



The Historic Wungnema House



Mills Park, Carson City, Nevada

Managed by the Foundation for Carson City Parks and Recreation Under Lease From Carson City



The north side and front entrance to the Wungnema House.

A family of Hopi stone masons, the Wungnemas, built this 1,000 square-foot house, which was completed in 1948. Some members of the family still live in Carson City.

Burton Wungnema, Burton's father Earnest, and Burton's wife Pearl, built this house on what was then the eastern edge of Carson City. Burton and his wife met as students at the Stewart Indian School, married, and went on to raise eight children in the home. Although Burton died in May of 1956, shortly after his twenty-ninth birthday, Pearl and her children continued to live in their home until the 1970s when they moved to a larger house. After nearly two



Burton Wungnema, aged 15, working on a church at Lake Tahoe.

decades of neglect, the house was acquired by Carson City, restored, and opened for a variety of public uses in December 2000. Pearl passed away in 2001 at the age of 75.

The Wungnema House is representative of the distinctive masonry work seen in churches and homes built by Burton and his father around Carson City and Lake Tahoe from 1925 to 1955.

Examples of their work can be seen at various locations in Carson City, including at the Stewart Indian School.



Burton Wungnema, his brother, and daughter at one of their Brunswick Canyon quarries in 1954.

Burton used a distinctively-colored rhyolite obtained from his father's quarries for the construction of his home. These quarries were located in the Brunswick Canyon area east of Carson City, south of the Carson River Canyon. Burton and Earnest's skill as masons is clearly visible around the exterior of the house as well as in the interior fireplaces. A walk around the outside of the house provides ample evidence of this, especially in the skilled manner that the stone blocks, from which the corners are constructed, were fitted to "frame" and support the randomly shaped, carefully fitted stone in the balance of the wall areas. The exterior of the chimney contains a number of smaller, non-rhyolitic, pieces of rock, some of which contain turquoise-like inclusions, which may tie back to a traditional esthetic. Also, on the east facade of the house, located on either side of the chimney, exposed rafters or floor joists for the second story are visible. This detail is strongly reminiscent of the *vigas* often seen in traditional Hopi or Puebloan architecture.

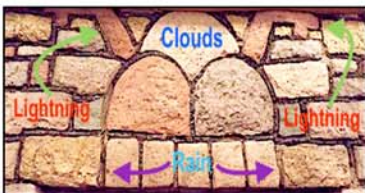


Chimney detail.

According to Wungnema family tradition, the chimney and fireplace utilize stone brought from Arizona. The fireplace's façade contains a cut-stone representation of clouds, lightning, and rain, which together form the symbol of the Hopi



The living room fireplace and hearth, showing the Water Clan symbol above the firebox.



Fireplace detail showing the Water Clan symbol and its components.

Water clan, the clan to which Burton belonged. Hopi traditionally trace their lineage through their mother, which means that Burton's mother was also a member of the Water Clan. Also, by tradition, a Hopi could not marry someone of the same clan; Burton's wife Pearl was a member of the Sun Clan. Hopi clan symbols have existed for at least a thousand years, appearing in ancient petroglyphs in the territory the Hopi currently occupy, as well as on petroglyph panels found as

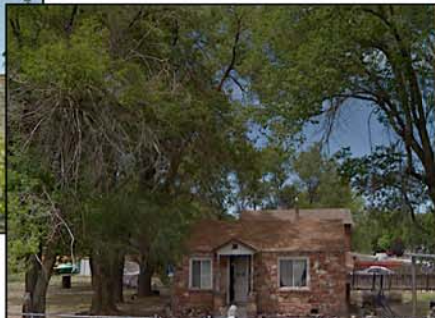
far away as Southern Nevada, an area where some believe several Hopi Clans originated. Appropriately, the Hopi root of the name Wungnema means "grow", as in growing corn, something that is impossible without water. The Water Clan is primarily from the Second Mesa Hopi village of *Shimópovi* on the Hopi Reservation.



Examples of Hopi Clan symbol petroglyphs, from left to right: Corn Clan, Bear Clan and Water Clan.

Help us locate other examples of the Wungnema Family's Work....

Their work included houses, fireplaces and chimneys, walls, outbuildings, churches, and monuments in and around Carson City and Lake Tahoe; however, few records documenting their work survive. The Foundation for Carson City Parks and Recreation (FCCPR), as part of its efforts on behalf of the Wungnema House and family, is attempting to locate and document examples of the Wungnema family's work. If you are aware of any examples of their work, please contact FCCPR by e-mail or at the address below. The pictures below include additional pictures of the Wungnema House, as well as what are believed to be other examples of their work.



**Foundation for
Carson City
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The Foundation for Carson City Parks and Recreation, Inc. (FCCPR) is a non-profit member-driven 501(c)(3) independent, non-governmental organization dedicated to bringing together members of the Carson City community to encourage and enable public support for the continuing enhancement of Carson City's parks and recreational facilities. FCCPR manages the Wungnema House under a lease agreement with the city. The Wungnema House is under the jurisdiction of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Department. For further information, email the Foundation at FoundationCCPR@gmail.com, go to the Foundation's web site at www.carsoncityparks.org, or reach us by mail at FCCPR, P.O. Box 3266, Carson City NV 89702-3266.