The home was built in 1864 in Washoe City, Nevada, for Solomon Foreman and his family.

He was a surveyor in Washoe City. At the same time, in Washoe City, Annie and James Roberts were owners of a saloon and boarding house called the Lake House. After the Lake House burned, James D. Roberts purchased the house from individuals. James worked at a saloon in town.

Washoe City had played out in about 1870 and many people were moving to where the larger populations and work were. Roberts owned the saloon across from the V&T Depot in Carson City. The family moved here in November of 1874, taking their house with them.

It has always been a point of conjecture as to how the house was moved to Carson City. Thurman Roberts, their youngest son, would tell a story about sawing the house in two and moving it on the V&T Railroad. The problem was that there was a tunnel at the top of the hill south of Carson City that a house would not fit through. No one has been able to find bills of lading to prove that it came on the train. It was most likely pulled by oxen and brought into Carson City. Some of the pieces of lumber have numbers on them so it could have been brought in pieces and reassembled.

The land was leased first and the house placed at 1207 North Carson. Later the land was purchased. The location was ideal as the property had an artesian well that would provide water for the family and the fruit trees that are still located there.

During the 1960's Thurman Roberts, the last living relative, passed away. The house was in disrepair. Thurman had willed the property to the state for the children of the state, and the state turned the property over to Carson City. The City was anxious to clear the house and use the property for a park. The lean-to kitchen was the first to go.

Concerned citizens in Carson City came together to save the house but were told if the house wasn't on a proper foundation, that within a certain number of days it would be torn down. These concerned citizens formed an organization called the Nevada Landmarks Society (now Carson City Historical Society). They organized

fundraisers, wrote and sold cookbooks, and did everything they could to get money together to pay for restoration and renovations. Local organizations provided lunches for workers. Prisoners from the Nevada State Prison came in and lifted the house up, removed the railroad ties, and put the house on a cement foundation. The house was saved and is now a functioning part of Carson City's history.

The family that purchased the house in Washoe City, and had it moved, remained in the house from 1866 until 1969 when Thurman Roberts passed away.

James D. and Annie Roberts eventually had five children who lived in the house. James Roberts worked at the Corbett Saloon across from the V&T Depot. Later he was a guard at the Nevada State Prison. Annie,



his wife, kept house. Their daughter, Mary Roberts, was a schoolteacher in Carson City and taught at the Central School. Josie Roberts was Secretary to Governor Sparks. She had been a schoolteacher at one time. Richard Roberts served in the Spanish American War and was stationed at Camp Clark in Carson City. Thurman Roberts, the youngest of the family, had a mine north of Carson City and also worked on the Carson and Colorado Railway. He later married Hattie Hale. They both lived at the Roberts House until Hattie was killed crossing Carson Street.

The Foreman-Roberts House is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Historic American Building Survey (HABS).